



ILGA-Europe Policy on Participation & Representation

Rationale

ILGA-Europe recognises that its membership is very diverse encompassing a range of sexual orientations, gender identities, cultures, religions, linguistic, racial and ethnic groups as well as factors such as age, disability, health status, financial means and family composition/responsibilities among others. ILGA-Europe recognises that while the organisation has set up structures to ensure that gender representation is ensured throughout, other groups have tended to be underrepresented.

ILGA-Europe is committed to improving representation and participation in its membership, activities and events. This policy therefore aims to identify some of the barriers that various groups might encounter and the measures that ILGA-Europe will take to promote full and equal participation of all those who wish to join and pursue the mission of the organisation.

Visibility

ILGA-Europe will strive to be as representative as possible in its communications tools by ensuring that images, articles, press releases, website content, newsletters and other organisational media produced portray as wide a range of membership groups as possible.

ILGA-Europe will also seek to be representative in its choice of speakers, panels and workshop facilitators to ensure that a wide range of issues are addressed and that the visibility of diverse groups within the LGBTI community is enhanced.

Language

While reiterating that, for practical reasons, the working language of ILGA-Europe is English, we recognise that this may prove to be a barrier to participation for some members. ILGA-Europe will however seek to:

- Simplify language as much as possible to ensure that the less fluent participants are able to follow and understand;
- Encourage the use of visual aids by speakers that can enhance understanding of participants;
- Provide interpretation/sign language services on request wherever its financial resources allow it to do so;
- Provide translations of texts and publications wherever possible and encourage members to translate materials into their own language;

- Seek to organize events and trainings on a national or regional basis wherever possible to reduce language barriers;
- Request and encourage participants to volunteer to provide simultaneous translation if required;

Positive Action

ILGA-Europe recognizes that some barriers to participation and representation are also endemic within its member organisations. Some groups might be active on the local, regional or national level but less so in the international arena.

ILGA-Europe will therefore seek to promote diversity among its members through trainings and workshops and will facilitate the sharing of good practice between member organisations. It will also encourage organisations to consider diversity issues in the selection of delegates for conferences, trainings and other events.

ILGA-Europe will seek to be pro-active in its approach by identifying underrepresented groups and inviting them to become members in order to establish a broader and more diversified network. It will consult with these groups to help the organisation design and recommend new criteria to bring about equity and participation of minorities in the governance structures, conferences and training events of ILGA-Europe.

Value Base

ILGA-Europe events should be a place where everyone feels comfortable enough to get involved in any activities run by the organisation. Any remark or action that demeans a participant or undermines personal dignity and worth or has the effect of offending, humiliating or intimidating another person goes against ILGA-Europe's principles of dignity and respect and creates a negative climate which may prevent full participation in activities and services and/or reduce enjoyment of these events.

ILGA-Europe will therefore develop a code of conduct for participants that will outline the principles that should guide their behaviour; the consequences and the procedure to be followed should these be infringed as well as a procedure for participants to bring forward their complaints that ensures that they will be treated seriously and dealt with fairly.

Format of Meetings

Where events are held, their cost, the language to be used, what facilities will be made available, the intensity of the work programme, the way the event is communicated to members, etc. may all influence the ability of members to participate fully. ILGA-Europe will seek to take into account the differing needs of individual members:

- when booking venues and arranging the dates and times for events. These will be arranged so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to attend and to gain access to a venue;

- by making explicit all forms of accommodation and facilities available including that for persons with a disability and families with children or other dependents;
- by providing a focal point for support at events;
- by valuing the diversity of members and promoting and utilizing a range of skills, methodologies and formats;
- providing the same opportunities for involvement to every member with regards to training, governance and participation at events;
- when allocating scholarships. Selection criteria will take into consideration the need to enhance participation of underrepresented groups;
- when communicating about events to members. Care will be taken to ensure that forms are available in different formats that are easily legible. If members do not have access or are not conversant with email then hard copies will be sent by post;
- by working with host venues to ensure that hotel staff are adequately prepared.

Work with Grassroots

The communities where ILGA-Europe's membership comes from is widely diverse. In order for all members of these communities to be represented member organisations will be encouraged to:

- actively seek to increase membership in order to represent an accurate cross-section of their community, including hard to reach groups and those who are under-represented.
- attempt to increase involvement and representation by advertising their services in a wide variety of locations;
- promote their organisation in a variety of different formats and languages to include the whole LGBTI community;
- seek to assist under-represented and hard-to-reach groups by identifying their needs in the community and establishing links with other organisations, e.g. ethnic groups, youth groups, pensioners groups, etc.

Implementation

ILGA-Europe will establish a diversity working group composed of board and staff members who will be responsible for drawing up an actual plan for the organisation. This plan, to be coordinated by the Executive Director, will be reviewed annually.