



# ACTIVITY REPORT 2014 - 2015

EQUALITY FOR LESBIAN, GAY,  
BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX  
PEOPLE IN EUROPE

# INTRODUCTION

In my first activity report note as ILGA-Europe executive director, I said: *In marching towards the next milestones of translating commitments into change on the ground, we are heartened and strengthened by the knowledge that European LGBTI movement is growing every year in strength and capacity.*"

Looking at the world around us these days, that sentiment from 2010 might seem overly optimistic. In the intervening five years, European societies have gone through profound changes. We are currently in the throes of a refugee crisis, one that reveals the present-day tension between human rights and political action bubbling just below the surface.

Decision-makers seem lost, caught between the vocal commitments made in international fora and their apparent desire to appeal to populist politics closer to home. Amid this cacophony of political confusion, it is hard (and, in some instances, downright dangerous) for human rights defenders and civil society to make their voices heard.

When confronted with this list of challenges, it's easy to fall into the trap of pessimism. We must be realistic. Now, we need to stare these difficulties in the face but not be silenced by them. The European LGBTI movement has shown time and time again how resilient we are. The creativity, compassion and resourcefulness of the movement are our greatest assets. This is why many other social movements are looking to us for inspiration.

For 2015 was also the year when Ireland shook off its shroud of perceived social conservatism, voting for marriage equality in a landslide referendum and introducing gender recognition legislation based on self-determination. Another island provided huge inspiration; Malta extended legal protection to trans and intersex people, making the

smallest EU country the biggest leader for LGBTI law and policy on our Rainbow Europe Index.

The sheer size of the 2015 Annual Conference in Athens is a clear illustration of the strength of our movement. In the past 12 months, we strengthened our work with our civil society colleagues and opened up conversations with more allies, such as progressive faith communities. The effectiveness of this alliance building is obvious: more than 450 participants will travel to Greece, up from 320 attendees just one year ago.

ILGA-Europe will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year. And as the organisation moves into its twenties, things are looking pretty strong. A team of 17 people moved into a new office space in Brussels, our website has been completely revamped, a new Rainbow Europe module is up and running, we've grown our media coverage and will be opening up new opportunities with our European Equality Gala. All of this bodes well and promises lots of chances to talk directly to our supporters and allies in Brussels and beyond.

The challenges and expectations faced by ILGA-Europe continue to grow. The LGBTI movement will encounter complex challenges over the next 12 months. But we are in a strong position to face all of it. As we assess our work next year half way into our own Strategic Plan, we will make sure that our board, staff and members all remain united and aligned. By the time we all reach Cyprus, I am confident that the movement will have found new creative, dynamic and strategic ways to move forward together, joined by old and new allies. Just like we always have.

**Evelyne Paradis**  
**Executive Director, ILGA-Europe**

# ILGA-EUROPE'S ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

## ILGA-EUROPE AT A GLANCE

Since the Annual Conference 2014 in Riga, ILGA-Europe...

- organised **13 conferences, meetings and events; 13 training sessions** and **3 study visits** for staff, board members, member organisations or partner organisations.
- had **meetings** with several **high-level officials**, including Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission; Věra Jourová, European Commissioner on Justice and Gender Equality; Martine Reicherts, former European Justice Commissioner; Randy Berry, US Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons. Moreover we had meetings with heads of cabinets of Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission & High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs; Vytenis Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health; Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations; Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment; Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education; Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration; Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice and Gender Equality. We also met with several **members of the European Parliament** throughout the year.
- was asked **to be a keynote speaker or panellist at seminars, hearings or conferences** organised by the European Parliament, the Italian Presidency of the European Union, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, European Asylum Support Office, European Commission, Embassy of United States in Belgium, International Bar Association and IDAHOT 2015 Forum.
- participated in additional **conferences and meetings** organised by: the OSCE/ODIHR – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights; European Commission against Racism and Intolerance; The Human Rights and Democracy Network; Social Platform; Freedom House; CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe; European Patient Forum; EU HIV Civil Society Forum; European Network on Religion and Belief (ENORB); Catholics for Choice; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Amnesty International; Open Society Foundation; European Roma Information Office; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN); Children Rights International Network (CRIN); European Women's Lobby; European Disability Forum; European Humanist Federation; EPATH; European AIDS Treatment Group; and the equality bodies of Germany and Belgium.
- had **meetings** with the national governments of Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands and the United States.
- was invited **to speak, participate, deliver presentations or workshops at several seminars, events, conferences or meetings** organised by member organisations across Europe, including Transgender Europe (TGEU), NELFA, ENAR and ILGA World.
- submitted **43 policy papers, submissions and substantial input** to different European public consultations and inputted directly into various European institutions' and organisations' work programme consultations, such as together with member organisations contributed with submissions to the European Commission's Progress Reports; submission to OSCE towards the 2014 hate crime report; and facilitated submissions to ECRI.

