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# Denmark to Celebrate Eurovision by Marrying 3 Russian Gay Couples

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Copenhagen will perform wedding ceremonies for three Russian gay couples.

COPENHAGEN — Copenhagen will perform wedding ceremonies for three Russian gay couples in the days leading up to Denmark's hosting of the Eurovision Song Contest in May, the municipality said.

Eurovision 2014 office manager Flemming Otto, who is in charge of the event, said that 20 to 30 heterosexual and homosexual couples from around the world have been booked to get married, and that the Russians will be first in line.

Gay marriages or civil unions are not recognized in Russia and openly gay couples say that attacks on them by vigilantes have increased since President Vladimir Putin approved a law last summer banning the dissemination of "gay propaganda" to minors.

This year is the 25th anniversary of same-sex civil partnerships in Denmark, which was the first country in the world to allow such marriages.

"It is no secret that the Eurovision Song Contest will attract many people from the gay community to Copenhagen, and last year Denmark had new legislation that made it easier for us to marry foreigners of the same sex," Otto said Thursday.

This is the third time Denmark will be hosting the contest, which has a large following in the gay community and whose motto this year is "join us."

"We would like to strike a blow for the diversity and openness we have in Denmark. We are looking forward to marry all the happy couples, and I am convinced we will be very busy," Otto said.

The song contest, which is broadcast throughout the world and has launched such famous singers and pop groups as ABBA, will be held in Copenhagen's old dockyard B&W Halls, Denmark's biggest workplace until it closed in 1996.

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Many countries at last week's United Nations population conference objected to the idea of enshrining the right of women to make their own sexual decisions, fearing it would tacitly condone same-sex relationships, the UN population chief said.

Gay rights emerged as an incendiary issue at the meeting of the UN Commission on Population and Development, where country delegates reviewed progress made since the adoption of a breakthrough action plan at the 1994 UN population conference in Cairo, said Babatunde Osotimehin, head of the UN Population Fund.

Many states wanted to include language in the final document of last week's population conference recognizing that women have the right to control decisions about when they have sex and when they get married. Osotimehin said socially conservative countries resisted the idea, arguing it would implicitly give people the right to enter into same-sex relationships.

The debate comes at a turning point for gay rights in many countries. Two new laws in Russia — one seeking to prevent gays and lesbians from adopting children and other banning so-called gay "propaganda" accessible by minors — have drawn scrutiny worldwide.

The meeting had been scheduled to end Friday, but negotiations continued into Saturday and by Sunday morning no final document had yet been posted on the commission's website.

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