

Members of the European Parliament

To: Irena Degutienė
Speaker of the Seimas

Petras Gražulis
Member of the Seimas

Concerns: Parliamentary petition to ban Baltic Pride in Vilnius
Reference: 20100317/BS

Brussels, 17th March 2010

Mrs Speaker, Hon. Mr Gražulis,

We write to you not in defiance or anger, but in sadness following the decision by Mr Gražulis to attempt to cancel the planned Baltic Pride event, due to take place in Vilnius on the 8th May 2010.

We are aware that, during the debates surrounding the drafting of a new Law on the Protection of Minors from the Detrimental Effects of Information, several Members of the Seimas expressed their opposition to the idea that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Lithuanian citizens may parade on the streets in what is now across the world a 40-year old tradition of pride marches (the first of which took place in 1969).

Pride marches symbolise a day of peaceful celebration and engagement with other citizens – not separately from society, but as a full and equal part of it.

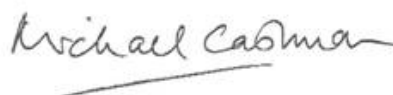
However, it has been asserted by some that the event may “insult people of the Catholic faith”. This statement fails to take into account the many Catholic believers who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Indeed, we fear that this debate is overlooking a key factor: Lithuanians have always included, include, and will always include people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, who deserve equal rights.

Finally, we would like to kindly remind you that a pride march is not an attack on the State, nor on traditional values. Pride marches are a joyful and peaceful celebration of diversity. It is a strong statement by an entire community that wants to live without fear, openly, together, and as equal citizens.

On behalf of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights,

Yours sincerely,

Ulrike Lunacek MEP
Co-president



Michael Cashman MEP
Co-president

Carbon copy: Dalia Grybauskaitė
President of the Republic of Lithuania

Živilė Pavilonytė
Permanent Representative of the Seimas to the European Union