



Athens 2015

ILGA-Europe

The Annual Conference



Athens,

May 2015

Dear friends from all around Europe,

We are very happy to welcome you to Athens, one of the oldest capital city in the world with its recorded history spanning around 5.000 years, and the earliest human presence around the 11th–7th millennium BC!

Classical Athens was a powerful city-state that emerged in conjunction with the seagoing development of the port of Piraeus. A centre for the arts, learning and philosophy, home Parthenon, of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, it is widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilization and the birthplace of democracy, largely due to the impact of its cultural and political achievements during the 5th and 4th centuries BC on the rest of the then known European continent. In modern times, Athens is a large cosmopolitan metropolis and central to economic, financial, industrial, maritime, political and cultural life in Greece.

Athens is recognised as a global city because of its geo-strategic location and its importance in finance, commerce, media, entertainment, arts, international trade, culture, education and tourism. It is one of the biggest economic centres in southeastern Europe, with a large financial sector, and its port Piraeus is the largest passenger port in Europe, and the third largest in the world. The Athens Larger Urban Zone (LUZ) is the 7th most populous LUZ in the European Union (the 5th most populous capital city of the EU), with a population of 4,013,368. Athens is also the southernmost capital on the European mainland.

The heritage of the classical era is still evident in the city, represented by ancient monuments and works of art, the most famous of all being the Parthenon, considered a key landmark of early Western civilization. The city also retains Roman and Byzantine monuments, as well as a smaller number of Ottoman monuments. As we welcome you to the ancient and modern Athens, the capital of Plato, Aristoteles, Sophocles, and all the other philosophers, poets and scientists, we hope you will discover your own proper greek drama (from the ancient word=drama) or a greek comedy (ancient word = komodia)!

The lesbian and Gay Community of Greece (OLKE), organises with enthusiasm the annual conference of ILGA – Europe. Through the spirit of cooperation and united strong voice, OLKE opened the floor to other LGBTI organisations of Greece and other human rights organisations, to be part of the local organising committee, organisations like: SYD (Transgender Association of Greece), Rainbow Families, LGBTI People with Disability, Athens Pride, Thessaloniki Pride, Positive Voice, Praksis and Volunteers of Athens 2004 and Special Olympics 2011.

Given the dire situation of human rights issues throughout many parts of Greece, this conference will be our moment to assist and strengthen Greece's LGBTI communities. The ILGA - Europe Annual Conference will give us visibility, solidarity, experience and a chance to speak more openly with the conservative Greek society. The local organising committee is ready to welcome you for this great and memorable event!

The Athenians know about "philoxenia" and reinvents classical myths! Let's keep on making history together!

**See you in Athens!**

Head of the Board of OLKE & President of the Local Organising Committee

Panagiotis Damaskos

Konstantina Kosmidou

