

UKRAINE

Population: 49,1 Mio

Area: 603.700 km²

Part 1: Laws concerning Homosexuality

Forbidden by law: No

Registered partnership/marriage: No

There is no law on same sex marriages in the Ukraine. The country strives to join the European union. And the resolution on equal rights for gays and lesbians adopted by the European Parliament contains also recommendations to the countries to adopt the same law. But the Ukraine has not done so, yet.

Differences to heterosexual marriages:

No formalised lesbian/gay partnerships are allowed.

Anti-discrimination law, protecting lesbians/gays (L/G) against discrimination: No

At work: No

On the housing market: No

In other areas: /No

Comments: As far as I know, there is no law that protects or prohibits homosexual relationships.

Other groups in the society protected through such a law: No

Incidents that briefly describe the situation of L/G in society:

I think the answers to the above questions describe the situation enough. The society is still conservative and traditional on the whole, and the main thing is that conservative people are also part of the authorities. They fear anything foreign, unusual, non-traditional or alternative. And this fear encourages them to eliminate and destroy anything that is uncommon to their traditions. The Ukraine is mostly a rural and agricultural country and people's main values are traditional family values, health, children, and economic positions. Certainly, the real reason for homophobia is shame. – Many lesbians and gays are ashamed of themselves. And quite some others have those “nasty” ideas and desires in their heads but they cannot stand anyone saying it out loud.

As to the general situation one can point out that the Ukraine is one of the biggest Eastern European post-communist countries (49 million inhabitants) and in a transition process towards a market economy and democratic society. The situation in the country is characterised by economic crisis (currently gradually being overcome) and uncertainty of its political future. Officially, however, the government declares adherence of the country to the European liberal and democratic values. Most political parties in the Ukraine also support this ‘choice for Europe’.

The Ukraine is a large country with rather different Eastern and Western regions. Kiev, the capital, is placed in the centre of the Ukraine and represents both traditions. As for most Eastern European countries, most of the political and social life of the country is concentrated in the capital.

The general human rights situation and the position of minorities in the Ukraine may be best described by using sociological survey data. According to the results of a poll conducted by UCEPS in January-February 2000, only 0.9% of the respondents suggested that human rights were fully observed in The Ukraine; 18.4% agreed that they were observed only in part; the

largest share, 75.9% of those polled, said that human rights were not observed at all, or mostly not observed.

It is necessary to note that there is a widespread opinion among Ukrainian people stating that human rights are a less important value than the level of economic welfare and that it is acceptable to restrict political human rights in order to 'establish order' and 'feed people'.

The judicial branch actually depends on the executive branch, which is illustrated by the funding of the judicial structures through the Ministry of Justice. The professional level of judges is often inadequate to modern situation. Currently, however, the situation is beginning to improve along with the starting of the judicial reform.

Noticeable pressure on mass media demonstrates the limitation on the freedom of speech. Executive authorities are influencing 'disobedient' mass media for example by the termination of leases, extraordinary inspections by taxation bodies or fire departments and by refusing accreditation at state institutions. Nevertheless, because of competition between different financial and political groups as well as foreign influence, there is some level of freedom of speech and lately it has been noticeably rising.

Political authorities seldom pay attention to the situation of minorities. The state authorities recognise in fact only the existence of ethnic minorities. For lack of financial means even the recognised minorities do not receive any support from the state. The society views all minorities with suspicion and is inclined to consider any support to them as groundless privileges.

Nevertheless there is no officially expressed xenophobia. But intolerant statements and actions of certain groups, individuals and even local authorities rarely meet adequate reactions of the state bodies. Homosexuals are one of the groups which suffer from this.

(Source: Nash Mir (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Centre, Kiev)

Part 2: Situation in the Church(es)

Open L/G welcome to

Eucharist: No

Do volunteer work: Yes

In church all kind of support is welcome. Anyone who wants to help gets the opportunity to do so.

Work as ordained ministers: No

Comments: The Church would receive help from anyone, but not anyone would be allowed to leading positions unless you live closeted.

Other employment in church(es): No

Partnership blessing possible: No

Part 3: Christian Lesbian/Gay Networks

Network name: Lesbian/gay contact address (not specifically Christian)

Web page/contact address:

Nash Mir (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Centre,
PO BOX 173, Kiev 02100, Ukraine

Questionnaire filled in by Vladislav from Nash Mir