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Croatian homosexuals make a stand

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Speaking	8
Listening Gap Fill	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

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13 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Croatian homosexuals make a stand

Homosexuals in Croatia have decided enough is enough and that it is time for their country to face and accept who they are. In spite of ongoing intolerance, about 1,200 of the nation's gay men and lesbians have taken a stand against their country's homophobic attitudes. They have openly called for greater acceptance and tolerance by publishing their names in an advertisement that was placed in three leading newspapers and several magazines. Next to each name was an initial denoting their sexual orientation – whether they are gay, lesbian, transsexual or transvestite. A poignant message alongside the list read: "I don't want to hide any more. Little divides us and a lot unites us. Reconsider your prejudice."

Homosexuals face severe discrimination in Croatia, where the influence of the Catholic Church is very strong. The Church considers homosexuality a sin and has labeled it as a "handicap" or "perversion". Many gays and lesbians have been the target of hate crimes, which often spills over to affect the families of known homosexuals. Such is the prejudice, the signatories did not risk putting their surnames in the newspapers for fear of persecution. Dorino Manzin, head of a leading Croatian gay group, told the BBC News: "Even though it's just a symbolic coming out, without full names, this is a good reflection that gays in Croatia are gathering courage to fully expose themselves and that society is growing more tolerant."

WARM-UPS

1. SEX CHANGE: Is it better to be a man or a woman in your country? Imagine you are now a member of the opposite sex. Ask your “changed sex” partner(s) what it is like to be different. Ask them questions about life as a man or woman (favorite perfume, hobbies, what kind of dates they like, etc.).

2. HOMOPHOBIA: Are you homophobic? In pairs / groups, talk about how you would feel if the following people were openly gay:

- Your English teacher
- Your boss
- Your swimming teacher
- Your best friend
- Your neighbor
- Your doctor
- Your roommate on a camping trip
- Your child

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Homosexuals / Croatia / enough is enough / intolerance / homophobia / transsexuals / transvestites / prejudice / Catholic Church / hate crimes / coming out

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. GAY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “gay”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think of these opinions towards homosexuality:

- a. It’s a sin. It says so in the Bible.
- b. Homosexuals are normal people – the same as heterosexuals.
- c. Society should be tolerant so homosexuals can “come out” and live freely.
- d. Homosexuals should have the same rights as everyone else.
- e. I don’t want to talk about homosexuality. It makes me feel bad.
- f. I don’t understand why there is a negative image to the word “homosexual”.
- g. Let them kiss and hold hands in the streets. It’s a free world.
- h. Homophobia is the real illness.
- i. The world should thank homosexuals for encouraging tolerance.
- j. Your opinion _____.

6. WORDS: Talk with your partner(s) about the meaning of the following words:

*gay lesbian straight homosexual queer transvestite bisexual
transsexual come out of the closet gay parade homophobia gay
bashing*

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Gays in Croatia have decided it's time their country accepted them. | T / F |
| b. 1,200 gays stood outside Croatia's parliament for 24 hours. | T / F |
| c. 1,200 gays wrote letters calling for greater acceptance by society. | T / F |
| d. 1,200 gays asked Croatians to reconsider their prejudices. | T / F |
| e. The Catholic Church accepts homosexuality. | T / F |
| f. Many Croatian gays and lesbians have been the target of hate crimes. | T / F |
| g. The homosexuals put their surnames and addresses in the newspaper. | T / F |
| h. Croatia's gays are gathering courage to come out of the closet. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. face | indicating |
| b. ongoing | token |
| c. denoting | chauvinism |
| d. poignant | abnormality |
| e. prejudice | moving |
| f. handicap | continued |
| g. perversion | victimization |
| h. persecution | unmask |
| i. symbolic | confront |
| j. expose | disability |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| a. enough is | orientation |
| b. lesbians have taken a stand | your prejudice |
| c. openly | the Catholic Church is very strong |
| d. sexual | called for greater acceptance |
| e. Reconsider | of persecution |
| f. the influence of | enough |
| g. the target of | courage |
| h. for fear | out |
| i. it's just a symbolic coming | against their country's homophobic attitudes |
| j. gays in Croatia are gathering | hate crimes |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Croatian homosexuals make a stand

