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## **DENMARK: The first male couple on Denmark's "Dancing with the Stars" is stirring up controversy... & winning**

***They have gone out of their way to respond to critics of two men dancing together on TV.***

By David Castillo

LGBTQ Nation (06.11.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2NK2I25> - Jakob Fauerby and Silas Holst are making Danish TV history with their appearance together on Vild med Dans, the country's version of the Dancing With the Stars franchise.

The pair is the first same-sex couple in the show's 16-year history and so far they have scored the highest points in four out of eight episodes. And this Friday they'll compete once again in a season that has surprised many, especially Fauerby himself.

"Not in my wildest dreams did I anticipate this," said Fauerby, a Copenhagen-based actor who said that his goal all along, aside from becoming a better dancer, was to show people that same-sex dancing was something they could tolerate.

The experience, says Fauerby – best known for his membership in the satirical group PLATT-FORM – has been an "amazing rollercoaster." Even in liberal Denmark, the news that the wildly popular show would feature two men dancing sparked controversy among some long-time fans. The criticism ranged from the ugly, like those that complained about how it was "unnatural," to laments about how few beautiful dancing gowns the season would showcase. Many more wondered who would be "the man" and who would be "the woman."

Through it all, Fauerby has maintained a positive outlook, confident that what he is doing is good for his fellow Danes, especially his fellow LGBTQ brothers and sisters. It was actually Fauerby's decision to set the condition of dancing with another male.

"I had already thought that if they called me, I would ask if it was possible to dance with a man," said Fauerby. "So, when they called and I asked, they said it was probably something they could talk about."

A few days later he received the good news that his request could be met. Fauerby credits the producers for creating the opportunity, noting that he believes producers probably wanted to feature a same-sex couple for quite some time but that they were unsure about how to ask someone to represent the LGBTQ community. They also had to find the right professional dancer who was willing to participate.

"It's difficult to ask someone 'Hey do you want to be in the show, but do you want to be the LGBT representation of it?'" he said. "So, I think they just waited for someone to express the willingness to do it themselves."

As for the dancer, they found an enthusiastic participant in Silas Holst, a Vild med Dans favorite who came back from a five-year break to dance with Fauerby.

"I am absolutely delighted, but it is even more important to me that we do well," Holst told Danish outlet B.T.

They have indeed done quite well. In the show's premier, they scored 18 points, placing first with the highest score of the night. The next week, they received the highest score again with 23 points.

Watching them dance, it is no wonder that the pair has been victorious in half of the shows that have aired so far. Indeed, many of the comments from fans have pointed out that it can be sometimes hard to tell who is the professional and who is the amateur.

Throughout the competition, Fauerby has met his critics and detractors head-on. He has made the rounds on TV news shows and radio call-in shows to speak directly to his critics. But he says he understands why there are such strong feelings about it, especially in the age of streaming and on-demand.

"We are a small country of only 5.6 million people, and every Friday more than a million people tune in to watch the show and many more watch it on-demand afterward," said Fauerby. "There are very few shows that everyone sees, and this is one of them, so there are a lot of feelings connected to it."

So Fauerby has tried to meet these people where they are in order to understand them better, but also to let them know that he has no plans on "ruining" the show, just that he wants to do his best. Of most importance to the actor, however, is the representation his appearance brings to the LGBTQ community.

"For me, in my living room, when I dance at home, I dance with a man," said Fauerby. "When I was a child, I never saw representation. We're just one couple out of 160 in 16 years. So for me if a young boy, girl, or trans person has the opportunity to see that positive representation as part of a TV show that is empowering in itself.

Much of the early criticism hurled at the news centered on a fear of sexualization of the competition. It is a fear Fauerby hopes has been dashed since his debut.

"What happened after the first two shows is that people saw weren't going to have anal sex on stage," said Fauerby with some laughter. "It is feelings. It is sensuality. But it is not sexuality. It's just two people dancing."

The representation Fauerby has striven to showcase has also extended beyond the stage and into his family life. Just over two weeks ago, he and his husband Anders, together with their good friend Rebecca, welcomed to the world a new baby girl.

In fact, she arrived on a Friday night, which is when the show airs live. He, Anders, and Rebecca had been musing for several months about what might happen if she decided to come on a show night. After his daughter was born, he traveled to the studio to prepare for the show.