- submitted **6 third-party interventions** to the **European Court of Human Rights**.
- re-granted **45 small grants** for projects carried out by member organisations and partner organisations of ILGA-Europe.
- visited **16 countries** for meetings with member organisations on national LGBTI issues.
- organised its first-ever fundraising event, the **European Equality Gala**, with **350 friends and allies** from Brussels
- was featured or quoted in international, European and national media **293 times** in at least **35 countries**, by outlets such as **The Advocate, BBC News, Buzzfeed, CNN, Deutsche Welle, The Economist, Euractiv, Euronews, The EU Observer, Gay Star News, The Guardian, The Huffington Post, The Local, The New York Times, Newsweek Europe, NPR, Politico, Pink News, Reuters, The Wall Street Journal** and **The Washington Blade**.
- issued **31 media releases and statements** raising human rights and equality issues for LGBTI people on international, European and national levels .
- published **8 opinion articles** in European and national media.
- launched a brand new website and an online version of our Rainbow Europe Map and Index. The two had together **232,606 visits** with an average of **655 visits** per day (as of 6 October 2015).
- had **22,999 'likes'** on our **Facebook** page and **14,619 followers** on **Twitter** (as of 6 October 2015). Moreover we created **2 social media campaigns** on women in the LGBTI movement and on older LGBTI people.
- processed **1,398** invoices, reimbursements, sub-grants, and other contractual work.
- **Moved office ...once!**

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The aim of this section is to report on progress made by ILGA-Europe towards achieving its strategic objectives under its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. This report covers work carried out between October 2014 and October 2015.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Achieve full equality and effective enjoyment of human rights without discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex (intersex), with particular attention to the following issues: (1) asylum; (2) bias-motivated violence and hate speech; (3) education; (4) employment; (5) family; (6) freedom of assembly, association and expression; (7) health; and (8) legal gender recognition.

In November 2014, the EU political scene was a source of great optimism. A change of leadership and a refreshed EU landscape promised a renewed commitment to human rights in the **European Union**, especially on LGBTI equality. This hope appeared in many forms: the new EU

Commission put fundamental rights in the hands of the Commission's First-Vice President; clear commitments were made by the Commission's President Juncker to unblock the new anti-discrimination directive; and the Italian Presidency of the EU organised the first-ever LGBTI event in

the European Council. But one year on, keeping LGBTI equality at the top of the EU's agenda remains a challenge.

ILGA-Europe were determined to make the most of the EU's early promise: we met with Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Justice and Equality Commissioner Vera Jourova at the start of their mandates; we appeared as a keynote speaker at the event hosted by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the Italian EU Presidency and we met with members of the cabinet of several Commissioners. Reaching out to new potential allies, we invested in building relationships with the EU Parliament by arranging one-to-one meetings, speaking at political group events, producing material on our key priorities, and actively supporting the new LGBTI Intergroup. But despite this intense engagement, we are still awaiting concrete policy actions.

