

# HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



## BIMONTHLY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2013

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# PUBLIC EVENTS AND VIOLATIONS TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

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## VIOLATION TO THE RIGHT TO PUBLIC ASSEMBLY AND PROTEST

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The Helsinki Committee, at the request of a group of citizens with impaired hearing monitored the protest in front of the plateau of the House of the Macedonian Army scheduled on 21.11.2013 in order to express disappointment with the work of the president of the National Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons of the Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter: The association). According to the citizens present who were members of the Association, the protest in front of the House of the Macedonian Army was scheduled during the celebration of 65 years of existence of the Association and they were not pleased with the work of the President in the advancement of the status and access to justice and rights of the persons with impaired hearing. This protest is third in a row; however unlike the previous two protests, in this one restrictions of the right to protest were established.

The observer from the Helsinki Committee who was present found the citizens attempting to gain access to the plateau in front of the House of the Macedonian Army. They were told that they cannot protest on this location. After a short conversation with the police officers and the citizens present it was established that a certain private security agency hired to secure the event at the House of the Macedonian Army does not allow the protest to take place in front of the plateau. The representative of the Committee demanded an explanation from the representative of the private agency who said that he received orders from his employer at the request of the president of the Association to prevent the persons present from protesting in front of the plateau at the House of the Macedonian Army. Furthermore, the observer established that this agency was not informed that the protest was properly scheduled in the police station Centar. The observer informed the people present that they have no jurisdiction to restrict or obstruct a peaceful protest or a public gathering and that with this act the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and the Law on Public Gatherings have been violated, for which they could be charged. After a talk with the citizens, they were enabled to express their opinion and dissatisfaction through peaceful protest.

The Committee would like to express its regrets regarding that the police officers present did not intervene in order to allow the citizens to exercise their right, although they were duly informed about the time and location where the protest would take place. At the same time, they allowed a private security agency to violate the rights of citizens in their presence.

The Helsinki Committee this past year on several occasion pointed out to the fact that the right to a public assembly and the freedom of movement of citizens are fundamental values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia and that every attempt to prevent or obstruct should be properly punished by the competent institutions.

## CLOSED INSTITUTIONS

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### UNTIMELY REACTION OF THE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS

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During the last month, the media published an article about a 69-year-old man from the village Rusinovo- Berovo who was mentally ill and was left to live alone in a crumbling old house, with no food supplies and therefore due to his inability to move, he spent the last 4 months in his bed. In the information from the media it was stated that the Center for Social Affairs in Berovo took measures to place him in PHI “Psychiatric hospital – Negorci” but they refused to accept him and so he was once again sent back.

Taking into consideration the bad state of the health of the person and the risk to his life, the Helsinki Committee turned to the Center for Social Affairs in Berovo in order to get information regarding the case. We received written information that the center took all the activities so that the patient is received in the healthcare institution in Negorci. In that direction, after a referral by the Center for Social Affairs in Berovo, his primary care physician established that the person’s health had deteriorated and that beside the poor physical health there are also reoccurring signs of a mental disorder. After this, a hospital referral had been prepared, but the person was denied admission in the healthcare institution in Negorci.

In collaboration between the Helsinki Committee and the Center for Social Affairs in Berovo, and as a result of the remarks about the legal liability for protection of the health of all citizens and persons, addressed to the PHI “Psychiatric hospital- Negorci”, in relation to this case, communication was established with this institution, after which it was arranged that the person is accepted and accommodated in the health institution whereby he will be provided with suitable medical assistance.

Therefore, the Helsinki Committee would like to indicate to all institutions competent for the protection and advancement of the health of all citizens and persons, to take measures on time, in order to protect their health more effectively, taking into consideration the principles of humanity and availability, as well as the obligations that stem from the legislation.

## DISCRIMINATION

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### THE BANKS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST BLIND PEOPLE

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An application for free legal assistance was submitted to the Helsinki Committee of the Republic of Macedonia by Mr. Marjan Janev, user of bank services in Komercijalna Banka JSC Skopje and NLB Tutunska Banka Skopje and a person with 100% damaged sight. In his application Mr. Janev states that he is facing problems related to the manner of conduct of these banks which places blind persons in an unequal position as opposed to the rest of the clients. Namely, the unequal treatment refers to the use of bank services and products for

which a signature by the user is necessary, whereby the banks do not recognize the signature of the blind persons, they do not allow use of a facsimile and they force them to authorize a third party to sign on their behalf and on their account. The blind persons face problems in the use of online banking due to the internal regulations of the banks (use of tokens, codes and similar safety tools which the blind persons are not able to use). Additionally, the banks provide the use of assistive technology such as for example the talking ATM, the braille printer, software solutions for access to electronic services, etc.

These findings represent an indication for direct discrimination done by the banks based on physical disabilities. Taking into consideration that this manner of conduct represents unequal treatment towards blind persons, it reoccurs and lasts for a longer period in practice, it contains the criteria for more severe forms of discrimination. The Helsinki Committee considers that the allegations of Mr. Janev are well-founded. We founded our opinion by studying the domestic legislation, the international instruments in this area<sup>1</sup> and by verifying the fact that some domestic banks have an unequal attitude towards blind persons as opposed to the rest of the persons.

The Helsinki Committee sent letters to Komercijalna Banka JSC Skopje, NLB Tutnska Banka Skopje and to the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia (NBRM). Unsatisfied from the reply by the banks and after the received correspondence by NBRM through which it was established that all banks from the group of large and medium-sized banks act in the same manner, the Helsinki Committee submitted a complaint to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and demanded that it acts in terms of application of the domestic legislation in this area.

After submitting the complaint, a representative of Komercijalna Banka JSC Skopje contacted the Helsinki Committee and notified us about the activities taken to overcome the problems with which the blind persons and the persons with damaged sight face. With a written correspondence we were notified that the blind persons no longer need a proxy, the bank accepts their signature, facsimile and signature stamp, access to online banking has been provided and a tender was opened to provide assistive technology to the blind persons (Braille printer).

During November, representatives of the Bank, the Committee and the National Association of Blind Persons had a joint meeting during which the positive step of the Bank was supported and it was agreed that a Memorandum for Collaboration should be signed which would lead to withdrawal of the complaint. Taking into consideration that Komercijalna Banka JSC Skopje is taking essential and specific measures to overcome the unequal treatment, it signed the Memorandum for Collaboration and expressed readiness for future collaboration, and therefore the petitioners decided to withdraw the segment in the complaint that refers to this bank. The complaint against the rest of the banks still stands.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 9 and 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Article 2 and 4 of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 17 of the Criminal Code and Article 3-6,8, 11-12 of the Law on Protection against Discrimination.

