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HUNGARY

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OVERVIEW

Hungary is located in the middle of the Carpathian basin in Europe, between western Europe and the Balkan Peninsula. Its neighboring countries are Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, and Slovakia. The land area of Hungary is 35,907 square miles, about 1 percent of the size of Europe, and with 10 million inhabitants¹ it ranks about 80th in the world by population size.² According to 2001 census data, only about 5 percent of the population identifies as ethnically non-Hungarian, including identification as German, Slovak, Croatian, Romanian, and Roma or gypsy, the last being the largest ethnic minority in Hungary. Almost 75 percent of the population identifies as religious: 55 percent belong to the Catholic Church and 16 percent to the Reformed Church.³

Historically, Hungary was a multiethnic formation: the independent Hungarian Kingdom was established in 1000 C.E. by the descendants of Finno-Ugric tribes, mixed with Turk, Germanic, Slavic, and other peoples. Most of Hungary was occupied by the Ottoman Empire from the early 16th century; this would last for the next 150 years. After the expulsion of the Turks in 1686, the Hungarian Kingdom came under the Austrian Hapsburg Empire, and in 1867 became part of the



Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon (1920), which marked the end of World War I, Hungary lost about 60 percent of its land and population, including about 3.2 million ethnic Hungarians. In 1910, 18.3 million people lived in the Hungarian Kingdom (not including Croatia-Slavonia, which the kingdom administered until 1918) on 282,870 square kilometers: 54.4 percent were Hungarians, 10.4 percent Germans, 10.7 percent Slovaks, 16.1 percent Romanians, 2.5 percent Ruthenians, 1.1 percent Croatians, and 2.5 percent Serbs.⁴

After World War II, Hungary was forced to become part of the Soviet sphere. The country was ruled by the Hungarian Communist Party from 1949 until the collapse of the state-socialist system in 1989. Hungary, after regaining its full sovereignty, became a member of the Council of Europe in 1990, NATO in 1999, and the European Union (EU) in 2004.

OVERVIEW OF LGBT ISSUES

Budapest, the capital of Hungary, has always been known for its thermal springs rich in sulfur, and within its bathhouse culture that has flourished for centuries, a distinct bathhouse-oriented gay culture emerged. During the second half of the 20th century, bathhouses, where certain days of the week were reserved for men only, became important social and community spaces, especially for gay men. These provided a hassle-free environment in which they could physically interact with one another without raising suspicion.

During the late 19th century, the city of Budapest provided a home for Károly Kertbeny, the coiner of the terms *homosexual* and *heterosexual*. He lived in the Rudas Thermal Bath for the last seven years of his life. Kertbeny was born in 1924. His mother tongue was German but, as he declared, "I was born in Vienna, yet I am not a Viennese, but rightfully Hungarian."⁵ In 1847 he officially changed his original name, Karl Maria Benkert, to Károly Kertbeny—a name at which he arrived by transposing the two syllables of his family name. In Hungarian literary history he is considered a mediocre translator and writer. However, in LGBT history, he is remembered for his inventiveness in sexual terminology and for the theoretical case he made for homosexual emancipation; he was the author of the anonymous pamphlets published in 1869 calling for the legal emancipation of homosexuals by eliminating the Prussian penal code that criminalized same-sex sexual activities. The word *homosexuality* (*homosexualitás*), created from the Greek *homo* (same) and the Latin *sexus* (sex), was first openly used in these pamphlets.⁶ Kertbeny had already used the terms *homosexual* and *heterosexual* in 1868 in a private letter written to the German gay rights pioneer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. In this letter, Kertbeny presented a surprisingly modern human rights argument:

To prove innateness... is a dangerous double edged weapon. Let this riddle of nature be very interesting from the anthropological point of view. Legislation is not concerned whether this inclination is innate or not, legislation is only interested in the personal and social dangers associated with it.... Therefore we would not win anything by proving innateness beyond a shadow of doubt. Instead we should convince our opponents—with precisely the same legal notions used by them—that they do not have anything at all to do with this inclination, be it innate or intentional, since the state does not have the right to intervene in anything that occurs between two consenting persons older than fourteen, which does not affect the public sphere, nor the rights of a third party.⁷

The new terms soon became popular, especially in psychiatric literature; they were used as early as 1886 in *Psychopatia Sexualis*, the medical-forensic study of sexual abnormalities, written by the Austrian neurologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing. Today, *homosexual* is perceived by many as a medical term, reflecting the interpretation of same-sex attraction as pathology, degeneration, or illness, while its original context, opposing paternalistic state intervention into people's private lives, has been overshadowed and often rejected as a means of medical control.

