

Working with ILGA-Europe FAQ's

How many people work at ILGA-Europe and what do they do?

Currently our staff team consists of around 20 people, many of whom work on issues that require a high degree of confidentiality so they are not featured on our website.

The staff team is divided into 5 service areas: policy and advocacy, programmes, finance and administration, communications and fundraising. These smaller teams are led by managers, who are supervised by the Executive Director.

What does recruitment look like at ILGA-Europe?

All of our recruitments are posted on this website. They are open, public processes, where any interested person can apply by submitting an applications form.

The application forms are read and reviewed by three people: usually the Executive Director, a manager, and a Board Member from the Employment Sub Committee. We don't assess candidates' degrees, certifications or formal employment history – we are much more interested in the competences they show in the written responses to questions.

We are very conscious of the different barriers people face when accessing employment, incl. limited possibilities to find paid work, to attend university or have formal trainings, to use English as a non-native speaker, as well as the impacts that systemic sexism and racism have on candidates. We strive to actively counter any bias that might be present in assessments.

Usually we receive anywhere from 40 to 80 applications for each position, and select 5-7 for interviews. We ask selected candidates to complete a practical assignment before the job interview. The interviews are carried out by the same recruitment panel that reviewed the written applications.

Why do ILGA-Europe use application forms instead of asking job candidates for CVs and cover letters?

We use application forms because they allow us to better understand the capacities, ways of thinking and background of candidates than a CV and cover letter would.

We design them to be able to read about the candidates' abilities to do the specific kinds of tasks that will be required from them on the job, and to learn about their motivations for joining ILGA-Europe.

The questions included in the forms reflect the specific tasks people may expect to be performing on the job, or similar tasks that require the same sets of competences. It is also a more relevant, honest and fair way of comparing different candidates against requirements than a list of educational and job experiences a CV could offer.

What languages do I have to speak to work at ILGA-Europe?

Our working language is English, but you do not have to be a native speaker to work at ILGA-Europe. You need to be able to communicate comfortably with colleagues and some external people about the content of the work and your cooperation.

Some of the jobs in our structure require a higher standard of written and spoken English – especially those that have to do with external representation or writing text.

Some positions also require Russian – because that is the language of some of our programmes, or French/Dutch – because we are based in Belgium and some staff need to be able to communicate with local authorities and providers. All these details are available in the job description and job ad for a given position.

In some cases we can also partially finance language classes for staff to help them reach the level of a language or if they need to get accustomed to specific nomenclature, if the job requires that.

Does ILGA-Europe offer permanent employment contracts?

Yes, in principle all of our contracts are open-ended (without an end date), apart from rare short-term contracts usually issued as a replacement for staff who are on long leaves of absence, or for temporary positions. If that's the case, it will be clearly mention in the job ad.

We are, however, an NGO and operate using largely project funding, so all our contracts are subject to the continuation of funding. Nonetheless, maintaining staff continuity is one of our priorities.

Does Belgium have good employment laws?

The employment laws in Belgium are quite complex but they protect employees, for example against

discrimination, unfair dismissal, in case of illness, etc. Notice periods are long (min. 6 weeks after 6 months of employment) and increase with the duration of your employment. Social security contributions and income tax are withheld from your gross salary, so you don't need to worry about it. Salaries increase automatically every 12-24 months with inflation. Staff member who have dependants or an unemployed partner can benefit for income tax deduction, under certain conditions. The employer is legally responsible for providing safe working conditions and insuring its employees against work related accidents. You can read more about employment laws here: https://www.belgium.be/en/work/employment_legislation.

I have dyslexia, how will my job application be treated?

We realize that a large part of our application process is based on written text and we understand that dyslexia takes many forms and may have a substantial effect on a person's ability to process language, words and number.

We also understand that people with dyslexia can develop strategies and coping mechanisms to reduce its impact, but may require support from their employer in some day-to-day activities.

You do not have to disclose dyslexia in the application form – we will be mindful of the possibility that candidates live with it while reviewing the applications and will not assume, for example, that spelling errors or typos are rooted in a lack of care or attention to detail. If you chose to disclose dyslexia during your application, we may be able to offer you to submit some parts of the recruitment process in video or audio form, or another format that helps you present your abilities.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for all candidates and staff members and, depending on the position and core tasks of the job, may be able to ensure, for example, more time to complete tasks, providing information or instructions in non-written form, providing assistive technologies, avoid assigning note taking duties, etc.

This will not be possible for all jobs and tasks however, and many positions at ILGA-Europe require the ability to process large amounts of information in written format – especially information coming from external sources.

