


Statement of the 8th Forum of LGBT Christians of Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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From 13 to 16 August 2015, the 8th Forum of LGBT Christians in Eastern Europe and Central Asia convened. Altogether, 66 people from 15 countries were together in Tartu, Estonia, for common prayer services, lectures, panel discussions and 20 workshops. On the last day, the participants agreed on the following statement, which they would like to share with all people of good will.

We, participants of the 8th Forum of LGBT Christians of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, being witnesses of God's love, striving to love our God, our neighbours and ourselves, coming together as Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders, Queers, Asexuals, Heterosexuals, Rainbow families and children, parents of LGBTs, representatives of civic movements, human rights organisations and other allies, from Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the USA, having enjoyed wonderful and recreational time in Tartu, expressing special gratitude to the parents of LGBTs present here as a sign of hope for better and broader mutual understanding, based on what we have experienced in the safe space of the Forum,

we reach out to society, churches, and religious communities, as well as the LGBT community and LGBT believers, and encourage encourage all people of good will to be:

- taking care of yourself as a whole, including your spirit, soul and body,
- realising one's potential and fulfilling one's call to holiness,
- accepting one's destiny and reconciling and embracing one's various identities,
- facing one's personal internalised homophobia or other phobias, and open to healing and transformation,
- willing to reach out for and accept help,
- contributing to decreasing stigma, fighting judgment in ourselves towards differing sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions,
- guided by God's mercy and choosing to accept life in all its diversity,
- reconciling with those who hurt us and whom we hurt, including our past and ourselves, and widening the work of reconciliation to include other groups and nations,
- acknowledging the vast queerness of the Bible and Church tradition as part of Christian identity,
- recognising the importance to seek new forms of prayer and to take courage to actively plan and organise prayer space and worship time for the sake of nurturing our spirituality,
- supporting of and participating in the contribution of Christian LGBTs to societies and Church communities,
- raising one's voice and daring to take advocacy to ever higher levels, including the political sphere,
- remembering that you are not alone, be active in coalition forming as the means to overcome historical divisions, including secular LGBT organisations, other human rights and religious groups,
- following the spirit of the Gospel, be looking in dialogue for common ground with our adversaries and allies based on shared values.

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