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## world

### EUROPE

#### Prime Minister Says Poland Is Gay-Friendly

To the astonishment of activists and others, Polish Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski said Aug. 30 that the nation is gay-friendly.

Speaking with European Union officials in Brussels, Belgium, he said: "I ask you not to believe in the myth of Poland as an anti-Semitic, homophobic and xenophobic country.... People with such [homosexual] preferences have full rights in Poland; there is no tradition in Poland of persecuting such people."

He added that Poland has many gay bars and magazines as well as "people of such a persuasion holding high public positions, on the right and not just on the left."



Polish Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski (right, with President Lech Kaczynski) claims his nation is gay-friendly.

In reality, Poland's gay community has been under attack from national and local officials in recent years—both before, and especially after, the conservative Law and Justice Party came to power last year.

President Lech Kaczynski, Jaroslaw's twin brother, was mayor of Warsaw when the 2004 and 2005 Gay Pride parades were banned. He reportedly called gays "perverts."

Jaroslaw has complained that Polish "gay people are allowed to conduct perverse demonstrations in the streets, but it is forbidden to discuss the issue of moral censorship."

Previous Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz said that if a homosexual "tries to infect others with their homosexuality, then the state must intervene in this violation of freedom."

Human Rights Watch said in February that the Law and Justice Party "brings to power officials with long records of opposing gay and lesbian rights."

In response to Kaczynski's remarks in Brussels, Robert Biedron, president of Poland's Campaign Against Homophobia, commented: "Maybe Jaroslaw Kaczynski and I live in two different countries? ... This government is trying to use even such measures as drawing a [link] between organized crime, drugs, pedophiles and gay rights organizations!"

#### Gay Adoption OK'd at Scottish Parliament

A measure to allow gay and unmarried couples to adopt children cleared

its first hurdle Sept. 14 in the Scottish Parliament. The vote was 103-8.

The bill must pass through two additional stages, and Christian organizations and some members of Parliament have promised a vigorous battle against it. The measure also would allow children who are not suitable for adoption to remain with a foster family indefinitely.

### AMERICAS

#### Quebec Might Get Gay Premier

Openly gay Parti Québécois leader André Boisclair could be the next premier of the Canadian province of Quebec, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

A new poll indicated his party holds a 5 percent lead over the ruling Liberals in the 2007 provincial election. The leader of the largest party in a provincial legislature is customarily appointed premier.

"The chances are good [I'll be premier], but I have to earn the confidence of people," Boisclair, 40, told Radio-Canada.

If chosen, Boisclair has promised to push for a new referendum on Quebec independence. He told Radio-Canada he also hopes to change attitudes toward gay politicians.

#### Uruguay to Legalize Same-Sex Unions

A civil union bill passed Uruguay's Senate in a 25-2 vote Sept. 12.

The gay-specific sections of the bill were voted on separately and passed 16-12. The measure advanced to the House of Representatives, where it is expected to pass easily.

Under the legislation, two people who have lived together for five years in a marriage-like relationship—"whatever their sex, identity or sexual option may be"—will automatically acquire the rights and obligations of a married couple. They also could choose to officially register their relationship after five years. The law is expected to be in force by the end of the year.



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