

TO: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
FROM: The Rev. Mario Bergner, Redeemed Lives, Inc.
REGARDING: The Right of Religious People to Choose Their Self Identification
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Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2012
Monday, 1 October 2012
Working Session 10: Fundamental Freedoms
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

Distinguished representatives of the Member States of the OSCE. Thank you for your listening ears, understanding minds and compassionate hearts that qualify you as men and women of justice, concerned with giving to each person what is their due.

Central Recommendation: That participating states of the OSCE region draft legislation to safeguard the rights of all people with unwanted sexual attractions to self-identify according to their religious beliefs and moral conscience and to protect them from being labeled as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender by society or governments.

Hate speech laws, that rightly protect people with LGBTQ self-identifications, are being over broadly applied causing discrimination against all people with unwanted sexual attractions. Not everyone who experiences sexual attractions to members of the same-sex, concurrent attractions to members of both sexes or the various expressions of transgenderism (transvestitism, heterosexual cross dressing and transexuality) want these attractions. Many men and women purposely live with conflicting sexual desires for various personal reasons, *which is not the business of society or governments.*

Overbroad application of hate speech laws have an anthropologic *a priori* essentialist assumption that people *are ontologically* lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The result is that men and women who experience similar sexual affections and attractions as unwanted are told this is who you are. Not only are they labeled as LGBT but moreover, they are publically accused of living a lie. This is the type of discrimination that boxes a human being into a category against the convictions of his or her conscience. This is exemplified by the title (and content) of an article published in the New York Times Magazine, June 16, 2011, *Living the Good Lie: Should therapists help God-fearing people stay in the closet?* At no time does the journalist imply that a person with unwanted same-sex attractions might prefer struggling against such attractions because of love for his or her spouse, love for the children of that marriage or the family life they cherish.

Many people, like myself, who once self-identified as gay, chose to exchange that self-identification and for a self-definition as first and foremost a human being, a person made according the Image of God as Genesis 1:26 declares. Such a self-definition is congruent with three of the world's largest religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Please, join me this evening at 18:00 to continue this topic as I address Understanding Diversity of Gender Self-Identification for the Public Debate in Meeting Room 1.

Again, I appeal to participating states of the OSCE region to draft legislation to safeguard the rights of all people with unwanted sexual attractions to self-identify according to their religious beliefs and moral conscience and to protect them from being labeled as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender by society or governments. Thank You.