

*Council of Europe*  
*The Secretary General*

Strasbourg, 24 January 2013

Dear Chairman,

I am informed that the Duma will examine in a first reading in the coming days draft legislation which deals with the prohibition of the so-called "propaganda" of homosexuality in respect of minors. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding this draft legislation.

I call upon you, as Chairman of the Duma and one of the leaders of the main political group in the Duma not to support this draft. It is important to take into consideration that relevant international obligations undertaken by your country are not put into question, in particular the obligation to ensure freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination which are set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

In this respect, you are certainly aware of the fact that a number of cases are currently pending before the European Court of Human Rights concerning the incrimination of the so-called "promotion of homosexuality".

I call upon the Russian Duma to demonstrate its commitment to the full respect of the human rights and equal treatment of all individuals in society, and to show political leadership in rejecting initiatives which are likely to increase intolerance and prejudices in society at large. The Council of Europe is ready to offer all necessary assistance to this effect.

I would be grateful if you could transmit my letter to the leaders of the different political groups in the Duma.

Yours sincerely,



Thorbjørn Jagland

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Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly  
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