

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Commissioner Fratini
DG Freedom, Justice and Security
The European Commission
220 Rue de la Loi
B1049 Brussels
Belgium

January 25th 2008

Dear Commissioner,

I am sure you will be aware that Janis Dzelme, former assistant to an MP in Latvia, has recently been found guilty of 'gross public disorderliness as manifested in an obvious lack of respect toward the public by ignoring universally accepted norms of behaviour' after throwing excrement at participants in Riga's Gay Pride March in 2006.

Mr Dzelme, who works for the Latvia First Party, was objecting to what he saw as 'gay propaganda', so I am delighted that the Latvian courts have taken this course of action and effectively upheld freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. I understand that charges have also been brought against a man and his son who are suspected of throwing explosives at a group of people leaving the 2007 Gay Pride March.

We have corresponded previously about the need to uphold equality, particularly with regard to gay rights in Eastern Europe and I am glad to see that some progress appears to have been made. I very much hope that the Commission will encourage the Latvian authorities in their efforts to oppose homophobic attitudes and behaviour and also continue to support initiatives to promote equality and respect.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.