



12 Zmeica str., sector 4, Bucharest, Romania | PO Box 1-410 Bucharest
tel. +4 0728.673.673
contact@asociatiaprovita.ro
www.asociatiaprovita.ro | www.RupeTacerea.ro | www.potisalvaoviata.ro

Bucharest, Jan 3, 2009

*His Excellency, The Honorable
Jean-Maurice Ripert, Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of France to the United Nations
245 East 47th Street
44th Floor
New York, NY 10017*

Re.: Political Declaration Regarding Sexual Orientation and Identity

Your Excellency:

PRO VITA Bucharest is a nongovernmental, nonprofit, civic organization which promotes the interests of the natural family, marriage, and the welfare of children, both born and unborn. We monitor legislation and policy, domestically and internationally, and lobby in favor of policies and legislation which benefit the family, children, parents, and marriage. PRO VITA espouses the marital union between a man and a woman and promotes the view, contained in Article 16(a) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that the natural family is the foundation of society and is entitled to protection by the society and the state.

I hereby respond to the Political Declaration Regarding Sexual Orientation and Identity which the Republic of France recently initiated, circulated to other member states for signature, and then submitted to the General Secretary of the United Nations.

We have carefully reviewed the Declaration and must express disagreement with some of the notions it contains. Though Romania, as a member of the European Union, acceded to the Declaration, undoubtedly as a matter of political convenience, the people of Romania by and large do not identify with the novel and radical notions expressed in the Declaration. Therefore, it would be erroneous for France or any entity associated with the Declaration to claim that the Romanian government, in signing the Declaration, spoke on behalf of the Romanian people.

Our position is as follows.

There is no internationally recognized social category or group based on sexual orientation or gender identity and, consequently, no international human right to nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We view the Declaration as an attempt to create such a group and right and express our opposition. None of the international treaties or instruments related to nondiscrimination encompass these social categories or norms.

Accordingly, it would be more appropriate for the world's wealthier and more powerful states to cease seeking to impose their views of sexuality and social norms on the rest of the world. We are a community of nations not of states. It is lamentable that France and the other signatories of the Declaration are ignoring the highly sensitive and controversial nature of the subject of the Declaration and are insensitive to the cultural and religious norms of most of the world's societies related to sexuality and sexual conduct.

Furthermore, sexual orientation and gender identity are artificially constructed social categories. There is nothing natural or immutable about sexual orientation and gender identity. For many decades after the adoption of the Universal Charter on Human Rights the international community spoke with one voice regarding the need to protect from discrimination various categories of individuals whose traits were immutably defined at birth or were so entrenched in human consciousness that international consensus existed about the need to protect them, among them race, national origin or ethnicity, and religion. In contrast, sexual orientation and gender identity are loose concepts which find no support in good faith scientific investigation. These categories relate to anomalous conduct individuals consciously adopt. Unfortunate choices deliberately made cannot in good faith seek or expect protection from the international community. Please respect the cultural sensitivities of nations.

We remind the signatories of the Declaration that a 1995 United Nations document, known as the Beijing Platform for Action validated the international consensus that gender is to be "understood in its ordinary, generally accepted usage." Nothing has changed since that time to justify the injection of radical notions of "sexual orientation and gender identity" in international instruments.

We further express the view that the Declaration is counterproductive. In seeking to inject in international instruments artificially constructed social concepts which are alien to most nations, the Declaration in fact promotes confusion in areas in which there should be no confusion and in which until recently, and for thousands of years, there was no confusion. States and governments around the world should concern themselves with ensuring that the sexual identity of youth is properly developed not distorted. In this respect the Declaration is a disservice to those it allegedly seeks to help. The citizens of the world expect the United Nations to provide guidance and clarity in matters of common concern. We believe that with respect to the subject of the Declaration, it has failed.

A related concern is that the notions of sexual orientation and gender identity are unclear and lack definitional firmness. For this reason they can be construed to encompass some of the most destructive and immoral sexual conduct, thereby undermining the physical, emotional, psychological, and moral health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of society. Increasing numbers of children and minors are exposed to immoral sexual conduct, sexual exploitation, sexual material, public displays of immoral sexual conduct, and sex trafficking. The Declaration seeks to validate deliberately chosen life styles which, due to their definitional ambiguity, can be construed to permit sexual abuse of minors. Therefore, a conflict with the rights of children enshrined in the International Covenant on the Rights of the Child (1989) can be easily predicted.



12 Zmeica str., sector 4, Bucharest, Romania | PO Box 1-410 Bucharest
tel. +4 0728.673.673
contact@asociatiaprovita.ro
www.asociatiaprovita.ro | www.RupeTacerea.ro | www.potisalvaoviata.ro

On the other hand we also emphasize Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the right of Member States to enact laws that meet “just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society”. We also state that discrimination and violence are unacceptable means to settle matters, but must add that to every right there is a corresponding obligation. One such obligation is to avoid the sexualization of every facet of societal expression. Moreover, the Declaration is selective in its approach and ignores the plight of other groups that also need the world’s attention. In this respect, in focusing on sexual orientation and gender identity, the Declaration seems to be elevating to a special status, worthy of the world’s immediate attention and concern, these two artificially created social categories. We express categorical disapproval of such attempts, as we do of the more general attempt to create, ex nihilo, "new rights" "progressive rights" or rights of a "new (or next) generation." This is all the more inappropriate considering that humanity faces more immediate and more serious concerns to resolve, such as poverty, demographic imbalances caused to a great extent by misplaced United Nations practices, abortion, or the environment.

Nor can we ignore the attempt reflected in the Declaration to forcefully and illogically interpret existing international human rights instruments to encompass the highly controversial notions of "sexual orientation and gender identity." Along these lines we applaud the opposition of such European Union member states as Poland, Ireland, and Malta to any references in the Declaration to the so-called Yogyakarta Principles.

Attempts at creating a hierarchy of human rights where special attention or status is conferred on sexual orientation and gender identity, indeed an obsession of sorts, are also rejected. We especially reject such attempts where rights to non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are constructed and promoted to the detriment of the historic rights of individuals, such as freedom of expression, religion, conscience, or association.

We urge the United Nations, the European Union and the Council of Europe to use their vast resources to fortify and protect the family and marriage as the fundamental and natural institutions of society.

In closing, we join our voices with all those who oppose the Declaration and respectfully request that our Note be filed, submitted, and considered in all relevant United Nations committees as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Bogdan Stanciu
President
PRO VITA Bucharest