

Timmy Dooley

co-President of ALDE

Stefan Löfven

President of PES

Manfred Weber

President of EPP

Brussels, 16 September 2024

Subject:

Uphold EU Values: Reprimand Bulgarian Member Parties Supporting Discrimination

Dear Presidents,

We write you today to ask you to demonstrate your full commitment to defending our most important European values of inclusion and tolerance and to show your full adhesion to the respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities as stated in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union.

On 7 August 2024, the Bulgarian parliament adopted a law that bans the “*propaganda, promotion or incitement in any way, directly or indirectly, of ideas and views related to non-traditional sexual orientation and/or determination of gender identity other than biological*” in schools. Despite the outcry and the calls from civil society organisations to veto the bill, the Socialist President of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev, signed it into law on Friday 16 August.

Bulgaria then became the second country in the EU to adopt a version of the 2013 Russian ‘anti-LGBT propaganda law’. It follows the steps of Hungary, whose 2021 discriminatory law was brought by the European Commission before the Court of Justice of the EU. The Commission, supported by 16 EU Member States and the European Parliament, considered that the Hungarian law infringed Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and several other European norms.

Proposed by the far right and pro-Russian Revival party, the Bulgarian law was adopted thanks to the votes of Members of Parliament from the Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria party (GERB) which sits with the EPP, the liberal Movement for Rights and Freedoms which sits with Renew Europe and the Bulgarian Socialist Party which sits with the S&D group.

The rise of radical parties poses a significant threat to our shared principles of equality, human dignity, and the rule of law. It is crucial that you, as pro-European forces, reject any form of cooperation or normalization with these parties. Liberal democratic political families that partner with extremists undermine the very fabric of our Union and endanger the civil liberties and fundamental rights of all European citizens. We welcome that your election manifestos and declarations understand those threats and clearly reflect your commitment to the fundamental values of the Union.¹

Today, we are asking you to uphold those pledges. The adoption of the Bulgarian dreadful law constitutes a blatant violation of the EU fundamental values, and we call on you to review the membership from your political groups of the Bulgarian parties who supported it and reprimand them. This would send a clear message that your political family will not tolerate any form of state-sponsored discrimination within its ranks.

We are also asking you to request the European Commission to take all possible measures to challenge and repeal this law, as there is no place in our Union for Russian inspired anti-LGBTIQ+ laws.

We remain confident that you will show an unwavering commitment to the defense of the fundamental values of the European Union, including the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people and the rights of children to access comprehensive, safe relationship and sexual education.

Yours sincerely,

EU-Wide NGOs:



Rémy Bonny,
Forbidden Colours



Esther Martinez,
Reclaim

Bulgarian NGOs:



Radoslav Stoyanov,
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee



Nadejda Dermendjieva,
Bulgarian Fund For Women



Denitsa Lyubenova,
Deystvie



Ivan Dimov,
Single Step Foundation

ⁱ In Defence of Democracy: Declaration from the S&D, RENEW, GREENS and THE LEFT European Parliament Political Group Leaders (08/05/2024), retrieved [here](#); EPP 2024 Manifesto: Our Europe, a safe and good home for the people (07/03/2024), retrieved [here](#).