

BRUSSELS

SAT 20.05.23

PRIDE



THE BELGIAN & EUROPEAN PRIDE

Protect the Protest

Theme of Brussels Pride, 20 May 2023

Protest is a fundamental human right. Today, this right is subject to all kinds of pressure all over the world, and Europe is no exception. The theme of Brussels Pride 2023 is "**Protect the Protest**", a slogan that serves as a rallying call for everyone to exercise their fundamental right without hindrance or violence.

Protest comes in different forms: in the street, in a meeting, alone, with family, virtually, in the attire of your choice. There are many objectives: asserting oneself, debating, contesting, challenging and encouraging a change in norms towards greater justice and equality.

A right for all

It is illegal to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ people. Our rights must be defended and laws enforced. A woman has the right to marry a woman. A male couple has the right to adopt a child. Transgender people have the right to have their gender identity legally recognised. In Belgium, these rights were won through protests that condemned the unacceptable discrimination and violence suffered by LGBTQIA+ people.

The LGBTQIA+ movement was born from struggle! It is our duty to remember the Stonewall riots in New York in the late 1960s. At the time, the Stonewall Inn's gay, lesbian, bi, trans, queer customers protested against the recurrent raids of the bar by the police services. This event gave a voice to the LGBTQIA+ movement. In the wake of this event, numerous, much larger scale protests were organised on a much larger scale all over the world.

Today we aim to underline that the right to demonstrate, to protest and to express an opinion is essential and can be expressed in different ways! In the street, on social media and in companies, schools and institutions.

However, this right is being violated around the world and the rights that have been hard won over the past decades are too often being called into question.

It has become all the more important to protect this right. Our struggle is far from over and our reality, which lies outside the spectrum of heteronormativity, cisnormativity and endosexnormativity, continues to be all too often denied!

International solidarity

Around the world, and even within the European Union, governments and institutions are restricting freedoms.

In Poland, for example, the creation of "LGBTQIA+-free zones" is harming the community's visibility. In Hungary, the "anti-LGBT propaganda" law has removed anyone belonging to the community from the media, schools and public debate. In Russia, laws passed over the past 10 years have blown apart and silenced the LGBTQIA+ community. In the United States, a growing number of laws are being passed that reduce the rights and visibility of LGBTQIA+ people.

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Our country is not immune from this international reactionary wave driven by conservative movements. We must remain vigilant.

Protest: A right, not a privilege

We defend the right to protest and we are calling on all governments of the world to comply with this fundamental human right, in particular for LGBTQIA+ people.

Brussels Pride 2023

The Belgian LGBTQIA+ movement knows all too well how fragile freedoms of association and expression are. However, they are vital for progress. These rights must be better guaranteed, the diversity of sexual orientations respected, and the self-determination of identities and gender expression encouraged, in Belgium, Europe and around the world.

#ProtectTheProtest

"Protect the Protest is a campaign by Amnesty International.
With Brussels Pride, we are happy to reinforce this global campaign by focusing on LGBTQIA+ events around the world.

Further information:

- English: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/protect-the-protest/>
- French: <https://www.amnesty.be/campagne/droit-protester/droit-de-protester>
- Dutch: <https://www.amnesty-international.be/wat-we-doen/thema/protect-the-protest>