

**Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
23 September to 4 October 2013
Warsaw**

Working Session 2: Tolerance and non-discrimination II: Review of the implementation of commitments on promotion of mutual respect and understanding, 24. Sept. 2013 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.

**A POLITICAL AGENDA SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO
PREVENT GAYS AND LESBIANS WHO DESIRE TO
UNDERTAKE SEXUAL ORIENTATION CHANGE EFFORTS
FROM EXERCISING THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION**

**STATEMENT OF THE REGISTERED ASSOCIATION „WUESTENSTROM“
to the OSCE/ODIHR and Participating States, Human Dimension Implementation
Meeting, Warsaw 2013**

Mr. Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

The statement in the headline was made by the former president of the American Psychological Association Nicholas Cummings in 2013 (http://www.consciencedefense.org/contents/media/Nicholas_Cummings_Declaration.pdf).

Mr. Cummings calls himself a life-long champion of civil rights including gay and lesbian rights. But he complains about the fact, that the role of psychotherapy and counseling in sexual orientation change efforts has become highly politicized. As he underlines, gay and lesbian rights activists appear to be succeeding in their efforts to convince the public, that homosexuality is one identical, unitary, unvarying and inherited characteristic.

But Mr Cummings and many other psychotherapists that we are working with know, that a sexual orientation is nothing you are born with. Persons who identify as homosexuals fall along a very broad spectrum of personalities with a wide range of conflicts with their emotions, relationships, self-perception. And what we all know is, that sexuality and even sexual orientations do change. So the well-known Professor of Psychology in Germany, Inge Seiffge-Krenke, underlines, that many persons, who call themselves homosexuals as minors do no longer call themselves homosexuals when they are grownups.

Let me share just one example:

A teenager, 17 years old now, is visiting me for one year now. He came with the knowledge, that he is gay and was not sure if he should live as a homosexual. Now we found out, that he had suffered from some traumatic experiences during his childhood, that he was still very fearful and that his violent sexual desires were a kind of flight from his self-hatred and his shame. In the meantime we were able to work on his traumatic distress and two months ago he fell in love with a girl in his school.

But now in different countries, e.g. California in the USA, the United Kingdom or now in Germany, politicians alongside with gay and lesbian activists attempt to characterize all sexual reorientation therapy as „unethical“. With that they try to legally prohibit sexual orientation change efforts - starting now with minors.

This year the Green Party in Germany submitted a bill to penalize now the psychotherapeutic help for persons under 18 who do not want to identify themselves as homosexuals but want to find themselves in their identities in a process of autonomous self presentation - as it is guaranteed in our constitution.

In their efforts the Green Party is supported by two ladies of the Research Service of the German Bundestag. They argue that there might be a legal way to restrict fundamental rights as the freedom of profession, the freedom of sexual self-determination and the parents' right of education.

So the Green Party and the German Bundestag know, that they threaten and try to restrict the fundamental rights of psychotherapists and counselors, the fundamental rights of minors and the fundamental rights of their parents. And what is the basis for their argumentation? They repeat the ideology of the gay and lesbian movement, that homosexuality is inherited and unvarying and that sexual orientation change efforts are causing harm. But both is not true - and the activists know that.

And we know, that such a bill is only the first step.

- We can see also the efforts of the German Lesbian and Gay Association to deny the right to psychotherapy for grownups 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).
- Also 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.

But 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. Prohibiting sexual orientation change efforts violates human dignity. With that politicians determine not only therapeutic goals but also how persons should find themselves in their identities.

Recommendations to OSCE/ODIHR and Participating States:

- Please do not allow politicians, parties or governments to fight against fundamental rights like therapeutic choice, freedom of profession, the freedom of sexual self-determination and the parents' right to educate.
- Please do not prevent minors and grownups from any kind of psychotherapy to find themselves in their identities in a process of autonomous self presentation. With that you guarantee the inviolability of human dignity.
- 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.

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