



2nd JUDEXIS MOOT COURT COMPETITION, 2026

PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. The Republic of Astoria is a constitutional democracy established in 1952. Its Constitution guarantees fundamental rights including equality before law, freedom of expression, and the right to life and personal liberty. These rights are subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order, morality, and social harmony. Astoria is culturally diverse, with varying social practices across its provinces.
2. In 2019, the Supreme Constitutional Court of Astoria delivered its judgment in *Zyra v. Union of Astoria*, wherein it decriminalised consensual same-sex relationships between adults. The Court recognised sexual orientation and gender identity as intrinsic to human dignity and personal liberty. However, the judgment expressly noted that questions relating to marriage, civil unions, adoption, and family law involved complex social considerations and were best addressed by the legislature.
3. Marriage and family relations in Astoria are governed by the Astorian Civil Relations Code, 1960 (ACRC). The ACRC defines marriage as a union between one biological male and one biological female and provides for various civil consequences including inheritance, taxation benefits, adoption eligibility, and spousal privileges. Over the years, several proposals to amend the ACRC have been introduced in Parliament but have either lapsed or been referred to committees without conclusion.
4. Aurora Rainbow Collective (ARC) is a registered non-profit civil society organisation working for the welfare and social inclusion of sexual and gender minorities. ARC operates nationwide and frequently engages in advocacy through workshops, publications, and digital campaigns. While ARC enjoys support from certain urban populations, it has also faced opposition from groups who view its advocacy as contrary to traditional family structures.



5. Lio Verdan, a 26-year-old citizen of Astoria who identifies as non-binary, has been in a committed relationship with Evan Solis, an adult citizen of Astoria, for over four years. Both are financially independent and reside together in the province of Norvale. Their families are aware of the relationship but hold differing views regarding its social acceptance.
6. In January 2024, Lio Verdan and Evan Solis applied for registration of their marriage under the ACRC. The Registrar of Civil Relations rejected the application, stating that the Registrar was bound by the explicit language of the statute and lacked discretionary authority to register marriages outside the statutory definition.
7. In February 2024, following a series of public demonstrations across different provinces on unrelated socio-cultural issues, the Government of Astoria constituted a Parliamentary Committee on Digital Order and Social Stability. Based on the Committee's recommendations, Parliament enacted the Public Harmony and Digital Responsibility Act, 2024 (PHDRA) in March 2024. The stated objective of the Act was to curb online activities that could foreseeably escalate into offline disturbances.
8. Section 22 of the PHDRA criminalises any online communication that knowingly promotes views capable of seriously undermining traditional family values or disturbing public harmony. During parliamentary debates, some members expressed concern about the vagueness of the provision, while others emphasised the need for preventive action in an era of rapid digital mobilisation.
9. In April 2024, ARC launched a nationwide social-media campaign titled "Families Beyond Tradition", advocating for legal recognition of diverse family structures and urging legislative reform. The campaign included personal narratives, opinion pieces, and calls for peaceful dialogue. Shortly thereafter, public demonstrations both supporting and opposing the campaign took place in several provinces.



10. In three provinces, these demonstrations escalated into confrontations between opposing groups, resulting in minor injuries and property damage. Provincial authorities attributed the unrest, at least in part, to the online campaign, while ARC denied any responsibility for the violence and condemned the incidents.
11. Separate criminal complaints were subsequently registered in multiple provinces against ARC office-bearers and Lio Verdan under Section 22 of the PHDRA. The authorities contend that the complaints were based on distinct local incidents and independent assessments of law-and-order conditions. ARC argues that the complaints arise from a single coordinated campaign and amount to harassment.
12. Meanwhile, public debate intensified regarding the role of courts in addressing evolving social norms, the limits of legislative discretion in matters of family law, and the extent to which online advocacy may be regulated in the interest of public harmony.
 - 12(A). In June 2024, the High Constitutional Court of East Verdan Province, in *Mira Vale v. Province of East Verdan*, upheld the validity of Section 22 of the PHDRA, holding that preventive restrictions on digital speech were justified in light of recent disturbances. Conversely, in July 2024, the High Constitutional Court of Solmere Province, in *Ryn Holt v. State of Solmere*, read down Section 22, observing that vague expressions relating to “traditional family values” posed a serious risk to free expression. Both judgments are currently under appeal.
 - 12(B). During the pendency of the present petition, one provincial court granted interim protection from arrest to an ARC office-bearer, while a different provincial court declined similar relief to another ARC member, citing local law and order concerns. These interim orders remain in force.
13. Aggrieved by the rejection of the marriage application and the initiation of criminal proceedings, Aurora Rainbow Collective and Lio Verdan have jointly



approached the Supreme Constitutional Court of Astoria by way of a constitutional petition. The Respondents have raised a preliminary objection, contending that ARC lacks locus standi to challenge the marriage provisions of the ACRC, while conceding that it may agitate issues relating to freedom of expression.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Whether the exclusion of same-sex and non-binary couples from the Astorian Civil Relations Code, 1960, violates the constitutional guarantees of equality and personal liberty.
2. Whether the refusal of the Registrar of Civil Relations to register the marriage application was lawful and constitutionally valid.
3. Whether Section 22 of the Public Harmony and Digital Responsibility Act, 2024 imposes unreasonable restrictions on the freedom of expression.
4. Whether considerations of public morality, social order, and legislative competence justify the continued statutory definition of marriage under the ACRC.
5. Whether the registration of multiple criminal complaints in different provinces arising out of a single advocacy campaign amounts to an abuse of the process of law.



CLARIFICATIONS

1. All laws, judgments, institutions, persons, provinces, and events mentioned in the moot proposition are entirely fictional and created solely for academic purposes.
2. The Constitution of Astoria is broadly similar in structure to modern constitutional democracies, but teams are free to rely on comparative constitutional jurisprudence unless expressly barred.
3. The judgment in *Zyra v. Union of Astoria* (2019) is final and binding. Its correctness shall not be questioned; however, its scope, interpretation, and application are open to argument.
4. The constitutional validity of the Astorian Civil Relations Code, 1960, may be challenged only to the extent raised in the Issues for Consideration.
5. No specific data, statistics, or official reports beyond what is stated in the problem may be assumed by the teams.
6. It is clarified that Aurora Rainbow Collective is a lawfully registered organisation and has no prior criminal record.
7. The social-media campaign titled “Families Beyond Tradition” did not explicitly call for violence, disruption, or unlawful activity.
8. The exact content of the online posts forming the basis of the criminal complaints is not provided and is left open for interpretation by the teams.
9. The demonstrations and disturbances referred to in the problem resulted in limited property damage and minor injuries; no fatalities were reported.
10. The petition before the Supreme Constitutional Court of Astoria is maintainable, and questions relating to locus standi and limitation need not be argued unless directly relevant to the issues.
11. International law, foreign judgments, and comparative constitutional principles may be relied upon for persuasive value only.



12. No other facts may be assumed, and teams are advised to confine their arguments strictly to the facts provided and reasonable inferences drawn therefrom.