In 2002, a new tombstone was erected for Kertbeny by Hungarian gay activists, with the support of national and international LGBT organizations and individuals, in the Fiume Street Cemetery in Budapest,⁸ where he was originally buried in 1882. In the same year, near Kertbeny's tombstone, the neglected joint grave of a police constable and a teacher, both men, buried in 1940 and in 1945 respectively, was discovered by accident.⁹ Since the discovery of the grave, the Lambda Budapest Gay association had the couple's grave renovated, and each year during the annual LGBT festival a memorial ceremony is organized at both Kertbeny's and the same-sex couple's gravesites. These activities can be interpreted as being part of an LGBT history-making project, an attempt by the Hungarian LGBT people to discover and regain their past.

During the second half of the 20th century, under the rule of the Communist Party, LGBT issues in Hungary were taboo, though consensual sexual activity between same-sex adults had been decriminalized in 1961. The elimination of legal discrimination against LGBT people was accelerated only in the process of preparing to join the EU: in 2002 the difference in age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual relationships was lifted, and in 2003 the Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities were introduced, protecting both sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite these gains, the social exclusion of LGBT people, homophobia, and transphobia are still visible in many forms in Hungary, providing LGBT organizations and activists with many goals to keep working toward.

EDUCATION

Under the state-socialist system, all schools, from primary grades to higher education, were run by the state, and most school curricula were imbued with the officially prescribed Marxist-Leninist ideology. Since the political system began to change in 1989, private schools, especially higher education institutions, were established or reestablished by private companies and business actors, as well as churches. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions increased from 100,000 to 300,000, and the rate of full-time students in the 18 to 22 age group rose to about 20 percent.¹⁰ In 2005 public education spending was less than 6 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 11 percent of total government expenditure.¹¹

Today, a three-level structure, comprised of the National Core Curriculum, the Frame Curricula, and local curricula at the institutional level, provide a framework for teachers to develop syllabi.¹² Based on a central definition of each discipline, the schools and the teaching staff can define and adopt local curricula and syllabi for each class and each subject, but LGBT issues are typically absent or misrepresented in Hungarian schools.

According to a recent survey, half of Hungarian LGBT respondents suffered from discrimination and prejudice in school, especially in secondary school:

90 percent of these cases were instigated by other students, and half of the cases by teachers. Moreover, one-third of the respondents reported a negative or totally missing representation of LGBT issues in school.¹³

With the support of the Phare democracy micro-projects program of the European Union, in 2000 the Labrisz Lesbian Association introduced the Getting to Know Gays and Lesbians educational program for secondary school students and teachers. The main aim of this program is to create a safe and unbiased environment in schools for all students, to help students learn to respect other, to increase teachers' awareness that their students might be gay or lesbian, and to give them ways to help these students. In 2003, the program was expanded to offer a training program on LGBT issues for prospective teachers, psychologists, and social workers. Developing a manual for teachers on LGBT issues was also part of this project.¹⁴

In 2003, the Károli Gáspár University of the Hungarian Reformed Church, after expelling an openly homosexual student, stated on its homepage that persons propagating and living homosexual lifestyles cannot participate in the church's pastoral and theological teacher training programs. In 2004, the Háttér Support Society for LGBT people in Hungary initiated legal action against the university because of the mistreatment of the homosexual student, applying the *actio popularis* clause of the Equal Treatment Act that had just come into effect that year; this allowed nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to start cases on behalf of individuals covered by one of the protected categories of the Equal Treatment Act. Though the case was rejected by the court on the grounds of freedom of expression and church autonomy, it was implicitly acknowledged that equal treatment legislation also applies to universities maintained by a church and financially supported by the state.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMICS

After the collapse of the state-socialist system in 1989, dramatic social and economic changes took place in Hungary. Following the one-party system, political pluralism and a market economy had to be created by introducing democratic institutions and constitutional reforms on the one hand, and by privatizing state enterprises and developing the private business sphere (with the influx of foreign capital) on the other. As a result of these structural changes, including the loss of the protected Soviet market, the Hungarian economy (as well as the economies of other post-socialist countries) fell into a deep crisis in the early 1990s. Strong recovery started from the mid-1990s, and the Hungarian GDP reached the 1989 level again by 2000.¹⁵ From 2001 onward, unsustainable fiscal policies have led to a new economic downturn, and progress toward a more developed economy has slowed. One of the major economic problems is the especially low employment rate of the population over age 55, a consequence of the pension system and the health of the population. Since the mid-1990s the Hungarian economy has maintained its dual character: besides the highly competitive, export-oriented manufacturing sector, domestic small and microenterprises suffer from a desperate lack of financial and human resources. In 2006, the rate of unemployment in the economically active Hungarian population between ages 15 and 64 was 7.5 percent; while economic growth in Hungary was among the lowest, the inflation rate was among the highest in the European Union.¹⁶ In 2007, Hungarian economic competitiveness reached 57.6 percent, or less than that of the United States,¹⁷ and was ranked 47th out of 131 countries.¹⁸

According to a recent survey, more than one-third of Hungarian LGBT respondents had suffered from discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.¹⁹ Most people are afraid to come out as LGBT at their work. Even though equal treatment legislation is in place, requiring public sector employers and businesses with more than 50 employees to develop equal opportunity strategies, LGBT people are not listed among the main target groups. Equal treatment practices are still very rare in Hungary.

SOCIAL/GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

There is no public funding provided by the state or local governments for any social programs specifically targeting LGBT people. However, a few smaller-scale social health programs have attempted to reach out to at least certain segments of the Hungarian LGBT community, including an AIDS prevention program for gay men in the countryside and a condom machine program for gay bars in Budapest, both implemented by the Háttér Support Society for LGBT People in Hungary and sponsored by the Ministry of Health.

There are two sources of support for civic organizations, including officially registered LGBT organizations. Since the introduction of the 1 Percent Act in 1996, taxpayers can allocate 1 percent of their income tax to a nongovernmental organization of their choice. In 2003, the National Civic Fund was established, which annually announces calls for applications to receive operating grants for NGOs. However, these sources of public support cannot provide a secure background for the functioning of the Hungarian LGBT social and cultural infrastructure.

SEXUALITY/SEXUAL PRACTICES

There has only been limited research on sexual behavior in Hungary, and there is hardly any reliable information available on the sexual practices of Hungarian LGBT people. However, changes in social and cultural norms associated with the rapid transitions of the 1990s have resulted in people starting sexual activity at younger ages, and also an increase in the number of sexual partners, especially among younger age cohorts. According to data from a 2004 national survey of 8,000 Hungarian youths, 54 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 were sexually experienced, as were 93 percent of young people ages 20 to 24. The average age for having a first sexual experience was 17.²⁰

During the 1990s, the sexual conservatism of the state-socialist era was replaced by oversexualized media representations and marketing projects, and a flourishing pornography industry started to develop in Hungary. In 1993, individual prostitution was decriminalized and legally interpreted as a petty offense. Since 1999, prostitution has been legalized and considered a form of individual entrepreneurship, but methods of profiting from another's prostitution, such as pimping or running a brothel, are criminalized. In 2000 an association was founded for protecting the interests of Hungarian prostitutes; since 2002 its membership has also included homosexual and transsexual sex service providers.

FAMILY

Until the early 1990s, the concept of family was closely associated with marriage and childbearing, ideally with a married couple raising two children. However,

decreasing marriage and fertility rates, marrying at a later age, rising divorce rates, and increasing rates of childless women reflect changes in individual and family lifestyles. Between 1980 and 2004 the total fertility rate decreased from 1.92 to 1.28 in Hungary, while the total divorce rate increased from 29 percent to 42 percent. The amount of childless women ages 15 to 49 increased from 28 percent to 39.6 percent, and the average age of first marriage increased from 22 to 26.5 years for women and from 24.5 to 29 years for men.²¹ In 2005, 11.5 percent of the Hungarian population lived in single-person households.²²

References to these statistics, along with the reality of Hungary's aging population, are regularly used in conservative political discourse as evidence of the death of the nation. Conservatives are calling for a moral revival and the return of the nuclear family. Same-sex families are unimaginable in this context, even though LGBT activists often argue otherwise.

