

4. Participation: freedoms of assembly, expression and association

4.1. Introduction

Freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are three basic human rights which are essential for a full and active participation in society. Indeed, hindrances to the free enjoyment of these rights impinge on the possibility of individually or collectively participating in civil, social and political life. These freedoms are pivotal to combating discrimination, to enhance communication, to favour dialogue and to improve civil society's understanding of issues pertaining to the human rights of LGBT persons.

The enjoyment of the rights to associate, express and assemble by LGBT persons and their organisations is guaranteed in most of the member states of the Council of Europe. However, as this report has demonstrated, public representation and visibility of LGBT persons may be received with hostile reactions, denial or rejection. In a few Council of Europe member states this has led to restrictions to the freedoms of expression, assembly and association of LGBT persons. Such cases have included the impossibility to organise Pride parades and cultural festivals, the denial of registering LGBT associations, and refusal or obstacles when publishing and distributing material on issues concerning sexual orientation and gender identity.

4.2. International and European standards

International human rights standards guarantee the respect of these three freedoms irrespective of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT persons are free to express their views, organise assemblies and register organisations which focus on issues concerning sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The freedom of expression is protected in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The European Convention on Human Rights ensures the protection of the right to freedom of expression in Article 10 and the European Union Charter for Fundamental Rights enshrines it in Article 11. Freedom of association and assembly are protected in Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights. Provisions guaranteeing these freedoms are also found in other international instruments.²³³ In Europe the right to freedom of assembly and association is enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 11) and in the European Union Charter for Fundamental Rights (Article 12). The Committee of Ministers in its recommendation called for

233. Such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination or the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

measures to be adopted in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of these rights irrespective of one's sexual orientation or gender identity.²³⁴

The rights to associate, express and assemble are not absolute. In some instances legitimate limitations can be applied by authorities. However, according to the European Convention on Human Rights, restrictions should be (1) prescribed by law, (2) have a legitimate aim, and (3) be necessary in a democratic society to achieve those aims. When applicants bring a case to the European Court of Human Rights, the Court will therefore verify whether there is an interference by public authorities and then apply this three-part test.

Legitimate aims for restricting freedom of expression, assembly and association include, in particular, national security, public safety, prevention of disorder or crime, protection of health or morals and protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The European Court of Human Rights has further clarified to what extent limiting these three freedoms is in compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court has stressed that when evaluating a specific restriction applied in a national context it is faced “not with a choice between two conflicting principles, but with a principle of freedom of expression that is subject to a number of exceptions which must be narrowly interpreted”.²³⁵ Regarding the possibility of invoking the “morality” justification for limitations to the freedom of expression the Court has maintained that, in order to promote pluralism, broadmindedness and openness in society, it is necessary also to accept opinions, expressions and information that may be welcomed unfavourably by a part of the population.²³⁶ The authorities should not therefore limit freedom of expression on the basis of their moral outlook, but rather be obliged to ensure freedom of expression even if the matters expressed are controversial. This has also been stated in a case of freedom of expression of LGBT persons, in the judgment of *Alekseyev v. Russia*.²³⁷ In relation to freedom of assembly the Court has held,²³⁸ and later restated in both *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland*²³⁹ and *Alekseyev v. Russia*,²⁴⁰ that protection of freedom of assembly goes as far as also including those assemblies that are not positively perceived by the majority. There is

234. Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, adopted on 31 March 2010, paragraphs 9 and 13.

235. European Court of Human Rights, *The Sunday Times v. United Kingdom*, Application No. 13166/87, judgment of 26 April 1979, paragraph 65.

236. European Court of Human Rights, *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, Application No. 5493/72, judgment of 7 December 1976, paragraph 49.

237. European Court of Human Rights, *Alekseyev v. Russia*, Applications Nos. 4916/07, 25924/08 and 14599/09, judgment of 21 October 2010.

238. European Court of Human Rights, *Stankov and the United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden v. Bulgaria*, Applications Nos. 29221/95 and 29225/95, judgment of 2 October 2007, paragraph 77.

239. European Court of Human Rights, *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland*, Application No. 1543/06, judgment of 3 May 2007.

