

To : ILGA-Europe Conference, Vilnius
From : Janfrans van der Eerden and Ruth Baldacchino
Subject : Report from the European representatives on ILGA Executive Board

From Sofia to Vilnius: October 2006 – September 2007 Report from the European Representatives on ILGA Executive Board

This year has been quite an exciting one. Working with the Co-Secretaries General Philipp Braun and Rosanna Flamer-Caldera has been a pleasure and it couldn't have been so without the constant work carried out by the office, in particular Patricia Ciurzi and Stephen Barris. The 2006 Sofia Conference saw Ruth succeeding Jackie Lewis as the female board member after having been involved as a reserve board member since Paris 2005.

In terms of meetings, ILGA had its Annual Board Meeting shortly before the Sofia conference, between the 1st and the 6th October 2006. Janfrans worked on the report and action list of this meeting. Since the Sofia Conference Janfrans has worked together with Philipp Braun, Secretary General (SG) during meetings in Bad Godesberg (Bonn) and with other board and staff members. Both Ruth and Janfrans attended the working meeting in Berlin with both SG's. A few weeks before the Vilnius Conference of ILGA-Europe Janfrans attended the board meeting of ILGA in Washington DC. During this meeting, an important item on the agenda was the discussion towards drafting a strategic plan for ILGA.

A brief overview of where ILGA is now: we have recently finalised the hiring of the Executive Director; HIVOS (the Netherlands) has confirmed an increase in core funding; and RFSL has worked with ILGA to secure further core funding from SIDA (Sweden). In addition ILGA has contributed towards the successful launch of the Yogyakarta Principles, the Norwegian statement at the UN and the 5 LGBT NGO's being granted ECOSOC status; and held its first regional conference in Africa and re-vitalised ILGA Africa.

The reason for pointing these funding updates is that up till now a number of operational and organisational shortcomings were a consequence of having to work with a short term and unsecured budget. We foresee that the employment of the Executive Director will have a positive impact on ILGA's office and work on both the medium- and long-term. We should not forget that funding followed thanks to the evaluation process executed on behalf of ILGA's funders HIVOS and NOVIB (both in The Netherlands), which was carried out last year.

Rather than a chronological overview of the work carried out this year, we would like to list the issues and points, which we have been working on.:

1. **Communication:** developing better or rather new ways of communications with all the regions has been a priority in our meetings and discussions.
2. **Registration of ILGA** since Belgian law on associations was changed in 2002 and 2004. The World Conference in 2006 decided that the ILGA Board can update the constitution to be in line with the new law. Janfrans worked on this with several consultants and prepared an updated constitution which was accepted by the ILGA Board.
3. **Membership and its involvement:** There is ongoing review of ILGA's membership, which Ruth has been working on together with Rosanna (SG). This work includes also discussions and work on membership database and related matters.
4. **Office:** ILGA's office has seen some changes this year with interns, part-time staff and the recently appointed Executive Director, Trevor Cook.
5. **ILGA & IGLYO¹:** Ruth has been working with IGLYO and discussed various actions through which both organisations can work together. The first of such actions is a global youth mailing list, which will be launched in October 2007. Ruth has been invited to represent ILGA at IGLYO's general meeting of members and will be holding further

¹ **IGLYO:** International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation, www.iglyo.com

meetings as a way to strengthen the working relationships between the 2 organisations and include LGBTQ youth within ILGA's focus.

6. **Events:** Janfrans attended the Company Pride Conference in Amsterdam in August 2007, which was organised by ING Bank, TNT Logistics and Mail and dealt with diversity policy of international companies. Janfrans also attended the opening of the new library of IHLIA² in Amsterdam. IHLIA is the organisation that holds the official ILGA archive and this is now a special desk in the general public library in Amsterdam.

As we said in our introduction, this year has been an active and exciting one. With new board and staff members, revitalised regions and further funding ILGA has a very promising year looking ahead of it. With a Board actively working on developing a strategic plan for ILGA and a World Conference only a few months down the road, we are looking forward to see how this new chapter in ILGA's history will unfold.

We do know and would like to acknowledge the fact that the hard work by previous board and staff members is bearing its fruit, and we would like to thank all involved for that. That said we are looking forward to use that pool of work and information on our next steps in our bid to further strengthen ILGA.

Janfrans van der Eerden and Ruth Baldacchino
September 2007

² **IHLIA:** International Homo/Lesbian Informationcenter and Archives