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# The Issue of Same-Sex Couples in Romania

Potential Change in the *status quo*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Legal and Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 The European Convention For The Protection Of Human Rights And Fundamental Freedoms And The Case Law Of The European Court Of Human Rights.....	10
2.2 Anti-discrimination policies of the EU regarding sexual orientation .....	14
2.3 Constitution of Romania.....	16
2.4 Concept of “family” / marriage in International Human Rights Law.....	19
2.5 Concept of “family” and “marriage” under Romanian legislation .....	21
2.6 Theory of Small Change and Spread of Same-sex Unions Policy in the European Union .....	23
2.6.1 <i>Theory of Small Change – General Concept.....</i>	<i>23</i>
2.6.2 <i>Same-Sex Union recognition in the European Union.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<b>3. Theory of Small Steps – Developments in the Romanian Legislation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1 First Step: Decriminalizing homosexuality in Romania – A sacrifice for integration	31
3.1.2 <i>Romania during Communist Period (Before 1989).....</i>	<i>32</i>
3.1.2 <i>Post-Communism Romania (After 1989).....</i>	<i>33</i>
3.2 Second step: Anti-discrimination legislation in Romania .....	36
3.3 Third step: Registered civil partnership – a new challenge for Romania .....	40
3.4 Citizens’ initiative to change the Constitution - “Romania of well-done marriages” .	44
3.5 Conclusions .....	49
<b>4. The influence of Regional and National Actors in Bringing Changes in Legislation .....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1 The Council of Europe and the European Union on Romanian Legislation .....	51
4.2 The Romanian Orthodox Church, an influential factor in the “ <i>status quo</i> ” .....	53
4.3 The involvement of the civil society .....	58
4.3.1 <i>Supporting LGBT community – ACCEPT, a mediator actor.....</i>	<i>59</i>
4.3.2 <i>Promoting traditional value - Coalition for Family.....</i>	<i>62</i>
5.4 Conclusions .....	65

<b>5. <i>Coman v. ROMANIA</i> .....</b>	<b>66</b>
5.1 Overview of the case <i>Coman v. Romania</i> .....	67
5.2 Legal Analysis of <i>Coman</i> case .....	71
5.3 Luxembourg – is there any hope?.....	77
<b>6. Final Conclusions.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>7. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>82</b>

## ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen relevant developments across many jurisdictions in the European Union on the legal recognition of same-sex couples' rights. However, there are no harmonized rules on the marital status of these couples, as the EU does not have competence in this area.

Through legal, sociological and historical approach, the thesis provides an overview of the legal developments regarding gay and lesbian persons in Romania, an Eastern European country. The research illustrates the legal developments in the fight for recognition of the LGBT community in a country with strong religious and cultural values. In parallel, changes in social attitude towards homosexuality will be observed. The theory of small changes, which assumes a step-by-step progress from decriminalization of "sodomy" law, to anti-discrimination laws based on sexual orientation and recognition of same-sex marriage is challenged by the local specificity. The accession of Romania to the Council of Europe and the European Union highly contributed to decriminalization of "sodomy" law and achievement of the minimum standard of protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. A Court case in full swing which ruling could trigger changes in the *status quo* of the same-sex couples in Romania will be observed.