Homosexuals in Croatia have decided _____ is enough and that it is time for their country to _____ and accept who they are. In spite of ongoing intolerance, about 1,200 of the nation's gay men and lesbians have taken a _____ against their country's homophobic attitudes. They have _____ called for greater acceptance and tolerance by publishing their names in an advertisement that was placed in three leading newspapers and several magazines. Next to each name was an _____ denoting their sexual _____ – whether they are gay, lesbian, transsexual or transvestite. A _____ message alongside the list read: "I don't want to hide any more. Little divides us and a lot _____ us. Reconsider your prejudice."

Homosexuals face _____ discrimination in Croatia, where the _____ of the Catholic Church is very strong. The Church considers homosexuality a sin and has labeled it as a "handicap" or "_____". Many gays and lesbians have been the target of _____ crimes, which often _____ over to affect the families of known homosexuals. Such is the prejudice, the _____ did not risk putting their surnames in the newspapers for fear of persecution. Dorino Manzin, head of a leading Croatian gay group, told the BBC News: "Even though it's just a symbolic _____ out, without full names, this is a good reflection that gays in Croatia are gathering courage to _____ expose themselves and that society is growing more tolerant."

poignant

openly

face

initial

unites

enough

orientation

stand

fully

perversion

signatories

influence

hate

severe

coming

spills

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**gay**' and '**group**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "GAY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about homosexuality.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| • enough | • severe |
| • spite | • labeled |
| • stand | • spills |
| • openly | • signatories |
| • initial | • symbolic |
| • little | • fully |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think putting names in the newspapers will make Croatia more tolerant towards homosexuals?
- c. Do you have any gay family and friends?
- d. What do you think of homosexuality?
- e. Why do you think the Catholic Church says homosexuality is a sin?
- f. Do you think it's fair that homosexuals have to hide?
- g. Do you think homophobia should become a crime?
- h. What do you think of same sex couples getting married and adopting children?
- i. Do you think it's OK for homosexuals to kiss and hug in public?
- j. What do you think of transvestites and transsexuals?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What would you think if your son or daughter told you he/she was homosexual?
- d. What would you do if a homosexual person asked you for a date?
- e. What do you think of the words "homosexual", "lesbian" and "gay"?
- f. What is the attitude towards homosexuality in your country?
- g. Do you have different opinions on male and female homosexuality?
- h. Perhaps 10 percent of people are homosexual. What do you think about this?
- i. Would you vote for a homosexual to be the leader of your country?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

HOMOPHOBIC ROLE PLAY: Should every form of homophobia be treated as a crime?

Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

.....

Role A – CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

Homosexuality is a sin. That is God’s word. You strongly believe homosexuals should confess to God and ask for forgiveness for their sins. You welcome homosexuals promising to follow a heterosexual, normal life. You believe homophobia cannot exist because homosexuality is a sin.

THINK OF REASONS WHY HOMOPHOBIA IS NOT A CRIME.

.....

Role B – A CLOSET HOMOSEXUAL

You do not understand the world. You are a totally normal person wanting to live a normal life. You and your same sex partner must hide in fear. You cannot do the “normal” things other couples do. People calling you names has made your life miserable.

THINK OF REASONS WHY HOMOPHOBIA SHOULD BE A SERIOUS CRIME.

.....

Role C – A GAY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

You are furious that in the 21st century there is still prejudice against gays. Religious leaders teach tolerance but have none towards homosexuals. There are many gay priests. This is hypocritical. Society cannot stand by and accept discrimination against and persecution of gays.

THINK OF REASONS WHY HOMOPHOBIA IS A SERIOUS CRIME.

.....

