

Speakers' biographies

PANEL 1: LGBTI Politics Debate

Robert Biedron



Robert is 34 years old. He is a graduate of political and social sciences at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, and currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Humanities in Pultusk. He is a journalist - he wrote, among others for the Dziennika, Trybuny, GazetyWyborczej, Rzeczpospolitej, Polityki.

In 2001 he founded the Campaign against Homophobia and served as its president until 2009. Since 2009, he is president of the Carpathian Institute focused on the development of civil society in sub-Carpathian region. He runs his own publishing house AdPublik. In 2007, his first book "Rainbow primer" was published.

At the October 2011 parliamentary elections he was elected to Sejm (Polish Parliament) from Palikot's Movement list. He is thus the first openly gay Member of Parliament in Poland.

www.robertbiedron.pl

Anna Grodzka



Anna was elected to the Sejm (Polish Parliament) as a candidate for the liberal Palikot's Movement in October of this year. She is the first ever transsexual MP in European history and currently the only transgender MP in the world.

Anna is a graduate of the University of Warsaw with a specialization in clinical psychology. She is an LGBT activist and the founder and president of Trans-Fuzja - Polish transgendered people group. She organizes and conducts support groups for transgender people, is coach on anti-discrimination and leads workshops "Taming transgender." Anna is also Vice-President of the Social Dialogue and Equal Treatment Committee of the Office of the Mayor of Warsaw. She was an entrepreneur and worked in publishing, poligraphy and filmmaking.
www.annagrodzka.info

Robin Brand



Robin is the deputy executive director at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Leadership Institute, the nation's leading organisation that identifies, trains and helps elect openly LGBT leaders to public office. As deputy executive director, Brand develops strategies and oversees programmes for the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender political action committee.

Prior to taking on her current role, Brand was chief operating officer for Gill Action, and earlier was a senior vice president at the Victory Fund and Leadership Institute. Her work in LGBT politics has included raising record-breaking amounts in candidate-specific funds, and helping elect the first openly LGBT legislators in several states.

Prior to working with the Victory Fund, Robin served as the eastern political director for the Democratic National Committee and as the executive director of the Washington State Democratic Party.

www.glli.org

PANEL 2: Traditional Values and Human Rights

Emma Bonino



Emma Bonino is a veteran Italian politician and campaigner on civil society issues, former Member of the European Parliament and European Commissioner, and current Vice-President of the Italian Senate. She is a leading member of the Italian Radicals, a political party that supports economic and social libertarianism, and human rights. She graduated in modern languages from Bocconi University in Milan in 1972. Since March 2003 she has managed the Arab press review for Radio Radicale, a unique initiative on the Italian information scene.

Emma was elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 1976 and re-elected in 1979, 1983, 1987, 1992, 1994 and 2006. She was also elected to the European Parliament in 1979 and re-elected in 1984, 1999 and 2004. In 1975, she founded the Information Centre on Sterilisation and Abortion and promoted the referendum which led to the legalisation of abortion in Italy. In 1986, she was among the promoters of a referendum against nuclear energy that led to the rejection of a civil nuclear energy programme in Italy. She also led campaigns on the legalisation of drugs, sexual and religious freedoms, end to capital

punishment, against female genital mutilation, and the eradication of world hunger.

For her battles and engagements with civil society issues, her promotion of human rights and civil rights in the world, she received the "Open Society Prize 2004" and "Prix Femmes d'Europe 2004" for Italy.

www.emmabonino.it

George Tugushi



George, 32, was appointed as a Public Defender of Georgia by the Georgian Parliament on July 31, 2009, for a five-year term. He assumed his duties on September 17, 2009. He is a specialist in Human Rights Law. From 1996, George Tugushi worked first in the Legal Department of the Tbilisi City Hall, then as the Assistant to the First Vice-Premier of the Tbilisi Government. From 1999, he worked as the Head of the Staff of the Chairman in the Tbilisi City Council.

George worked in a number of international governance and human rights projects, at the Georgian Parliament and the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Prior to being elected as a Public Defender, George Tugushi worked as the Coordinator of the project "Support to the Public Defender's Office".

From December 1, 2005, George Tugushi is a member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As recently as 18 October of this year, he was also elected as one of 5 new members of the UN Committee against Torture.

www.ombudsman.ge

PANEL 3: LGBTI History

Jeffrey Dudgeon



Jeffrey has held office in the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (NIGRA) since its foundation in 1975. He was the successful plaintiff in 1981 in a six-year case at the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg. That court's judgment on the Article 8 - right to a private life- led a year later to a law decriminalising male homosexual behaviour in Northern Ireland. His case was a European first and later a US Supreme Court precedent.

His book on the life of the gay Irish revolutionary Roger Casement and the authenticity of his famous diaries was published in 2002. He worked latterly in the Department of Health in Belfast dealing with public health and hospital infection. Jeff Dudgeon stood for election to the Irish Senate in March 2011.

www.jeffreydudgeon.com

Joke Swiebel



Since the sixties, Joke has worked for human rights and combating discrimination. She has participated in both the feminist and the LGBT movements. From 1982 until 1995 she worked at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. She was head of the Netherlands delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) from 1988 to 1995, and Vice-Chairperson of that commission (1992-1993). She led the Dutch negotiating team at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

From 1999 to 2004 she was Member of the European Parliament, where she was the President of the Intergroup for Gay and Lesbian Rights, an informal grouping of MEPs and staff from different political backgrounds, working for the rights of LGBT people.

Joke now is chairwoman of the International Gay and Lesbian Information Centre and Archive (IHLIA), board member of the Amsterdam Gay Museum Foundation and a member of the Board of Trustees of Movisie, center for social development. In January 2007 she received the Bob Angelo award for her commitment to national and international LGBT movements.

www.jokeswiebel.nl

Angelo Pezzana



Angelo is a journalist, writer and political activist on human rights of LGBT people. He is the founder, in 1971, of the first Italian gay liberation movement "Fuori!". In 1976 he was elected to the Italian Parliament as member of PartitoRadicale. In 1985 he was elected as counsellor in the Piedmont Region, 1990- counsellor for Torino Municipality. In 1991 he founded the Federation of the Italy-Israel Associations.

In 1977 he was the first European gay activist who protested in Moscow against Soviet Penal Code provisions which criminalised consenting same-sex acts, and for freedom of Sergej Paradjanov and homosexuals from USSR. In 1978 he co-founded IGA during and participated in the first IGA Conference (ILGA's mom) in Coventry. He attended all IGA Conferences until 1982. In 1981 he organized the IGA World Conference in Torre Pellice (Torino), Italy. He also was the team leader who organized and helped Enzo Francone in his manifestations in Iran (1979) and Moscow (1980).

He is now the president of the Fuori! Foundation. His most recent book is " A normal Homosexual" (in Italian) StampaAlternativa Pub. (February 2011)

www.angelopezzana.it