

01 October 2014

TO: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

FROM: Dr Michael Davidson, Director, Core Issues Trust

TOPIC: **Viewpoint Discrimination: The UK governments' determination to disallow contrary views around the discredited idea that sexual preference is inborn.**

DATE: **1 October 2014, Working Session 13:** 10.00 – 1.00am (Fundamental Freedoms II Including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief)

.In 2012 during the Olympic Games, the UK's primary gay-advocacy group 'Stonewall' ran a bus advertisement on 1000 London double-decker buses reading "Some people are gay. Get over it!". The posters were bright red, bold and intended to encourage acceptance of the view that sexual preference is inborn. Countering the advertisement, Core Issues Trust, which supports freedom of choice and LGBT dignity but works to support individuals with unwanted sexual feelings, commissioned a similar advertisement on only 25 busses. It too was bold and bright red. The counter advert read "Not gay, ex-gay, post-gay and proud! Get over it". Mayor Boris Johnson, on the eve of mayoral elections for the city of London, instructed the banning of the Core Issues Trust advert (only), and actively promoted the Stonewall advertisement during his campaign for mayor. The mayor widely accepted popular opinion in wide-spread media reports, that his own disapproval banned the Core Issues Trust advertisement. He wrote letters to politicians confirming his personal intervention.

A Judicial Review sought by the Trust in 2013 was refused, and costs awarded against it. Stonewall adverts continued to run despite an appeal which recognised that, under UK law, "ex-gay" persons are protected by equalities legislation. Appellate judges remitted the case back to the High Court. That court was asked to assess Mayor Johnson's personal intervention and instruction to ban the Trust's advertisement. In June 2014 Mrs Justice Lang accepted the Mayor's testimony that he did not personally ban the advertisement, arguing that the word "instructed" in this case, does not mean what it does to most Britons. The Case continues.

Such viewpoint discrimination, and the favouring of one side of an argument, in the year when the Royal College of Psychiatrists have conceded that homosexuality is not genetic, is discrimination of the clearest order and a violation of both public office and purse.

In this case, a small Christian charity, with limited resources, faces the high office of the Lord Mayor of London and the full resources of Transport for London's Legal Department, a well resourced public body, using tax-payer money to promote one political point of view.

Core Issues Trust requests the participating states of the OSCE, and the ODIHR to:

- (1) observe the UK government's failure to protect the 'ex-gay' minority by promoting viewpoint discrimination by public bodies including the judiciary, and
- (2) recognise the dangers of political indoctrination currently evident in UK political society which allows only one viewpoint to be promoted in advertising space, and
- (3) note the imbalance of resources being exploited in this case by those refusing to allow the expression of a contrary point of view.