240. European Court of Human Rights, *Alekseyev v. Russia*, Applications Nos. 4916/07, 25924/08 and 14599/09, judgment of 21 October 2010.

also a positive obligation for the authorities to protect the participants of an assembly from violent counter-demonstrators.²⁴¹

4.3. Situation in the member states

Freedom of assembly

LGBT persons and their organisations in many member states of the Council of Europe have been invisible from public life for a long time. The “Stonewall Riots” of June 1969 in New York, during which LGBT persons protested against continuing harassment by the police, marked a turning point for the freedom of expression, assembly and association of LGBT persons. The events of June 1969 constituted an important inspiration for LGBT human rights defenders to stand up publicly and to denounce the discriminations they experienced. LGBT Pride events have since 1969 been celebrated in many places around the world. Over time, other specific events have also become recurring, such as the Transgender Day of Remembrance celebrated annually on 20 November to commemorate victims of transphobic violence.

The enjoyment of the right to freedom of assembly is sometimes considered as a litmus test for the attitudes of society towards LGBT persons. In most member states Pride parades and similar cultural events take place without significant problems and participants enjoy police protection if need be. Political parties and commercial companies may participate in Pride events. Trade unions in at least nine member states (France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have also participated in Pride festivals.

However, in some member states bans or administrative impediments have been imposed or the police have not effectively protected participants from violent counter-demonstrators. Opposition to events promoting the human rights of LGBT persons have their roots in sensitivity of parts of the population, as such events raise public attention to issues of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The mere visibility of LGBT persons at such events is seen as provocative by a majority of the population, as evidenced by surveys carried out, for instance, in Serbia,²⁴² where 73% of those surveyed said they oppose public demonstrations of LGBT persons.

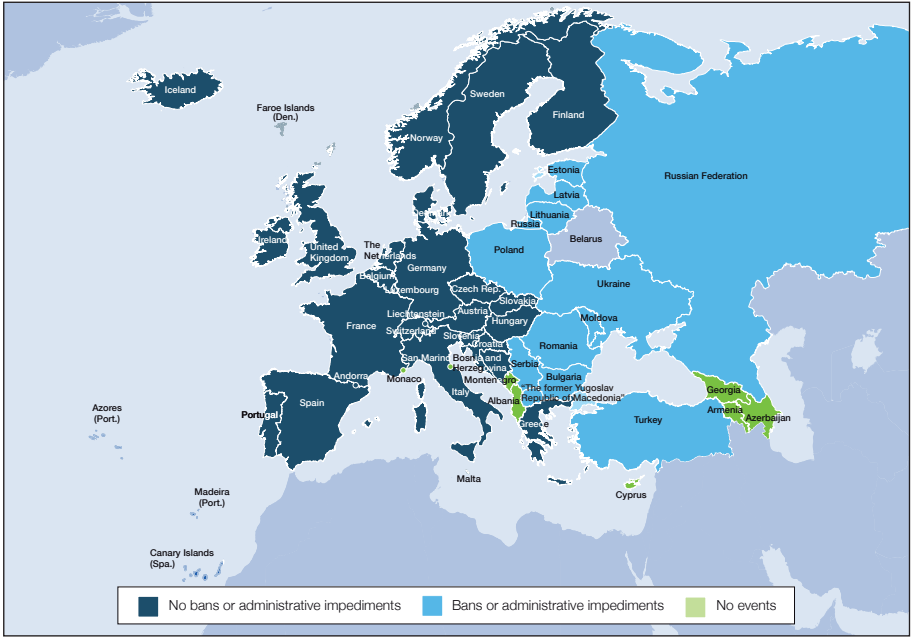
Since 2004 in at least 12 member states there have been cases of bans and/or administrative impediments on Pride events or other large public cultural LGBT events (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”). In eight other member states (Albania, Armenia,

241. European Court of Human Rights, *Plattform “Ärzte für das Leben”*, Application No. 10126/82, judgment of 21 June 1988, paragraphs 32 and 34.

242. Gay Straight Alliance, “Prejudices Exposed – Homophobia in Serbia”. Public opinion research report on LGBT population, 2008, February-March 2008, p. 6.

Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino), no large public cultural or Pride events have ever been organised, while in the remaining 27 member states no significant problems have been encountered (see Map 4.1) even though in some of them, bans of Pride events have been called for.