At present, there are no legal institutions allowing same-sex marriage, joint adoption of children by same-sex couples, or second-parent adoption (i.e., adoption of the biological or adoptive child of one's partner). Adoption by LGBT individuals is legal, but national adoption agencies often give preference to married couples. Before 2006, artificial insemination was legally available only for women who were married or cohabiting with a man. Since 1996, single women have been allowed to apply, but only if natural reproduction is improbable because of the woman's age or in the case of medically proven infertility.

For transsexual people, one precondition of an official sex change is being single or divorced, in order to avoid the transformation of an originally heterosexual marriage into a same-sex marriage. In the new Hungarian civil code to be introduced in 2009, a sex change will automatically lead to the dissolution of an existing marriage.

COMMUNITY

While the first homosexual organization, the Homeros Lambda, was established in 1988, the sociocultural infrastructure for LGBT people is still not very well developed in Hungary. Even though there is an increasing number of formally and informally organized groups representing LGBT interests, the number of activists, LGBT social and cultural venues, and LGBT events remains limited. The officially registered LGBT organizations include the Háttér Support Society for LGBT People, which maintains a help line, legal aid service, and several AIDS prevention and other outreach programs; the Labrisz Lesbian Association; the Lambda Budapest Gay Association, which has published the *Mások* gay magazine since 1989; the Szimpozium Association for young LGBT people; the Atlasz LGBT Sport Association; the DAMKÖR Gay Association in southern Hungary; and the Rainbow Mission Foundation, organizing the annual LGBT cultural festivals in Budapest.

All Hungarian LGBT NGOs struggle for survival with the help of volunteers, lacking any kind of regular state support. Most LGBT-related events take place in Budapest, but there are regional LGBT community groups, bars, and parties in several other locales, mainly in bigger cities such as Debrecen, Nyíregyháza, Pécs, Szeged, and Székesfehérvár.

HEALTH

In 2004, Hungary spent 7.9 percent of its GDP on health care. Of the total expenditure on health, 71.6 percent was financed from public sources²³ consisting

of revenues from general and local taxation, and more importantly from contributions to the social health insurance scheme, which since its establishment in 1990 has been operating nationwide as a single fund, the Health Insurance Fund. The social health insurance scheme provides nearly universal coverage and a comprehensive benefit package with few exclusions and little or no co-payment except for pharmaceuticals, medical aids, and prostheses. The revenue of the Health Insurance Fund is derived mainly from the health insurance contribution, a proportional payroll tax paid partly by employers and partly by employees. Voluntary health insurance also exists in Hungary, but it is not a significant feature of the health care system. Health care delivery is based on the constitutional obligation of the state to make health services available for all resident citizens.²⁴

The collapse of the state-socialist regime was characterized by a marked decline in health status in Hungary. Between 1960 and 2000, the life expectancy increased by only 3.5 years in Hungary, compared to 9 years in the average of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Life expectancy in Hungary is still among the lowest in Europe. The main causes of premature death include cardiovascular disease, malignant tumors, and digestive disorders, as well as external causes, such as suicide; infectious disease seems to be less of a problem, as the incidence of and mortality from most childhood infectious diseases, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis and AIDS continue to occur less frequently in Hungary than in other countries of the central eastern European region.²⁵

AIDS is not considered a major health concern in Hungary. The first Hungarian HIV infection was identified in 1985. By the end of 2007, 1,453 HIV infections were officially registered, although the true number is believed to be at least three times higher. In Hungary, the main risk factors for HIV infection are sex between men and unprotected heterosexual sex, while the number of infections caused by intravenous drug use remains very low.²⁶ There are several anonymous HIV testing facilities in Hungary. However, if a person gets a positive result, his or her identity must be disclosed in order for him or her to receive treatment. All HIV/AIDS-related medical costs are covered by social health insurance.