One of ILGA-Europe's main priorities has been to encourage the European Commission to adopt an **EU Strategy on LGBTI equality**. This would enhance the EU's ability to measure its progress in this area in a practical, visible way. And it's not just ILGA-Europe who thinks so. Commitment to a Strategy was made by several in the Commission, including Commissioner Jourova, as well as a growing number of governments (14 governments in total) and we have heard repeated calls from the European Parliament. ILGA-Europe worked with all these actors throughout the year to build on this work. While we were disappointed that Vice-President Timmermans did not reinforce the Commission's commitment publicly when he spoke at ILGA-Europe's European Equality Gala in June 2015, Maltese Minister Helena Dalli did make a strong appeal to the EU Commission to show leadership on this issue. We have kept up the momentum over the past few months; we have been working with the Parliament, governments who will soon hold presidency of the EU, and more importantly with Commission officials themselves, to support the adoption of clear and strong actions on LGBTI equality by the Commission in the very near future.

Ever since it was first put forward in 2008, the introduction of the **new anti-discrimination directive** has been

ILGA-Europe's other major political goal at EU level. The priority placed by the current EU Commission on finally getting the directive adopted, some eight years after it was initially proposed, gave new impetus to the debate.

ILGA-Europe seized this opportunity by going to Berlin twice to meet with German parliamentarians and high-level government officials, the equality body and NGOs. The goal of these trips was to support political mobilisation towards changing Germany's position on the proposed legislation. We also worked with past, current and future EU Presidencies (namely Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) as to maintain political pressure, and ensured ongoing visibility of the directive through proactive media work. All of this was done in close cooperation with our friends and allies from other equality NGOs, whom we work with as part of the "Equality for All" coalition. In 2016, it will be crucial to keep up the momentum, in particular by ensuring that upcoming EU Presidencies and the Commission take concrete action to see the adoption of this significant piece of legislation.

On a more positive note, LGBTI human rights remained high on the EU's 2014 Enlargement agenda as a result of ILGA-Europe's continued monitoring and advocacy work. This was reflected in **EU Enlargement strategy** and progress reports, EU Delegations' engagement with national LGBTI organisations and in the support of the establishment of a regional LGBTI association. In 2015, ILGA-Europe, together with other civil society organisations, gave input to the **EU's Neighbourhood policy** review; we called for a greater focus on human rights in the context of the EU's engagement with its eastern neighbours. The results of the review will be published later this year, but it is already evident that the shifting geopolitical climate in the Eastern Neighbourhood has negatively impacted on the EU's engagement on human rights in the region. ILGA-Europe also successfully advocated for a stronger text on LGBTI human rights in the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, placing particular emphasis on the implementation of the LGBTI Guidelines.

At the **Council of Europe**, ILGA-Europe continued working closely with the various institutions, including the Sexual

Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Unit, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) throughout the year, always with the objective of supporting the consolidation of the Council's mandate and policy framework on sexual orientation and gender identity. In this context, we provided input for discussions on the current and future work of the Council, we fed into monitoring processes, and generally sought to create synergies between the Council's activities and opportunities at the movement level. At the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), the highlight of 2015 was the adoption of a very comprehensive resolution on trans rights. Transgender Europe (TGEU) took the lead in working for the development and adoption of the resolution, with ILGA-Europe providing support, principally on lobbying.

In short, it must be said that opportunities for European institutions to lead or instigate change at the moment are rather limited. This is why we continue to build **strong relationships directly with national policy-makers** – in close cooperation with our member organisations. For example, we actively participate in the Annual IDAHOT Forum which brings together representatives from governments, intergovernmental institutions, equality bodies and NGOs. We help with the event's planning and overall thinking, in addition to sharing our expertise as speakers. Once again, we did that at the 2015 event hosted by the Montenegrin government, and are already engaged with the Danish government which will host the 2016 edition of the Forum. We support the work of the LGBT Governmental Focal Point Network through information exchange. This is clearly an area which is developing, and one of our priorities is to build effective spaces for meaningful NGO-government dialogue so we can all help to build practical plans to advance LGBTI equality across Europe.