Role D – A HOMOPHOBIC

You think homosexuals are unnatural and dangerous. You disagree with the idea that people can have sex changes, can get married and even have children. You think this will lead to the breakdown of the whole of society. Everyone should be normal – like you.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY HOMOSEXUALITY IS “WRONG”.

.....

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Decide what can be done to increase society’s tolerance for and acceptance of homosexuality.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Croatian homosexuals make a stand

Homosexuals in Croatia have decided _____ and that it is time for their country to face and accept who they are. In _____ of ongoing intolerance, about 1,200 of the nation's gay men and lesbians have taken a stand against their country's _____ attitudes. They have openly called for greater acceptance and tolerance by publishing their names in an advertisement that was _____ in three leading newspapers and several magazines. Next to each name was an _____ their sexual orientation – whether they are gay, lesbian, transsexual or _____. A _____ message alongside the list read: "I don't want to hide any more. Little divides us and a lot unites us. Reconsider your _____."

Homosexuals face _____ discrimination in Croatia, where the influence of the Catholic Church is very strong. The Church considers homosexuality a sin and has _____ it as a "handicap" or "_____". Many gays and lesbians have been the target of hate crimes, which often _____ to affect the families of known homosexuals. Such is the prejudice, the signatories did not risk putting their surnames in the newspapers for fear of _____. Dorino Manzin, head of a leading Croatian gay group, told the BBC News: "Even though it's just a symbolic _____, without full names, this is a good reflection that gays in Croatia are gathering courage to fully expose themselves and that society is growing more _____."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on gay rights. Visit the Human Rights Campaign site (<http://www.hrc.org/>), which works for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equal rights. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. TAKING A STAND: Have you ever stood up for your rights or stood up to someone who was trying to take away your rights. Write a story about a time this happened. Read your stories to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar experiences?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the organizer of the group that put the ads in the Croatian newspapers. Tell him / her what you think of the brave actions of people having the courage to stand up for themselves. Give them suggestions of other things they can do to make society more accepting. Show your letters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| a. face | confront |
| b. ongoing | continued |
| c. denoting | indicating |
| d. poignant | moving |
| e. prejudice | chauvinism |
| f. handicap | disability |
| g. perversion | abnormality |
| h. persecution | victimization |
| i. symbolic | token |
| j. expose | unmask |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| a. enough is | enough |
| b. lesbians have taken a stand | against their country's homophobic attitudes |
| c. openly | called for greater acceptance |
| d. sexual | orientation |
| e. Reconsider | your prejudice |
| f. the influence of | the Catholic Church is very strong |
| g. the target of | hate crimes |
| h. for fear | of persecution |
| i. it's just a symbolic coming | out |
| j. gays in Croatia are gathering | courage |

GAP FILL:

Croatian homosexuals make a stand

Homosexuals in Croatia have decided **enough** is enough and that it is time for their country to **face** and accept who they are. In spite of ongoing intolerance, about 1,200 of the nation's gay men and lesbians have taken a **stand** against their country's homophobic attitudes. They have **openly** called for greater acceptance and tolerance by publishing their names in an advertisement that was placed in three leading newspapers and several magazines. Next to each name was an **initial** denoting their sexual **orientation** – whether they are gay, lesbian, transsexual or transvestite. A **poignant** message alongside the list read: "I don't want to hide any more. Little divides us and a lot **unites** us. Reconsider your prejudice."

Homosexuals face **severe** discrimination in Croatia, where the **influence** of the Catholic Church is very strong. The Church considers homosexuality a sin and has labeled it as a "handicap" or "**perversion**". Many gays and lesbians have been the target of **hate** crimes, which often **spills** over to affect the families of known homosexuals. Such is the prejudice, the **signatories** did not risk putting their surnames in the newspapers for fear of persecution. Dorino Manzin, head of a leading Croatian gay group, told the BBC News: "Even though it's just a symbolic **coming** out, without full names, this is a good reflection that gays in Croatia are gathering courage to **fully** expose themselves and that society is growing more tolerant."