

TO: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

FROM: Dr Michael Davidson, Director, Core Issues Trust

TOPIC: **Protecting Competent Professional Guidance and Therapeutic Care for Unwanted Sexual Feelings.**

DATE: **30 October 2014, Working Session 13: 3.pm - 6.pm** (Tolerance and non-discrimination II)

Both in the United Kingdom and the United States of America, co-ordinated attempts are frustrating both access to and the provision of therapeutic support for individuals wanting to move away from unwanted sexual practices and feelings. This action discriminates unfairly against the minority rights of those seeking and offering such help.

In the United Kingdom, it is now no longer possible as a psychotherapist to retain professional membership of any Professional Mental Health Body with integrity, without affirming the ideological view that homosexuality, for example, is inborn and unchangeable. Even the Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC), under the leadership of the Professional Standards Authority (PSA for Health and Social Care) now prohibits therapeutic practice that allows its members to assist clients to move away from unwanted homosexual practices and feelings.

Under the guise of protecting minors and vulnerable adults, initiatives by Professional Bodies in both countries promote gay affirming therapies that refuse to acknowledge reasonable therapeutic goals of clients, both minors and adults, who do not seek affirmation of such behaviours. Yet when asked to do so, these bodies are consistently unwilling and unable to produce peer-reviewed, randomised population sample research, showing that on average such therapeutic support is harmful for these clients. Anecdotal evidence for either side of this disagreement is an insufficient basis for public policy or professional practice.

In the United Kingdom three therapists have been eliminated from practicing in respect to this issue, simply on ideological grounds which reject the possibility of change. Consistent requests to see the evidence that therapeutic care is harmful, have never been forthcoming.

I invite persons interested in this dilemma to the HDIM side event taking place on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October in meeting room 1 at 1.00 – 3.00**. This is an opportunity which will explore the issue of freedoms of conscience, expression and speech in these increasingly secularised states. The opportunity will engage legal professionals associated with Core Issues Trust cases related to this issue.

Core Issues Trust requests the participating states of the OSCE, and the ODIHR to promote protective legislation for, and to pay careful attention to:

- (1) The right of access to appropriate and competent guidance and therapeutic care, including spiritual care, for both minor and adult individuals seeking help, after advanced, informed consent, and
- (2) The protection of trainee and practising professionals to provide such support with access to both professional memberships of relevant bodies and requisite insurance.