In this context, ILGA-Europe's **benchmarking activities** are even more important. Beyond the media buzz around who is 'number 1', the Rainbow Map and Index have become an integral part of discussions with policy-makers about the legal standards required to achieve LGBTI equality. Therefore, ensuring the credibility, accuracy and timeliness

of the information we provide is a job we take very seriously. While the new interactive web-based Rainbow Module enables ILGA-Europe to keep the information up-to-date and accessible to a wider audience, we are working on ways to strengthen the use of the Annual Review. We are acutely aware that our Index can only measure laws and comparable European policies but the number beside a country's name cannot possibly tell the whole story. This is why we put together the Annual Review, which complements the legal picture painted on the map with information about the lived reality on the ground. We are also stepping up our thinking on measuring social change and we hope that, in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to produce a map which includes legal and social benchmarking.

When we look at all these aspects of our advocacy work, it is apparent that **litigation** is more important than ever. In countries where the rights of LGBTI people are heavily politicized and where political advocacy is difficult, litigation in domestic courts can often provide an alternative solution. Litigation has become an essential tool to instigate reform of national laws and heap pressure on those governments who ignore or openly reject the application of international human rights standards to LGBTI people. ILGA-Europe are working hard to enable LGBTI activists and groups to engage in strategic litigation by continuing to enhance their skills and knowledge. There is also an ongoing need to create progressive jurisprudence to strengthen our advocacy for more explicit recognition of the human rights of LGBTI people at national, regional and international levels.

This is why ILGA-Europe continued our work on **strategic litigation**, encouraging our member organisations to take key cases to the European Court of Human Rights. We supported on-going cases through third-party interventions, and, for those cases that had already been decided, with submissions to the Committee of Ministers under the procedure for the execution of judgments. In the past year, ILGA-Europe participated in five third-party interventions before the European Court of Human Rights. The cases addressed freedom of assembly issues, the obligation of states to investigate hate crimes, asylum,

access to medical treatment for trans people, and challenging the requirement for trans people to undergo sterilisation as a condition for legal gender recognition. In the execution of judgments procedure, ILGA-Europe provided support for the implementation of cases against Lithuania (legal gender recognition), and Moldova and Russia (freedom of assembly). ILGA-Europe want to acknowledge the continuing support of Professor Robert Wintemute in this litigation work. In addition, ILGA-Europe took a case under the Social Charter's collective complaints procedure for the first time; we joined TGEU in initiating a case challenging the Czech Republic's law requiring trans people to be sterilised as a condition for legal gender recognition. The complaint, which invoked the right to health, was declared admissible by the European Committee of Social Rights in September 2015 and a judgment is expected by the end of 2016.

Looking closely at specific political developments over the past year, several negative trends have required our attention. One of the most concerning trends we have witnessed is the **closing space for civil society**. We have seen restrictions being placed on NGOs, including LGBTI groups, in a growing number of countries. Governments are erecting legal and administrative barriers and increasingly fail to include civil society in decision-making processes. This makes it more difficult for civil society to receive foreign support and funding to operate, to influence policy making, to hold public gatherings or set up new organisations. In addition to this, incidents of intimidation and harassment against human rights defenders are on the rise. Since our Riga conference, ILGA-Europe have prioritised action in the area. We published a study on the impact of shrinking space on LGBTI groups, organised a strategizing event on 'shrinking civil society space for LGBTI organisations' and developed recommendations. By arranging meetings between activists and EU policy-makers, we gave the activists directly affected by this trend the chance to strategize and plan effective responses. We also forged robust connections with other human rights organisations to build strong horizontal alliances standing up against these worrying developments.

We also stepped up our monitoring of **so-called "gender ideology"**, the argumentation used to undermine any initiative to challenge gender stereotypes in schools and in society, including LGBTI-specific initiatives. We mapped the situation across Europe and explored how to respond to this trend along with other civil society organisations. Currently, we are drafting a short paper about these trends, to bring the anti-human-rights agenda of the people using the "gender ideology" rhetoric to light. This paper will help our advocacy work, as well as strengthening our cooperation with other organisations on the issue. This "gender ideology" backlash is prompting us to investigate new strategies to advance equality in education, especially around our messaging and documentation work. In addition to increased research and analysis, we also started taking action to counter the anti-gender narrative in European level settings, using discussions on EU gender policies as an opportunity to reaffirm an inclusive understanding of gender. In particular, we worked with TGEU on the European Parliament's report on the EU gender strategy for 2016-2020. Together, we secured an inclusive understanding of gender, meaning that everyone across Europe should live without fear of gender based violence and discrimination, and included specific references to the rights of LGBTI people – with particular focus on trans and intersex issues.

