



The situation of LGBT people in Ukraine

LGBT Human Rights NASH MIR Center

Twenty Years Serving Ukrainian LGBT Community



The situation of LGBT people in Ukraine

During the Soviet period, criminal prosecution for consensual same-sex contacts between adult men was covered by Article 122 of the Criminal Court of Ukrainian Soviet Republic and envisaged up to 1 year penalty for gay sex.

Sexual relationships between women officially were not banned by law, but lesbians could face repressive psychiatric “treatment”. Transsexuality was considered as a mental disorder.

In general, society knew very little about people of “non-traditional” sexual orientation. This topic was closed to public debate until the “glasnost” (publicity) policy occurred in the late 90’s of the 20th century. Only during this period did the first publications and TV programs about homosexuals appear and Soviet citizens find out that such people existed not only abroad, but sometimes next door as well...

After the collapse of the Soviet empire and the proclamation of independence by Ukraine in 1991, our country became the first former Soviet republic to

decriminalize voluntary gay sex. Most likely, some politicians were aware that such a regressive Soviet legislative provision left on the books would interfere with their dialoguing with Western partners, so politicians tried quickly to demonstrate to Westerners their “commitment” to democratic values.

Over the next decade, progress with LGBT issues can be characterized as very slow: legislation and government policies avoided the issue as a side issue, and the theme remained as considered “shameful” for public discussion. In major cities, however, began a slow process of the formation of LGBT community and LGBT activism took its first steps.

The situation began to change rapidly in the early 21st century. The basic reasons for this were the gradual democratic changes in society, the openness of the media and penetration of the Internet, a powerful wave of LGBT activism, and the ever-increasing visibility of the community itself.

On the other hand and probably as a response to



the increased visibility of LGBTs in the society, homophobic rhetoric intensified. More often coming from the side of politicians and the church could be heard statements about “traditional family values”, as well as rejection and condemnation of LGBT people. These declarative political and church processes have intensified homophobic attitudes among Ukrainian society, and can be explained by serial psychological reactions of the closing-ranks type: incomprehension, denial, resistance, discrediting, even demonizing.



Meanwhile, with substantial support from international donors, was a growing and strengthening Ukrainian LGBT movement. Gradually it began to collaborate with elements of broader civil society – human rights groups and organizations combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic; media renewed its interest and attention on LGBT topics.

Against this background and following the example of the Russian Federation in 2011-2012, three bills to ban so-called “propaganda of homosexuality”

were proposed in the Ukrainian parliament. One of the bills passed its first reading and could potentially have become law.

However, the Ukrainian political establishment at the time declared a “multi-vector” policy: maneuvering between “friendship” with Russia on the one hand and “European integration” on the other. The adoption of such discriminatory legislation as this would have been too obvious an anti-European act. For our part, however, the multi-vector policy provided such good grounds and opportunities for joint counter-efforts by LGBT activists, human rights defenders, Western politicians and diplomats that together we managed to prevent the adoption of such a law.

State authorities again resorted to homophobic rhetoric in late 2013, when a dramatic change was announced to the anti-European policy (President Yanukovich's refusal to sign the Association agreement with the European Union in November 2013). For example, in one of his contemporaneous speech-

es, Prime-minister Azarov intimidated a crowd with the alleged fact that together with European integration Ukraine would need to recognize “gay marriages”...

It did not help them. In early 2014 was revealed and established the “Revolution of Dignity” that swept away the previous political regime. New political forces came into power in the country.

At the beginning, LGBT subjects were withdrawn from big policy considerations because more pressing issues came to the forefront for the country. These were the issues of “war and peace”, and opposition to the aggression by Russia. But over time

politicians were forced to pay attention to the scope of our LGBT citizens’ problems.

Notable progress in the realization of the rights of the LGBT community started in 2015, but the movement forward did and does not proceed smoothly –



Protester in front of Kyiv municipality [No comments]

not only positive but also negative aspects occur.

