

Report of the European representatives to the ILGA World Board 2014

2014 has been a busy year for ILGA with conferences in all the regions: Africa, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Oceania; with the European conference as the last. The circle of conferences will culminate with the World Conference in Mexico City in the last week of October.

The ILGA Board has adopted a new strategic plan, which will get the final stamp of approval at the World Conference.

Earlier in the year, ILGA opened a representation office in Geneva and the proposal from the Executive Board to the conference is to move the official seat to Switzerland. It is a consequence of the enhanced presence of ILGA at the different relevant UN-bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, based in Geneva after the reacquisition of the consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in order to continue the work towards a more effective impact within the UN system.

The Executive Board has had a greater continuity, and improved funding has made it possible to have an average of two meetings per year. At the same time, more structured leadership models and work methods have been introduced both in the Board and in the Staff.

In addition, regional offices has opened in Asia (Hong Kong) and Latin America (Argentina) which will help develop greater, genuine autonomy and coordination at the regional level, and greater.

On May 30th, ILGA launched the 2014 version of its State Sponsored Homophobia Report and Gay and Lesbian Rights Maps around the world in the framework of a side event at the United Nations in Geneva. During the ceremony, ILGA's Co-Secretary General Gloria Careaga Pérez has awarded the UN High Commissioner Navanethem Pillay "LGBTI Friend of the Year 2014" at the presence of the UN Ambassadors of Argentina and Brazil

The report demonstrates how it has become clear in recent inter-governmental discussions that there is a new geopolitical map in which politics and economics are playing a complex game among governments and alliances. For instance, Latin America, with the leadership of Argentina and Uruguay, seems to be the progressive region that stands in contrast to a very conservative neighbour in the Caribbean (with the exception of Cuba), known to be allied with conservative forces from other regions. Likewise, the African Coalition (with the exception of South Africa) opposes any SOGI (sexual orientation/gender identity) mention, as do the Arabic countries (led by Egypt) as well as Russia and the Vatican. Accusations of "agenda intervention" and "western vision imposition" usually follow, as if to indicate that certain States would rather publicise their diplomatic distaste for atypical bodies, genders and sexualities instead of endorsing the protection of human rights and wellbeing of everyone.

The World Conference will elect two new Co-Secretaries General since Gloria Careaga Pérez from Mexico, has decided not to run again after four years on the post where she has been a contributing factor to the improvements in the governing structures of ILGA. Azusa Yamashita, who as alternate stepped in as Co-Secretary General a year ago, will also not run for reelection.

Maria Sjödin and Martin Christensen

European Representatives to the ILGA Board.