



INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR  
THERAPEUTIC & COUNSELLING CHOICE

Issued by the International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice

Press Statement

For Immediate Release

April 2, 2026

## **IFTCC CALLS FOR GREATER LEGAL & REGULATOR CARE IN TREATMENT OF SPEECH, TESTIMONY, AND THERAPEUTIC CHOICE IN MATTERS OF SEXUALITY & GENDER**

The International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC) welcomes two recent court decisions which, taken together, highlight the need for greater legal and regulatory care in the treatment of speech, testimony, and therapeutic choice in matters of sexuality and gender.

In *Chiles v. Salazar*, the Supreme Court of the United States held that Colorado's law, as applied to voluntary talk therapy, raised serious free speech concerns and could not be insulated from proper constitutional scrutiny simply by being described as professional conduct. The Court also recognized the problem of permitting one viewpoint in counselling while prohibiting another.

In Malta, in the case involving Matthew Grech, Mario Camilleri and Rita Bonnici, the court acquitted all three defendants of charges relating to the alleged advertising of conversion practices. The court declined to stretch the law so broadly that personal testimony, public discussion, or reference to freely chosen services could automatically be treated as criminal conduct. It also emphasized freedom of expression, the distinction between forced practices and free decisions, and the need for the legal elements of any offence to be properly proved.

These decisions arise from different jurisdictions and different legal systems. They are not identical. But they point to a common concern: that broad and contested legal frameworks on "conversion therapy" may be used not only to prohibit coercive or abusive practices, which should be opposed, but also to restrict lawful speech, personal testimony, professional discussion, and the freedom of individuals to seek help consistent with their own convictions and goals.

The wider European context makes these rulings especially significant. In Finland, the recent case involving Päivi Räsänen points in a different direction, illustrating that courts in Europe may still be prepared, in some circumstances, to uphold sanctions for contested speech on homosexuality. That contrast shows that the legal and cultural struggle over speech, conscience, and sexuality is far from settled.

The IFTCC has consistently opposed coercion, manipulation, and unethical or outcome-driven intervention. At the same time, we maintain that individuals experiencing distress related to sexuality or gender should not be denied the freedom to explore those concerns responsibly and voluntarily, without every non-affirming conversation being treated as inherently harmful or unlawful.

Dr Michael Davidson, Chairman of the IFTCC, said: *"These decisions are important not because they resolve every legal question, but because they remind regulators and courts that there remains a vital distinction between coercion and consent, between abuse and exploration, and between safeguarding and the enforcement of a single approved ideology. The law should protect people from harm, but it should also be careful not to criminalise testimony, suppress professional discussion, or deny individuals the freedom to seek help in accordance with their own convictions."*

The IFTCC believes these rulings should encourage regulators, legislators, and courts to proceed with greater humility and precision. Freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and therapeutic choice remain essential protections in any democratic society.

ENDS

For further information/interview:

Dr Mike Davidson [mike.davidson@iftcc.org](mailto:mike.davidson@iftcc.org)

*IFTCC Chairman*

Editor's Notes

The IFTCC advocates for individual rights and freedoms to seek and to receive professional and pastoral help to live according to their primary values concerning their sexual identity and practices. For further details, visit: [www.iftcc.org](http://www.iftcc.org).