One iconic landmark in the recognition of LGBT rights was the adoption in November 2015 of amendments to the Labor Code, namely the inclusion of “sexual orientation and gender identity” to the list of anti-discrimination provisions of the labor law. Unfortunately, this amendment was adopted by the Verkhovna Rada (the Parliament) only after several failure votes. A key role was played by the fact that this change in the law was one among several Ukraine’s obligations before EU in the framework of the implementation of the desirable Visa Liberalization Action Plan (on a visa free regime) between Ukraine and the European Union.

Another example: in 2014 the Ministry of Justice started preparations for the National Human Rights Strategy, which was approved by President Poroshenko in 2015. Unfortunately, despite intensive advocacy, there was no place provided in the Strategy to mention LGBT issues.

Later, the Cabinet of Ministers did indeed approve



the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy up to 2020, which included almost all the proposals of the LGBT organizations, namely:

- Explicit inclusion of an prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the general anti-discrimination law;
- Improvement of legislation and practices to counter hate crimes against LGBT people;
- Development of the registered partnership legislation;
- Addressing health and social problems, which relate to transsexuals and intersex people.


It is indicative history of the “Equality March” (in fact, aka LGBT Pride March) in Kyiv in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In 2014 the march was banned by the authorities under the pretext of “the war is now – not the time for this”. In 2015, under high pressure Kyiv authorities allowed the march, but police organization of participants’ protection from right-wing radicals was very bad, which led to the beating of demon-

strators and police officers. In 2016 the city authorities and the police provided full assistance to ensure that the “Equality March” happened, was safe and passed through the city center of the capital. President Poroshenko expressed his support, claiming that as a Christian he would not participate in the “Equality March”, but as the president of a European state he did not see any reason that someone opposes the event.

However, legislation and public policies for LGBT citizens are still far from exemplifying full recognition of equal rights on a par with the heterosexual majority of the society.



“Fagots & drug addicts are the cause of AIDS”, “AIDS is fair for gays”, and “Perverts get out of Ukraine” (Kyiv, 2003)



As mentioned above, public opinion towards LGBTs during the years of independence was also changing. The last opinion poll, conducted at the request of Nash Mir Center at the beginning of 2016, showed that on the whole Ukrainian society still demonstrates a fairly high level of homophobia. Replying to the question about their attitudes towards people of homosexual orientation, respondents' votes were divided as following:

less than 5% – more or less positive;

60% – more or unambiguously negative;

5% – undecided in their opinion;

30% - responded, "I do not care".



The difference in attitudes according to socio-demographic groups (comparing “better – worse”): young people – the older generation; women – men; high level of education – low; East – West of the country; residents of cities – rural areas.

One previous study found that regarding the acceptance of LGBTs, a significant fact is if the respondent personally knows any lesbian or gay. If ‘yes’, then the level of acceptance is higher. Consequently, many people still base their judgments about LGBT people on secondary-information stereotypes and prejudices.

According to our observations, modern Ukrainian society as a whole does not demonstrate active intolerance towards LGBT people, but demonstrates a more latent, passive rejection.

So, it is not surprising that in such social conditions with an undercurrent, Ukrainian LGBT people face discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, hate crimes and incidents.

Monitoring shows that the nature of these problems



has changed somewhat over the last decade. In the past, cases of rights violations by law enforcement officials were dominant. Instead of counteracting crimes, officials could more readily use their authority to violate the law themselves

Thus, in the early 2000's we knew that at least in some police stations there were files on LGBT citizens, which could be used for quick access to known or suspected LGBT community members, and for blackmail with the aim of extortion and pressuring.

In cases of violation of LGBT rights, often police officers cast a "blind eye" on the problem, refusing to accept a complainant's statement regarding an alleged offense, and a LGBT victim could face even

greater psychological pressure for speaking up. Accordingly, LGBT people were afraid to contact the police, rightly fearing to get back from them more problems instead of protection.

Fortunately, in 2015-2016 there occurred a positive change in the attitudes of the law enforcement agencies towards LGBT people, which was due to a radical official upgrading of the structure and composition of new police.

