

Trade unions condemn criminalisation of LGBTIQ+ people and activists in Russia

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The EPSU General Secretary and EPSU Vice-President Thomas Kattnig joined Europe's trade union leaders in condemning the acts and attacks of the Russian government against people and activists of the LGBT+ community. On the 30th of November the Russian Supreme Court banned the activities of the "international LGBT movement" in the country. As there is no such organisation in existence, there was no defendant in court.

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The ETUC considers this ruling a further step towards the criminalisation of LGBTIQ+ people at work and in society, in continuation with the constant degradation of the Rule of Law in Russia even more challenging since the suspension of Russia from the Council of Europe that also works for LGBTIQ+ equality.

It threatens a wide range of human rights. A person found guilty of displaying LGBTIQ+ symbols faces up to 15 days in detention for the first offense and up to four years in prison for a repeat offense. The authorities may include individuals suspected of involvement with an extremist organization in the countrywide "list of extremists" and freeze their bank accounts. People deemed to be involved with an extremist organization are barred from running for public office.

The wording "*International LGBT Movement*" is very ambiguous, creating the risk that the ruling will allow the authorities to arbitrarily prosecute anyone, including trade unions for any activities related to LGBTIQ+ rights, as indeed Russian police has started to do right after the ruling of the court was made public

The ETUC recalls that, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties, States have the legal obligation to protect LGBTIQ+ people from violence and discrimination, including the obligations to protect individuals from violence, to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to safeguard freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly for LGBTIQ+ people.

This further attack against the LGBTIQ+ people and activists is part of a wider attack on liberties (self determination of women, civil, trade union and political rights) by the dictatorial regime of Putin.

The European trade union movement, ETUC, EPSU and the affiliates will fight any discrimination

and prejudice. We want that workplaces and trade unions are safe and inclusive places for members of the LGBTIQ+ community. We support LGBTIQ+ equality in the world of work

The ETUC commits to work further with affiliates to campaign and provide support for all LGBTIQ+ workers.

The statement was adopted at the Executive Committee Meeting of 06-07 December 2023: <https://etuc.org/en/document/etuc-condemns-increasing-criminalisation-lgbtq-people-and-activists-russia>

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