

## **Ambassadors Issue a Statement of Support for Sofia Pride 2014**

*Diplomats encourage people and institutions in Bulgaria to stand up for and support open-mindedness and tolerance towards the LGBTI people.*



Sofia Pride

On 3 July, Ambassadors of a series of Sofia-based embassies issued a statement of support for Sofia Pride. The statement reads:

We would like to convey our support to all people who either actively participate in or back this year's Sofia Pride on 5 July 2014. Promoting the principle of equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people is an important aspect of a tolerant and respectful civil society. No one should ever be discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. By signing this statement, we would like to stress that any democratic society should stand up for open-mindedness towards LGBTI people.

Sofia Pride is an opportunity to promote human rights and tolerance, celebrate diversity, and denounce homophobia. The Pride March also increases visibility for the Bulgarian LGBTI people and sends an important message to thousands of young gays and lesbians across the country – you are not alone.

Thanks to increasing legal tolerance towards LGBTI people, countries have passed legislation to allow same sex marriage, have recognized civil unions and partnerships and have safeguarded sexual orientation as a human right in the constitution.

In Pride events all across the world, gay and straight people come together for the principle that all citizens should have the same rights: to live, to love and to work without fear of discrimination. We are yet to achieve this goal – discrimination still exists everywhere. Therefore, we would like to encourage Bulgaria to embrace LGBTI people as equal citizens by joining the Sofia Pride March. We wish everyone a peaceful and happy celebration.

Signatures:

- H. E. Mr. Jonathan Allen, Ambassador of the United Kingdom
- H. E. Mr. Tom J.M. van Oorschot, Ambassador of the Netherlands
- H. E. Mrs. Anick Van Calster, Ambassador of Belgium
- H. E. Mr. Xavier Lapeyre de Cabanes, Ambassador of France
- H. E. Mrs. Marcie B. Ries, Ambassador of the United States of America

- H. E. Mr. Harri Salmi, Ambassador of Finland
- H. E. Mrs. Guro Katharina H. Vikør, Ambassador of Norway
- H. E. Mr. John Biggar, Ambassador of Ireland
- H. E. Mr. Matthias Höpfner, Ambassador of Germany
- H. E. Mr. Kaare E. Janson, Ambassador of Denmark
- H. E. Ms. Vanessa Calvert, Ambassador of South Africa