ILGA-Europe continued to enhance its ability to respond effectively to those who oppose the recognition of LGBTI human rights, especially religious extremist groups. To this end, we consolidated our links with other human rights organisations by establishing a platform called High Ground. This platform will coordinate powerful political and policy **responses to anti-human rights claims**. By working together strategically, we will expose opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), LGBTI human rights, women's rights, secular institutions, and attacks on the universality and indivisibility of human rights in Europe. We also worked on our argumentation to counter the tendency to pit LGBTI equality against religion. To this end, we organised an event with European Network on Religion and Belief (ENORB) aimed at identifying common experiences of discrimination between LGBTI people and

religious and belief groups, and exploring areas of potential tension in a spirit of mutual understanding. In addition, ILGA-Europe joined forces with Catholics for Choice for a one-day forum in the European Parliament which gathered parliamentarians, staff from EU institutions, journalists, and civil society to discuss the rise of anti-human rights extreme religious lobby groups in European institutions. We also published a study on 'the right to freedom of religion or belief and its intersection with other rights'. This work allows us to respond to claims that LGBTI equality violates freedom of religion in a manner that is fully consistent with human rights law, whilst also helping us address internal prejudice towards faith from within the movement by better understanding other peoples' perspectives.

Thankfully, the negative and challenging trends are offset by extremely positive advances. One of the most encouraging developments is certainly the increased **visibility of intersex issues** in Europe. The ever-increasing strength of the intersex movement (which allowed for more targeted advocacy and awareness-raising on European level) combined with momentum driven nationally (with leaders like Malta producing inclusive legislation) raises the interest and awareness of policy makers. Having leaders who want to learn is very exciting; but 2016 will be the year to turn words into action as the first European Parliament hearing to include intersex human rights will take place in April 2016. It is in this context that ILGA-Europe worked with OII-Europe to organise a study visit for intersex activists to Strasbourg, to build on the publication of ground-breaking reports on the human rights of intersex people by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner and the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency. Activists met with members of the European Parliament, the cabinet of Commissioner Jourova, the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner and officials from the Council of Europe, and also took part in an event organised by the European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup. We also worked with activists to ensure several EU Parliament reports recognised the needs of intersex people, for example the Noichl report on future gender equality strategy and the Ferrara report on the situation of fundamental rights in Europe (the first time that a Parliament report states that

non-medically necessary surgeries on intersex children are a human rights violation).

We have taken steps to include LGBTI people and **health issues** more explicitly in European policies. Specifically, we published our "key demands for ensuring the enjoyment of the right to health and access to health without discrimination" and increased our engagement with relevant EU Commission officials developing new projects on health inequalities experienced by LGBTI people. An important development in ILGA-Europe's work in the field of health is that we stepped up our advocacy on **HIV/AIDS**. With the high prevalence of HIV once again being a significant concern within the LGBTI community, ILGA-Europe responded positively to the growing request from different actors and members to be more vocal and active. In addition to our work as a member of the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and on-going engagement with UNAIDS, we started to consider the larger strategy in terms of our role in advocacy and the needs in the movement. ILGA-Europe also looked at specific issues related to HIV prevention such as access to PrEP and took part in a consultation organised jointly by UNAIDS and the European AIDS Treatment Group.

In areas like health and education, ILGA-Europe's impact is most evident in our **direct engagement with national policy-makers**. Roundtables are our preferred model, bringing together national policy-makers and activists to exchange good practices on a specific topic. Not only is this approach helping us to overcome the issue of limited European competences in these areas, it is also proving more effective by ensuring practical peer learning opportunities and providing safe spaces to discuss the challenges. In the past year, ILGA-Europe organised the first Roundtable on LGBTI Health in Europe, with the support of the French Ministry of Health. This roundtable marked the first time that policy makers from across Europe got together to acknowledge that there are specific issues for LGBTI people in accessing health and in health care. The attendee list has the potential to create a network of policy makers to allow for on-going exchange of information and good practices. We are organising another similar event later in 2015 on mental health. Building on work from



previous roundtables held in Athens and Dublin in 2013 and 2014, we organised a third roundtable on education in Lisbon, focusing on existing effective policy models. The meeting aimed to identify how cooperation between the various actors on **education** could be strengthened throughout the year by, for instance, exchanging information on a regular basis, working on joint projects and promoting successful policies initiated across Europe.