A few years ago activity grew taken by various homophobic groups that preyed on gays using the internet: homophobes invited victims to fake meetings, and then abused the victims mentally and physically, and made offensive video clips and put them on the



"Equality March" (Kyiv, 2015)



Internet.

During the last couple of years we have seen a rise in hate crimes of an increasingly violent type, with the use of weapons. Presently and this time, the threat comes from the right-wing nationalist groups.

What is and how is life conducted in a modern LGBT community? Kyiv and two or three major regional centers have clubs and other recreational facilities, as well as established nonprofit “community centers” operating with the support of Western donors in those regional cities. We can confidently state that real gay communities have appeared in large cities, and consequently LGBT people from across



Picket near Ukrainian Parliament making our demand to include “sexual orientation and gender identity” into the antidiscrimination article of the Labor Code (Kyiv, 2015)

the country strive to move to those cities. Parallel to this, intense life now takes place within social networks and dating sites – you can meet there and communicate with soul mates without the necessity of going outside.

Today, people in their twenties have many fewer problems with self-acceptance of their sexual orientation. However, as it was before, not each gay person can dare to exit “out of closet”.

The LGBT movement has also passed along a difficult path during the past years. Active growth of LGBT groups and organizations rose in the 2005-2010 period, when Ukraine began to receive financial assistance from international donors for the prevention and combating of HIV/AIDS. Created then were more than two dozen gay groups and organizations across the country to work with one of the most vulnerable groups, men who have sex with men. The organized activity of the lesbian community also increased.

Unfortunately, after the flow of funding began to decline, many projects were cancelled. Altogether, ac-



tive work in 2016 is carried out by not more than ten organizations and their regional branches.

Another problem is the LGBT people in the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and eastern Ukraine. After the Russian occupation of the Crimea, Russian legislative acts holding sway there included the odious law banning so-called “propaganda of homosexuality”. New Crimean authorities clearly expressed the view that they would not allow “any gay parades” on the peninsula. Information and news appeared about the emigration from Crimea of LGBT people leaving unacceptable situations in the occupied territory (for example, the owner of a gay bar departed from Sevastopol). A much larger flow of internal emigration followed from the area seized by the pro-Russian separatists in the east of Ukraine. In those oblasts more chaos and lawlessness reigns, making an open life for LGBT people impossible: refugees report the LGBT rights situation there has regressed back to Soviet era times.

Ukraine is going through a particularly difficult period in its history, transformative. Nevertheless, we

live hopefully in the expectation that our country substantially and finally has chosen a democratic European way of development. This attitudinal stance provides us cautious optimism about progress on LGBT human rights, reduction of homophobia in the public consciousness, and the thriving, growth, enhancement and increased visibility of the LGBT community and its integration into wider society.

Ukraine functions more and more in line with global trends, so our hope is that after one to two decades we will reach the same position regarding LGBT issues as in other democratic countries.



“Equality March” (Kyiv, 2016)

About the LGBT Human Rights NASH MIR Center

Nash Mir is a national Ukrainian civil society organization whose aim is the implementation and protection of the rights and freedoms – and the satisfaction of the public, social, cultural, political, economic and other interests – of the Ukrainian LGBT community.

History of the organization

Our history dates back to the middle of the 1990s, when a small group of enthusiasts from Luhansk in the east of the country decided it was time to take action to bring into being organized reactive social work specific to our needs.



At the time and to all appearances there was “no problem with gays” in Ukraine – until they declared themselves! Local judiciary officials in Luhansk initially did not know what to do with our organization. In an interview in a national

newspaper, one of them said: “How can we recognize them at the state level, make a legal entity? We have no legislative base and no precedents, although it looks that their orientation is not prohibited... However, if I will register them, then, sorry, will masturbators come to get the registration too? ... And what about morality?” And so under false pretenses we were denied registration.

Of course, we did not put up with such obvious discrimination. Ultimately Nash Mir was officially registered in late 1999, after nearly a year of hard struggle for its legitimate rights and constant attention to this issue by the various international human rights organizations.

Since then, our activities have been aimed at both the LGBT community and the Ukrainian society as a whole. Now we focus our efforts on the following:

- Monitoring LGBT rights violations and reporting about these occurrences.



