

Activist Appeals St. Pete Anti-Gay Bill in European Court

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Alexeyev was fined 5,000 rubles in April for holding a picket with a sign reading, "Homosexuality Is Not a Perversion."

A gay-rights leader on Wednesday lodged an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights over a controversial St. Petersburg law introducing fines for promoting homosexuality.

"This will hasten our struggle to repeal discriminatory and homophobic laws," activist Nikolai Alexeyev told GayRussia.ru. In articles posted on his LiveJournal page, Alexeyev said the controversial legislation violated articles 10 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which concern freedom of expression and prohibition of discrimination.

Alexeyev is seeking 50,000 euros (\$63,000) in compensation after a St. Petersburg district court ruled April 12 that he had violated the law by holding a one-man protest with a sign reading "Homosexuality is not a perversion." He was the first person to be tried under the legislation passed in March.

Critics have called the law draconian, saying it effectively bans gay-pride parades and other

public displays.

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