

Update from Moldova Saturday May 10, 2008

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PHOTOS: (Left) Moldova's LGBT community creates worship banner for MCC worship service. The banner proclaims "Metropolitan Community Churches: Building Hope, Creating Our Future." (Right) Moldova's human rights organization GenderDoc-M creates "1000 Cranes For Peace" for MCC worship service.

"The Human Rights Church" On The Frontlines In Moldova

Rev. Elder Diane Fisher and Florin Buhuceanu report that plans for this weekend's first LGBT Pride March in the Eastern European nation of Moldova are moving forward -- despite opposition and threats from the government, the state church, and a highly-organized, well-funded, right-wing student group. After first issuing a permit for the Pride March, the government reversed itself and withdrew the permit.

Diane says that wherever she goes, LGBT Moldovans express thanks to Metropolitan Community Churches for leading an international campaign calling on Moldova's government to protect the rights and safety of LGBT people.

GenderDoc-M is Moldova's national LGBT human rights group. When the government withdrew the Pride Parade permit and threatened to arrest Diane, Florin, and other LGBT leaders, GenderDoc-M appealed to The Hague, the European Union and international human rights groups for support.

Within hours, MCC issued an international Action Alert calling on Moldova's government to protect its LGBT citizens.

Diane reports that Moldovans have repeatedly noted that MCC was the first international organization to issue an Action Alert and to publicly stand in solidarity with them.

Thousands of emails from around the world are pouring into the government of Moldova. And Amnesty International received so much response from MCC's Action Alert, they have agreed to have an on-site observer at the march.

Here is the current situation on this weekend's first-ever Pride March in Moldova:

The LGBT community followed all laws and regulations in applying for a public march permit. The permit was granted by the city of Chisinau, in accordance with Moldova's laws.

The Orthodox Church responded with a public condemnation of the gay community. They made unsupported and untrue charges -- they claimed a public march by LGBT people was a threat to public morality. They wildly claimed that gay people have an "aggressive nature" that makes them a threat to public safety.

Rather than taking a stand for the equal rights of all people, the mayor of Chisinau gave in to religious pressure from the Orthodox Church and withdrew the parade permit.

But Moldova's fledgling LGBT community is both determined and creative! They found an exception in Moldova's laws of assembly: Public gatherings and events of up to 50 persons do not require a government permit.

They have decided to proceed with the public march with a total of 50 LGBT people and their supporters.

The government has ratcheted the pressure by refusing to provide police protection. The Pride organizers have arranged for six private security guards to accompany the marchers, reducing the actual number of Pride March participants to 44.

Alarmingly, Moldova's government has said it will not limit the number of anti-gay protestors that show up for the Pride March. They are using the rationale that anti-gay protestors will be showing up as individuals -- not as an organized group -- and thus need no permit. In other Eastern European countries where Pride Marches have taken place, thousands of hostile, anti-gay protestors have lined the streets to heckle, taunt, and in some cases, attack Pride Marchers.

The actions by our brothers and sisters in Moldova are a powerful reminder of how deeply the human spirit yearns for freedom, honesty and authenticity: This weekend 44 LGBT people and their supporters will march through the capital city of Moldova, most likely surrounded by thousands of hostile protestors, without government or police protection, and with only six private security personnel between the protestors and the marchers.

Attending the Pride March will be representatives from Human Rights Watch, ILGA Europe, ACCEPT, and Amnesty International. **And marching at the front of Moldova's first-ever Pride Parade, as special guests of Moldova's LGBT community, will be MCC leaders Rev. Diane Fisher and Florin Buhuceanu.**

For standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and for working for social justice and spiritual justice for all God's children, **Metropolitan Community Churches has become known as "The Human Rights Church"** across Eastern Europe, and increasingly around the globe wherever people are devalued, oppressed and marginalized.

Your help is still needed -- right now! -- to support our brothers and sisters in Moldova.

Here's what you can do to help:

1. Pray for God's protection for the marchers in Moldova's first-ever Pride events this weekend, and for safety for Rev. Elder Diane Fisher and Florin Buhuceanu.
2. Be sure you have responded to this week's Action Alert by sending your e-mails to the government of Moldova. (If you need another copy of the Action Alert, write to info@MCCchurch.net or visit the front page of the MCC website at www.MCCchurch.org.)
3. Forward the Action Alert to your friends and acquaintances. Post it on listservs and websites. [Send it to LGBT organizations and human rights groups.](#)

Help us keep the eyes of the world on Moldova this weekend!



Emergency meeting of LGBT activists to discuss church threats against

to plan response to government and march in Moldova.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES

PO Box 1374 • Abilene, Texas 79604
Phone: 310-360-8640 • Fax: 325-690-6328

www.MCCchurch.org . info@MCCchurch.net