

RESOLUTION N° 27
in the PSI world congress in Helsinki

Gay and lesbian workers

The 25th World Congress of the Public Services International, meeting in Helsinki, Finland, from 2 to 6 August 1993,

recognising that

- numerous proclamations issued by various international organisations of nations have declared the fundamental freedoms and rights of all peoples, such as the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Political Rights (1966), the Proclamation of Tehran (1968), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953), the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969); also the European Public Services Committee adopted in its 'Prague Statement'(1992) these rights;
- even today, homophobia - the irrational hatred and persecution of lesbians and gay men, solely on the grounds of their sexuality - continues to manifest itself in many ways, ranging from social intolerance and cultural exclusion to criminalisation of homosexual acts which are even a capital offence in some countries;
- lesbian and gay workers throughout the world are confronted with various types of oppression and discrimination on the basis of their sexuality/sexual preference/sexual orientation;
- hostility towards and discrimination towards lesbian and gay workers by their colleagues, clients and managers constitutes harassment and is a legitimate trade union issue;
- the appointment to a new job or to a higher rank should be based on criteria necessary to comply with that job or rank, and not on a worker's sexuality/sexual preference/sexual orientation;
- the tasks of trade unions include active prevention of and struggle against discrimination at work, on whatever basis, and improvement of the working conditions and working climate for all workers;
- the tasks of PSI and its affiliates include the development of an emancipatory policy related to collective bargaining and within the trade unions themselves;
- PSI's equal opportunities work should be understood to include disability, lesbian and gay, black¹ and women's issues;

recommend that

- PSI affiliates actively support initiatives taken by lesbian/gay members to prevent or combat discrimination at the working place;
- affiliates explicitly condemn discrimination and express this condemnation in their policies;
- affiliates incorporate non-discriminatory clauses into their own policies and seek their inclusion in the policies of employers;
- affiliates are encouraged to lobby their national governments to demand the creation of legislation which protects lesbians and gay men from discrimination and harassment, and the abolition of penal codes where lesbians and gay men are treated differently to heterosexuals;

1 This should be understood to mean all oppressed ethnic groups.

- affiliates are encouraged to lobby their national governments to recognise the legitimacy of asylum seekers seeking refuge as a result of persecution in their home countries because of their sexuality;
- the PSI secretariat will gather and spread information about initiatives to combat and prevent discrimination at work of lesbians and gay men, by publication and/or by organising meetings on regional level;
- Congress endorses the resolution of the PSI Women's Conference 1992 calling for the creation of an Equal Opportunities Officer, and should include within that post's remit work on all the issues to do with discrimination on the grounds of disability, sexuality, gender or race;
- PSI regional secretariats progress policy motions on the rights of lesbian and gay workers through appropriate Regional Trade Union Forums, to influence non-public sector unions' policies and practices;
- PSI use its influence within the ICFTU to have the rights of lesbian and gay workers included within its policies and remit;
- the issue of gay/lesbian policy as part of the general policy of the labour union will be considered in relevant education programmes by the affiliates;
- PSI engage in contacts with global and regional organisations such as the United Nations Organisation and its relevant sub-organisations, the International Labour Organisation and the European Commission, to prevent and combat discrimination of lesbians and gay men by laws and regulations;
- the PSI secretariat to take active stand in supporting affiliates in cases where lesbians' and gay men's human rights are violated.