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Meeting report : Gay – Straight Alliance, Eurovision Song Contest 2008. Organization Board, Ministry of Interior of Republic of Serbia

Upon a request of Gay – Straight Alliance, Boris Milićević was hosted at a meeting at Broadcast corporation of Serbia (RTS), meeting was held 24th April 2008. Meeting was also attended by board of organizers ESC 2008. representatives, and Ministry of interior officials, in charge of manifestation security.

ESC Organizer's Board was represented by Sandra Suša (executive producer ESC 2008), Lieutenant Zoran Alimpić (deputy in charge Police representative at the Ministry of Interior) and Lieutenant Slobodan Vukolić (deputy in charge Police representative at Central Police Intendance of the City of Belgrade).

This meeting was requested by GSA, for the security issues raised, as well as in domestic public media as in foreign media and public for the security of the visitors of the contest held in Belgrade in time 17th-24th May 2008. The interest on the matter was raised on the issue of the security of LGBT fans of the ESC, whose arrival to Belgrade is expected in huge numbers.

The issue, and fears upon this matter are mostly a product of lots of threats of cleric - fascistic organizations in Serbia - such as Obraz, whose president Mladen Obradović uses every single public appearance to announce open hunt on LGBT population of fans who are about to attend the ESC 2008. Considering times past occurrences and omissions made on security issues, mostly hostile position of the population in Serbia to LGBT population (facts taken from the public study made by CeSID for GSA this April) and existence of the real occurrences that could lead to lots of incidents, that are going to jeopardize the security of the fans from Serbia and from abroad countries – GSA took steps on its own potentiality to put pressure upon security formations and organizers to prevent any flaws on the security issues.

Police representatives attending the meeting said that Police is always taking huge attention upon events of huge scale, in order to protect the citizens – they also said that their attention upon this particular event is the highest possible at this moment and will be raised as needed in order to keep its fans in maximum security.

Police representatives have informed GSA that the security precautions are about to be at highest point by engaging the most of the preassinged forces for the ESC during the peak

of the manifestation, as well in Serbia as in Belgrade. Police representatives underlined that not only manifestation itself is going to be under large amount of security forces, saying that rather all turistic attractions, hotels, motels, hostels, restaurants and public rallies are going to be fully secured.

The Police representatives said that their intelligence is aware of all the possible risk, and that Police forces are going to take equal measures to every citizen engaged in possible incidents, and all in order to prevent, and suppress the incidents and gain security for all fans. Treatment equal for all citizens include security for LGBT population also, but without any special precautions on the matter.

GSA was given a word that there is willingness to cooperate on LGBT population security in general, as well as on this particular event. The word said was also including general prevention on any violence and discrimination upon LGBT population.

The members of the O.B. of ESC 2008. said that their main objective is that all the guests leave with high satisfactory level of the event, but they also said that there is huge responsibility as well as on guests, as on the organizers.

All the attending parties agreed on the fact that the ESC 2008. is one huge and important event, the event that has to bring brightest of all the visions from Serbia and Belgrade, and that all precautions available are mandatory in order to prevent incidents and violence of any kind.

Attending GSA members warned the Organizers Board and Ministry representatives that they both carry huge burden of responsibility to prevent any possible violence raging on the fans, especially the possible violence on LGBT population. GSA also asked for the highest precaution measures on eventual violent offenders.

GSA members informed other attending parties that, despite all the warranties given by the Police representatives in order to prevent any violence on ESC fans, GSA and its domestic and foreign partners are going to watch on any potential violence, and/or any announcement of violence of any kind, in order to make a reaction and to presumably prevent any incident.

GSA Info Centre