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Equal rights for homosexual partnerships

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The principles of the equal value of all human beings is fundamental to liberals, and to the Council of Europe. Though progress has been made in many countries in many aspects of the question of human rights, there is still a lot to be done before we can guarantee each and everybody the same rights and possibilities to live free lives in Europe.

Among our member states, positions on the question of sexual orientation vary. In many aspects homosexuality is still considered by many as a “strange and unwanted phenomenon” rather than a part of a person’s nature – and correspondingly our different legal frameworks discriminate against anything different from the heterosexual norm. One example of this is the fact that homosexual families in many countries are treated differently from heterosexual families in e.g. migration and asylum questions. The UNHCR consistently refers to “the family” as the natural and fundamental group unit in society and that state parties should take measures to facilitate its reunification – however this does not apply to homosexual families in an exceedingly larger number of our member countries, with the effect that families are being torn apart with no legal means of reunification.

The European Court of Human Rights has played an important role in the decriminalisation of homosexual conduct, and article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights together with Protocol 12 form a solid basis for protecting the access of all persons to fundamental rights, without discrimination. In 2000 the Parliamentary Assembly adopted [Recommendation 1474 \(2000\)](#) on the Situation of lesbians and gays in the Council of Europe member states.

The Council of Europe should also provide expertise and advice for reform, support for civil society, as well as serving as a forum for reflection and debate. If we accept the fact that our member states are not recognising and allowing the same rights to homosexual partnerships – the result is discrimination.

What plans does the Committee of Ministers have to take concrete steps with the aim to guaranteeing equal rights for homosexual partnerships in the Council of Europe member states?

Signed:

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