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## **INEFFECTIVE PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BY THE COMPETENT INSTITUTIONS**

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The Helsinki Committee, acting upon the request for protection against discrimination based on ethnicity and religious affiliation, i.e. the client's background, as well as sexual harassment, submitted a complaint to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, and in accordance with the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. At the same time, the client pressed criminal charges to the Public Prosecution Skopje, in accordance with the articles from the Criminal Code with which hate speech and discrimination are considered as criminal acts, i.e. Inciting national, racial and religious hatred, discord and animosity, Disseminating racial and xenophobic material by means of a computer system, Racial and other kinds of discrimination, as well as Endangering the Safety.

On 13.11.2013, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination adopted the opinion not to initiate proceedings regarding the submitted complaint, because for the same legal affair a procedure has been initiated in front of the Public Prosecution Skopje, and in accordance with Article 2 Paragraph 1 of the Law for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. In this article it is stated that the Commission shall act upon the complaint if the procedure in front of the court for the same matter is not already initiated and there is a final verdict.

The Helsinki Committee would like to indicate that pressing criminal charges in accordance with the old Law on Criminal Procedure does not mean that legal proceedings have been initiated, but that it represents a previous procedure within the criminal procedure, i.e. pre-trial proceedings, and thereby we consider that the Commission has unfoundedly decided not to initiate proceedings regarding the submitted complaint. This is especially due to the fact that the complaint in question was submitted also on charges of sexual harassment, and in accordance with Article 7 Paragraph 2 of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, which was not stated in the criminal charges.

Taking into consideration that 6 months have passed since the criminal charges were pressed and there is no reply from the Public Prosecution, and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination did not initiate a procedure regarding the submitted complaint, the Helsinki Committee once again in this reporting period, established ineffective protection against discrimination of the citizens by the competent institutions.

## **SOCIAL RIGHTS**

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### **RESTRICTIVE POLICY WHEN EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO DISABILITY PENSION**

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A significant part of the focus of the work of the Helsinki Committee in the last two months was on the area of free legal assistance for persons whose rights have been violated in the area of social welfare, as well as violation of the rights in the procedure for realization of the right to disability pension.

Acting upon the requests of citizens, the competent bodies mostly adopt decisions with which they unfoundedly reject their requests. From the inspection of several decisions which were available to us, it is evident that incomplete and lump explanations are given with which the requests are rejected, and also the same formulations are repeated without taking into consideration the specific factual situation that is decided upon.

In one of the cases involving a user of a disability pension approved with a temporary decision, whose health is exceptionally critical, during the mandatory checkup in front of the Commission for Mandatory Checkup, without any explanation it was established that there is neither general nor professional incapacity for work in order to exercise the right to a disability pension, i.e. the client is capable for work. Based on this factual situation, the Pension and Disability Fund of Macedonia – Professional service- Branch – Strumica adopted a decision with which it established that the conditions for extension of the right to a disability pension are not fulfilled. Furthermore, the findings, the assessment and the opinion do not correspond with the factual situation, i.e. the health of the person in question. It has not been altered not only since the first checkup when the person with a temporary decision was granted the right to a disability pension, but also in the meantime his health has deteriorated, for which the person has complete medical documentation, which he submitted as evidence.

An additional problem is that the client is 59-years-old, with credited 33 years of service, and he is unable to get reemployed. The Helsinki Committee provided free legal assistance by preparing the lawsuit to the state commission for deciding in an administrative procedure and a procedure for employment in the second degree, whereby a decision by the Second Instance Commission is anticipated.

It is worrying that this is not an isolated case and it has become regular practice of conduct by the competent institutions that decide about the realization of the rights from the area of social welfare. The requests by citizens are rejected without any supported argumentation, with confusing and often similar explanations, although the cases are different.

The restrictiveness and rigidity of this social policy is felt mostly by the socially vulnerable categories of citizens, which have been sucked into the administrative labyrinth without any support and protection by the competent institutions.

## COURT CASES

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### JUDICIAL PROCEDURE FOR PROTECTION AGAINST POLITICAL DISCRIMINATION

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The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights is part of an informal network for protection against discrimination consisted of 8 NGOs that beside the rest of the activities that they

implement, they also operate in the area of protection against discrimination<sup>2</sup>. The Network for Protection against Discrimination aims to develop strategic representation in cases of discrimination and in front of domestic and international courts, as well as through providing free legal assistance in strategic cases of discrimination.

In response to the submitted application for free legal assistance by a group of citizens that sought protection against political discrimination in employment, who were fired from the workplace with the change of the local government, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights as part of the Network for Protection against Discrimination, acted upon this request and provided free legal assistance and in coordination with the lawyer of the plaintiffs we prepared a lawsuit for establishing the alleged discrimination in the case in question, which was submitted to the competent court. Also, in accordance with the Law on Litigation and in collaboration with the rest of the organizations that are members of the network, the Committee adopted a decision to submit a proposal to the court regarding interference of the plaintiffs in the procedure. The interference in court procedures of civil associations that fight against all forms of discrimination and on all grounds and that have long-term working experience in this area, is in the spirit of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, whose main purpose is to protect the right to equal treatment of all citizens. Until this report was finished, the court still had not adopted a decision with which it would allow interference in the procedure or would reject the proposal.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that although there is a large number of reports for discrimination based on political affiliation and beliefs, which is forbidden with the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, so far only a few court procedures have been initiated to ascertain whether there was discrimination on these grounds, because of which case law has not been created in this area. Taking into consideration that this is a strategic case, we consider that this case may contribute to creating case law for ascertaining and protection against political discrimination, and along with that raising awareness of citizens about the opportunity for judicial protection against discrimination on all bases covered by the Law.

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#### **IRREGULARITIES ESTABLISHED IN CONDUCTING COURT CASES**

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In the last period, the Helsinki Committee observed a significant increase of the number of complaints by concerned citizens that reacted to the manner in which the procedures in front of the competent courts were conducted. When considering these complaints, as well

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<sup>2</sup> The Network for Protection against Discrimination aims to develop strategic advocacy in cases of discrimination and in front of domestic and international courts. The development of domestic practice is triggered by providing free legal assistance in strategic cases of discrimination. The network was established in December 2010 by the following organization: Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, Association for Health Education and Research (HERA); HOPS- Healthy Options; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia and Association for Emancipation, solidarity and equality of women in the Republic of Macedonia (ESE); ROMA S.O.S. Prilep; Coalition “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities” and the National Center for Support of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities –PORAKA.

as the submitted documentation, the Committee in several cases established violations of the stipulated legislation.