Advocating for effective laws and policies to combat **homophobic and transphobic violence** remains a clear priority for ILGA-Europe. Over the past year, we continued to build momentum towards future EU-wide protection against bias-motivated violence. We organised a conference for EU and national policy-makers, NGOs and legal experts to explore how EU-level legislation can be strengthened in this area. We also continued to work with other European NGOs to build a coalition of supporters to persuade the EU to take action against violence. In order to strengthen the case for stronger measures against violence at European and national levels, we provided extensive input to the monitoring of hate crimes by the OSCE and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. We also produced a European analysis of trends based on national reports produced by LGBTI groups supported by our documentation grants. In addition to building the ground for our legislative goals, we also focused on ensuring effective implementation of existing standards, including by joining forces with other European NGOs to identify good practices to address issues of under-reporting and victims' support. Similarly, most of our work related to asylum focused on the implementation of existing EU legislation, in particular by working with the European Asylum Support Office on the development of tools to support national governments to apply EU standards properly when it comes to LGBTI asylum seekers.

Recognition of **LGBTI families** also remains firmly on the agenda, as ILGA-Europe are exploring strategies to best support legal and political changes related to family rights. To this end, we organised a roundtable for LGBTI activists and allies on the legal situation of families across Europe, in conjunction with the 2015 Europride in Riga. The event was

a prime occasion to discuss advocacy strategies on EU and national level to ensure equal rights for LGBTI families. While ILGA-Europe engage with EU institutions to advance recognition within the limited scope of European competences (e.g. mutual recognition of status across borders and property regimes), it is clear that strategic litigation remains the main tool to be used from a European level to secure equality of families in law.

In 2015, ILGA-Europe re-entered the area of **equality in the workplace** through many different angles. Firstly, together with TGEU, we started talking with the EU Commission about the discrimination faced by trans people in the labour market. Thanks to the work of national LGBTI organisations active in the area of workplace diversity, we have also gone back to mapping existing good practices and opportunities to advance equality at work across the region. A critical piece of piece of this work is strengthening of benchmarks for workplace diversity, including emerging global benchmarks, to assess employers' track record on LGBTI equality and to create a sense of accountability. This is why ILGA-Europe was happy to accept the invitation to join the Workplace Pride Global Benchmark, an opportunity to contribute to bridging the gap between the expectations of the LGBTI community and the day to day realities that employers face of making progress with LGBT workplace inclusion. Beyond workplace diversity, corporate engagement for LGBTI equality is fast becoming a new strategic issue in terms of advancement of the European LGBTI movement. ILGA-Europe initiated thinking on the role of the private sector to instigate political and social change in different countries, with a view to developing our own strategy in the near future.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance the capacity of ILGA-Europe (members, board, staff) to achieve political, legal, institutional and social change by:

- Strengthening the capacity of ILGA-Europe to lead on LGBTI equality in Europe through: (1) strengthening ILGA-Europe's capacity to adapt and respond effectively to changing environments; (2) reflecting and integrating the diversity within the LGBTI population across ILGA-Europe's work; (3) consolidating ILGA-Europe's capacity to advance the rights of intersex people
- Strengthening the European LGBTI movement through: (1) strengthening the organisational capacity of LGBTI organisations to achieve change; (2) strengthening the capacity of LGBTI organisations to engage nationally on key European level policy developments and implementation; (3) enhancing the capacity of LGBTI organisations to recognise and reflect the diversity within the LGBTI communities

When it comes to our movement building work, ILGA-Europe's aim is to ensure that LGBTI activists have the necessary tools and skills to be able to cope with the ever-evolving political, social and cultural environments in which they work. This is why, in large part, priorities in our movement building work are informed and shaped by the political developments described under our first strategic objective; both pillars of our work feed into and complement each other. It is with these current political and social trends in mind that, over the past year, we developed several projects to enable us to adapt to the current needs of the movement.