- Legal aid and counseling to victims of sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination and hate crimes.
- Legal education of LGBT community.
- Joint actions with other organizations for the protection of equal rights for LGBT people at the legislative and political levels.
- Strategic litigation as part of advocacy work.
- Information and education on LGBT issues.

Nash Mir is a co-founder of the Council of LGBT Organizations of Ukraine that unites the vast majority of LGBT groups, and is one part of the Coalition for Combating Discrimination in Ukraine, which aims to promote equality and overcome discrimination in Ukrainian society.

Further along in this brochure is a detailed account of the directions of our work and the results produced.

Monitoring and its results


Collection of information about the LGBT situation in Ukraine is at the heart of our work. We monitor changes in legislation, the current state policies on relevant issues, statements of officials, politicians and public figures on LGBT issues, online publications and media, and violations of LGBT citizens' rights.

Nash Mir supports the work of the monitoring network, which includes LGBT activists from different cities. With their help, we acquire information on what is happening at the local community level.

The number of rights violations cases that we collect is growing steadily in recent years. 54 cases were



The founding members of Nash Mir Center: the Constituent Assembly of the organization (Lugansk, 1998)



documented in 2015, 70 – in 2014, and 162 – just for the first three quarters of 2016. It is necessary to clarify that these figures do not mean a rapid growth of violations. They reflect the growing awareness of dignity by LGBT citizens, and represent a gradual transition from silence over violations of their rights to active opposition. Also, our monitoring network for collecting information is expanding.

For quantitative estimates, we conduct LGBT surveys via the Internet. For example, a survey dealt with hate crimes in September 2016. About half a thousand gay men responded to questions.

Procedurally, some of our baseline and stored infor-

mation data is sourced and updated from other co-operating LGBT groups and human rights organizations.

The finished result of this work: our annual reports on the situation of LGBT people in Ukraine, specialized reports for special subjects or specific preparations for a requesting international organization.

Information provided by Nash Mir has been used, inter alia, in annual reports of Ukrainian Ombudsman (2013-2015), the US State Department reports on human rights in the world (2007-2015), OSCE/ODIHR reports, the United Nations Universal periodic review (2008, 2012), and the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, and more.

Monitoring and reporting are essential for human rights work – these processes highlight the problems, provide arguments supporting debates, and comprise the basis for development of recommendations and follow-up advocacy.



Nash Mir's Community Center in Lugansk (1999)



Protecting the rights of LGBT people

Nash Mir provides free services access to primary legal advice, and full representation and protection of rights for persons facing discrimination, hate crimes or other problems based on homo- or transphobia.

Primary consultation includes analysis of the case, the proposal of an algorithm of actions for the protection of victims' rights, assessment of the expected results of the human rights process; and, in case of need, we provide consultation and assistance in the preparation of the statement to the law enforcement authorities.

Comprehensive protection implies the search for and hiring of a lawyer to represent the interests of the victim during the investigation and trial.

Every year we provide around 50 initial consultations (an upward trend) and support several human rights cases to conclusion.

The main difficulty is fear on the part of the victims to assert their rights: in other words, their fear of

facing possible homophobia from the police and prosecutors' office, and/or their lack of confidence in the force of law and the efficiency of the judicial system.


Also, we are often faced with the difficulty of finding a friendly and professional lawyer to conduct a case, especially if the process involves case-filing in some provincial town.

In our opinion and the opinion of other experts, there must be more successful examples of the human rights process in order to motivate LGBT people to defend their rights. To date, pursued cases unfortunately are few. In future, surely more successful cases and outcomes will in turn engender increases in case numbers.

In spite of this underuse so far by victims, we consider our assistance in protect-



“GAY RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS”. Picket organized by Nash Mir in support of a student dismissed from University for his homosexuality (Kyiv, 2005)



ing LGBT rights as one of the main thrusts of our work. The process and the results highlight the existing problems, help to protect the victims' rights, to punish the offenders and to promote crime prevention in the future – and raise community morale.

