The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

'Gay is Normal' Signs Get Demonstrators Arrested in St. Petersburg

April 05, 2012



Activist Alexei Kiselyov being detained by police Thursday.

Two gay rights demonstrators were detained by police in St. Petersburg on Thursday in what could be the first case resulting from the recently passed city law banning so-called gay propaganda.

Alexei Kiselyov and Kirill Nepomnyashy were arrested outside the Palace of Youth Creativity holding signs bearing the words, "Gay is normal," police told Interfax. Police said the pair was conducting so-called one-man pickets — which do not require City Hall approval — meaning that they were not standing together or yelling slogans.

Under a St. Petersburg law that took effect last month, anyone found guilty of promoting homosexuality among minors is to be fined from 5,000 to 500,000 rubles. The law has been condemned by domestic and international human rights advocates and gay activists, and by Western governments.

At a hearing Friday, a justice of the peace ordered police to rewrite their report regarding the

charge of promoting homosexuality, saying it did not specify what slogans were written on the demonstrators' signs. The official ordered that two administrative charges, of holding an unsanctioned rally and disobeying police orders, be considered.

Gay rights leader Nikolai Alekseyev said the pair's signs were simply stating scientifically accepted fact.

"There was of course no propaganda in the activists' actions. They were only trying to tell society common scientific truths about the fact that homosexuality is not an illness but a natural and normal sexual orientation," Alekseyev told GayRussia.ru.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/04/05/gay-is-normal-signs-get-demonstrators-arrested-in-st-petersburg-a13874