

its responsibilities when gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons are involved or at risk," the group said. "None of those cases has been solved, or even seriously investigated, by the police."

For information on where to send protest letters, e-mail iglhrc@iglhrc.org.

UNITED KINGDOM

A British Defense Ministry study has found that integrating open gays into the military has caused no problems. The confidential report was obtained Nov. 19 by the *Observer*.

"The services reported that the revised policy on homosexuality had no discernible impact, either positive or negative, on recruitment," the study says. "There is widespread acceptance of the new policy. It has not been an issue of great debate. In fact, there has been a marked lack of reaction. Generally there has been a mature, pragmatic approach which allowed the policy to succeed. The change in policy has been hailed as a solid achievement."

The ban was struck down by the European Court of Human Rights in late 1999. The *Observer* commented, "The startling conclusion will cause serious embarrassment to service chiefs, who fought to retain the ban, and to the Conservative Party, which has pledged to consider its reintroduction."

MEXICO

Mexico City has a new gay monthly magazine, *Q-Eros*.

It is published by Azul Editores, which also owns the popular *Boys & Toys*, and edited by Francisco Javier Lagunes Gaitan, director of the gay group Human Action for the Community. A total of 20,000 copies are printed.

The magazine costs about \$1.05. A typical Mexican salary is about \$20 a day.

ROMANIA

A polling institute report published Nov. 17 indicates 90 percent of Romanians do not want gays as neighbors. The same percentage rejects alcoholics and convicted criminals.

About 75 percent don't want to live next door to Gypsies (who, in general, prefer to be called "Roma") or people who carry HIV. One-third don't want to be around Jews or Hungarians.

INDIA

Pune, India's Organized Lesbian Alliance for Visibility and Acceptance, celebrated its first birthday Nov. 21 with a "Come Out, Wherever You Are" party.

More than 100 women attended. "Olava" translates as "moist" in the local Marathi language.

"Olava suggests the warmth and tenderness two women are capable of sharing in a relationship," spokeswoman Chatura told *Express India.com*. "We opted for Marathi since we want our group to reach out to every section of society and not just the urban elite middle class."

LITHUANIA

Lithuania's Parliament banned anti-gay discrimination in October, but the measure won't take effect for more than a year, the Web site *Gay.lt* reported.

New Penal Code Article 169 states: "A person who undertook acts which were aimed to prevent a population group or its member from participating equally in political, economic, social, cultural, work or other activities or to restrict such rights or freedoms of a population group or its member because of their sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or opinions shall be punished by public works or fine or freedom restriction or arrest or imprisonment up to three years."

New Penal Code Article 170 will imprison for up to three years persons who "jeer, disdain, instigate to hatred or initiate discrimination towards a population group or its member because of their sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or opinions."

The new laws mark the first time "sexual orientation" has been mentioned in Lithuanian law. The protections were added to a later draft of the new penal code after lobbying by the Lithuanian Gay League and pressure from the media.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's Parliament voted Nov. 22 to give gay couples the same spousal property rights as married and common-law straight couples. According to the New Zealand Press Association wire service, the legislation significantly rewrites the Matrimonial Property Act, extending its provisions to include same-sex and de facto couples and giving the courts greater discretion in how they divide property between partners in a relationship split.

Opposition members of Parliament denounced the legislation, saying it will force people into a legal relationship against their will. The law will apply to any two people who live together as a couple for at least three years.

VATICAN



The Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family issued a paper Nov. 21 calling gay relationships "a deplorable distortion of what should be a communion of love and life between a man and a woman in a reciprocal gift open to life."

Roman Catholic doctrine maintains that every human sexual act must be open to the possibility of procreation. For this reason, the church denounces as sinful oral sex, masturbation, birth control and gay sex.

The 76-page document, *Family, Marriage and 'De Facto' Unions*, also claims laws recognizing gay relationships are a "much more grave" error than laws allowing registered domestic partnerships for unmarried straight people.

"This is a mean and cruel stand because it is aimed at excluding homosexuals and homosexual couples from their juridical rights," longtime Italian gay leader Franco Grillini said. "It is in this way that homosexuals are not guaranteed the right to welfare for their partner, access to public housing or rights of inheritance."

CYPRUS

The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church determined last month that allegations that Cyprus' Bishop Athanasios of Limassol had seduced a young monk were untrue. His supporters claimed the charges were invented by his enemies to derail his likely succession to the archbishop's chair.

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

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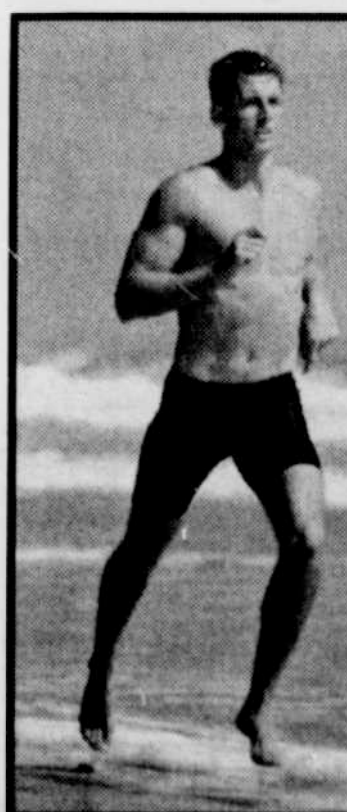
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