In one of the cases the Primary Court Skopje 1 Skopje, adopted a decision with which it granted ownership of a real estate to a creditor, as a sole and best bidder. The decision took effect on **26.09.2001**. In the meantime a timely appeal procedure was initiated in front of the Appeal Court in Skopje. Nine months later, the Primary Court adopted a decision to suspend the enforcement proceedings, so that it would continue against the same debtor but with a different creditor. In the explanation of the second decision it is stated that the court established that the first adopted decision became final on **27.02.2002**. The two different effective dates of the same decision represent a serious violation of the law and a severe violation of the legal norms, which especially influences the factual situation and the legal operation in the case. Namely, the request for compulsory payment in respect of overdue wages from 14.12.2001 by one of the redundant workers from the debtor firm in the subsequent proceedings is disputed for reasons that the competent court cites the first date of validity of the decision, and therefore the two redundant workers are not able to pay their debt, i.e. the overdue wages. In this case a procedure for revision has been initiated in front of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Macedonia.

In the latter case, deciding upon the claim for payment of debt from the Public Company for Water Management Berovo- Berovo, the Primary court in Berovo adopted a verdict in which in the explanation the court calls upon the Law on Financial Operations (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” No. 42/93 and 32/97), which ceases to be valid on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2012. In the verdict by the appeal court in Stip which decided on a lawsuit, the appeal allegations regarding the conduct of the First Instance Court in accordance with the law, which is invalid and irrelevant for deciding in this specific legal matter. The client was advised to turn to the Judicial Council of the Republic of Macedonia, with an explanation regarding this case.

Irregularities in the conduct of the litigation procedure in front of the Primary Court Skopje 2 were reported by citizens, who were prevented from obtaining the minutes from the court hearing, in which they are the sued party, with which a direct violation to Article 119 Paragraph 3 of the Law on Civil Procedure has been made, and so the court is obligated to issue a sample of the minutes to the parties. The Helsinki Committee reacted with a complaint to the President of the Primary Court Skopje 2 Skopje, after which the parties were given the sample of the minutes requested. .

From the great number of reactions of citizens and the lack of trust that they express regarding the work of the courts, there is an impression that the aim for effectiveness, objectivity and lawfulness in the work of the courts in the Republic of Macedonia has not been achieved.



# RIGHTS OF THE LGBTI COMMUNITY

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## INTRODUCTION

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The end of the year was marked by several positive events, which unfortunately received a black mark, made by the very institutions that should work for equality and freedom of expression. The campaign “Macedonia has love for all” had a record number of visits on its website and the profiles of Front Line Defenders, as well as a very positive influence of the radio broadcasts throughout society. Creating this positive atmosphere and sharing positive messages contributed to a peaceful and incident-free March of Tolerance, which was the ultimate goal of the campaign. Unfortunately, several radio stations, whose names can be found below, refused to broadcast the audio jingles due to their content (calls for non-violence and equality for LGBTI people). Instead of defending his viewpoint, the President of the Broadcasting Council equalized the human rights movement with beekeeping, a nebulosis which disclosed his utter lack of knowledge and appropriateness for the position he is appointed to. This only shows that our society has a long way to go, primarily toward recognition, and then toward protection of all people, in order for them to enjoy universal human rights.

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## LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

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### **Press-conference: Promotion of the campaign “Macedonia has love for all”**

The Helsinki Committee for human rights of the Republic of Macedonia and the LGBTI Support Centre held a press-conference for promotion of the second part of the campaign “Macedonia has love for all” on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November at 12:00 in the EU Info Centre in Skopje.

Due to the increased need for condemnation of violence, awareness-raising and promotion of tolerance, the LGBTI Support Centre and the Helsinki Committee, supported by Front Line Defenders (FLD) created the radio and internet campaign “Macedonia has love for all”. This campaign was primarily focused on condemning violence and supporting LGBTI people.

The campaign consisted of two parts. The first part contained personal experiences of LGBTI people, victims of violence or persons whose close ones are LGBTI victims of violence, while the second part of the campaign was focused on celebrities, expressing support for LGBTI people and also condemning violence and calling for tolerance toward the LGBTI community in the Republic of Macedonia.

Considering the fact that radio is a medium that can reach a larger audience, the goal of this campaign was to help change the public discourse, calling for non-discrimination of people on various grounds, including sexual orientation, as well as pressure on the Government, to prevent violence and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The campaign had media space on several radio stations in Macedonia, as well as internet portals and its own [web page](#), also containing a petition to the Prime Minister and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in order for them to do everything in their power to fight against violence toward LGBTI people. The petition is available in three languages and may be signed by anyone who supports a life free from violence; so far it has received more than 500 signatures.

The campaign was also an announcement for the upcoming March of Tolerance, held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2013, under the slogan “Macedonia has love for all – Violence didn’t start and won’t end with me!”.

Unfortunately, even though the campaign (ended on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November, before the March of Tolerance) was popular and successful in public space, some radio stations did not wish to broadcast this campaign in their program. The following stations and portals were among those that refused to broadcast: radio Fortuna, radio Vati and the web portal Almakos, and some of them, such as: radio Antenna 5, radio Buba Mara and Macedonian Radio did not even respond to our request.

The organizers expressed regret due to such reactions by Macedonian radio stations, while simultaneously sending a request to the Broadcasting council for free broadcast of this campaign as a campaign of public interest in line with the Law on broadcasting (more in the Institutions section of this Report).

### **Holding the fifth March of Tolerance**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2013, the Helsinki Committee and the LGBTI Support Centre, in cooperation with 14 other NGOs organized the March of Tolerance for the fifth time, decisively saying NO to violence, which is becoming an everyday occurrence in our society.

Unfortunately, in our society, violence is slowly but surely becoming an everyday feature and a habit in these current conditions. The frontline is always consisted of vulnerable and marginalized groups who directly feel the pressure of structural dysfunctionality which produces even more anger toward differences. The institutions become even more passive in regard to finding the perpetrators, providing access to justice and executing concrete procedures equally for all citizens in Macedonia. This year, unfortunately, violence culminated in all segments of our society.