Hungary's incidence of gonorrhea decreased from 46.9 cases per 100,000 people in 1990 to 8.9 in 2003. Syphilis data show a different tendency: while new syphilis cases steadily decreased from the 1970s until 1990, a sharp increase occurred between 1990 and 2002. In 2002, more than half of new syphilis infections affected people ages 25 to 44, with 21 percent among those under age 24.²⁷

Specific health needs of LGBT people are not recognized in Hungary. Safe sex campaigns for LGBT audiences are only conducted by LGBT organizations. According to a recent national survey, 28 percent of 1,122 LGBT respondents encountered discriminative treatment in the health care system, including the rejection of blood donations from people identifying as homosexual based on the alleged risk of HIV infection. Homophobic and transphobic reactions on the part of medical personnel were also common.²⁸

Before the 1990s, the Hungarian situation was characterized by the total lack of a health care system for transsexuals. In the early 1990s, when the first sex reassignment surgeries (SRS) took place, the rule was that in order for a person to change his or her birth certificate and other official documents, he or she should have undergone irreversible changes. This unfair arrangement, requiring patients to go through a medical process without any help or recognition, was abandoned because of the high rate of unsuccessful surgeries. Current practice, since 2004, leaves surgery as an option for which the state takes no responsibility. Today, SRS is not

a precondition of official sex change, which basically requires permission from the Ministry of Health based on two psychiatrists' expert opinions both stating that it is a case of transsexualism. For a few years, social health insurance could cover, in theory, at least some of the SRS costs of a person, but from 2007 a government decree referred the treatment of transsexuals to private health care; 90 percent of the costs to be paid by the individuals themselves.

POLITICS AND LAW

Criminalization

The medieval practice, death penalty for sodomy, ceased to exist in Hungary following a decree of the Austrian emperor and Hungarian king, Joseph II, in 1787. At the end of the 19th century there was no punishment defined for sodomy or perversion against nature, as it was referred to by the legal terminology used for centuries in the Hungarian penal code, and women could not be prosecuted for this kind of crime at all. The lack of actual penalization was explained by an 18th-century source, which noted that "the Hungarian people have attained virtue and chastity to such a degree that there was no need for a special law like this"; the penalty for acts of sodomy had to depend on the wisdom of the judge.²⁹

Between 1878 and 1961, three forms of perversion against nature were distinguished: sex with an animal, sex with a same-sex partner, and any sex act deemed unnatural. Consensual same-sex relationships were considered to be milder crimes and punishable with a maximum of one year of imprisonment, while coerced sodomy was punishable with up to five years of imprisonment.³⁰

In 1961, homosexuality was decriminalized;³¹ general prosecution of perversion against nature ceased, but different ages of consent were introduced: 14 for heterosexual and 20 for homosexual relationships, and men as well as women could be prosecuted. While perversion against nature with an animal was no longer penalized, two special clauses were introduced: one penalized sodomy conducted in a scandalous manner—that is, causing a public scandal—punishable by three years of imprisonment (the same as for having sex with a same-sex partner younger than 20). The second clause stated that coerced perversion against nature is only applicable if it is committed outside marriage (followed by a clause stating that in the case of rape, if the perpetrator and the victim get married before the first judgment, the punishment can be mitigated). According to the ministerial explanation of the act, which cited medical arguments, homosexuality was considered a biological phenomenon that could not be handled legally as crime. In addition, it emphasized that the criminalization of homosexuality is dangerous in that it could provide grounds for blackmail.

In 1978, the age of consent for homosexual relationships was lowered from 20 to 18.³² In 2002, the Hungarian Constitutional Court found this legislation to be unconstitutional and ordered the equalization of the age of consent for same-sex and different-sex partners, which is 14 years of age today.

Antidiscrimination Statutes

In a broad sense, the development of sexual orientation-related antidiscrimination and equal treatment legislation can be traced back to 1989, when article 70/A

on the prohibition of discrimination became part of the new Hungarian constitution. Before the introduction of the law on equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities in 2003,³³ Hungary already had national laws prohibiting discrimination, such as in the constitution, the labor code, the Act on Public Education, and the Act on Public Health; however, only the last explicitly prohibited sexual orientation-based discrimination. The first Hungarian law explicitly recognizing the necessity of equal treatment on the basis of sexual orientation was the Act on Public Health, introduced in 1997.³⁴ In all other cases, the question of whether sexual orientation should be included under the heading "any other grounds whatsoever," usually ending the list of discrimination based on "race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, financial situation, and birth," was a matter for interpretation.