Our approach to reasonable adjustment is also applicable to the impacts and effects of other disabilities.

Can I apply for a job if I am not an EU citizen or don't have an EU work permit?

Yes, you do not need to have a work permit to apply for a job at ILGA-Europe. If you are selected, we will manage the visa and work permit application for you. We cannot guarantee that the authorities will award you a work permit, but we will do everything we can to make sure you are able to join us, and we will cover all the associated costs, so that you are not out of pocket.

Do I have to be a European to work at ILGA-Europe?

No, you do not need to be a European or an EU citizen to work for ILGA-Europe. We have staff members from non-EU countries and other continents. You will need to obtain a work permit and visa to start your employment, but we will manage the process and cover the costs. It is important to note that these documents are decided on by Belgian authorities, and while we will do everything in our power to ensure the application is successful, we cannot guarantee it. That said, all the work permit applications we applied for in recent years were successful.

I don't live in Belgium, can I apply for a job at ILGA-Europe?

Yes, ILGA-Europe staff come from different countries and continents. You can apply for a job regardless of where you currently live and what passport you hold. If you are selected, you will be expected to move to Belgium to join our Brussels office. That will be possible only after we manage to obtain a work permit and visa for you. We will be as supportive and flexible as possible to ensure you have a smooth move and will support your relocation financially.

Do I have to move to Belgium to work at ILGA-Europe?

Our staff spend most of the time working from the office based in Brussels and maintaining that team connection and in-person cooperation is important to us. You may choose to live anywhere in Belgium or neighbouring countries, as long as you are able and willing to commute to the Brussels office. In exceptional circumstances we can, temporarily, arrange for remote working, but that will not be possible in the long-term.

I have a partner/family in my home country. Can I move to Belgium with them?

You can choose to move together and, in such case, ILGA-Europe will provide guidance on how to obtain visas, if they need them. We will not be able to facilitate or manage any related processes for you. We will similarly not be able to support your family members with finding jobs or schools. It is good to know however that staff members who have unemployed dependants (spouses, registered partners or children) receive a reduction on their income tax and have a higher net salary intended to support their family.

If you do not move together to Brussels, we may be able to arrange for you to have a day or two a week of

working remotely (for example Friday and Monday), but that will largely depend on the kind of job you hold and the responsibilities and tasks that go with it. Any costs associated with commuting will be your responsibility. Additionally, most of the roles at ILGA-Europe require occasional travel which often happens on weekends and we cannot guarantee you will be able to work partially remotely throughout the year with no exceptions.

Do I have to have a background in EU advocacy/policy work to work at ILGA-Europe?

A background in EU advocacy/policy or the knowledge of institutions is not required for the majority of jobs at ILGA-Europe. In some roles, advocacy and policy work are core tasks, but even then, we are more interested in your abilities than your previous experience. For these policy and advocacy jobs what is really important to us is your ability and desire to learn about the institutions and actors you'll be working with, your experience of working with political actors, your competences on building relationships and your understanding of political work. You might have job or volunteering experience that is applicable to the kinds of tasks you would be performing at ILGA-Europe – for example from advocating for change in your country or working with trade unions.

Do I have to have international work experience to work at ILGA-Europe?

You do not have to have experience of working in regional or international organisations or entities. But you will be expected to interact with activists and policy-makers from different countries on a daily basis, so you need to be able to navigate these diverse settings and relationships, and understand how different can the styles of communicating and working be across the region. You need to have an understanding of the social and political landscape of the region, the cultural differences and the different behavioural, interactional norms within the movement.

Do I have to have experience working for an LGBTI organisation to work at ILGA-Europe?

You do not have to have experience of working for an LGBTI group or organisation. But the rights of LGBTI people are our core purpose, so you need to be strongly committed to the equality and empowerment of LGBTI communities. You will also need to gain an understanding of some of the specific needs LGBTI people have. Some of our jobs require knowledge of specific issues – such as security context for LGBTI activists or LGBTI laws, policies or practices in specific thematic areas, but you can find these kinds of requirements in the recruitment pack.

Do I have to have experience working in the civil society / in an NGO to work at ILGA-Europe?

It's not a requirement to have a background in NGOs but if you have never worked or volunteered in civil society groups, you need to understand and be committed to some of our overall values and principles, such as:

- We are membership-led, which means we are not only accountable to our 600+ members across Europe and Central Asia, but also strive to cooperate with them, reflect their realities and diversity, take a lead from them in terms of what are priorities, capacities, opportunities, challenges and limitations.
- We are a non-profit organisation, which means that while we need to make ends meet, the strategic impact of our work is much more important than sheer visibility, advertising or income.
- We serve and represent the LGBTI movement in Europe and Central Asia, which means we take the utmost care to not overstep our mandate, to not take away their resources or opportunities, and to help groups and organisations achieve their goals. Many of our members are volunteer groups who work in the evenings and on the weekends only, so we also need to make ourselves available during those times, if needed.