The March, held under the slogan “Macedonia has love for all – Violence didn’t start and won’t end with me!” and whose goal was marking the international Day of tolerance, was dedicated to the right to life free from violence. Symbolically, in 5 minutes before 12 o’clock, in front of the Government, this year’s March started with short statements by representatives of all organizations participating in the event, where they spoke of the challenges of violent behavior they face every day in their domain of operation. Even though the speeches were different, the message was the same – NO for violence, NO for the silence of the institutions, NO for impunity of perpetrators.

From there, the group headed toward the centre of the city, crossed the Stone Bridge, and arrived at the Plateau in front of the department store Most, where the first part of the event ended with a cultural and artistic program, poetry and music. The marking of the international Day of tolerance ended with a projection of short films and a debate, followed by a cocktail and a party.

Apart from the organizers – the Helsinki Committee for human rights and the LGBTI Support Centre, the following organizers also participated in this year’s March: HERA – Health education and research association, Coalition “Sexual and health rights of the marginalized communities”, Tiiit! Inc. – women’s movement, Subversive Front – Association for critical approach toward gender and sexuality, STAR-STAR – Civil initiative for promotion of the rights of sex workers, Terra Floria – Association for environmental protection, Parkobrani, National network against violence toward women and domestic violence, HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje, Anima Mundi – association for protection of animals, NRC – National Roma Centre, Civil – Centre for freedom, Plostad Sloboda and MOF – Youth Educational Forum. They sent their representatives to stand side by side with the organizers, demanding condemnation for violence in any form and greater involvement by the authorities in finding and punishing the perpetrators.

### **Panel discussion on the topic of “Strategic litigation of cases of discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation”**

There was a panel discussion for presentation of the publication “Strategic litigation of cases of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation”<sup>3</sup>, written by Dr. Ljubomir Frchkoski, PhD.

The following people participated on the discussion: Dr. Ljubomir Frchkoski, author of the document and university professor, Dushko Minovski, President of the Commission for protection against discrimination, Natasha Boshkova, attorney at law and associate of the Coalition “Sexual and health rights of the marginalized communities” and Snezana Lupevska, author and journalist. The topics covered were directions and measures for improvement of the approach of relevant and concerned stakeholders in the litigation of cases concerning members of the LGBTI community.

The discussion was very dynamic, the audience participated in the debate, while the panelists shared their views.

Dr. Frchkovski presented the document and stated the main conclusions on strategic litigation, as well as his viewpoint on how NGOs can use this tool for improving and amending flaws in Macedonian legislation and practice, in regard to protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Namely, he emphasized the main points on selection criteria for cases whose litigation might contribute to broader effects of changing practice and improving legislation, i.e. criteria related to the legal system, the social context and client selection, i.e. case selection.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mhc.org.mk/system/uploads/redactor\\_assets/documents/528/Stratesko\\_zastapuvanje\\_MK\\_19-12.pdf](http://www.mhc.org.mk/system/uploads/redactor_assets/documents/528/Stratesko_zastapuvanje_MK_19-12.pdf)

After Dr. Frchkovski, the President of the Commission for protection against discrimination, Dushko Minovski, stated that even despite the limited resources and operation of the Commission due to various factors, it is more than clear that it is important to set a positive example in the field of protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The positive practice of the Commission, as well as other relevant institutions, would open the path toward simplification of further procedures. In this context, he mentioned the example of the textbook with homophobic content, in which case the Commission found discrimination, and recommended to the Ministry of education to amend certain parts in the content of the textbook. He also concluded that there is a need for greater activity by the victims of discrimination within the LGBTI community and the civil sector regarding submission of complaints, adding however, that many of the complaints receive no response within the legally determined timeframe due to the limited resources and competences of the Commission.

After the discussion developed with the panel participants regarding the work of the Commission and its importance in the field of promoting protection against discrimination, the floor was given to Natasha Boshkova, attorney at law, who presented the positive practices of strategic litigation of cases of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. She presented two detailed cases in which strategic litigation tools were used. You can read more details in the Annex of the Strategic litigation document<sup>4</sup>, available for download on the websites of the Helsinki Committee and LGBTI Support Centre.

In the end, the representative of the media, Snezana Lupevska spoke, and emphasized that the current situation of the media in the country is worrying, however described the positive line of creating documentary shows, whose core topic are the challenges of the LGBTI community in Macedonia. She also presented the challenges during the creation of these shows, stating that there is a lack of people prepared to talk about their lives and the problems they are facing.

After an active debate, it was concluded that there is a need for approach from all aspects of a case, if there is willingness for positive effects of its strategic litigation. Starting from the sturdiness of character and readiness of the victim, to the engagement and dedication of NGOs supporting the case, to the expertise of the legal team initiating and following the procedure, to the media, using a positive research and analysis approach toward the public in order to draw attention. In the end, of course, the openness of the institutions also has an important role, since they are to review and objectively and professionally resolve the case, where the most important part is the readiness of the professionals to face the challenges of that case.

### **Legal initiative “Article 3” – Civil initiative for harmonization of national anti-discrimination law with the *acquis***

The LGBTI Support Centre, as a subsidiary of the Helsinki Committee for human rights of the Republic of Macedonia, in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI),

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.mhc.org.mk/system/uploads/redactor\\_assets/documents/528/Stratesko\\_zastapuvanje\\_MK\\_19-12.pdf](http://www.mhc.org.mk/system/uploads/redactor_assets/documents/528/Stratesko_zastapuvanje_MK_19-12.pdf)

particularly its office in Skopje, started realizing the project “Strengthening the capacities of civil organizations for participation in the legislative process”, where the Centre shall work on realizing the legal initiative “Article 3” – Civil initiative for harmonization of national anti-discrimination law with the *acquis*. The scope of the project is limited to Article 3 of the Law on prevention and protection against discrimination, and the activities of the LGBTI Support Centre shall be directed toward legal definition of sexual orientation and gender identity as separate possible grounds for discrimination, via adopting a Law on amendments and supplementations of the Law on prevention and protection against discrimination. In favor of promoting human rights as a universal value, in the interest of all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, and considering the openness of the Centre toward participation of a larger number of interested and concerned parties, the realization of the project shall be coordinated via a working group, consisted of several organizations, active in the field of promotion and protection of the rights of marginalized communities. Hence, this opportunity might be utilized for introducing any other grounds that have been omitted in Article 3, expanding the much needed protection against discrimination to the most marginalized groups in society.

