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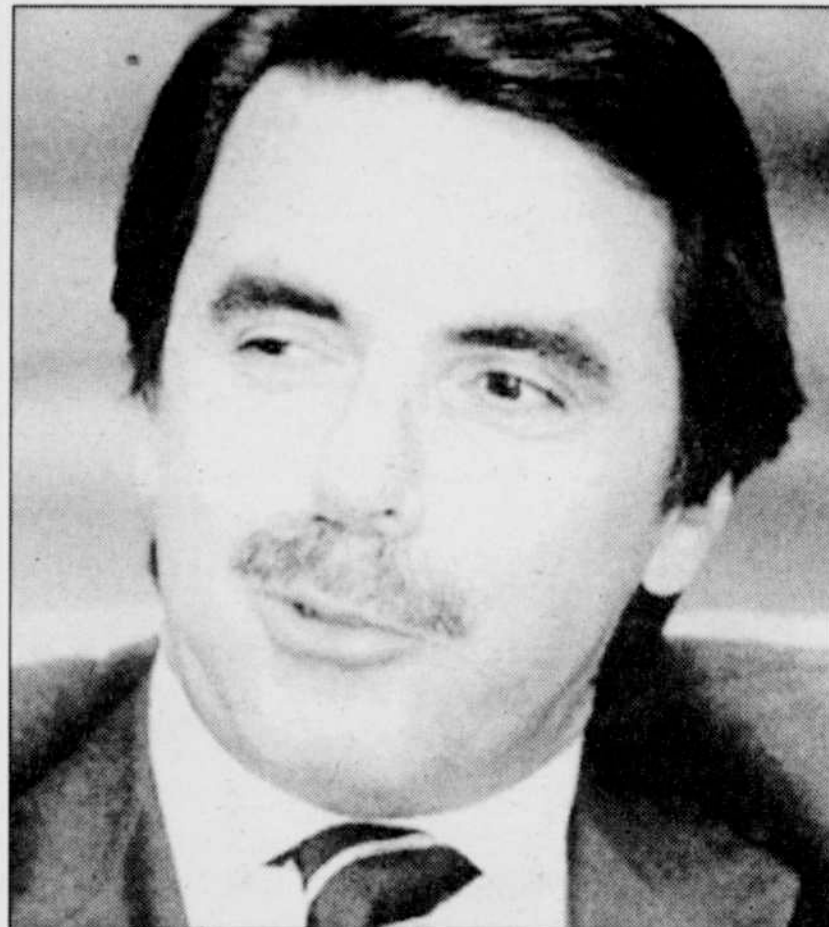


WORLD news

SPAIN

Spain's Parliament voted down five bills Feb. 20 that would have legalized same-sex marriage, Agence France-Presse reported.

The report said all members of Parliament from Prime Minister José María Aznar's People's Party were forced to vote against the measures. People's Party deputy Rosa Estaras said the bills—introduced by the Socialists, the United Left and three regional parties—were torpedoed because they were "unconstitutional."



Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar's party has torpedoed five bills that would have legalized same-sex marriage

INTERNATIONAL

A man who U.S. officials have called one of the most credible and useful al-Qaeda informers in Europe came out during conversations with investigators, *The New York Times* reported Feb. 17.

"My family is very poor," Jordanian Shadi Abdullah told them. "I wanted to come to Germany to start a new life. Another reason was the opportunity to live a freer life in Germany. This involves my sexual tendencies toward men. I had expected problems and disadvantages in relation to this in Jordan."

According to the *Times*: "In addition to providing counter-terrorism officials with details like the meanings of code words used in taped conversations, [Abdullah] laid out a road map of the network's capabilities and intentions and explained how the hierarchy was rebuilt after the death or capture of Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan. Mr. Abdullah provided names and descriptions of dozens of Qaeda members, helping authorities to disrupt terrorist plots in Germany, Italy, Britain and the United States."

The European Parliament approved a directive Feb. 11 favoring mutual recognition of same-sex couples and their families when they relocate among the 15 nations of the European Union. The vote was 269-225 with 46 abstentions.

"By adopting the principle of mutual recognition to same-sex partnerships in the context of free movement, the European Parliament has taken up the core demands put forward by ILGA-Europe in its advocacy efforts," said the International Lesbian & Gay Association's European branch. The Parliament's proposal must be approved by the EU's Council of Ministers.

"If this directive will pass through the council as it now stands...it would remove the main obstacles hindering LGBT citizens from exercising their right of residence and free movement," said Kurt Krickler, ILGA-Europe co-chairman. "While today, a gay couple registered in Germany, for instance, is not able to move to Italy and maintain their status as a legally recognized couple, the new directive would change that."

AUSTRALIA

The full bench of the Family Court of Australia on Feb. 21 rejected Attorney General Daryl Williams' effort to invalidate a marriage between a woman, Jennifer, and a female-to-male transsexual. Kevin's birth certificate and passport now say he is male, and the couple have had two children via in vitro fertilization.



Daryl Williams

Williams might appeal to the High Court. According to his spokeswoman, "The case raises serious issues concerning the meaning of marriage under the Marriage Act."

UNITED KINGDOM

About 20 percent of Scottish queers have children and an additional 17 percent want to, a survey has found.

Only 9 percent of the parents made use of artificial insemination. Most of the children resulted from previous opposite-sex couplings.

The survey was commissioned by the Glasgow gay group Beyond Barriers. Respondents said the most important issue facing gay people is partnership rights, followed by discrimination and prejudice.

Surveyors found that two-thirds of respondents had been verbally abused by homophobes and that 23 percent had been physically attacked. Only 17 percent reported the incidents to police.

London's Metropolitan Police Service has recruited a female-to-male transsexual officer for the first time.

The 39-year-old has entered the force's officer training course. The Met said he will not be allowed to conduct physical searches of suspects because the law requires that a suspect be searched only by someone of the same gender.

A department spokesman said deliberate recruitment of trans officers "will help us make the organization more representative of the communities we serve." Other trans officers are on the force, but they switched genders after they were hired.

London's Metropolitan Police Service has created a pool of gay and lesbian officers who will be deployed when their sexual orientation could be beneficial to an investigation.

Similar pools are being created based on ethnicity. Met officers are being asked to submit details on their sexuality and ethnicity to a database that also will catalog language skills, life skills and hobbies.

The Birmingham City Council is hoping to build a gay neighborhood.

A total of 20 acres are being set aside near downtown to attract developers to a "Gay Gateway." A spokesman said Birmingham is "seriously rivaling Manchester as a place where gay people feel comfortable."

The British Broadcasting Corp. received 400 phone complaints after two men kissed