

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Rt Hon David Miliband MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles St
London
SW1A 2AH

October 19th 2009

Dear Foreign Secretary,

Now that the main Gay PRIDE 2009 season has come to a close I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the support it gave the LGBT community via British embassies. The variety of actions taken in 2009 creates a wealth of good practice around promoting the human rights of LGBT people, building on the excellent example of Ambassador Richard Moon in Riga.

You will recall that in previous years I have recommended that the British authorities play a positive role in promoting freedom of assembly and self expression by developing existing good practice, such as the publishing statements of support, the hosting of receptions for British visitors and organisers of PRIDE events, and the flying of the rainbow flag. This year I was delighted to see so many examples of progress in this direction, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. This letter can hardly do justice to their efforts but I would like to mention the following:

- The embassy receptions for LGBT people: a Diversity Barbeque in Bucharest, dinner in Kiev, lunch in Sofia and “afternoon tea” in Warsaw, Skopje, Riga and Budapest, as well as support for the premiere of the film “Stonewall” in Bratislava and the hosting of a “hate crime” conference in Warsaw.
- The flying of the rainbow flag from windows of the British Embassies in Bratislava and Budapest, which, according to one of my constituents who attended these events, was received with great delight by Slovak and Hungarian LGBT people.
- The attendance of British Embassy staff at the Bucharest PRIDE Parade - alongside ambassadors from the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the Czech Republic - where Ambassador Robin Barnett gave a speech, in Romanian, voicing his support for human rights for *all* minorities and commending the parade organisers and all those working to promote human rights in Romania.
- The translation of the FCO Guide to LGBT people into the languages of all the Accession states and of Moldova.
- The generation and publication of statements of support for PRIDE events and LGBT people, leading to a joint embassy statement in Budapest.
- The successful proliferation of this good practice to other supportive governments, most notably in Bulgaria and Hungary, where Ambassadors Steve Williams and Greg Dorey generated participation in PRIDE and support for LGBT people from some 16 countries on four continents.

Sadly, as you know, Belgrade PRIDE did not take place because, despite the police, President and Premier giving their guarantees to protect participants in the planned location, the police withdrew security with less than 36 hours notice due to the threats of violence. However, I was heartened to see that Ambassador Stephen Wordsworth in Belgrade was actively involved in the statement of support for Belgrade PRIDE 2009 made by the Swedish EU Presidency. I hope the FCO is emphasising to both President Tadić and Premier Cvetković that Serbia must demonstrate freedom of assembly and expression are a reality for *all* Serbian citizens, and that those who incite or threaten violence against members of the LGBT community should be vigorously pursued and prosecuted.

Please do pass on thanks to the British embassy staff in Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, the Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia who have reached out effectively and creatively to offer support to LGBT people.

I look forward to an even more successful PRIDE 2010 season to celebrate the 40th birthday of PRIDE culminating with the EuroPRIDE Parade in Warsaw on Sat 17th July. I trust that the FCO and British Embassy staff in Warsaw are already engaging with Warsaw EuroPRIDE organisers and considering how best to support and enhance this occasion, reinforcing human rights and democratic principles throughout Poland and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Lucas".

Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.