



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Sir Richard Leese
Leader of the Council
about member representing the
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RL/CF/JK

May 25th 2007

Juris Lavrikovs
Information and Communications Officer
ILGA-Europe
Rue de la Charité 17
Brussels B-1210
Belgium

ENTRY
11 MAY 2007
ILGA-EUROPE

Dear Juris,

Re: The right to freedom of assembly and expression by LGBT people in Europe

Thank you for your e-mail requesting our support for ILGA-Europe's campaign to protect the right of LGBT people to assemble and freely express themselves during Pride events across Europe. We write to you with a message of solidarity and support for your campaign to encourage all European cities to defend the rights of LGBT people.

Manchester City Council recognises that during the past few years the freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people has been seriously compromised and/or violated in a number of European cities where peaceful and public demonstrations and pride events by LGBT people and their supporters were banned and participants of these events experienced humiliation, abuse and even violence.

Manchester is made up of rich and diverse communities. Our approach to diversity is lead by our elected Council, championed by the Leader of the Council and Deputy Chief Executive. We also have strong employee groups that represent our diversity strands and we are customer focused, which means we must respond to the diverse needs of our city's residents. The city is renowned for its civil rights movement history, including the women's social and political union, trade unionism and lesbian and gay rights movement.

Manchester City Council was recently awarded 3rd place on the National Stonewall Diversity Champions index of good lesbian and gay employers. This recognises the leading role this council plays in the employment rights of lesbian and gay employees.

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This Council facilitates a variety of cultural and diversity focussed events throughout the year which both support educational understanding of difference and also celebrate the city's diverse communities, examples of these include: Manchester Pride, LGBT History Awareness events, World AIDS Day and International Day Against Homophobia. The council also conducts a variety of service improvement measures to meet the needs of LGBT service users.

Manchester Pride is a world-renowned festival that contributes to the cultural diversity of our City, encourages tourism and provides economic prosperity. We would encourage other cities to embrace the opportunity to celebrate LGBT pride openly and discover the benefits of liberated expressions of freedom and celebration.

I hope our support for your campaign will encourage the minority of Councils who do not support LGBT rights to reconsider their position and respect the rights of LGBT people to assemble and express their views freely. Should you wish to find out more please call a member of my team, contact details at the top of this letter.

May I take this opportunity to pledge Manchester City Council's support and wish you all the best with your Campaign.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Leese', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Richard Leese
Leader of Manchester City Council