Map 4.1: Bans and/or administrative impediments on large LGBT events since 2004



Bans of Pride parades and other LGBT cultural events have since 2004 occurred in a handful of member states, notably the Pride parades in Latvia (in 2005 and 2006), Lithuania (in 2007 and 2008), in Romania (in 2005) and in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (in 2007, when an LGBT event in Skopje was denied authorisation). In the Russian Federation, since 2005 notifications by the NGO GayRussia to hold a Pride parade in the city have been turned down by the Municipality of Moscow every year. However, activists have organised events, despite the impossibility of holding a Pride parade, which resulted in incidents and attacks from homophobic groups and which lacked effective protection of participants by the authorities.²⁴³ In a recent European Court of Human Rights ruling²⁴⁴ the Court found a violation of the Convention because it did not accept the argument from the authorities that the possibility of violent counter-demonstrations is a valid justification to

243. Human Rights Watch and ILGA-Europe, “We have an upper hand! – Freedom of Assembly in Russia and the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People”, June 2007.

244. European Court of Human Rights, *Alekseyev v. Russia*, Applications Nos. 4916/07, 25924/08 and 14599/09, judgment of 21 October 2010.

prevent the Pride parade from taking place.²⁴⁵ The Court recalled its previous case law that there is a positive obligation by states to protect the participants from violent counter-demonstrations.

As for administrative impediments, the landmark case *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland* concerned a request from the authorities to present a traffic plan to the organisers of the 2005 Pride parade in Warsaw, resulting in an impingement on the right to freedom of assembly, as ascertained by the European Court of Human Rights.²⁴⁶ Administrative impediments have also been used in other member states in order to deny authorisation to hold Pride parades. Administrative impediments have been justified by authorities on the ground that the police would not be able to protect the participants from hostile or violent counter-demonstrations. This has been the case in, amongst others, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. In some instances, such as in Serbia and Moldova, the authorities made the location of the event conditional for police protection. Sometimes they would propose locations which were far away from the city centre.

Counter-demonstrations as a reaction to Pride parades are not uncommon in member states and may be held by religious communities, nationalist or extreme right-wing groups. While most of these counter-demonstrations are carried out within the limits of the right to freedom of assembly, others take the form of organised attacks on participants in Pride parades, resulting in clashes and incidents. This has been the case in at least 15 member states since 2004 (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden and Ukraine²⁴⁷). Sometimes counter-reactions have had a wider reach and have been promoted and sustained by political or religious figures. European institutions, including the Commissioner for Human Rights, have expressed concern for violence and limitations on the right to freedom of assembly of LGBT persons.²⁴⁸ Violent clashes seriously hamper the possibility for LGBT persons to peacefully demonstrate for their human rights and contribute to fostering hostility and prejudices. The OSCE has developed a set of guidelines to provide guidance to states on how to respect the freedom of assembly.²⁴⁹ The guidelines contain a principle of non-discrimination on the part of the authorities in guaranteeing the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly, including on the ground of sexual orientation, while they do not make mention of gender identity.

245. *Ibid.*, paragraph 51.

246. European Court of Human Rights, *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland*, Application No. 1543/06, judgment of 3 May 2007.

247. See (FRA) national contributions.

248. Commissioner for Human Rights, "Pride events are still hindered – this violates freedom of assembly", 2010, Human Rights Comment.

249. OSCE/ODIHR, "Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly" (2nd edn), Warsaw, 2010.

Freedom of expression

Interference in the exercise of freedom of expression of LGBT persons is not frequent in Council of Europe member states. If it happens, it is usually directed at impeding expressions, opinions and information concerning sexual orientation or gender identity from being circulated because of possible negative reception by the majority population.