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## INSTITUTIONS

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### **Radio campaign “Macedonia has love for all”**

In the Lobbying and advocacy section of this Report, there was a description of the campaign conducted by the LGBTI Support Centre and Front Line Defenders. Considering that the goal of the campaign is to reduce violence against LGBTI people and their parents and friends, in line with Article 96, indent 3 of the Law on broadcasting activity, this campaign is a campaign of public interest, directed toward promoting basic human rights and freedoms, i.e. the right to life free from violence.

The Helsinki Committee sent a written request to the Broadcasting Council, for a written certificate granting access to free broadcasting of the campaign on radio programmes, i.e. a certificate stating that the campaign “Macedonia has love for all” is a campaign of public interest.

In their response, the Broadcasting Council stated that it is out of their competence to give any suggestions or opinions on programmes intended for radio broadcast, before they are broadcasted by the radio stations. The Council also stated that the stations are independent in creating their editorial policy and deciding which content they shall broadcast.

Furthermore, on the public session of the Broadcasting Council, held on 11.11.2013, on the topic of “Gender and the media”, a representative of the Helsinki Committee for human rights and the LGBTI Support Centre asked if this campaign deserves to be broadcasted free of charge as a campaign of public interest in line with Article 96 of the Law on broadcasting. The Council’s President, Zoran Trajchevski, responded in a way indicating the rights of a group within the population are not of public interest. Namely, he stated that the request submitted by the Helsinki Committee was considered and will receive a written response,

however also explaining that the Council is not competent to decide what public interest is, adding that the public interest of a small group (1% of the population) cannot be of interest to the rest of the population, which is majority. On the question of whether the percentage of a group matters when speaking of equality for all citizens in Macedonia, he replied that even though this matter has been discussed, there are also other groups and civil associations, such as the association of beekeepers, hence he cannot see why the LGBTI community should get the pole position in Macedonia, considering the fact that he doesn't believe that the "so-called" rights of LGBTI people are in any way endangered in comparison to the rights of other citizens in the Republic of Macedonia.

We would like to remind the President of the Broadcasting Council that all free civil associations who perform other activities, such as beekeeping, and according to the information that we possess, were never attacked several times in one year, while the institutions were silent. We would like to emphasize, for all representatives of the institutions who have not had the chance to inform themselves yet, that the demands of LGBTI associations are equal access to justice and protection of human rights and freedoms, which must not and cannot be divided into categories and priorities, regardless of the social area in question. It is absurd for the Broadcasting Council to state that someone's rights cannot be on the same level as the rights of the majority.

### **March of Tolerance and cooperation with the state institutions**

In order to ensure the safety of the participants on the fifth March of Tolerance (more details in the Lobbying and advocacy section of this Report), the March was announced to the authorities alongside a request for security measures for the participants. Also, a notification was sent to the Municipality of Chair, that the plateau in front of the Department store Most would also be used.

The March was peaceful and without incidents. The Helsinki Committee and the LGBTI Support Centre had good cooperation with the police officers from the Sector for Internal Affairs – Skopje, within the Ministry of Interior, who performed well in their duty to protect the participants. The presence of the police, which was well-organized and highly visible throughout the entire event proved sufficient to prevent any incidents which may have threatened the successful organization of the March.

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### **MEDIA**

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In November, the fifth March of Tolerance, as an official ending and crowning of the campaign "Macedonia has love for all", organized by the LGBTI Support Centre and the Helsinki Committee, and supported by Front Line Defenders, drew particular attention by the LGBTI community in Macedonia. However, media interest caused by this event could not have passed without falling under the shadow of sensationalism, twisting facts and selective information. Namely, during the campaign itself (before the announcement of the March), existing media coverage, even though deprived of the attention of most national TV

stations, was mainly ethical, neutral and balanced.<sup>5</sup> However, things started changing after the announcement of the March (held on 16.11.2013). Even though the radio campaign itself was against violence toward LGBTI people in Macedonia, the March was a joint action of 14 NGOs, a protest against violence we face every day in our society. The support of LGBTI people and the condemnation of violence against them was but one of several aspects via which violence and impunity in Macedonia were condemned, but five media on seven different occasions<sup>6</sup> saw an opportunity to portray the entire event as an “(mini) gay parade”. In order to make the contradictoriness and sensationalism even bigger, it is a fact that none of these media mentions a “gay parade” anywhere apart from the headline, leaving room for classification of this behavior as “editorial freedom”. But such selectiveness causes confusion in readers and the journalists’ duty for comprehensive informing is not fulfilled, leaving the entire text confusing, difficult to understand and full of contraindications and incomplete statements. Furthermore, another medium<sup>7</sup> gave a political classification of the event, stating that “in defense of the gay population” there were several small NGOs, ideologically similar to the opposition parties, as well as that “among homosexuals and bisexuals, there are journalists employed in the opposition portals”. By doing this, the medium once again misinformed the public, by giving political context and discrediting the entire civil sector in Macedonia, once again humiliates and mocks LGBTI people in Macedonia, portraying them as the negative comparator, also comprising the “journalists employed in the opposition portals”. Regarding the rest of the coverage<sup>8</sup> of the radio campaign and the March as its end, we can say that the basic principles of journalism were adhered to, even though once again there is an evident lack of core analysis of the social influence of the campaign’s topic. The media coverage of the campaign “LGBTI rights are human rights”, organized by Women’s Alliance in cooperation with Subversive Front and the “Free and equal” initiative by the UN Human Rights Office, and the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation, was done in a mainly professional and ethical manner<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/111391/Makedonija-ima-ljubov-za-site---kampanja-protiv-nasilstvoto-na-LGBTI-lugjeto>, <http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/226643>, <http://www.radiomof.mk/makedonija-ima-ljubov-za-site-radio-kampana-za-poddrshka-na-lgbti-zaednitsata/>, <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&cat=19&vest=8958>, <http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/113284/Site-se-povikani-da-marshiraat-za-tolerancija-na-16-noemvri>, <http://24vesti.mk/kampanjata-za-lgbt-pravata-ja-odbija-povekje-radio-stanici-vo-makedonija>, [http://makfax.com.mk/322915/marsh\\_na\\_tolerancijata\\_po\\_petti\\_pat\\_vo\\_makedonija](http://makfax.com.mk/322915/marsh_na_tolerancijata_po_petti_pat_vo_makedonija)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.press24.mk/utre-mini-gej-parada-vo-skopje>, <http://www.skopjeinfo.mk/gradot/870500528/denes-ke-se-odrzi-mini-gej-parada-vo-skopje>, <http://www.press24.mk/node/48207>, <http://maxim.mk/foto-vrie-od-policija-na-skopskata-gej-parada>, <http://ekonomski.mk/2013/11/16/%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%B3%D0%B5%D1%98-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%98%D0%B5/>, <http://www.skopjeinfo.mk/gradot/1315047511/foto-mini-gej-parada-vo-skopje>, <http://zase.mk/eve-kolku-politsija-ja-obezbeduva-skopskata-gej-parada/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sitel.com.mk/mk/marsh-na-tolerancija-0>

