

ILGA-EUROPE ACTIVITY REPORT 2015-2016

This document contains the following sections:

- 1- Report on the Strategic Plan 2014-2018
- 2- Report on the Governance Activities of the Executive Board

Report on the Strategic Plan 2014-2018 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 November 2015 and October 2016.

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.

ILGA-Europe's efforts to secure greater legal protection, political support and social acceptance don't take place in a vacuum. We have to tailor our advocacy to work best within the existing political landscape. And since the last Annual Conference, the mood has been one of reflection. Not only because 2016 is ILGA-Europe's 20th anniversary year, but also because many events have taken place since Athens that have caused us to pause and think. Whilst ILGA-Europe's advocacy work is evolving, it remains guided by three main questions:

1. How can we work with the European institutions and leverage their mechanisms for change?
2. What important trends in Europe do we need to support or counter?
3. Which issues of concern for LGBTI people need to be given visibility and better understood by political actors?

A word about the current political context

All of our work is happening in a fast-changing political environment. This opening statement could have appeared in many previous activity reports, but there have been few years where the political landscape has been changing quite so profoundly at the same time.

Over the past year, European institutions have been under pressure, as the Union's approach to refugee policies has been closely watched by member states and civil society groups alike. The EU was then confronted by the UK's decision to vote to leave and needed to formulate a collective response. These events are also set against a background of rising populism and xenophobia across the EU and beyond its borders. In many parts of the region, political parties and governments explicitly cultivate a sentiment of fear, using the language of security and anti-terrorism as a front and stoking suspicion of 'the other', a climate which has led to increased incidence of violence and growing hate speech against so-called minority groups.

The current context is bringing us right back to basics. At ILGA-Europe, we are questioning what kind of Europe we are living in, how this differs from the best version of Europe that we all want to live in and how to bridge the gap between the two. It also highlights the need to have institutions that are relevant and accountable, and able to confront these challenges to democracy and human rights. The European Union needs to show that it is reliable, relevant and functional. This work became even more pressing following the UK's decision to opt for a Brexit in June 2016. Why does all this matter specifically for ILGA-Europe's advocacy? Because during our 20 year history, we have seen the very best of the EU institutions at work. The LGBTI community is particularly well-placed know just how much benefit the European project can bring. ILGA-Europe can testify that the EU has been a driver for positive change.

This said, if our goal is a Europe that is a fair, free, inclusive and progressive place, then the EU institutions cannot continue to do business as usual. The way of doing politics needs a fundamental change. That is what ILGA-Europe has been calling for, and we are not alone. In September, we joined 176 fellow human rights groups and trade associations to sign a common call for a New Europe, a vision for a more effective EU. This is a first concrete step towards what we expect will be growing coalition work with civil society allies in the coming year.

European Union

Attendees who could join us at the last Annual Conference will remember the declaration of solidarity with **refugees and asylum seekers** agreed in Athens. That promise was put into action in the following months. ILGA-Europe have been working with many European bodies, seeking to activate the leverage of institutions on this issue (within the EU and abroad). We have been

sharing our knowledge on the impact that asylum procedures can have on LGBTI refugees with groups such as the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Along with our member organisations, ILGA-Europe worked to make sure that information specific to the LGBTI asylum seeker's perspective and experience was part of the debate – from giving strong input to EU discussions on the 'safe countries' list, to contact with EASO on the EU's asylum package, to increasing the capacity of our members to assist LGBTI asylum seekers. This is a piece of ILGA-Europe's work that will only grow, both in terms of complexity and urgency. Similarly, ILGA-Europe continues to advocate with other NGOs for stronger EU human rights mechanisms, in particular by providing substantial input towards the European Parliament report which made concrete recommendations, and towards joint proposals to Vice-President Timmermans. We also continued to bring cases of human rights violations against LGBTI people within the EU to the attention of the Commission and Parliament.

