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Statement

Title: ___LGBTQ* Community_____

Point of the agenda: __8biii_____

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Proposed by: EC, Human Rights and Solidarity Coordinator, Equality Coordinator.

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The European Students' Union condemns all acts of aggression on the LGBTQ* community by governments.

The LGBTQ* community is facing an increasing number of acts of aggression, physical, psychological and legislative. This worrying trend was demonstrated in recent months, when several European countries adopted legislations that ban all discussion about LGBTQ* rights. These laws, in effect, legitimise all aggressions on the LGBTQ* community and ensure a total impunity to the authors of acts of aggression towards LGBTQ* people. This tendency, coupled with already existing intolerant groups spreads a living environment of fear and oppression undermining the right of members of the LGBTQ* community to freedom of expression, to be themselves and to live in dignity.

In recent months the Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation overwhelmingly supported and endorsed a new law which explicitly bans the promotion, discussion, or self-expression of “non-traditional sexual relations” in any setting in which children might be exposed to it. LGBTQ* people, their lives and

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self-identity have been attacked in a formalised and exploitative way by the very government which should be defending them. Russian people appear to no longer be prevented from using this law as a state approval for acts of violent homophobia and transphobia, as evidence is emerging of physical torture, psychological harassment and public intimidation and attacks on LGBTQ* people and organisations more and more frequently since the passing of this law.

Many young people affected have been traumatised, forced to come out on camera, raped, beaten, harassed, and some have taken their own lives. We firmly believe that human rights are universal, inalienable and cannot be denied to anyone in such an aggressive and inhumane manner.

ESU stands with the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO) and many other civil society groups in Europe in utterly condemning this type of political agenda.

Meanwhile, however, other laws with the same intent have begun to proliferate in other countries in Europe.

Some of Lithuania's legislators, led by an extremist and reactionary media campaign in certain outlets, have begun to incrementally remove the right of young people to learn about the LGBTQ* community and for LGBTQ* people to express themselves for who they are, forcing them to live in fear of public humiliation and ostracisation.

Proposals under discussion at the present in Ukraine to ban all "propaganda of homosexuality" - defined as any positive public

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depictions of LGBTQ* people, including in the media, would impose a five year jail sentence on those found guilty.

The LGBTQ* community in the Southern Caucasus has been systematically oppressed by their own governments, law enforcement and religious leaders for generations. The recent international day against homophobia and transphobia demonstration in Tbilisi, Georgia, was marred by violence against the demonstrators.

In Serbia, the LGBTQ* community has repeatedly been denied the right to hold a gay pride parade since 2010, violating their right to assemble and to express themselves freely. The LGBTQ* community has systematically been put at risk when attempted at defending their right and acts of aggression have remained unpunished.

In March 2012, a law was passed in Saint Petersburg, Russia, aiming at outlawing any type of presentation of the LGBTQ* movement in a positive light. ESU firmly condemned this law and ideology of hate, but today we can see that this law is now applied in all of Russia. We now recognise and condemn the spread of this particular brand of hatred anywhere it arises in Europe.

ESU firmly condemns the adoption of these types of laws, the acceptance by society to oppress a certain community as well as the absence of punishment of acts of aggression that deprive the LGBTQ* community of their most fundamental human rights, in particular their right to assemble and their right to freedom of expression.

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ESU believes that this particularly affects young people and student members of the LGBTQ* community as they are particularly being targeted by this violence and it forces them to make choices that will affect the course of their lives. Indeed many are deprived from the right to education, another essential human right, as they cannot evolve in a safe environment that will allow them to be themselves and seek the corresponding personal development.

ESU calls on all members of the Council of Europe to act on their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights to protect LGBTQ* people and to outlaw all discrimination, either by the state or by individuals. ESU furthermore calls on the Council of Europe and the European Union to express their revulsion at the events in those countries which see fit to exploit and oppress their own citizens in this way. ESU finally calls on all governments in Europe to proactively fight to defend the rights of all their citizens to health, happiness, and the freedoms to assemble and self-expression.

* The term "LGBTQ*" is used throughout this statement to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and any other person who chooses to identify with this group.