<sup>8</sup> <http://24vesti.mk/petti-marsh-na-tolerancijata-vo-skopje-so-poraki-protiv-nasilstvoto>, <http://lokalno.mk/skopje-marsh-na-tolerancija-makedonija-ima-ljubov-za-site/>, <http://www.radiomof.mk/marsh-za-tolerantsija-sredonoshkoltsite-ne-se-chuvstvuvaaat-bezbedno/>, <http://www.tera.mk/2013111672568/aktuel/petti-marsh-na-tolerancijata>, <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&cat=2&vest=9463>, <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&cat=2&vest=9463>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.redup.mk/site/out/1052449-kampanja-za-chovekovite-prava-na-lgbt-licata>, <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&vest=9664&cat=2>,

*(footnote continued)*

Furthermore, news<sup>10</sup> on the organization, realization and follow-up of the referendum in Croatia for constitutional definition of marriage as a community between one man and one woman was also ethically and neutrally reported.

In the media coverage of the hate speech of Zeljko Joksimovic, jury member of the X-Factor music show, directed toward Fifi, a trans-woman, we can notice a very interesting situation. Namely, even though the media coverage is mainly ethical and neutral, one main trait of all articles on that topic is the lack of basic knowledge regarding the term "gender identity". Most of the national media wrote about Fifi using male grammatical gender<sup>11</sup>, except when quoting parts of the written reactions of LGBTI associations from Serbia, hence we can see articles containing both genders in reference to Fifi<sup>12</sup>, creating a confusing situation for any reader.

In the analysis of media coverage on the Law on prevention of discrimination against LGBT people in employment, passed by the US Senate in November, we can once again see media neutrality, ethics and balance, typical for coverage of foreign events of interest for the LGBTI community<sup>13</sup>, spiced by the biased spinning of information and unnecessary sensationalism, which some media<sup>14</sup> used once again. Those media published titles showing that the law supports homosexuals (and transsexuals), giving the reader an impression of additional and extraordinary support for the LGBTI community (which strengthens the stereotype that "LGBTI people keep demanding special rights"), and not of application of the principle of non-discrimination (as a basic right which cannot be "demanded" because it

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<http://libertas.mk/%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%87%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://grid.mk/read/news/506306244/5324357/hrvatska-utre-kje-reshava-za-ustavnoto-definiranje-na-brakot>, <http://grid.mk/read/news/506306244/5323240/zagreb-marsh-protiv-ustavnata-definicija-na-brakot>, <http://daily.mk/hrvatska-podelena-pred-referendumot-za-ustavno-definiranje-na-brakot?forward=2607774>, <http://daily.mk/hrvatska-podelena-pred-utreshniot-referendum-za-ustavno-definiranje-na-brakot?forward=2607613>, <http://daily.mk/hrvatska-podelena-pred-referendumot-za-ustavno-definiranje-na-brakot?forward=2607626>, <http://grid.mk/read/news/506303410/5320865/seve-vo-odbrana-na-lgbt-populacijata-ako-molchite-utre-kje-dojdai-i-po-vas>,

<http://www.akademik.mk/hrvatite-na-referendum-glasaa-protiv-istopolovite-brakovi>

<sup>11</sup> <http://maxim.mk/treba-li-zheljko-joksimovikj-da-se-izvini>, <http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/113185/LGBT-zaednicata-bara-izvinuvanje-od-Zheljko-Joksimovikj>, <http://sky.mk/exclusive/24536-fifi-krena-prashina-joksimovikj-odgovarashe-na-kritikite-od-lgbt-zaednicata>,

<sup>12</sup> <http://prvi.mk/2013/11/06/zhelko-joksimovik-se-doobjasnuva-za-travestitot-od-makedonija/>, [http://hitportal.com.mk/Show\\_Bizz-detail/poradi-fifi-lgbt-zaednitsata-bara-izvinuvane-od-zhelko-joksimovik/?utm\\_source=daily.mk](http://hitportal.com.mk/Show_Bizz-detail/poradi-fifi-lgbt-zaednitsata-bara-izvinuvane-od-zhelko-joksimovik/?utm_source=daily.mk), <http://kurir.mk/magazin/scena/136410-LGBT-aktivistite-go-osuduvaat-odnosot-na-Zeljko-Joksimovik-kon-Fifi><http://www.redup.mk/site/out/1023055-lgbt-aktivistite-go-osuduvaat-odnosot-na-zeljko-joksimovikj-kon-fifi>, <http://zazabava.com/zheljko-izvini-i-se-na-fifi>, <http://www.telegraf.mk/zabava/estrada/59858-lgbt-zeljko-diskriminira-transvestit>

<sup>13</sup> <http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/233849>

<sup>14</sup> <http://telma.com.mk/index.php?task=content&cat=1&rub=5&item=32172>, <http://www.press24.mk/senatot-vo-sad-usvoi-zakon-za-poddrshka-na-homoseksualcite>



is "possessed".) One medium<sup>15</sup> went even further, publishing an unrelated text (about an American law against discrimination, which is not the Law against discrimination in employment), titled: "Let's stop evil on time: Pedophiles demand rights like the homosexuals!", in an attempt to align the demand for improvement of the rights of LGBTI people with an attempt and conspiracy for legalization of pedophilia. Apart from the news being published in a suspiciously chosen time, it was a text more than two years old, filled with false information, bias, sensationalism, selective informing and a tendency to label an entire community of people in Macedonia as the beginning of an enormous and inevitable evil. The detailed and comprehensive critique of this text can be read in its review, published within the USAID project for strengthening the media in Macedonia, Service for reviewing facts published in the media<sup>16</sup>.

Moreover, in November, in Macedonian media space there was an article titled "You won't believe this: Going against SDSM, Dnevnik defends Iceland faggots from Dunja Mijatovic?!"<sup>17</sup>, in which the author, not only attacks LGBTI people, but also the double standards of Dnevnik, "aligning with the Government and attacking our LGBT community 24/7, now attacks Dunja Mijatovic for allegedly causing harm to LGBT people in Iceland, by prohibiting them to adopt a law imposing prison sentences on anyone speaking against them?". However, regardless of the fact that the author assesses the public policy on LGBTI issues negatively, this article is full of unnecessary and unethical media sensationalism and stigmatization by placing the word 'faggots' in the title, probably in order to make it more remarkable.