The first general antidiscrimination draft bill, the Hungarian Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, was submitted to the Hungarian parliament in April 2001 and included the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and clear references to the 2000/43 Racial Equality Directive as well as the 2000/78 Employment Equality Directive of the European Union. By the time the draft bill reached parliamentary discussion at the end of 2003, besides the protected categories listed in the employment directive—including race, skin color, ethnicity, language, disability, state of health, religion, political or other views, gender, sexual orientation, age, social origin, circumstances of wealth and birth, and other situations—additional categories, such as family status, motherhood (pregnancy) or fatherhood, gender identity, part-time or limited period employment status, and membership of interest representing bodies, were inserted into the list of protected categories. The bill passed in December 2003 and came into force in January 2004. The Hungarian Equal Treatment Authority, which was stipulated in the act, started to function in 2005.

The Hungarian Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities was the first national equal treatment legislation in the world that included gender identity, specifically providing antidiscrimination protection for transgender and transsexual people. Another important feature of the act was the possibility of initiating *actio popularis*, providing societal bodies and special interest groups with the opportunity to start legal action without the direct involvement of victims.

Marriage

In 1995, in the constitutional examination of marriage between persons of the same sex, the Hungarian constitutional court denied that the definition of marriage as a communion of a man and a woman can be considered discrimination infringing on the constitution. At the same time, it was also stated that a lasting communion of two persons could constitute such values that they were entitled to legal recognition of their communion based on a fair recognition of the personal dignity of the involved persons irrespective of their sex. Thus, the parliament was ordered to make the changes necessary to recognize same-sex partnerships by March 1996. Since 1996, a legal framework, similar to common-law marriage, exists for same-sex partners who live together, but they must make extra efforts, typically in the form of private legal contracts, if they want to establish a level of family security similar to that inherently enjoyed by married couples. In January 2009, a new legal institution—registered partnership for same-sex and different-sex

couples—would have come into effect in Hungary, providing rights similar to marriage but excluding joint adoption of children and the automatic insertion of a partner's family name. However, on December 15, 2008, the Hungarian Constitutional Court found the Act CLXXXIV of 2007 on Registered Partnership to be unconstitutional, arguing that registered partnership for different sex couples would duplicate the institution of marriage, and would thus contradict the special protection of marriage supposedly enshrined in the Hungarian Constitution. Significantly, the Court confirmed that the right of same-sex couples to legal recognition and protection follows from the constitutional principle of human dignity, and the related rights to self-determination and freedom of action. A new bill on registered partnership was submitted to the Parliament in early 2009 and it was passed on April 20, 2009. The Act XXIX of 2009 on Registered Partnership and Related Legislation and on the Amendment of Other Statutes to Facilitate the Proof of Cohabitation came into operation on July 1, 2009, and retains much of the content of the previous bill with one exception: the institution of registered partnership is only available to same-sex couples.

Speech and Association

The right to free speech and association is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary. Perhaps because of Hungary's state-socialist past, freedom of expression has been held in such high regard that this has prevented efforts to enact hate speech legislation. Hate crimes do exist as a criminal category, but only if the victim is a member of an ethnic or religious minority. A draft bill providing protection on the basis of other grounds, including sexual orientation, was submitted in late 2007.

Transsexuals

There is no consistent legal framework dealing with gender transition in Hungary. Practice tends to abandon medical requirements for complete official gender transition, being relatively easy and costless to achieve, and puts transsexual individuals in a personal status where they have equal rights and responsibilities with people with no experience of gender transition. The lack of legal arrangements regarding accountability, however, can raise concern for the consistency of this practice in the future.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Major Christian churches in Hungary follow the "hate the sin but love the sinner" policy, at least in theory. Many LGBT people are religious, but far fewer are active members of a church community. According to the findings of national LGBT social exclusion research conducted in 2007, of 1,122 respondents one-third identified as religious, and 28 percent had experienced prejudice and discrimination within religious communities.³⁵

VIOLENCE

As instances of antigay violence and gay bashing are rarely recorded, there is little data on this phenomenon. However, the 2007 July Pride march was marked

by openly antigay violent attacks—for the first time in the 12-year history of Hungarian LGBT festivals. Given that antigay violence is typically socially invisible, the violence seen during and after the pride celebration was a great shock.