Legal education of LGBT community

We believe that it is necessary to raise the level of legal awareness and legal culture among the LGBT community, because foreknowledge can help them in defending and protecting their rights.

The work of awareness rising includes trainings in le-

gal education, and also the preparation and distribution of specialized literature.

Example: the booklet “Me and the police”, which we republished several times to reflect changes in legislation. The primary purpose of the publication is to give to LGBT people the most important and urgent information on their contact with law enforcement officials. Included: the explanation of legal norms, legislation references, and recommendations. The booklet is the size of a credit card and can fit in wallet or pocket to be “at hand” any time.

We hold trainings for the community in collaboration





with local LGBT organizations and activists. Training topics over time are modified to meet changing needs and current situations. The training structure is a good platform from which LGBT people share their knowledge and experience in solving various problems. Such sharing and peer-to-peer learning unites our local communities and makes us stronger!

Advocacy

It is salutary to cite a few examples of our successful advocacy of LGBT rights, which we conducted together with other groups in recent years:


- Preventing the adoption of a law banning so-called “propaganda of homosexuality”;
- The inclusion of LGBT components in the Action Plan to implement the National Human Rights Strategy;
- Coverage of human rights issues faced by LGBT people in Ukraine, subsequently included in the Ombudsman's annual reports and a number of international organizations.

Assuredly in our situation, a positive result directly depends on the presence of political will. One of the most effective mechanisms for a long time was our encouragement of an inflowing international message impact on Ukrainian authorities. To potentiate this impact we still spend a lot of energy monitoring and reporting on LGBT rights in Ukraine – relaying topical, accurate information to our country's foreign partners.

We ask this at each meeting with foreign politicians and diplomats: “Please pick up on topics relevant to LGBT people in dialogues with your Ukrainian partners. Let them get used to being asked about our community's issues. At least, you will then facilitate our leaders' understanding of the essence of the issues, so they form and have answers... because they strive to attain visibility as “European politicians”.



Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, at a meeting with representatives of Nash Mir (Kyiv, 2007)



In the changed new situation, we expect that the new political forces will not simply declare their pro-European intentions, but work actively in the European direction. Still, we have to push them in that direction.

Many difficult issues are on the agenda that need to be solved in legislation for the subsequent implementation of closer ties with the EU: improved protection against hate crimes, introduction of the institution of registered partnerships, improving the practice of protecting against discrimination, etc.



The fight against hate crimes

One of the topical issues in our work is countering hate crimes. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian legislation is still very weak regarding this matter, and crimes based on intolerance towards homosexual or transgender persons are not mentioned in the Criminal Code.

Thus, the work of countering hate crimes should be done in several ways:

- Improvement or creation of the relevant legislation;
- The inclusion of monitoring and counteraction to crimes into the sphere of police work;
- Education of LGBT community members to raise their awareness about these issues, to motivate them to report such incidents and to strive to defend their rights.

The continuing gradual transformation of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies – the creation of a new police force – gives us great hope. Now police repre-



sentatives come to our events and talk about human rights – this is a major breakthrough for Ukraine!

We are specifically working on the topic with the support from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The registered partnership for LGBT people


For the second quarter of 2017, Action Plan for the National Strategy on Human Rights provides “to develop and submit to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine the draft law on legalization of registered civil partnerships for opposite-sex and same-sex couples in Ukraine, taking into consideration their proprie-

tary and non-proprietary rights, including ownership and inheritance of property, support of one partner by another in the event of disability, constitutional right not to testify against the partner”.

Note that this statement sets forth quite optimistic plans for Ukraine.

