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**WORLD news**

**AFGHANISTAN**

An American working in Afghanistan who was jailed for engaging in gay sex in September has been released after it was determined he is straight and was framed.

Vincent White, 52, a finance ministry adviser, spent a month in a rat-infested Kabul prison, accused of paying an 18-year-old Afghan man \$49 for sex.

While in custody, he was forced to masturbate in front of policemen and doctors, he said. He was released after the Afghan man admitted he concocted the story while being tortured by the police.

Afghan prosecutors plan to investigate the incident to determine if White was targeted by people upset over his role in vetoing certain government contracts that would have been lucrative for Western firms and Afghan officials, according to a report in London's *Sunday Telegraph*.

"Often in countries like this when contracts get dished out, everybody gets their palms greased, and it is a bonanza for all," White said. "I wasn't prepared to let that happen, and as a result I was framed."

**ARGENTINA**

Argentina has its first gay radio station, broadcasting on the Web at ArgentinaGayRadio.com.ar.

The station broadcasts primarily music but also segments on health and gay rights issues and "a lot of joking around."

"We respect the gay tendencies in music, the preferences for Latin and electronic music," station co-founder Sergio Miranda told *Diario-hoy.net*. "Although if a listener requests folk music, it'll happen."

**AUSTRIA**

Austria's Federal Constitutional Court refused Nov. 3 to recognize a married same-sex couple for purposes of immigration.

American Lon Williams and an unnamed German man were married in the Netherlands, which grants same-sex couples full marriage rights. The German was then offered a job in Austria but had to turn it down when Austria refused to recognize his husband as his spouse.

The couple plans to appeal to the Federal Administrative Court and, if necessary, the European Court of Human Rights.

The gay rights group Homosexual Initiative Vienna commented, "EU law unequivocally provides for any third-country spouse to join his or her EU spouse exercising the right to free movement within EU territory."

The organization said Austria's refusal to recognize the couple's marriage violated Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which bans discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation in areas that include free movement and family reunion.

**CANADA**

The premier of the Canadian province of Alberta, Ralph Klein, remains defiantly opposed to same-sex marriage even though it has been legalized in British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Quebec and the Yukon Territory.



Alberta Premier Ralph Klein says "no" to same-sex unions

That leaves only Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador (which is expected to move next), New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Prince Edward Island, which account for only 14 percent of Canada's population.

"We will fight, I guess, and use whatever legal means are at our disposal to make sure the solemnization of marriage remains between a man and a woman," Klein said Nov. 9.

The federal government has referred four questions on same-sex marriage to the Supreme Court of Canada, which is reviewing a draft law to legalize gay matrimony nationwide.

**EUROPEAN UNION**

The 26th European Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association drew some 220 activists to Budapest from Oct. 27 to 31 to discuss "Coming Out to the EU."

The European Union increased in size this year from 15 nations to 25 nations.

The activists were addressed by Hungary's minister of equal opportunities, Kinga Göncz, and by Joop Verboom, a representative of the EU presidency.

The 2005 confab will be in Paris, and the 2006 meeting will be in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The new nominee for European justice commissioner, Franco Frattini, is more gay-friendly than the previous nominee, who withdrew from consideration under fire for calling homosexuality a "sin."

Frattini said during European Parliament hearings Nov. 15 and 16 that same-sex couples who are legally coupled in any one of the 25 nations of the European Union must be recognized as a couple by all of the nations. He said that this is stipulated by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

"The right of freedom of movement for individuals...is a basic right that must be guaranteed irrespective of the fact that some member states have or do not have legal rules regarding same-sex couples," Frattini said. "That is an obvious principle."



Franco Frattini

Slovakia and Austria, among others, have balked at this requirement.

Fourteen of the 25 EU nations do not have a mechanism for legal recognition of same-sex couples.

**ITALY**

Only 32 percent of Italians support same-sex marriage, and only 21 percent support gay adoption, according to a Eurisko poll conducted for *La Repubblica* newspaper, which published the results in its Nov. 7 issue.

The poll also found that three-quarters of Italians are OK with unmarried couples living together and that 63 percent are fine with divorce.

Italy's Tuscany region banned discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity Nov. 10. It is reportedly the first Italian region to do so. The measure was passed by the Tuscany Regional Council.

The law "grant[s] to every person free expression and manifestation of the person's sexual orientation and of the person's gender identity."

It also gives same-sex couples rights in the area of health care decisions and promises to promote cultural events "open to all lifestyles." Violators will be fined up to \$3,900.

**ISRAEL**

Israeli gays and lesbians will automatically inherit a deceased partner's estate unless it was willed to someone else, following a groundbreaking Nov. 13 ruling by the Nazareth District Court, *The Jerusalem Post* reported.