OUTLOOK FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The main legal goals to achieve in Hungary in the 21st century are same-sex marriage and joint adoption of children by same-sex partners. However, legal emancipation is only one part of challenging the social heteronormativity still dominating everyday life. In the long run, cultural change can be as effective as legislation. Various aspects of inequality, like discrimination on multiple grounds, also have to be taken into account when raising awareness and working for an inclusive society.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Suggested Reading

- Anna Borgos, "Getting to Know Gays and Lesbians in Hungary: Lessons from a Gender-Informed Educational Program," in *Multiple Marginalities: An Intercultural Dialogue on Gender in Education*, ed. Justyna Sempruch, Katharina Willems, and Laura Shook (Königstein/Taunus, Hungary: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2007).
- Lilla Farkas, "Nice on Paper: The Aborted Liberalisation of Gay Rights in Hungary," in *Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Partnerships: A Study of National, European, and International Law*, ed. R. Wintemute and M. Andenaes (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2001).
- R. Kuhar and J. Takács, eds., *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe* (Ljubljana, Slovenia: Mirovni Institute, 2007).
- Scott Long, "Gay and Lesbian Movements in Eastern Europe: Romania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic," in *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*, ed. Barry D. Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and André Krouwel (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).
- Judit Takács, "The Double Life of Kertbeny," in *Past and Present of Radical Sexual Politics*, ed. G. Heckma (Amsterdam: UvA—Mosse Foundation, 2004).
- Judit Takács, *How to Put Equality into Practice? Anti-discrimination and Equal Treatment Policymaking and LGBT People* (Budapest: New Mandate, 2007).
- Judit Takács, "The Influence of European Institutions on the Hungarian Legislation Regarding LGBT Rights," in *The Gays' and Lesbians' Rights in an Enlarged European Union*, ed. A. Weyembergh and S. Carstocea (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2006).
- Renáta Uitz, "Hungary: Mixed Prospects for the Constitutionalization of Gay Rights," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 2, no. 4 (2004): 705–15.

Films/Videos

- Araszsin görény* [*The Pink Skunk*] (50 min.; 2003). Directed by Katrin Kremmler. Budapesti Leszbikus Filmbizottság. The first feature film by the Budapest Lesbian Film Committee, a crime parody on a lesbian detective (and her skunk) investigating the disappearance of a female politician.
- Másra nézve* [*Another Way*] (102 min.; 1982). Directed by Károly Makk. Mafilm Dialóg Filmstúdió. The first Hungarian film that referred to the events of 1956 as a revolution (not as a counter-revolution as it was officially regarded during state-socialism),

thus being groundbreaking in its portrayal of both sexual and political dissidence. The central theme is the love between two women, Éva and the married Livia, leading to a disastrous ending in the aftermath of 1956. Polish actress Jankowska-Cieslak, playing Éva's character, won the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1982.

Eklektika Tánciskola [*Eklektika Dancing School*] (17 min.; 2004). Directed by Mária Takács. Budapesti Leszbikus Filmbizottság. Documentary on the first LGBT classical dancing school, which was opened in 2003 in the backroom of a Budapest café.

Halállal lakoljanak? [*Paying with their Lives?*] (55 min.; 2002). Directed by Bernadett Frivaldszky. Fórum Film Alapítvány. Documentary on the relationship between homosexuality and Christianity as seen by a former theology student.

Mielőtt befejezi röptét a denevér [*Ere the Bat has Flown his Flight*] (91 min.; 1989). Directed by Péter Timár. Mafilm. Received a CICA Award from the Berlin International Film Festival in 1989. In the 1980s in Budapest, a single mother, Teréz, falls for a policeman, László, who becomes obsessed with her teenage son, Róbert.

Redl ezredes [*Colonel Redl*] (144 min.; 1984). Directed by István Szabó. Jadran Film. A fictional film inspired by John Osborne's play, *A Patriot for Me*, about the rise and the fall of Alfred Redl, the high-ranking homosexual intelligence officer. For this film István Szabó, the Oscar winning director of *Mephisto* (1981), was nominated for an Oscar and received the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as a German Film Award in Gold in 1985, and a BAFTA Film Award in 1986.

The Kertbeny Story (10 min.; 2005). Produced by Douglas Conrad, SF CA. Documentary how Károly Kertbeny, who coined the words homosexual and heterosexual, got a new tombstone in 2002 in the Budapest cemetery where he was buried in 1882.

Zarándoklat a Kecskérúzs földjére [*Pilgrimage to the Land of the Goat Rouge*] (35 min.; 2005). Directed by Mária Takács. Budapesti Leszbikus Filmbizottság. Documentary on a Hungarian village, Szatina, where a small lesbian community was formed in the early 1990s.

