

**Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
24 September to 5 October 2012
Warsaw**

Working Session 14: Tolerance and non-discrimination II: Review of the implementation of commitments on promotion of mutual respect and understanding, 3. Oct. 2012 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.

**A NEGLECTED MINORITY: MEN AND WOMEN WITH
UNWANTED SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS
- THERE HUMAN DIGNITY AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ARE
THREATENED IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

**STATEMENT OF THE REGISTERED ASSOCIATION „WUESTENSTROM“
to the OSCE/ODIHR and Participating States, Human Dimension Implementation
Meeting, Warsaw 2012**

Mr. Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

my name is Stefan Schmidt, I am the spokesman and a counselor of the counseling organization wuestenstrom in Germany. We focus on the issues of identity and sexuality.

I am here today to kindly ask you to recognize the neglected minority of people with unwanted sexual orientations.

Our association respects any decision an individual makes concerning his or her sexual orientation. So we appreciate the OSCE principles and commitments, for example the implementation of commitments on promotion of mutual respect and understanding.

People who want our help find, that what they feel in their sexuality is closely connected to traumatizing experiences during their childhood. This evening three men will present a side event with me. All of them will tell you, how they see their homosexual desires as a result of humiliation, abuse and rejection during childhood with lots of consequences for their abilities to develop relationships. They decided not to live as homosexuals because for them it has never been true, that they have been born gay - and they do not have the aim to live in a same-sex partnership.

But when they are looking for support in their change efforts, they experience, that their interests, their self-development and their self-determining and also their suffering are ignored. They fear that like in the UK or in California now, it will be legally forbidden to help people when they ask for support in not living out homosexual feelings.

They and the counsellors like us who try to support them, are slandered and defamed and violated in their human dignity and in Fundamental Freedoms like the freedom of thought, conscious and religion (Article 18 Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the freedom of opinion and expression (Art. 19 UDHR) and the freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Art. 20 UDHR).

In The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany we find in Article 1: „The dignity of man is inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all public authority.“ Human dignity always means that a person has the right to realize personal autonomy and self-determination.

The inviolability of human dignity actually means that the human being has the right and the inviolable freedom of how to think about her or his own life or way of living herself or himself and to realize it in compliance with the laws .

However, there are several incidents in the past to the present day, showing that it is getting more and more difficult in Germany and also in other European countries to deal with ones own sexuality individually and in freedom. This right and with that the dignity of man is violated in Germany concerning the field of human sexuality. For example:

- The efforts to modify the German Constitution and to impose the controversial phrase of a „sexual identity“ in Article 3 - what is already happening in various state constitutions in Germany. We state that the term "sexual identity" violates the human dignity, because it follows a certain ideology and philosophy under which the person should be forced. This contradicts the right to find oneself in ones identity in a process of autonomous self-presentation.
- We can see this also in the efforts of the German Lesbian and Gay Association to deny the right to psychotherapy for those who don't want to live out their homosexual feelings or even want to change their sexual orientation. Such targets are currently supported by the political Left in Germany, Bündnis 90/The Green Party and by parts of the SPD (the Social Democrats).
- We can see that also when politicians especially of the Green party alongside with gay activists demand, that the state has to deprive the charitable status of those organizations who are welcoming and helping those people who are looking for change in their sexual orientations.
- **So as a result of that, we have been discriminated again two months ago. Two colleagues and I - all of us studied social workers - registered for an advanced**

training in the area of the protection of minors. That has nothing to do with the question of sexuality or sexual orientation. But all of us have been thrown out of the training because the organizers found out, that one of the things we offer is the support of people with unwanted sexual orientations.

Recommendations to the OSCE/ODIHR, to:

- Be aware and raise awareness of the discriminations and hate or fear-based incidents that Christians who seek help with unwanted same-sex attraction, and those who offer help, are experiencing.
- Have a category in TANDIS that covers these cases specifically

Recommendations to OSCE/ODIHR and Participating States:

- Please do not promote efforts to implement culturally particular ideologies like the idea of an inherent „sexual identity“ in constitutions and laws and with that make it more and more difficult for men and women to find support, when they experience unwanted sexual orientations.

Freedom means to judge by oneself, what is right and what is wrong, and to live ones live according to that own understanding!

Thank you very much for your attention.
Stefan Schmidt
Speaker, wuestenstrom e.V.