Our first new programme is **Creating Opportunities**. Simply put, the programme creates a central resource for the European LGBTI movement to make sure they can respond to opportunities or threats. On one hand, *Creating Opportunities* is ILGA-Europe's response to an increasingly organised opposition which attempts to block positive developments or even approve hostile anti-LGBTI legislative proposals in different countries. But the programme is also an instrument to support the LGBTI movement where it is presented with exciting opportunities to affirm or strengthen LGBTI rights. This means that this innovative programme can be used in a

variety of scenarios, from a referendum on a constitutional marriage ban to supporting a campaign for a new law on legal gender recognition. *Creating Opportunities* allows ILGA-Europe to keep track of national events that could possibly spill over to neighbouring countries and give our member strategic assistance as soon as they need it. This programme can leverage the efforts of groups operating on the ground through strategic planning, community mobilisation and social change influencing efforts. It also helps to make optimal use of good practices, through documenting and disseminating positive case studies, and it encourages peer-to-peer learning.

A burning question for our movement in recent years has been: "how do we reach the hearts and minds of people?" Over the past year, ILGA-Europe delved deeper into this question, trying to get a better understanding of the psychology of social change. In particular, we looked at the impact of language on changing people's perceptions, overcoming prejudices, and convincing decision-makers of the need to take action. Even more concretely, we took important steps to increase the movement's capacity to instigate change by **strengthening our communications work**. In addition to two training sessions – one for LGBTI

activists and one for ILGA-Europe's staff and board – we also launched a new project with the Public Interest Research Centre on building value-based message frameworks that positively influence public opinion. The aims of the project are to develop strategic LGBTI narratives for advocacy and communication purposes and to increase understanding of the narrative landscape surrounding the rights of European LGBTI people, while creating peer learning and exchange tools for activists to facilitate access to knowledge and resources.

The third new ILGA-Europe endeavour is the **Allies in Action** programme. At a time when opportunities for 'conventional' campaigning (targeting state bodies and aiming for legislative and policy changes) are limited, we believe that developing horizontal ties across society is crucial. We need to activate person-to-person connections, and increase the capacity of LGBTI groups to engage supporters outside of LGBTI movement in a progressive, meaningful, and sustainable way. Designed to foster an enabling environment for LGBTI equality work in six former USSR countries, *Allies in Action* creates ways for local LGBTI advocates and groups to involve more supporters in their work, from groups of professionals, to family and friends of LGBTI communities. A joint venture with COC Netherlands, this three-year initiative will allow LGBTI groups to increase their allies' knowledge of LGBTI-specific issues and to support their activities to promote LGBTI equality.

The projects and programmes mentioned so far focus on enhancing skills and sharpening strategies. However, the personal well-being of our community is also at the forefront of our minds. **Security concerns for LGBTI human rights defenders** and organisations have sadly increased in recent years. In the 12 months since our conference in Riga, ILGA-Europe provided temporary relocation to human rights defenders through the *Dignity for All* programme, supported security trainings and provided assistance to organisations to help them mitigate risk. We also started to explore how to lessen the negative impact that security risks often have on the wellbeing of activists, which in turn can undermine the sustainability of organisations. ILGA-Europe is looking at facilitating trainings to proactively address these situations.

Every day, the ILGA-Europe staff team is involved with one aspect or another of our movement building work, from leading a training session or issuing a grant, from one-to-one skype calls with activists discussing a development at national level to supporting a piece of organisational development. It is difficult to capture the breadth of actions carried out during a year to support the movement. While it is virtually impossible to name every single piece of movement building work we do, we should mention a few main activities by name:

- The Annual Conference, with its 46 workshops.
- Capacity-building seminars and trainings: on strategic communication; community and organisational development; financial management; security and strategic planning.
- Workshops on community and organisational development, wellbeing of activists, strategic communication.
- Various fact-finding trips and in-country sessions on strategic planning and project management.
- Study and advocacy visits to the Council of Europe and the EU.
- Coaching/mentoring on organisational management and development.
- Documentation grants on LGBTI discrimination in education, advocacy grants in the framework of the *Dignity for All* programme and various grants to support other documentation activities.