Web Sites

Annual Hungarian LGBT Festival homepage, <http://www.budapestpride.hu>.

Budapest Gay Guide, <http://www.navegre.hu/index.php?m=guide>.

Gay.hu, <http://www.gay.hu>.

Forum for gay men.

GayRádió.hu, <http://www.gayradio.hu>.

Hiv+.hu, <http://www.hivpozitiv.hu/>.

Practical information on being HIV positive by people who are HIV positive.

HIV-pozitívok hozzátartozóinak baráti köre, <http://www.pozitivtars.tvn.hu>.

Forum for relatives of HIV-positive people.

Magyarországi Meleg Apák, <http://www.melegapa.cletmod.hu>.

Forum for gay fathers.

Mások gay magazine online, <http://www.masok.hu>.

Meleg vagyok—Coming out campaign.

Műgyetem Meleg Kör, <http://www.bbme.uw.hu>.

Gay group of the Budapest Technical University.

Pride.hu, <http://www.pride.hu>.

LGBT news portal, forum for LGBT people.

SHIVAMANTRA, <http://shivamantra.freeblog.hu/>.

"Being HIV-positive complicates your life, but it is not the end of the world."

Personal blog and counseling for HIV-positive people.

TranSexual Online, <http://tsonline.uw.hu/>.

Forum for gay men.

Tranny Baráti Kör, <http://tranny.tuti.hu>.

Forum for transvestites.

<http://melegvagyok.hu/>.

Organizations

Atlasz LMBT Sportegyesület (Atlasz LGBT Sport Association), <http://www.atlaszsport.hu>.

Officially registered in 2004. The association has 10 sections: running, rock climbing, soccer, cycling, handball, basketball, dance, badminton, hiking, and swimming.

Budapest Lambda Meleg Baráti Társaság (Budapest Lambda Gay Association), <http://www.masok.hu>.

Founded in 1991, this is the oldest Hungarian gay organization that is still functioning. Their main activity has been to publish the monthly gay magazine *Mások*, the first unofficial issue of which came out in 1989.

Dél-Alföldi Meleg Baráti Kör (DAMKÖR Gay Association), <http://www.tar.hu/damkor>.

First one of its kind functioning outside the capital of Hungary. It was established in 1999 in Szeged.

Háttér Társaság a Melegekért (Háttér Support Society for LGBT People), <http://www.hatter.hu>.

Established in 1995, this group has the largest number of members and most widespread activity in the country. From 1996, information, personal, and telephone counseling services have been operating. In 2000, the Háttér legal aid program was initiated.

Labrisz Leszbikus Egyesület (Labrisz Lesbian Association), <http://www.labrisz.hu>.

The only Hungarian lesbian organization was founded officially in 1999 but the core of the organization existed from 1996. Their main goal is to organize community-building activities and increase the social visibility of lesbian and bisexual women in Hungary.

Magyar LMBT Szövetség (Hungarian LGBT Association), <http://www.lmbtszovetseg.hu>.

Founded in January 2009, this is the largest Hungarian LGBT umbrella organization with nine member organizations.

PATENT Egyesület (Association of People Challenging Patriarchy), <http://patent.org.hu>.

Established in 2006 with the main aim to raise public awareness on violence against women and children, but also deals with sexual minority issues.

PLUSS Magyarországi HIV-pozitívokat Segítő Egyesület (Association for Supporting HIV-positive People in Hungary), <http://www.pluss-hiv.hu>.

Established by HIV-positive people in 1989 to represent the interests of people infected with HIV in Hungary. Their goals also include awareness-raising on HIV infection and HIV/AIDS prevention issues.

Szimpozion (Szimpozion Society of Friends, Cultural, Educational and Leisure Time Organization of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People), <http://www.szimpozion.hu>.

Founded in 2002, it organizes the biweekly meetings of the Pocok Club, a youth club with a cultural orientation. In 2006 they started the *Bújjj elő!* (Come out!) campaign by launching the www.melegvagyok.hu ('meleg vagyok' = I am gay) internet portal.

Levegő Alapítvány (Rainbow Mission Foundation), E-mail: kurator@gay.hu.

Established by the Háttér Support Society for LGBT People, the Labrisz Lesbian Association, and the Lambda Budapest Gay Association in 2001 with the primary aim of organizing the events of the annual LGBT Cultural Festival and the Gay Pride Day.

NOTES

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