In December there was no media coverage on larger LGBTI-related events in Macedonia. This does not mean that there weren't such events, on the contrary, from the 19th to the 22nd of December, in Skopje, the ninth LGBTI film festival "Dzunica" ("Rainbow") took place. But due to the character of the festival, it was not promoted in the media, and only one national medium<sup>18</sup> reported on it, after it finished. We also welcome the fact that in December there were several national media that used an ethical and professional approach to create or translate articles analyzing matters essential to the LGBTI community in Macedonia<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://denesen.mk/web/2013/11/11/da-go-zapreme-zloto-na-vreme-pedofilite-baraat-prava-kako-homoseksualcite/#comment-14595>

<sup>16</sup> <http://mediumi.vistinomer.mk/recenzija-da-go-zapreme-zloto-na-vreme-pedofilite-baraat-prava-kako-homoseksualcite/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://maktel.mk/makedonija-2/item/8472-nema-da-vi-se-veruva-dnevnik-za-da-mu-nashteti-na-sdsm-gi-brani-pederite-vo-island-od-dunja-mijatovikj>

<sup>18</sup> <http://emagazin.mk/%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B2-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%98%D0%B5-%D0%BF%D0%BE-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%B8-%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%82-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%80/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://lokalno.mk/pratenicite-nemaat-odgovornost-koga-deskriminaliraat-vo-sobranie/>, <http://dnevnik.mk/?ItemID=113D8567E1C62D49A AFC51A06CE1225B>, <http://okno.mk/node/33594>, <http://makfax.com.mk/324973/istochna-i-zapadna-evropa-podeleni-okolu-gej-brakovite-i-homoseksualno-sta>, <http://portal.com.mk/vesti-svet/istochna-i-zapadna-evropa-podeleni-okolu-gej-brakovite-i-homoseksualnost.html>, <http://www.fama.mk/zanimlivosti/kategorii/ostanati-zan/10122-kolumna-na-novinar-homoseksualec-dali-site-protivnici-na-gej-brakovi-se-homofobi>

Unfortunately, the lack of large national events of interest for the LGBTI community did not mean a lack of media sensationalism and spinning of topics and information in regard to, or significant to LGBTI people. One national medium, on 10.12.2013, six months overdue<sup>20</sup>, published the news titled A HOMOSEXUAL COUPLE ADOPTED A CHILD - THEY SOLD IT TO THEIR GAY FRIENDS FOR SEX (PHOTO), which is unnecessary controversial and sensationalist around the pedophiles' sexual orientation; however, the news is obsolete. The medium went as far as to publish photos of the child-victim, violating its right to privacy and acting contrary to the Code of Journalists of Macedonia<sup>21</sup>. Another medium made an addition to the title of an article referring to the protests of feminists in San Juan, Argentina, against strong anti-abortion policies of the Catholic Church, with some violent behavior. The medium titled the news "Video: Feminists and homosexuals spit on Christians"<sup>22</sup> and writes about the violent behavior of protesters, consisted of "feminists and homosexuals" against the faithful who "protected" the church. However, the LGBTI Centre did research on this news and not even once, not even in the source video of the medium<sup>23</sup>, nor in the news by foreign media<sup>24</sup>, did we find information pointing out that there were "homosexuals" on those protests. On the contrary, foreign media reporting on this, as well as the video description of the domestic medium, talk about a protest by the feminist movement of San Juan due to the strict viewpoints and policies of the Catholic Church regarding women's right to choose. The word "homosexual" is not mentioned in those sources. Hence, this medium is tendentious and biased, changing the content of the news, deepening the gap of intolerance already existing toward LGBTI people in our society. The characterizations and stylizations of factual information could be seen on two more occasions. One medium classified the coming-out of a British athlete as "sad news"<sup>25</sup> and another, covering the adoption of the law in Uganda, stipulating even life sentences for homosexual behavior, wrote an article with the following title: "UGANDA: LIFE SENTENCES FOR FAGGOTS!", in a sensationalist and rather humiliating manner, bestowing the title with a word considered so offensive for gay men, that it is not even contained in the law stipulating "life sentences for faggots" itself.

In December there was large media interest for regional events. The ethical and professional manner of reporting was noticeable in the media coverage of the proposal law for a new family code, adopted by the Croatian Government in December<sup>26</sup>, stipulating that homosexual couples have almost the same rights as heterosexual couples, only two weeks

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<sup>20</sup> Пренесувањето на оваа вест од страна на националните медиуми беше анализирано во *Двомесечниот извештај за човековите права во Република Македонија, Јули-Август, 2013*, изработен од страна на Хелсиншкиот комитет за човекови права на РМ и ЛГБТИ Центарот за поддршка. За повеќе информации, види стр.18 од Извештајот, достапен на <http://lgbti.mk/uploads/926f955a-c6e6-468c-8c89-7c139c02aa8d.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.mim.org.mk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=68%E2%8C%A9](http://www.mim.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=68%E2%8C%A9)

<sup>22</sup> <http://denesen.mk/web/2013/12/05/video-feministki-i-homoseksualci-plukaat-na-hristijanite/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://popara.mk/2013/vesti/uganda-dozhivotna-robija-za-pederi/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/horror-mob-of-topless-pro-abort-feminists-attacks-rosary-praying-men-defend>, <http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/between-errands-april-thompson/2013/dec/5/argentina-women-attack-church-while-men-try-protect/>, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/2013/mark-tapson/violent-feminists-attack-argentinian-cathedral/>, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/peter-roff/2013/12/05/could-argentinias-repulsive-pro-abortion-protests-come-to-the-united-states>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/117188/FOTO-Zhalna-vest--Devojkite-luduvaat-po-nego-a-toj-prizna-deka-e-gej>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.sitel.com.mk/mk/vladata-na-hrvatska-predlaga-pogolemi-prava-za-istopolovite-dvojki>, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=63BF384BE1465F4AA509782A860C28BE>,

after the people of the dominantly Catholic Croatia stated on a referendum that they were against same-sex marriages. Media attention was also directed toward the public opinion survey in Montenegro, regarding LGBTI people and the reaction of the EU Delegation to the disappointing results of the survey<sup>27</sup>. Considering media interest for events in other countries, we may say that the interest was mainly on the law stipulating punishment of homosexual behavior in India<sup>28</sup>, the possibility of a life sentence if "repeating" homosexual behavior in Uganda<sup>29</sup>, the promotion of rights of same-sex couples in New Mexico, Utah and Brazil<sup>30</sup>, as well as the country of the year award given to Uruguay by The Economist, due to passing laws on same-sex marriages and laws on regulating the production, sale and use of marijuana<sup>31</sup>, in the same year. Reporting on these events was mainly professional.