In our opinion, the partnership problem first requires a comprehensive study be done, as questions exist but no agreed solutions: Who can gain access to the institution of registered partnership? What are the rights and responsibilities that such partnerships should provide? What should define the difference between partnership and marriage? Which authority should be authorized to carry out the registration





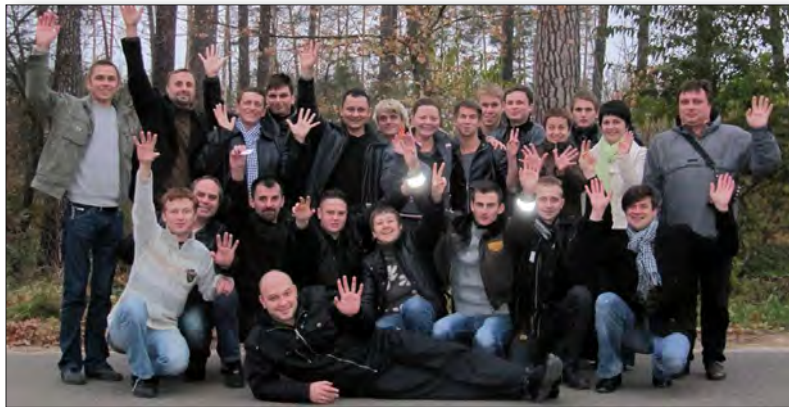
of partnerships? Should partnership status be noted in a citizen's passport?

Since 2015 Nash Mir has stepped up its work in this direction: we collect factual data on the current status of same-sex couples in Ukraine (we provided and conducted 9 focus group interviews with LGBT people in different regions especially on the topic); we performed an analysis of legislation and existing legal issues (prepared in the format of an analytical note) and proposed two versions of the applicable bills. This issue was discussed in depth at the Inter-

national Conference "LGBT Issues and the European Integration of Ukraine" (March 2016) and in a round-table event with experts entitled "The Registered Partnership in Ukraine: Analysis of the Problem and Discussion of Prospects" (May 2016).

We used strategic litigation on this issue as one of the methods of advocacy. In 2014, two pairs of gay men (members of Nash Mir and their same-sex partners) filed complaints with the European Court of Human Rights. The applicants pointed out the discriminatory status of same-sex couples disadvantaged in Ukraine in matters of property in comparison with opposite-sex couples who live together but without official registration of marriage: the Family Code provides joint property rights to such latter pairs. Taking into account European trends and similar cases from other countries, we expect that the ECHR will find for our side at outcome. This will encourage the process of advocacy here.

Included in our plans are: the study of public opinion on this issue, assistance for govern-



Participants of the school for LGBT activists, organized by Nash Mir in 2011



ment components in the development of legislative proposals and the justifications for them, searching for allies among other civil society organizations and for deputies of the Parliament who would be willing to get such legislation tabled for action in the legislature.

Combating discrimination

Nash Mir is a member of the Coalition for Combating Discrimination in Ukraine. This common platform gathered under its “umbrella” an array of rather different civic organizations: defenders of the rights of national and ethnic minorities, of people with disabilities, of LGBT people, general human rights organizations, etc. The Coalition has played a significant role in developing and complementing the first Ukrainian

law on combating discrimination in history (adopted 2013). Further, it conducts active work monitoring cases of discrimination, responding to them and running awareness campaigns in this context.

Our most significant contribution to this work was the preparation of Ukraine's first overarching report on the subject, “In the Crosscurrents: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Ukraine” (2015). For the preparation of this publication we recruited about a dozen other organizations, which deal with national minorities, gender issues, people with disabilities, HIV/AIDS, etc. To address these challenges we analyzed the law and its use in practice, collected a large number of examples and presented the best foreign experience. As are many our publications, this book is in Ukrainian and English and is available



Our publications: human rights reports, on legal education, raising awareness about LGBTs, and HIV/AIDS prevention



at our website. It is useful for human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, teachers and students who are interested in this topic.

This project was implemented in partnership with the British human rights organization Equal Rights Trust with the financial support from the European Commission.

International Conference “LGBT Issues and the European Integration of Ukraine”

In 2000, we held the first international conference on LGBT rights in Kyiv. Later were held three more such forums. Their ongoing aim was to draw attention to the issue, to highlight the situation of LGBT people in Ukraine and neighboring countries, and to exchange experience among partners.

Then we entered a planned break for almost ten years, as we did not see any public or political will to change at the time. We saw no sense or benefit in holding any more conferences solely for discussions bounded “within a circle of friends”.