On the most basic level the freedom of expression of LGBT persons can be restricted when the legislator drafts bills in order to impose sanctions on those accused of “promoting homosexuality”. This has been the case in three member states since 2004. In Lithuania the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information was passed in December 2009. According to that law, information deemed to be detrimental to minors includes information promoting sexual relations, expressing contempt for family values and encouraging the concept of entry into marriages and families other than by the definition of marriage in the Lithuanian Constitution as being exclusively between a man and a woman.²⁵⁰ The first version of the law, which was passed in July 2009, included “promotion of homosexual, bisexual and polygamous relationships”. Following national and international criticisms this reference was dropped but the law still contains the expression “contempt for family values”, the scope of which remains unclear.²⁵¹ Moreover, drafts to supplement the Penal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences have been proposed, which aim to prevent issues of homosexuality from being raised in public. Adoption of these proposals is still pending but they would be likely to include, if adopted, a limitation to the right to freedom of expression of LGBT persons. In Poland in 2007, the attempt to adopt a similar law was not successful and the amendments to the Law on Education System, proposed by the then Minister of Education, were rejected.²⁵²

In the Russian Federation in 2003 and in 2006 two federal bills punishing the so-called “propaganda of homosexuality” were proposed in the Duma. Such “propaganda” would include any public statement, including in the mass media, and public displays of a “homosexual lifestyle”. The draft bills formulated as punishment “deprivation of the right to occupy certain posts or practise certain activities for a period of two to five years”.²⁵³ The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, however, maintained when reviewing the draft bill of 2006 that:

250. FRA national contribution (legal report) on Lithuania, pp. 45–46; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Homophobia, Transphobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: 2010 Update – Comparative Legal Analysis”, 2010, pp. 34–35.

251. FRA national contribution (legal report) on Lithuania, pp. 45–46.

252. FRA national contribution (legal report) on Poland, pp. 67–68.

253. Federal Law on Amending the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to Criminalise the Propaganda of Homosexuality, Draft No. 367150-3: proposed by Deputy of the State Duma A. V. Chuyev on 15 September 2003; Federal Law on Amending the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to Criminalise the Propaganda of Homosexuality, Draft No. 311625-4: proposed by deputy of the State Duma A. V. Chuyev on 20 June 2006.

in accordance with the current legislation sodomy and lesbianism are considered as criminal only if these deeds are associated with the violence or with the threat of it, or in taking advantage of the victim's helpless condition. Committing the mentioned deeds by mutual consent do not form any crime or administrative offence. The Federal Law on the Mass Media prohibits the distribution of information that promotes pornography, and a cult of violence and cruelty, but does not exclude the possibility of releasing erotic publications under certain conditions (Articles 3 and 37).²⁵⁴

The drafts were not supported by the government and were also rejected by the state Duma.

Despite the fact that such law initiatives failed on the federal level, in the region of Ryazan a Regional Law on Administrative Offences punishing the “Propaganda of Homosexuality” among minors²⁵⁵ was adopted in 2008, together with a Regional Law on the Protection of Morality and Health of Minors, which contains similar provisions.²⁵⁶ In 2009 Russian LGBT activists appealed to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, and asked the Constitutional Court to test the constitutionality of the Regional Law of Ryazan. The Constitutional Court in 2010 refused to consider the complaint regarding this law, and noted that “the family, motherhood and childhood in the traditional interpretation, received from our ancestors, are the values that provide a continuous change of generations, and are conditions for the preservation and development of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, and therefore require a special state protection”.²⁵⁷

Interference with the freedom of expression can also take the form of explicit bans on specific materials or performances in which LGBT issues are presented or discussed. Although not common in most member states, incidents have been registered in three member states and concerned diverse kinds of publications. In Poland in 2006 the publication of *Compass*, the manual for human rights education of the Council of Europe, constituted the reason for the then Polish government to dismiss the director of the government agency which had financed and distributed the Polish version of the manual. In the view of the government the manual did not reflect Polish values since it did not depict homosexuality as a deviation.²⁵⁸ The

254. On the Draft Federal Law on Amending the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation to Criminalise the Propaganda of Homosexuality: Official Response of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation No. 492-2/06щ. of 20 April 2006.

255. Law of Ryazan Region on Administrative Offences: passed by the Ryazan Region Duma on 24 November 2008.

256. Law of Ryazan Region on the Protection of Morality and Health of Children in Ryazan Region: passed by the Ryazan Region Duma on 22 March 2006.

257. On refusal to consider the complaint of citizens Alekseyev Nikolay Aleksandrovich, Baev Nikolay Viktorovich and Fedotova Irina Borisovna regarding the violation of their constitutional rights by Article 4 of the Law of Ryazan Region on the Protection of Morality and Health of Children in Ryazan Region: Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation of 19 January 2010.