Of course, all the expertise we contribute to broader human rights discussions stems from our own focus on LGBTI equality. A huge proportion of our advocacy work at European level continues to focus on getting explicit political commitments from institutions on concrete actions at European and national levels. For many years, ILGA-Europe have requested that these definite political goals be contained in one cohesive document. Regardless of its title, be it a roadmap or an LGBTI strategy, as long as it detailed LGBTI-specific recommendations for EU action, that was the main thing. Since we left Athens, the **European Commission** published its long-awaited **List of Actions** in December 2015, setting out their own plan to work towards LGBTI equality. Whilst not the level of commitment ILGA-Europe had asked for, the List of Actions does provide a new useful framework for our engagement with the Commission and other EU institutions. Why is a framework like this important in the first place? It gives a clear direction to the EU's work on advancing LGBTI equality. It helps everyone – institutions and civil society actors – plan their work in a more strategic way, which ultimately helps us to protect the rights of LGBTI people in a more effective way. As civil society, it gives us a tool to hold the Commission accountable and to assess progress. Following the adoption of the List of Actions, ILGA-Europe actively engaged with the Dutch EU Presidency towards the adoption of the first-ever **LGBTI-specific conclusions** to be approved by the Council of the European Union. Despite some elements of problematic language, the fact that member states have backed clear goals for LGBTI equality is an important step forward. This is a clear signal for other EU institutions to be braver in their own pronouncements in favour of equal treatment for all. These high-level statements of support for LGBTI equality provide us with a basis to strengthen the work of EU institutions in the coming year. A particular focus for ILGA-Europe is to support the Commission in setting up a process for an annual assessment of progress, to which civil society organisations

would be able to contribute, as well as in mainstreaming the work across the different directorates of the Commission and EU agencies.

On a legislative level, ILGA-Europe's advocacy work has always been clearly committed to closing protection gaps that exist in EU and national legislation – on both **anti-discrimination and hate crimes**. These topics remain firmly on our agenda and are a regular part of our conversations with EU policy-makers. For example, we held conversations with our civil society colleagues in Germany to discuss how to reactivate their government on the proposed horizontal anti-discrimination directive and organised a discussion with members of the Bundestag about it. This work was particularly relevant this year as Germany's own wide-ranging anti-discrimination law celebrated its 10th birthday in 2016. So we are persistent. But ILGA-Europe are also pragmatic. The reality is that the prospect of new EU legislation in the coming years is relatively slim. This is in large part due to the current political context mentioned earlier. As a result, our work on closing gaps in legal protection in the area of anti-discrimination and hate crime is increasingly turning to supporting national level action, from providing technical support on implementation to enabling peer learning between members on advocacy and good practices.

Whilst perspectives for new legislation are rather limited, it is important for ILGA-Europe and our partners to explore new ways of advancing this issue and to make best use of existing legislation. For example, the blocking of an EU proposal to harmonise property regimes for married and registered couples by Poland and Hungary brought **freedom of movement** to the forefront of everyone's minds in late 2015. As a result, the initiative continued in 2016 under the Dutch Council Presidency and the umbrella of the enhanced cooperation process. To support this process, we worked closely with our members in the EU member states to ensure as many governments as possible involve themselves in the important enhanced cooperation discussions. We are also working with the European Commission and the European Parliament on monitoring the effectiveness of existing laws on the ground, for example how the victims' rights directive is working for LGBTI people in practice. Also, we actively contributed to the European Parliament's latest report on the employment directive. In addition, we actively contributed to the European Parliament's latest report on the employment directive. ILGA-Europe also provided input to the EU public awareness campaign '*We All Share the Same Dreams*' as an initiative marking the Commission's public support for LGBTI equality. We will continue to engage with the Commission on this initiative in relation to its capacity to complement the awareness-raising work carried out by other actors at European and national levels.

As in recent years, ILGA-Europe continued our successful engagement with the EU in relation to its external policies. Our advocacy and monitoring programme related to the **EU enlargement**

strategy continued apace this year with regular contribution to the annual progress reports, in conjunction with our members in Turkey and the Western Balkans, and in cooperation with ERA, the LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey. In addition to this, ILGA-Europe stepped up our support for change on the ground by working producing a report which outlines new political priorities for the local LGBTI movement, going beyond issues contained in the enlargement mandate. A special focus this year was on the situation of human rights defenders and LGBTI organisations in Turkey. We raised awareness of the problematic security situation in the country through meetings between activists and the EU policy-makers.

In recent years, ILGA-Europe had occasionally raised issues in the framework of the **EU's Eastern Neighborhood Policy** (especially through the regular Human Rights Dialogues). This work had led to success in the context of Ukraine's visa liberalisation process, through which the Labour Code was amended to outlaw discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation. This summer, EU engagement contributed to the Georgian President blocking a referendum to ban same-sex marriage. Unfortunately, the EU's political leverage on human rights issues in the region has been challenged in the context of deteriorating political relationships and growing political polarisation; as a result, we are observing less progress in other Eastern Neighborhood countries.