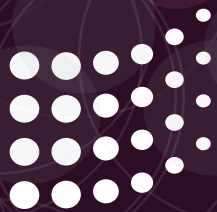
Every year, we strive to respond to the broad spectrum of needs identified across the region to the best of our ability. We prioritise our action based on a needs assessment process. We review our assessment process on an annual basis, thanks to the feedback received from our members, partners and donors. Overall, our work tends to have a geographical focus on Russia and former USSR countries, the Balkans and Southern Europe, where challenges experienced by the movement are more severe. Unfortunately, our own limited capacity doesn't allow us to meet all the expectations and needs of the movement. Where this is the case, we constantly try to find alternative ways to help – for example, by redirecting to other groups who may be able to support or by enhancing access to relevant knowledge and information.

An important priority within our movement building actions is to empower those working with under-represented groups within LGBTI communities and emerging organisations, in line with ILGA-Europe's objectives to strengthen diversity within the organisation and the movement. Once again, ILGA-Europe placed great importance on contributing to the strengthening of the **intersex** movement. Our work in this area included supporting a one-day gathering of intersex activists prior to the Athens conference and participation at the Annual Conference itself. As in previous years, we also took steps to consolidate the capacity of the LGBT movement to be inclusive on intersex, this time by co-organising a seminar with IGLYO on LGBTQ activism and intersex.

On the broader framework of diversity, ILGA-Europe built on our previous work and prioritised challenges of visibility for **diversity** issues and participation of under-represented groups within the organisation. One good example of this is our social media usage. ILGA-Europe turned to social media to respond to lack of visibility which so many people in the LGBTI community face. In addition to our regular communication on special days, this year we marked International Women's Day (8 March) and the UN International Day of Older Persons (1 October) with dedicated social media campaigns raising awareness about the experiences of women within the LGBTI movement and of the specific needs of older LGBTI people.

However, we chose to concentrate our diversity efforts around the 2015 Annual Conference, where we are organising a series of workshops and sessions that will provide multiple spaces for participants to explore intersectionality issues (including related to age, gender, religion and faith, ethnicity). Through the scholarship programme, we are also enabling activists representing a greater diversity of experiences to be present in Athens. In addition to this, we will present the first Diversity Awards to recognise good practices to promote inclusiveness by LGBTI groups. The discussions in Athens will feed into a consultation process we are initiating with organisations representing minority groups within the LGBTI community. This process is aimed at identifying ways to enable their active participation within ILGA-Europe and the wider European movement.

Last but certainly not least, enhancing ILGA-Europe's ability to fundraise and to create a strong base of individual donors was a top organisational priority in 2015. Moving from exploration to action, ILGA-Europe held the European Equality Gala in June, our first **fundraising** event in Brussels. The event, which received significant attention thanks to the participation of the EU Commission's Vice-President Frans Timmermans as keynote speaker and Maltese Minister Dalli, sold out with over 350 supporters gathering on the evening. The event was attended by two other EU Commissioners, members of the European Parliament as well as several Brussels-based European media outlets. ILGA-Europe also secured sponsorship from Google – a first corporate sponsorship for the organisation. We also launched two targeted donation campaigns via social media aimed at friends, allies and supporters of ILGA-Europe. Admittedly there is still a significant amount of learning to do in order for such fundraising initiatives to enable the organisation to truly diversify its funding. But the activities carried out this year provide a solid basis for the future. We are developing this work, also considering the broader aim of fostering a philanthropic culture on LGBTI rights in the region, which would benefit the movement as a whole. Finally, beyond our own funding, ILGA-Europe stepped up its engagement with public and private donors by organizing a **large donors' meeting** prior to its 2015 Annual Conference in Athens, with a view to discussing the needs of the broad European LGBTI movement and of contributing to increased coordination of grantmakers and alignment of efforts to support the movement's activities in Europe.



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