258. FRA national contribution (legal report) on Poland, p. 67.

Secretary General of the Council of Europe²⁵⁹ and the Commissioner for Human Rights spoke publicly against this point of view.²⁶⁰

In Turkey, following the decision of the Ankara Public Prosecutor Office to seize an LGBT magazine in 2006,²⁶¹ which was justified on the ground of Article 28 of the Turkish Constitution and the Law on Criminal Procedure, the NGO which had published the magazine filed an appeal. This appeal was unsuccessful and after the final decision of the Ankara Criminal Court of First Instance, the NGO brought the case before the European Court of Human Rights,²⁶² which is now pending. In Azerbaijan the novel “Artush and Zaur”, by the author Alekper Aliyev, portraying the love between an Azerbaijani man and an Armenian man, was removed by the police from a big bookstore in Baku.²⁶³

Freedom of association

LGBT NGOs have been formed in nearly all member states. LGBT NGOs in some member states of the Council of Europe face challenges on the most basic level: to register their organisation and statutes. Restrictions on the freedom of association have been observed in five member states during the period 2004-2010: Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. Such restrictions by the authorities are usually motivated on the ground that the founding documents and scope of the association are contrary to national law. Authorities have also used the argument that the scope of the association is in contrast to or undermines national moral values. Furthermore, administrative issues may arise in relation to registration formalities.

In the Russian Federation, notwithstanding the constitutional guarantee of the freedom of association, some LGBT organisations have been refused registration. In February 2010, the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation denied state registration of the organisation “Marriage Equality Russia”. The organisation, which included in its statutes that it wished to achieve marriage equality for LGBT people in the Russian Federation, was denied registration because its founding documents would be contrary to the legislation of the Russian Federation as well as incompatible with the Family Code of the Russian Federation, which defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.²⁶⁴ Another organisation, Rainbow House, was denied registration because the goals of the organisation aimed “to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals, including persons of non-traditional sexual orientation, to promote education of identity of these individuals as citizens of

259. Article by Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* of 2 October 2006.

260. Commissioner for Human Rights, Memorandum to the Polish Government, 20 June 2007, CommDH(2007)13, paragraphs 53-55.

261. National contribution (legal report) on Turkey, p. 12-16.

262. European Court of Human Rights, *KAOS LG v. Turkey*, Communicated to the Government for observations, Application No. 4982/07, Date of Decision to Communicate 16 June 2009.

263. National contribution (legal report) on Azerbaijan, p. 6.

264. National contribution (legal report) on the Russian Federation, pp. 16-17.

society which are equal in rights and value". According to the authorities "the propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation", which in turn "could lead to undermining the security of the Russian society and State", would "undermine the moral values of the society, and undermined the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia because of a reduction of the population", which means that the organisation would "infringe on institutions of family and marriage, protected by the State".²⁶⁵ The decision was unsuccessfully challenged domestically by the NGO,²⁶⁶ which therefore decided to file an application at the European Court of Human Rights.²⁶⁷

Other cases in the Russian Federation involved organisations in Arkhangelsk and St Petersburg. In the first case, the NGO Rakurs in Arkhangelsk had already been registered in 2007 as an NGO working on women's rights, but had at a later stage wished to change its statutes by defining its purposes as encompassing issues pertaining to homophobia, discrimination and support to LGBT persons. The refusal to accept the amendments to the statutes was motivated by the authorities with reference to the argument that they were in conflict with the Law on Countering Extremist Activity.²⁶⁸ In the second case, the organisation Gender-L, which had organisational aims similar to those of the Rakurs organisation, successfully challenged in court the denial for registration. Indeed, there is evidence that more LGBT organisations have been able to register, such as two LGBT NGOs in St Petersburg and Murmansk whose statutes explicitly mention the fight against discrimination and homophobia as the purpose of the associations.

Problems with the registration of the statutes of LGBT associations have also been registered in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. In Ukraine in 2008, despite the absence of formal limitations, the "People of Bukovina" NGO was requested to delete from its statute the wording "sexual orientation" and compelled to use "gender orientation".²⁶⁹ Another Ukrainian organisation, the Lviv LGBT Organisation Total, reported similar problems. In Armenia, NGOs report being unable to include in their statutes references to LGBT issues, sexual orientation or gender identity, although the authorities have denied that this is the case.²⁷⁰ In Azerbaijan the NGO Gender and Development managed to get the registration but reported that they were contacted several times during the registration process by the State Security Committee regarding the target groups, scope of the organisation and the organisation's relations with other countries.