"I missed the rehearsal, arrived an hour before the show started, did a quick press conference, then got into makeup and danced the show," he said. "We are a rainbow family, and it's been overwhelming and amazing."

At 42, Fauerby says one thing about this opportunity that he has found most incredible is the privilege he has to learn dance from a professional dancer.

"To learn something that you weren't able to do before is an enormous privilege," said Fauerby. "For several hours a day, one of the best dancers, not only in Denmark, but in the world is teaching me how to dance and that is just amazing."

Fauerby also credits the platform the show has given him to take a stand for LGBTQ rights and visibility. The privilege to do so is not lost on him, and he has taken every opportunity he's been given to make sure that voice is heard.

"Having this tremendous power to have access to speech, the privilege of having a voice is something I take very seriously," he said. "And something has changed. We were standing at the Royal Theater with more than a million people watching us at home dancing the rumba. That has not been done before in Denmark."

As for LGBTQ people outside of Denmark, Fauerby hopes that they see his participation on the show and understand just why visibility is so important and that they act.

"LGBTQ people with resources, access, and courage should know that representation is so important. That's easy for me to say because I live in a rich country, in a democracy that works, with legislation that works, where women's rights are in place, where gay rights are in place," said Fauerby. "We have a lot of fights here, especially regarding transgender people, but the legislation is there. So I'm privileged, but I cannot tell someone in Saudi Arabia to go out and fight."

"So if you live in a place where your safety isn't jeopardized, then please go out and be visible. Show the world that being you is okay."

Jakob Fauerby and Silas Holst will compete this in week nine of the show, which airs Friday nights at 8 p.m. on Denmark's TV2.

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## **FRANCE: France lacks understanding of intersex human rights violations**

***Amendment to the French Bioethic law cements the status quo of unconsented surgeries on infants and children.***

OII Europe (09.10.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2P6OIRk> - Yesterday, on the 8th of October 2019, the national assembly in France has failed to prohibit non-vital surgeries on infants and children with a variation in their sex characteristics by 89 voices against 19.

The now adopted amendment 2334 to the French Bioethic Law stipulates that a specialized pluridisciplinary teams of reference centres for rare diseases shall be in charge of the care of a child born with a variation in genital development and shall establish “the diagnosis as well as possible therapeutic proposals, including therapeutic abstention, and their foreseeable consequences”.

Other stipulations include that the doctor shall “inform the child’s parents of the existence of associations specialising in supporting people with varying genital development” and that psycho-social care and counselling shall be provided by the multidisciplinary team throughout the process.

Last but not least, the amendment stipulates that “the consent of the juvenile must be systematically sought if he or she is able to express his or her will and participate in the decision.”

“We congratulate the French government for including the idea of therapeutic abstention and the stipulation that parents need to be informed about the existence of intersex associations. However, this amendment can only be considered a complete failure of the French government to protect intersex infants’ and children’s human rights and especially their rights to bodily autonomy and personal integrity. In France many surgical and other medical interventions are still performed right after birth and in the first two years of childhood, where the child clearly is in no position to give their consent.”, says Dan Christian Ghattas, Executive Director of OII Europe, and adds: “It is worrying that the French government not only disregards the clear call of the 2019 EU Parliament resolution [2018/2878(RSP), Resolution on the rights of intersex people] and the 2017 PACE resolution [Resolution 2191, Promoting the human rights of and eliminating discrimination against intersex people] to ban non-vital interventions on intersex infants and children but also the French Conseil d’Etat opinion on the revision of the bioethic law, which clearly determines any intervention on intersex infants and children to be unethical that is non-vital or treats an actual physical suffering.”

“We would at least have expected a reference to those limits set by the Conseil d’Etat opinion in the law. The law as it is now, will not sufficiently protect intersex children and is really disappointing. Only a clear ban of all non-vital interventions would give adequate protection “ adds Audrey Aegerter, member of the OII Europe Executive Board.

“The terminology used in the amendment again pathologize and as a result stigmatises intersex people. This perspective clearly does not foster a climate of social acceptance of bodily diversity”, points out Kitty Anderson, Co-Chair of OII Europe.

French intersex activists and their allies have worked hard to make sure that include intersex human rights would be the basis of bioethics law amendment. As we see today, this work has not yet come to an end. OII Europe will stand side by side with the Collectif Intersexes et Allié.e.s – OII France and the GISS / Alter Corpus to make sure that intersex infants, children, adolescents and adults can enjoy their human rights without exception.

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## **HOLY SEE: Vatican calls non-binary gender 'fictitious' in report tackling 'education crisis' over sexuality**

By Julia Hollingsworth

CNN (11.06.2019) - <https://cnn.it/2RaJoG0> - The Vatican has come under fire from LGBTQ groups after releasing a guide to sexuality for Catholic schools across the world that describes non-binary gender as "fictitious."

The church's education ministry on Monday released [the 31-page document](#), called "Male and Female He Created Them," for parents, students, school leaders and bishops.

The paper said that we are now facing an "educational crisis" in the field of sexuality, adding that the "process of identifying sexual identity" was being made difficult by the "fictitious (construct) known as 'gender neuter' or 'third gender.'"

It comes as many countries mark Pride Month, an annual celebration of the LGBTQ community, and LGBTQ Catholic campaign groups were quick to condemn the Vatican's guidebook.

New Ways Ministry, a US-based ministry which advocates for LGBTQ Catholics, slammed the document as a "harmful tool that will be used to oppress and harm not only transgender people, but lesbian, gay, bisexual people, too."

Francis DeBernardo, the ministry's executive director, said it would confuse those struggling with questions of gender identity and sexual orientation -- and could lead to self-harm, addiction and even suicide. Research has found LGBTQ teens have a much greater risk of suicide.

"The only truth that the document reveals is that the Vatican remains ill-equipped to discuss gender and sexuality in the modern world," DeBernardo said. "The Vatican remains in the dark ages, promoting a false teaching that relies on myth, rumor, and falsehoods."

Reverend James Martin, a Jesuit priest and author of "Building a Bridge," which looks at the Catholic Church's relationship with the LGBT community, said in a tweet that the Vatican paper "rightly calls for 'dialogue' and 'listening,' but sets aside the real-life experiences of LGBT people."

"Sadly, it will be used as a cudgel against transgender people, and an excuse to argue that they shouldn't even exist," he added.

The Vatican paper adds that "a person's sex is a structural determinant of male or female identity."

And that when people tried to erase the differences between men and women, it "undoubtedly helped to destabilize the family as an institution, bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women."

The document is not signed by Pope Francis but does include quotes from the pontiff.

The paper comes amid fresh scrutiny of the church's stance on LGBTQ issues. In recent years, a number of government institutions around the world have recognized non-binary gender identities.

And while the Catholic Church has traditionally had conservative ideas on gender and sexuality, in 2016 Pope Francis said the church owed LGBT people an apology for historically condemning homosexuality.

In recent years, the church has also come under intense scrutiny over its handling of sexual abuse cases and, in March, the Vatican issued tougher rules governing the sexual abuse of minors.

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## **NORTHERN IRELAND: Northern Ireland strikes victory for equality**

***Legal green light for abortion services, same-sex marriage only a first step.***

By Philippa H Stewart

HRW (24.10.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2JvCLvn> - Clocks over Northern Ireland were counting down as the region prepared for a leap toward furthering equality.

At midnight on Monday (21.10.2019), legislation came into force that decriminalized abortion and legalized same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland.

The celebrations were widespread – on Twitter, people posted photographs of countdown clocks, and women's rights campaigners took to the streets to celebrate.

According to the legislation, same-sex weddings will be able to take place starting February 2020. The government has until April 2020 to put in place the types of abortion services available in other parts of the country. In the meantime, it must cover the costs for women from Northern Ireland who travel to other parts of the United Kingdom for services.

These changes came about when campaigners leveraged the fact that Northern Ireland's own governing Assembly hadn't convened since early 2017 to push for legal reform via Westminster. While adopting legislation regulating Westminster's legal power in Northern Ireland during the power vacuum, UK MPs included amendments that extended rights to marriage equality and access to abortion to Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Assembly had until October 21 to convene if it wanted to block the amendments taking effect. That didn't happen, despite last-ditch efforts by some of the region's socially conservative politicians. This resistance could be a sign of things to come, with the political will to make it possible to exercise these rights in doubt.

Marriage equality requires marriage licenses as well as people to conduct ceremonies, make cakes, and provide venues. Safe abortions means not only access to abortion services, but also counselling, advice, education, and aftercare.

Human Rights Watch has seen that legal changes are not enough to ensure acceptance.

In the United States, celebrations over marriage equality in 2015 were followed by a series of stories about people refusing to provide wedding services, as well as same-sex couples struggling to adopt. Marriage equality needs antidiscrimination laws to back it up.

Increasing access to abortion is sometimes thwarted by allowing health care providers overly broad claims to conscientious objection that result in refusals to perform the procedure. Comprehensive reproductive rights also require comprehensive sexuality education for children, including how to avoid pregnancy and options they have in the event of an unwanted pregnancy. Too many governments, including the one in Northern Ireland, fail to provide this.

The next few months will be telling for Northern Ireland, and after the celebrations fade, campaigners will need to keep checking that what they fought so hard for comes to fruition.

## **POLAND: LGBT+ communities targeted ahead of Polish election**

***The ruling party has made 'LGBT ideology' a key issue in its election campaign, saying it is a 'foreign influence'.***

Al Jazeera (26.09.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2nj9qfW> - Alicja Sienkiewicz was attending a gay pride event in the Polish city of Bialystok in July when a group of young men shouting expletives surrounded her wheelchair and hurled firecrackers.

The 18-year-old student and gay-rights activist said she witnessed the group beating and kicking some parade participants and hurling homophobic insults, prompting police to intervene.

"I've never been subject to this level of aggression before," said Sienkiewicz, who was temporarily wheelchair-bound while recovering from an ankle injury. "It was a very traumatic experience for me."

In Poland, which doesn't recognise any form of same-sex union, parades to celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (or LGBT) life have become violent flashpoints ahead of an October 13 general election.

The ruling Law and Justice party (PiS) has made "LGBT ideology" a key issue in its election campaign, saying it is an invasive foreign influence that undermines traditional values in staunchly Catholic Poland.

Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski has publicly urged Poles to resist the "travelling theatre" of pride parades and described the LGBT movement as "a real threat to our identity, to our nation and to the Polish state".

Human rights activists and some Poland specialists say the party is fomenting homophobia to fire up its conservative base ahead of the election. The LGBT community has responded by organising more events, including a parade planned for this Saturday in the city of Lublin in southeastern Poland.

On Tuesday, Lublin's mayor banned the parade, citing security concerns following the violence that accompanied an LGBT event in the city last year. Parade organisers responded by challenging the ban in District Court in Lublin, which on Thursday overruled the mayor's decision. The mayor plans to appeal, his spokeswoman said.

A PiS spokeswoman did not respond to requests for comment from the party and its leader. A government spokesman did not immediately respond for a request for comment.

PiS officials have previously said they are not against gay couples, they just want them to exist as couples in private. Of the party's focus on LGBT issues, one senior party member said it was responding to public opinion.

A comfortable election victory next month by PiS, which has a comfortable lead in the polls, would give it a mandate to further reshape Poland in its conservative image.

***'Scaremongering'***



Poland has allied itself with other right-wing governments in Europe such as Hungary's to fight what it sees as the European Union's attempts to impose liberal, western values on Eastern European nations.

PiS was elected four years ago promising a raft of socially conservative policies. Some observers say they see parallels with the 2015 campaign, when the party deployed anti-immigrant rhetoric.

"Scaremongering about 'LGBT ideology' has almost become official policy in Poland with often nasty insinuations from members of the government and public media now the norm," said Stanley Bill, a lecturer in Polish culture and politics at the Britain's University of Cambridge.

He said the PiS was targeting its conservative base in an effort "designed to mobilise them to actually get them out to vote".

A recent poll published by London-based market research firm Kantar Group for a Polish newspaper found a majority of those surveyed said they opposed LGBT marches and more than a third would like to see them banned. The survey, based on 1,000 respondents, was conducted earlier this month.

"In Poland we are currently dealing with a kind of massive attack on values that are close to us - on our family, on Christian values, on the Church, on the basis of patriotism, on our homeland," said Marcin Romanowski, a deputy justice minister and PiS candidate for a constituency near Lublin.

The organisers of the LGBT parade in Lublin - the city's second-ever - say they hope the event will still go ahead as scheduled on Saturday, citing a similar attempt by the mayor to ban last year's event that was overruled by the Court of Appeal days later.

If it does go ahead, they are braced for trouble. More than 3,000 people signed an online petition urging the mayor to stop the event and its "provocative, aggressive and vulgar" participants.

The previous parade in October 2018 drew crowds of protesters who pelted parade participants with rocks, flares and tomatoes as they progressed from the steps of Lublin castle up through the city's old town. Riot police responded with pepper spray and water cannons to clear a path through the protesters. The roughly 1,000 parade attendees were matched by a similar number of protesters.

Among those who protested against Lublin's parade in 2018 were members of the Ruch Narodowy, or National Movement, a right-wing group that says it vehemently opposes gay rights.

Rafal Mekler, head of the National Movement's Lublin chapter, told Reuters news agency that his group was not to blame for last year's violence, and it was not looking for confrontation on Saturday.

But, he said, he was not responsible for the "huge movement of normal people" who opposed the march. "There is anger in society and we cannot stop [it]."

### ***Safety measures***

Preparations for Saturday's planned march include various safety measures, helmets for the people leading the march and an ambulance with first-aid responders. Organisers have



also requested concrete barriers and say they are communicating more closely with police than last year.

The organisers say they have had to change the planned route for security reasons and that they are telling parade participants to hide any LGBT symbols on the way to and from the march.

"It's a horrific atmosphere we're living in," says Bartosz Staszewski, a 29-year-old filmmaker and one of the organisers of Saturday's event. For him, participating in the parade is a vital part of trying to seek equality. "You show up, you humanise yourself," he said.

*Original Source: Reuters News Agency*

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## **SERBIA: 'I'm not giving up': Belgrade Pride calls for Serbia to address LGBT rights**

By Helena Skinner

Euronews (17.09.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2Il9ESI> - Marching under the slogan "I'm not giving up" #NeOdricemSe, Sunday evening saw thousands take part in Belgrade's eighth Pride Parade.

The latest Balkans capital to hold Pride events, the walk passed the main government institutions, to which protesters have been addressing their demands for improved LGBT rights.

Despite the appointment of openly gay prime minister Ana Brnabic in 2017 who attended this year's Pride, Serbia's LGBT community still faces widespread discrimination.

One of Belgrade Pride's organisers Jovanka Todorović, told Euronews, "Serbia is still conservative society where LGBTIQ topics raise a lot of public turmoil, especially surrounding Pride".

A police cordon was in place at Sunday's Parade to separate participants from anti LGBT protesters, "calling for public morality and demonstrating at LGBTIQ presenting christian values and religious values as their own" says Todorović.

Goran Miletic, Civil Rights Defenders' Europe Programme Director who was at the Parade told Euronews, "the protest group was smaller than in previous years, only comprising of around one hundred".

"Whilst not extraordinary in number, we should not underestimate the power of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans region, their nationalistic and homophobic sentiment - means their role amongst communities is not good".

Participant and LGBT activist Stefan Shparavalo told Euronews,

"In terms of LGBT rights, whilst things have improved in the last 10 years, we are still far from reaching equal legal footing, still the same sex partnership act has not been adopted, and a gender identity law doesn't exist".

Both pleas feature on the Pride Parade website's list of demands, alongside a call for better healthcare provisions for members of the trans community.

"We also expect Parliament to recognize the problems of the LGBTQ community and adopt the legislation in a form that will enable us to tackle those problems", says Jovanka Todorović speaking on behalf of Pride.

Serbia's turbulent LGBT history saw key legislative developments in 2009, when Parliament approved a new anti-discrimination law, and in 2012 when Serbia's Ministry of Justice incorporated hate crime into draft amendments to the criminal code.

Though Stefan remains sceptical, "Translation into reality is almost non existent - so for instance, the hate crime law adopted in 2012 has been taken into account by courts only once - so as you can imagine the application of the law is rare".

The first verdict passed under the law was in November 2018, an incident of domestic violence against an LGBT person.

Stefan says the community is, "Seeking confident authorities to be more vocal on LGBT rights, to be more vocal on combating widespread and ubiquitous homophobia in the public domain".

He is also asking the government, "to reprimand homophobic slurs, especially those coming from ministers and MPs".

Earlier this year Serbian politician Nenad Popović came under fire for accusing Croatia of attempting to import Children's books featuring same sex parents. Popovic Tweeted, "We need to stop those who want to convince us that it's OK for 'Roko to have two moms, and Ana two dads".

2019 has also seen Prime Minister, Ana Brnabic, become a parent after her same sex partner, Milica Djurdjic gave birth.

Serbian family law does not recognise a same sex union, Goran Miletic, Civil Rights Defenders noted that some members of the LGBT community "are not happy, some believe Brnabic should do more".

Commending the success of this year's Pride and Brnabic's participation, Goran says "In every society in the world, a Prime Minister's presence and care for Pride is a positive force".

"Brnabic spoke with protesters holding differing and diverse opinions, she is a great example to society that criticism can form a civilised discussion".

A frontrunner in the EU accession process, Serbia has been involved in accession negotiations since 2014.

EU Ambassador to Serbia Sem Fabrizi applauded the Parade as an embodiment of EU values.

With a turnout of almost 2000 people, and social media awash with #NeOdricemSe, like many activists Stefan hopes the Pride Parade will be used to raise the visibility of LGBT rights and the position of LGBT people in Serbia.

"We hope we will achieve equality as fast as we can in the given social context and atmosphere, where unfortunately homophobia remains pretty dominant".

## **UK: Home Office refused thousands of LGBT asylum claims, figures reveal**

***Exclusive: 'culture of disbelief' excludes at least 3,100 nationals from countries outlawing same-sex acts.***

By Jamie Grierson

The Guardian (02.09.2019) - <https://bit.ly/2jSZx6I> - The UK Home Office has refused at least 3,100 asylum claims from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) nationals from countries where consensual same-sex acts are criminalised.

At least 1,197 LGBT Pakistanis were refused asylum after making a claim for protection on grounds of sexual orientation between 2016 and 2018, according to an analysis by the Liberal Democrats of figures published by the Home Office. A further 640 LGBT Bangladeshis and 389 Nigerians had their claims on the same grounds refused during the period.

In Pakistan, "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" is punishable with life in prison, while Amnesty reports that "transgender people continued to suffer harassment and violent attacks" there. In Bangladesh, Amnesty reports that "LGBTI activists continued to be routinely harassed and subject to arbitrary detention by state and non-state actors".

In Nigeria, homosexual acts are punishable by up to 14 years in prison and displays of same-sex affection are also outlawed. After Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nigeria produces the largest number of asylum claims based on sexual orientation.

Using data from the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, the Lib Dems separated out countries where same-sex acts were criminalised. Applications for asylum on grounds of sexual orientation were also refused for nationals of Cameroon (136), Ghana (144), Iran (124) and Uganda (145) as well as Iraq, Jamaica and Malaysia.

Christine Jardine, the Lib Dems' spokesperson for home affairs, said: "This Conservative government is letting down every LGBT+ person and every individual in this country who cares about human rights. We should be leading the campaign across the world against homophobia and transphobia. Instead we have a government that is turning its back and looking the other way.

"These figures are a disturbing reminder that this Conservative government is failing to stand up for LGBT+ rights by refusing asylum to more than 1,000 people a year who face prosecution at home simply for who they are. The Liberal Democrats demand better for LGBT+ people wherever they live. We will establish a new, dedicated unit to handle asylum claims, free of political interference and without the Home Office's culture of disbelief."

In 2018, the Home Office refused 970 LGBT claims from nationals of countries where same-sex acts were criminalised, down from 1,096 in 2017 and 1,043 in 2016.

Last year, LGBT asylum was brought into focus by the case of a Nigerian man who fled to Britain to avoid prosecution for being gay.

Adeniyi Raji, who was sacked for his sexuality, received threats on social media in Nigeria, which included comments such as, "I really wish you were killed that very day ...", "You know gay practice is an abomination in our land", and "You better stop your gay practice, if not you could get yourself killed in this country".

The Home Office rejected his claim, which was upheld by the first-tier immigration tribunal. He is appealing against the decision but faces deportation.

The challenges faced by LGBT asylum seekers were further highlighted by a case in which a first-tier immigration tribunal judge rejected the claim of a man because he did not have a gay "demeanour".

The judge said he did not accept the man applying to stay in the UK was gay and contrasted his appearance with that of a witness who "wore lipstick" and had an "effeminate" manner, who the judge accepted was gay.

In July, the high court ordered the Home Office to help a woman return to Britain after she was refused asylum on grounds of sexuality and deported to Uganda. The judge on the case said it was "procedurally unfair".

If the judgment stands, the woman would be the first deportee whose case was processed through fast-track rules operational between 2005 and 2015 to return to the UK and appeal against the decision to deport her.

The ruling could encourage similar appeals from thousands of people whose asylum claims were treated under the same system.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Individuals are only returned to their country of origin when the Home Office and courts deem it is safe to do so.

"Each case is considered on its individual merits against relevant case law and published country information, and all decisions on claims based on sexual orientation are reviewed by an experienced caseworker.

"The UK has a proud record of providing protection to those fleeing persecution. Over 12 months, we gave protection to more than 18,500 people, the highest number since 2003."

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## **UKRAINE: Coalition of religions and believers to ban the Gay Pride in Odessa**

Dumskaya (20.08.2019) - "Undermining the reputation of the city": the Moscow Patriarchate, along with individual Catholics and Protestants, asks Trukhanov to ban the LGBT march in Odessa

A number of religious organizations in Odessa addressed Gennady Trukhanov, the mayor of Odessa, a one-million city on the Black Sea, asking him not to allow the LGBT action "Pride-2019" to be held in our city, announced for the second half of August.

The authors of the document cite the Bible and the 51st article of the Constitution of Ukraine, which states that "marriage is based on the free will of men and women", and "family, childhood, motherhood and fatherhood are protected by law."

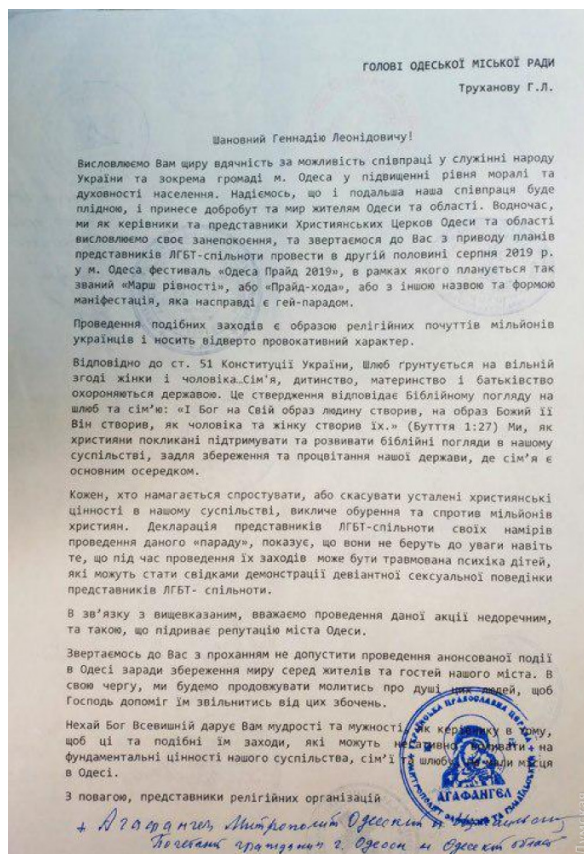


Photo via Dumskaya

Signatories believe that the march of sexual minorities in Odessa is “inappropriate” and “undermines the city’s reputation.” They beg the mayor not to allow the Pride “for the sake of peace among the residents and visitors of the city” and promise to “pray for the souls of these people so that the Lord will help them free themselves from perversions.”

The first signature on the appeal was put by the **Metropolitan of Odessa and Izmail Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) of the Moscow Patriarchate Agafangel**. Also there are autographs of Odessa **representatives of one of the Jewish communities** (not the largest); **Armenian Apostolic Church; Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Churches**; several **Protestant organizations**, including those whose believers were displaced from the occupied territories of Ukraine by Russian-backed fighters in the Donbas. **Muslims** and the **Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU)** ignored this initiative.

In the **Odessa Exarchate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC)**, they told us that the letter was signed by Father Superior Ruslan Ostafy, Rector of the Cathedral of St. Andrew, and this is his personal initiative. Moreover, when the Greek Catholic put his signature and seal, the signatures of Agafangel (Savvin) were not there.

**Roman Catholics** have not yet commented on the situation. The appeal is signed by Bishop Bronislaw Berndsky, but it is well known that he is already at an advanced age, seriously ill and has not managed dioceses for a long time, where he has been appointed bishop-coadjutor (acting) - Stanislav Shirokoradyuk. Only the latter can officially represent the Catholic community of the south of Ukraine in such matters, but Father Stanislav did not sign the paper. According to our sources in the capital, the apostolic nunciature (Vatican Embassy) in Kiev urged the Catholic communities not to actively participate in such initiatives, especially if they come from the Moscow Patriarchate.