In December, once again there were news mostly on show-business, but significant to the LGBTI community<sup>32</sup> due to the people involved in those events. Most attention was drawn by the homophobic public expressions of two Balkan celebrities which received well-deserved criticism in the articles referring to them<sup>33</sup>.

In November and December, in national media space, lesbians, bisexuals and intersex people were only mentioned occasionally, when speaking of the LGBTI community as a whole.

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## SUPPORT GROUPS

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With the reopening of the LGBTI Support Centre, the support groups once again got space for holding various meetings. Simultaneously, the weekly parties for all members and supporters continued to take place, as they had been so far.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://tocka.com.mk/1/114112/za-sekoj-tret-crnogorec-homoseksualecot-e-isto-kako-i-kriminalecot>

<sup>28</sup> <http://okno.mk/node/33881>,

<http://makfax.com.mk/324777/sudot-vo-indija-go-potvrdi-zakonot-za-kaznuvanje-na-homoseksualnosta>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.sky.mk/svet/401370-dozhivoten-zatvor-za-homoseksualcite-vo-uganda>,

<http://makfax.com.mk/325529/uganda-go-pri-fati-drakonskiot-zakon-protiv-homoseksualnosta>,

<http://popara.mk/2013/vesti/uganda-dozhivotna-robija-za-pederi/>, <http://maxim.mk/uganda-ako-si-homoseksualec-kazna-dozhivoten-zatvor>, <http://netpress.com.mk/uganda-za-homoseksualcite-dozhivoten-zatvor/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.sky.mk/svet/401271-novo-meksiko-dozvoli-gej-brakovi>, <http://maxim.mk/sudot-vo-nju-meksiko-gi-dozvoli-gej-brakovite>, <http://24vesti.mk/juta-gi-prizna-homoseksualnite-i-poligamnite-brakovi>,

<http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/119986/Juta-gi-prizna-homoseksualnite-i-poligamnite-brakovi>,

<http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/250003>

<sup>31</sup> <http://lider.mk/2013/12/21/urugvaj-e-zemja-na-godinata-poradi-legalizacijata-na-marihuana-i-gej-brakovite/>, <http://www.mkd.mk/svet/vesti/urugvaj-e-zemja-na-godinata-poradi-legalizacijata-na-marihuana-i-gej-brakovite>, <http://tocka.com.mk/1/114153/ekonomist-urugvaj-e-drzava-na-godinata-legalizirase-marihuana-i-gej-brakovi>, <http://netpress.com.mk/ekonomist-urugvaj-e-drzhava-na-godinata-legalizirashe-marihuana-i-gej-brakovi/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://portal.com.mk/shoubiz-holivud/dzhordzh-kluni-jas-sum-gej.html>,

<http://www.makdenes.org/archive/news/20131207/428/428.html?id=25193027>,

<http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/118232/FOTO-Ne-sum-gej-eve-i-fotka-kako-ja-baknuvam-zhena-mi>

<sup>33</sup> [http://hitportal.com.mk/Show\\_Bizz-detail/gej-aktivistot-predrag-go-javna-zhelko-joksimovik-foto/](http://hitportal.com.mk/Show_Bizz-detail/gej-aktivistot-predrag-go-javna-zhelko-joksimovik-foto/),

<http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/254204>, [http://hitportal.com.mk/Show\\_Bizz-detail/zhelko-navredi-gej-aktivist-na-tviter/](http://hitportal.com.mk/Show_Bizz-detail/zhelko-navredi-gej-aktivist-na-tviter/),

<http://www.press24.mk/zhelko-joksimovik-kon-gej-aktivist-otkachi-mi-se-peerishte>,

<http://kurir.mk/magazin/scena/141272-Joksimovik-za-gej-aktivist-Otkaci-se-peeriste>,

<http://www.plusinfo.mk/vest/118719/Vlado-Georgiev-go-predizvika-Marko-Kon-Te-znaat-li-doma-deka-si-gej>

The lesbian and feminist support group organized and held a meeting together with members of several other organizations, hosting guests from Project Seven. This is an international project from 2007, operating through theatrical plays and focusing on the unique experiences of seven women living in different parts of the world. The goal was to establish communication with domestic organizations and consider the possibilities for further cooperation.

The parents' support group held a meeting during the first visit to the Centre by a girl and her mother. The conversation was focused on stating the importance of this support to the child by her parent, as well as encouragement for continuing this support, considering the fact that the parent and child had already established a relationship of understanding and mutual support.

The gay men support group focused on planning future activities, while the transgender support group focused on the preparation and realization of another training on the topic of transgender people.

This is the fourth training for members of the trans support group and the expert team of interested medical professionals and psychologists. This time, supported by Transgender Europe (TGEU), we opened topics going one step deeper into the depths of this subject. Once again, Kristian Randjelovic, an activist from Gayten LGBT from Belgrade and Board member of TGEU, was guest-lecturer on this training.

The training took place on 21.12.2013 in the GEM Club. According to the well-known dynamics, the training lasted for several hours, and in the evening, the members had an opportunity to socialize; accommodation was provided for members from other cities.

The several sections of the training covered the following topics: Experiences in working with trans groups, LGB in the trans community, Intersex, Trans activism in Serbia and Europe, Application of the WPATH SoC on practical level, with examples, Medical "sex reassignment", Legal gender recognition and Model law on gender identity in Serbia. During the lecture, Kristian stated the newest experiences in working with trans groups, according to his personal experience in Serbia and working with various groups throughout Europe, spoke of the diversity in the trans community in regard to sexual orientation, dedicated some time to intersex people, a topic yet to be opened in our society. Furthermore, he spoke of the Standards of Care by WPATH, a worldwide organization, whose Standards depict the necessary treatment trans people should get on demand in the health care systems. The audience had many questions, they were interested in the Standards and the possibilities for their application in the Macedonian health care system. Kristian also talked about "sex reassignment" from a medical and legal aspect, alongside numerous questions by the participants. In the end, he made an overview of the Model law on gender identity in Serbia, giving details on the preparation process and expressed encouragement for undertaking similar steps in our country, in order to increase the visibility and promote the rights of trans people.