PROPOSAL FROM UNISON TO 2013 ILGA-EUROPE CONFERENCE

EU GUIDELINES ON LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS

Conference welcomes the adoption in June by the European Union of the Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. This legally binding document provides instructions to EU institutions and Member States on how to progress the human rights of LGBTI people in dealing with third countries and at international fora. It is the first ever EU policy document explicitly referring to intersex people, and the first EU document adopted by all member states that provides a definition of transgender and gender identity.

Conference also welcomes the statement in the guidelines that the EU will seek to actively promote and protect the enjoyment of LGBTI rights ‘through the different tools available within its external action, including financial instruments available from both EU institutions and Member States’.

Conference recognises, however, that in order for these tools to be used to advance LGBTI human rights and equality, it is essential for there to be genuine dialogue with those on the front line in the countries concerned regarding the types of action that are taken, not decide what should be done for them.

It further recognises that statements made by political leaders without any reference to local struggles for LGBTI rights can create a real risk of a serious backlash against LGBTI communities and organisations, and against human rights defenders. It believes that statements such as the recent remarks of UK Prime Minister David Cameron on his wish to ‘export gay marriage around the world’ are at best unhelpful and, at worst, actively damaging. Cameron’s statement is of particular concern given that there is already significant evidence of his 2011 announcement that overseas aid should be cut to countries which criminalise homosexuality being used by some governments and political leaders to scapegoat LGBTI people and organisations and exacerbate an environment of intolerance and hatred.

Conference recognises that the laws criminalising homosexuality and gender expression in many countries are a legacy of colonialism, and that ‘threats’ to try to force changes in laws smack of neo-colonialism.

It also recognises that singling out LGBTI rights in the context of wider human rights violations in some countries, reinforces the notion that LGBTI rights are ‘special rights’ and considered to be ‘more important’ than other human rights.

Conference therefore calls:

1) On the Board and member organisations as and where appropriate to raise these issues with governments;

2) For funding to be used actively and creatively to support engagement with LGBTI communities and the development of local LGBTI organisations;
Finally, Conference reiterates the call by ILGA-Europe, the European Parliament and almost half of EU member States for a comprehensive EU LGBTI Roadmap, formalising internal policy into a clear, efficient and meaningful strategy on LGBTI human rights within the EU.

**Background**

This proposal is self explanatory. It reflects recent developments and reaffirms the call for a comprehensive LGBTI roadmap for the EU.


Press report of David Cameron’s recent remarks are here: [http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/david-cameron-%E2%80%98i-want-export-gay-marriage-around-world%E2%80%99250713](http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/david-cameron-%E2%80%98i-want-export-gay-marriage-around-world%E2%80%99250713) (UNISON was not invited to the party!)

One of many comments on neo-colonialism and LGBT human rights, including reference to David Cameron’s previous remarks, is here: [http://www.commonwealthadvisorybureau.org/fileadmin/CPSU/documents/Publications/April_Opinion.pdf](http://www.commonwealthadvisorybureau.org/fileadmin/CPSU/documents/Publications/April_Opinion.pdf)