ENGLISH only

- TO: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- FROM: Dr Michael Davidson, Director: Core Issues Trust
- TOPIC: Ostracising difference: the new ideology of professional psychotherapeutic bodies that shame, and expel members who support autonomous individuals, seeking help to achieve personal emancipation, by reducing unwanted same-sex attractions aligned with personal values.
- DATE: 8th November 2012, 16:00 18:00 SESSION I: Freedom of Association: obstacles to the full realization of this right and ways to overcome them

Thank you for the work of the OSCE in allowing freedom to express concerns about professional psychotherapeutic bodes in participating states which refuse professional association to individuals supporting the right to freedom of choice in achieving sexual identities consistent with personal values.

I am one of three forced out of membership of professional psychotherapeutic bodies in the UK for maintaining that the right to align the expression of sexual feelings to personal values is a fundamental and inalienable right. In two previously well-publicised cases, two colleagues, like me, were removed from professional membership: the first simply indicated that he might have difficulty offering advice on sexual technique to same-sex partners; the second, offered therapy to a undercover journalist who posed as a client and who later complained that her service was damaging. I was expelled because, on national radio I upheld the view publically, that individuals have a right to decide to move away from homosexuality and to access professional psychotherapeutic help in support of their goals, where these are genuinely held and are reasonable aspirations. My expulsion, ten months on, has been without hearing, and no evidence put before me.

The two largest professional psychotherapeutic bodies in the UK, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) have ruled that it is an 'ethical offence' to assist a client to reduce, or attempt to reduce, homosexual feelings in any circumstance. No exemption is articulated by either body. Thus a married man wishing to remain faithful to his family, who wishes to maximise his heterosexual potential, may not be supported in his personal goal to reduce his homosexual desires. He may however, be assisted to maximise his homosexual feelings and therefore to overcome his reticence to these feelings.

Several years ago, I began this journey because my sense of personal emancipation encouraged me to reduce my homosexual feelings and remain faithful to my wife and children. I received careful support, which both challenged my assumptions but also valued my personal autonomy, which led me to walk away from homosexual practice. Given the recent BACP and UKCP rulings, I would be denied similar help in the UK today.

We request the OSCE to call upon its member states to:

(1) Monitor self-regulating professional, psychotherapeutic or psychological bodies who offer ideological rather than scientific data to claim that reducing homosexual feelings is in all cases, and without exception, harmful; and to

(2) Recognise the potential for abuse to individuals, communities of practice and faith groups, of professional bodies imposing psychosexual values which have no objective, irrefutable scientific basis, but rather reflect the ideological goals of a special interest group;

(3) Require professional psychotherapeutic or psychological bodies to follow appropriate, agreed, externally-moderated, cross-disciplinary protocols when expelling or penalising their members who disagree with unilateral ultimatums to refrain from reducing, or attempting to reduce, unwanted-same-sex attractions in adult clients.