The reality of working at an NGO such as ILGA-Europe is that it is a very fast-paced and ever changing environment. We react to the local- and national-level situation and often need to change our plans and adjust our work. We try to make sure that people who need to be part of a conversation are present. We interact daily with many different groups of people, with different ideas, expectations and working cultures, and navigate between them. It often takes a long time to see the effects of our work. Many of our staff deal with dire situation on a daily basis, and have to process information about discrimination, oppression and abuse. The workload is not steady all year-round: some periods are fairly quiet and others are very intense and packed with work. We do our best to balance all these realities and circumstances with support from managers and colleagues, atmosphere and work culture, employment benefits and other means, because we care about our staff very much, but the reality is that often people who have not experiences working in similar setting find NGO work challenging.

Do I have to have a university degree to work at ILGA-Europe?

No. Formal education is never a requirement in our recruitment processes. We understand that people gain knowledge and experience in a multitude of ways, and that formal education is not accessible to everyone, either due to economic reasons or because of systemic oppressions. In some cases, a formal certification of some sort might be desirable (simply to help us fill some compliance requirements), but that would be clearly stated in the recruitment pack and could be replaced by proven practical experience.

What are the working hours at ILGA-Europe?

We have a flexible approach to working hours to accommodate any caring responsibilities or other needs you might have. The standard day is 7.5 hours long, and you are expected to start work between 8:00 and 10:00. The work week is from Monday to Friday. In busy periods you might need to work more hours or on a weekend, especially during travel, but you will know about that well in advance and you will take the extra time off on other days.

Can I transition while working at ILGA-Europe?

Yes, ILGA-Europe has a policy in place to support employees who transition. In terms of the use of personal, legal data, we have to comply with Belgian regulations and cannot change any formal documents without a legal gender recognition, but we protect staff privacy and up-date information about name and gender wherever possible without hassle as soon as a staff member expresses the wish for us to do so. We also cover all medical transition related costs that we legally can through the health insurance schemes we provide, and make sure medical transition is feasible in terms of the time off work needed.

I am a wheelchair user, can I work at ILGA-Europe?

Our office is partially accessible to wheelchair users: all the elevators, corridors and doorways are wide enough, office doors can be opened with sensors, there is an accessible toilet, and we can make adjustment to the work station to accommodate different needs.

The building where we are based however has a heavy entrance door which might pose challenges for some wheelchair users. Wheelchair accessible apartment rentals are available on the Brussels market and are partially subsidized by the city, but they are limited. Public transport is largely wheelchair accessible.

What kinds of benefits does ILGA-Europe offer?

The salary is comprised of 12 months and an additional holiday pay paid out in May, but no year-end or other bonuses are offered. Besides this, we offer: comprehensive hospitalisation and ambulatory care insurance, meal vouchers for every day worked, a complementary pension plan financial indemnities for working from home and commuting to work, financial support for professional development, additional days of at year-end and in especially busy periods and a range of policies aiming at making the lives of staff who experience intersectional exclusions easier. We also do not provide the so called "mutuelle" coverage (obligatory public health insurance participation, approx. €10 per month).

Are salaries good at ILGA-Europe?

The salaries at ILGA-Europe are about 15% net higher than the average Belgian salary, and slightly above the average salaries for the NGO sector in Brussels. They are approx. 10-15% lower than salaries in some private sector fields, such as banking, technology, marketing or consulting. The salaries increase usually every year, and the net starting amounts you can expect per month are approx. 2600 € for officers, 2900 € for senior officers, 3300 € for directors as a single person without disability or dependants. To compare, a one bedroom flat within 30 min walking distance from the office can cost approx. 800 – 1000 € plus utilities, while studios and rooms can be found within the 500 – 900 € range. These figures are applicable in 2024.

What is the workplace culture like?

While ILGA-Europe is a structured organisation, with policies on specific operations, manuals for different positions and areas of work, and clear lines of responsibility and accountability between staff, Board and membership, the workplace culture itself is relaxed and informal. We rely on conversations between different people and cooperation rather than strict instructions. We do not have any specific dress codes. We try to balance the need for clarity and fairness with flexibility and allowing people to find the best ways of doing things.