

BELGRADE GAY PRIDE 2011...

...The parade that never happened

On Sunday 20th September 2011, a Pride Parade was going to be held in Belgrade, Serbia. The authorities called off its conduct by saying that it couldn't happen for security reasons.

Last year, 2010, when the Pride Parade took place in Belgrade, a number of the population, from moderate conservative levels to right-wingers, attacked the demonstrators and as a result cars and stores were damaged, injuries followed and also arrests and abductions occurred.

This year, the municipality of Belgrade refused to support the Pride Parade claiming that the event is a jeopardy for "the ownership, the members of the gay population, the police and the citizens of Belgrade".

This prohibition was supported by the government and the police. By displaying such an attitude, the authorities proved that they don't have the will or the potential to protect the right to free expression and assembly. Since 1999, when attempts for the organization of the event began, "Pride" has already been cancelled 4 times altogether. The excuse is always that the conditions are not mature enough for such an event because "society is not ready yet".

As long as the authorities display such diffidence, the conditions will never be "right". And how can they be since all of these years you hear the following: "homosexuals are sick people" (Serbia's Patriarch), the parade is a procession of "infidels and satanists" (Nationalistic "Serbian Popular Movement 1389").

In addition, it is not only the right-wingers and the nationalists who embrace such fascistic ideas, but also the average Serbian family, a group of the population that was described in the past by the aphorism of Archbishop Christodoulos, in equivalence for the greek data: "we are manlike greeks, we are orthodox".

Such views are encountered not only in Serbia and Greece, but in Russia as well, which has never managed to conduct a Pride Parade in Moscow, under the same pretense about security. Coherent element of the established culture in all these countries, seems to be an extreme homophobic rhetoric that identifies with the church and its institutions. According to this rhetoric, homosexuals are considered to be "contaminated", "pests", "incapable of reproducing themselves" etc. The

public areas are considered to be “de facto straight” areas. Homosexuality has been jettisoned strictly to the private area.

When it becomes visible and public, then it is perceived by the conservative levels as audacity, contamination, desegregation of the public areas. Moral panic and cultural concern are caused for the integrity and the purity of the nation and there is an increase of violence to punish and remind where each one belongs.

“We’ve all got gay friends. Alas, we don’t exclude anyone. It’s a social phenomenon, but I draw the line to it since I’m faithful to the traditions, the principles and orthodoxy. If I were a mayor, I wouldn’t marry gay couples, as I am also against the gay pride parades...we’ve got no lack of beautiful women to parade as cheerleaders” (P. Psomiadis)

All these attitudes suppress and limit us, in a sense that they condemn us in identities which could be characterized only as hollow stereotypes and they violate our right to be free and live freely, equally and egalitarianly in society.

WE ASK FOR INSTITUTIONAL EQUALITY AND EGALITARIANISM. WE STAND TO THE LGBT COMMUNITY OF BELGRADE

HOMOPHONIA: Collectivity for Thessaloniki Pride

LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Community