265. National contribution (legal report) on the Russian Federation (Annex to Chapter 2, case 6).

266. On the cassation appeal of A. V. Zhdanov on the decision of Centralny District Court of Tyumen, case No. 33-2383.

267. European Court of Human Rights, *Aleksandr Zhdanov and Rainbow House v. Russia*, Application No. 12200/08.

268. Decision of the Office of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on the Arkhangelsk Region and Nenets Autonomous District of 31 May 2010 No. 03-09-3266 on the refusal of state registration of amendments to the constituent documents of a public association.

269. National contribution (legal report) on Ukraine, p. 14.

270. National contribution (sociological report) on Armenia, p. 8.

In Turkey, LGBT organisations have faced problems in relation to attempts by the authorities to close them down. There is a pattern in this regard and problems were reported in different cities, such as in Ankara (KAOS LG), Istanbul (Lambdaistanbul), Izmir (Black Pink Triangle) and in Bursa (Rainbow Association). Arguments used to carry out these operations, later successfully challenged in Turkish courts by the NGOs, related in all these cities to issues concerning the contrariety of the activities of these associations to Turkish moral and family values. The case of Lambdaistanbul was heard in 2009 by the Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals after the Istanbul 3rd Civil Court of First Instance had ruled for the closure of the association. The Supreme Court in deciding the case ascertained that the scope of activity of the association did not go against moral values and therefore overturned the previous decision.²⁷¹ However, although Lambdaistanbul defeated the legal challenge to its registration, the Supreme Court of Appeals left open the possibility of future challenges to freedom of association in its ruling: “The dissolution of the defendant organisation could still be demanded if it would act counter to its charter, in the ways of encouraging or provoking lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite and transsexual behaviour or acting with the aim of spreading such sexual orientations.” Lambdaistanbul lodged a case challenging this aspect of the judgment at the European Court of Human Rights in June 2010.²⁷²

Restrictions to freedom of association are not exclusively limited to unlawful interference by the authorities in registration processes. They can also take the form of impediments for LGBT associations to carry out social and cultural activities in their premises or in locations rented out by private parties. Evidence for such occurrences were identified in, but not confined to, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovenia and the Russian Federation. Refusals to rent or to provide access to these locations are connected to the LGBT-related character of these events.

For instance, Organisation Q in Bosnia and Herzegovina was evicted from its premises by the landlord and the Lithuanian Gay League was unable to rent office space from another NGO working on disability issues.²⁷³ In Slovenia the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the LGBT movement, to be held in a castle, was cancelled after the owner had discovered the nature of the event.²⁷⁴ In the Russian Federation, the LGBT Film Festival “Side by Side” was prevented from taking place in 2007 because the owner of the premises intended to be used for the event in St Petersburg cancelled the booking, allegedly motivated in part by pressure from public authorities. A similar incident was also registered the following year when the owner of

271. Beyoğlu/Istanbul Civil Court of First Instance No. 3, Case No. 2009/65, Decision No. 2009/69. National contribution (legal report) on Turkey, pp 10-11.

272. European Court of Human Rights, *Lambda Istanbul v. Turkey*, Application No. 53804/10. The application has been registered but not yet communicated.

273. FRA national contribution (sociological report) on Lithuania, p. 13.

274. FRA national contribution (sociological report) on Slovenia, p. 6.

another facility in which the event was to take place cancelled the screenings following a threat to have the electricity cut off.²⁷⁵ In Serbia the press conference of the Gay Straight Alliance was cancelled by the Director of the Sava Centar in Belgrade because it had been deemed inappropriate for the venue.²⁷⁶ In Italy, LGBT associations in 2007 were prevented from taking part in the Conference for the Family organised by the Ministry of the Family and faced problems when seeking access to theatres and venues for organising public debates.²⁷⁷

275. National contribution (sociological report) on the Russian Federation, pp. 21-22.

276. National contribution (sociological report) on Serbia, p. 8.

277. National contribution (sociological report) on Italy, p. 7.

