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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Patriarch Alexi II's opposition to freedom of assembly for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

Written declaration[1] No. 401

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

In April, in a pre-Easter address to the media, Patriarch Alexy II announced his invitation to address the Parliamentary Assembly. Emphasising his opposition to gay pride parades, he said he would speak "about Christian values … and the promulgation of sin … there are other abnormalities, including kleptomania, but no one is promoting them. Why is this abnormality advertised so broadly?"

He had previously supported the banning of the 2006 parade, saying that the church "does not accept any propaganda for immorality …. Russia is living through a demographic crisis … a (gay) parade … will not help strengthen the family as the foundation of a strong state".

Both 2006 and 2007 gay pride events were met with violent opposition by Orthodox and nationalist extremists and broken up by the police.

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at the Council of Europe must be based on the principle of the universality and indivisibility of human rights and on mutual respect and tolerance.

We urge Patriarch Alexy to avoid the use of language inciting intolerance and to respect, rather than seek to deny, the fundamental rights of sexual minorities.

Signed (see overleaf)

1. 2nd edition, first tabled on 2 October 2007.

Signed[2]*:*

SILVESTRI Gianpaolo, Italy
AUSTIN John, United Kingdom
BARTUMEU CASSANY Jaume, Andorra
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
DEES Dirk, Netherlands
DREYFUS-SCHMIDT Michel, France
ERR Lydie, Luxembourg, SOC
ETHERINGTON Bill, United Kingdom
FLYNN Paul, United Kingdom, SOC
FOSS Per-Kristian, Norway
GERVEN Henk, van, Netherlands
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland
HÄGG Carina, Sweden
HENDERSON Doug, United Kingdom
HUSS Jean, Luxembourg, SOC
JONKER Corien W.A., Netherlands, EPP/CD
JURGENS Erik, Netherlands
KATSELI Eleonora, Greece
KOX Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
LAAKSO Jaakko, Finland, UEL
LAXTON Bob, United Kingdom
LINDBLAD Göran, Sweden, EPP/CD
MACHADO Jorge, Portugal
MANZELLA Andrea, Italy
MARTINS Maximiano, Portugal
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
MEULENBELT Anja, Netherlands
MILO Paskal, Albania
NESSA Pasquale, Italy, EPP/CD
O'HARA Edward, United Kingdom
OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC
PAPADIMITRIOU Elsa, Greece
PLATVOET Leo, Netherlands, UEL
PRESCOTT John, United Kingdom, SOC
ROSEIRA Maria de Belém, Portugal, SOC
SINISCALCHI Sabina, Italy
SYDOW Björn, von, Sweden, SOC
VERMOT-MANGOLD Ruth-Gaby, Switzerland
WODARG Wolfgang, Germany
YAZDANFAR Maryam, Sweden

Total = 40

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2. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left