But in 2014 “the wind of change” blew, and we decided that it was time again to discuss our issues with colleagues from Ukraine and abroad. The International Conference “LGBT Issues and the European Integration of Ukraine”, held in March 2016, became an actualized and influential event. At the conference were Ukrainian representatives of the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Justice and Social Policy, police, and MPs. Among the participants were human rights activists, lawyers, teachers and students of higher education institutions, and LGBT activists from throughout Ukraine and from several European countries.

By some measures the conference has become seen as a “litmus paper”, proof that our country is on the path of progress regarding LGBT issues as well as being one of the leaders in the post-Soviet space after a quarter century has passed.

For support in organizing the most recent conference we are grateful to the European branch of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA-Europe), and to our donors – The Embassy of Norway, and The Embassy of The United Kingdom in Ukraine.



Participants of a number of international conferences, all organized by Nash Mir (Kyiv, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2016)

Raising awareness about LGBT life and issues

Our activity began with the first edition of our educational news magazine called “Nash Mir” (Eng. – Our World). Today LGBT information and education remains as necessary as it was nearly 20 years ago. Sources have changed: previously the majority of LGBT news and information came from abroad, now many gay topics and happenings are centered or focused in Ukraine.

For accessing current events information, the organization's blog is kept on Facebook. Our website is an even wider resource on the LGBT theme, for there can be found collected not only our own but

interesting publications produced by others.

One of our latest publications is the brochure “Traditional Orientation. Myths and Facts

about LGBTs”. As the preface reveals, the edition is based on years of our joint experiences and contains fifty answers to questions about homosexuality, transgenderness and the life of LGBT people – questions which often arise from audiences not familiar with the covered topics. The brochure is written in plain, accessible language and provides the general reader the most basic knowledge about this sphere of human life in modernity.

Relishing interaction, we are always open for comments and interviews for mass-media outlets.

However, now and in 2017 our outreach work requires more attention and a greater investment of resources. In particular, our advocacy campaigns furthering registered partnership – and the prevention and fight against discrimination – both require intensive support through social advertising, articles in the mass media, and other kinds of enlightening work with society.

We would like to highlight here, too, the launch of our individual new project called Pechen’ki (Cookies)



Advertisement of Nash Mir Center appearing on the Kyiv Metro line: "Are you gay?" (2005)



on Facebook. Pechen'ki is a fresh sharing of soulful “queer” conversations about our lives, world, and everything of concern – with an attraction for Ukraine’s youth generation.

After Russian aggression...

During the last two years we transformed our office premises partly into a shelter space for our friends from Lugansk, who moved to Kyiv after the dramatic escalation of pro-Russian separatists in Donbass region. They had to leave their homes and it was our human responsibility to help them survive to enjoy peace and safety again.

One proverb says that every cloud has a silver lining. In our case this situation led to re-uniting of our group, Nash Mir, which made us stronger than ever.

Currently we are looking for funding to develop project to support LGBTs – internally displaced persons.

From the list of our activities, you can see they intertwine by design very closely, while being underlying basic and supplemental to one another. We are a small, but friendly and active team. Among us are those who founded the organization and journeyed together along its 20-years path – and our important younger activists bringing their welcome new energy, new ideas, and new goals.

***We are queer, we are here, and
this is OUR WORLD too!***



Nash Mir launching balloon against homophobia at the International Day Against Homophobia event (Main square of Kyiv, 2005)



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GRATITUDE

Nash Mir expresses gratitude to all the donors who have funded and continue to support our projects and organization. Among them: the European Commission, the Embassies of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, the USA, France, GTZ (Germany), Love Fund, ILGA-Europe, LSVD (Germany), Open Society Foundation, and others, as well as private sponsors.

Nash Mir thanks all activists and organizations with whom we are working on monitoring and protection of the rights of the LGBT community in Ukraine. Among them are members of our informal monitoring network, the Council of LGBT Organizations of Ukraine, the Coalition for Combating Discrimination in Ukraine.

The brochure has been prepared with the financial support of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).



NORWEGIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE
DEN NORSKE HELSINGFORSKOMITEE



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS