

Action against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation

21.7.2008

1031st meeting of the Committee of Ministers – 2 July 2008

The strong attachment of the Council of Europe to the principle of equal rights and dignity of all human beings, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, was stressed by the Committee of Ministers at the 1031st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on 2 July. The meeting recalled that the Council of Europe's standards on tolerance and non-discrimination applies to all European societies, and that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity is not compatible with these standards.

In this context, several decisions aimed at enhanced Council of Europe action against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation were taken. The Ministers' Deputies gave instructions for the elaboration of a recommendation to member states concerning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. They also initiated work on the topic of various forms of marital and non-marital partnerships and cohabitation with a view to identifying possible measures to avoid discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The decision was also taken to address a message to all committees involved in intergovernmental co-operation at the Council of Europe inviting them to give due attention in their activities to the need for member states to avoid and remedy any discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. These committees were also asked to make proposals for activities to strengthen the equal rights and dignity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and to combat

Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation: Possible action by the Committee of Ministers

a. Draft ad hoc terms of reference for the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH)

b. Draft message from the Committee of Ministers to steering committees and other committees involved in intergovernmental co-operation at the Council of Europe on equal rights and dignity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons

Decisions

The Deputies

1. adopted Decision No. CM/876/02072008 giving ad hoc terms of reference for the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), with a view to preparing a recommendation on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as it appears at Appendix 4 to the present volume of Decisions;

2. adopted the message from the Committee of Ministers to steering committees and other committees involved in intergovernmental co-operation at the Council of Europe on equal rights and dignity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, as it appears at Appendix 5 to the present volume of Decisions.