Council of Europe

With human rights unfortunately falling at the bottom the EU's political agenda, the role of the **Council of Europe** as the main human rights institution in Europe has become more important than ever. This was the message conveyed when ILGA-Europe met Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland in September 2016. Consolidating the Council's mandate and policy framework on sexual orientation and gender identity continues to be an utmost priority for ILGA-Europe. As we are all too aware of how quickly gains achieved over the past decade can be rolled back, we know how important it is to institutionalise the political commitments and strengthen mechanisms to monitor developments and to hold governments accountable to their human rights obligations.

With this in mind, ILGA-Europe continue to actively support the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) throughout the year. A priority in the coming year will be to ensure that there is a new review process of the Committee of Ministers' 2010 Recommendations on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. This review is an important moment to assess progress and gives us a great opportunity to reach out to and engage with Council of Europe member states. Over the next year, we will thus work on preparing a substantial contribution towards this review process – to make the review as effective an experience as possible.

Building on the Council of Europe's great capacity to give visibility to emerging human rights issues, we also actively contributed to the work of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers on a strategy on the rights of the child. In particular, the strategy foresees that the Council of Europe will undertake research on the situation of LGBT and intersex children regarding protection of their rights. Similarly, ILGA-Europe have joined forces with intersex activists in raising the awareness of PACE members on the human rights of intersex people. As a result of our joint advocacy, the committee on equality and non-discrimination is now working on a report on the human rights of intersex people.

Litigation

From a European perspective, we've seen the ever-increasing added value of using **litigation** to boost our advocacy work, both domestically and on regional level. This year, ILGA-Europe participated in three third-party interventions to the European Court of Human Rights (on length and conditions of asylum detention for LGBTI people, deportation of LGBTI asylum seekers, and freedom of association). Given the changes in political climate in a number of countries, we also saw the need to step up our efforts in litigation on national level; we joined two third-party interventions before the Constitutional Court of Romania, on a case related to a proposed change to the legal definition of marriage and family, and on a case of lack of recognition of same-sex marriages contracted abroad.

Back at European level, ILGA-Europe welcomed positive judgments by the European Court of Human Rights on several cases we had intervened in over the past few years: a case against Romania on the authorities' failure to efficiently investigate a bias-motivated incident; cases against Croatia and Italy on the refusal to grant a same-sex (non-EU) partner a residence permit; and a case against Hungary on the vulnerability of LGBTI asylum seekers in detention facilities. ILGA-Europe continue to work on the execution of previous judgments; this year, we provided support for the implementation of cases against Russia (freedom of assembly), Lithuania (legal gender recognition), and initiated the work in this area for the judgments delivered this year. We also became part of the newly established European Implementation Network (EIN) aimed at facilitating exchange of information and building the capacity of NGOs to effectively engage in implementation processes at the European and national levels. A significant part of our strategic litigation work is made possible thanks to the support of our partner organisations and other experts, in particular Professor Robert Wintemute who we thank for his on-going support and expertise.

Engaging with national governments

Whilst European institutions still provide leverage to bring about political change at national level in different parts of Europe, the overall assessment is that the influence of European intergovernmental organisations is increasingly being put into question. In this context, **direct engagement with national policy-makers** has become more relevant and even more important in ILGA-Europe's advocacy work over the past few years. Not only does it offer new opportunities to instigate legal and political change at country level, but working with national government representatives also creates more local ownership for the implementation of laws and policies. To this end, we are investing in building effective spaces for meaningful NGO-government dialogue, where practical plans to advance LGBTI equality can be developed. In the last 12 months, ILGA-Europe has provided extensive input and support towards the planning of the 2016 IDAHOT Forum in Copenhagen, with a view to strengthening this Forum as a moment for country peer review and annual stock-taking. In addition to ILGA-Europe's ongoing contribution to the LGBTI Governmental Focal Point Network, we started to actively participate to the newly-formed EU High Level Group on combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, which provides a new opportunity to work with governments on the remaining gaps in legal protection in the EU. Finally, ILGA-Europe is providing expertise (when requested and where relevant) to the Council of Europe in its technical cooperation to governments, as we did last year on legal gender recognition and national action plans.

ILGA-Europe's flagship project **Rainbow Europe** stands at the core of our expanding work with national policy-makers. Our Rainbow benchmarking project has become the starting point for many conversations on legal and policy changes with government officials as well as national ministers. This is why ILGA-Europe is working to improve the Rainbow Map and Index to ensure that we continue to set benchmarks that keep governments on their toes. We simply can't allow decision-makers to fall into complacency. Since the Athens conference, the Rainbow Europe Index criteria were updated and now many areas require evidence of implementation (and not just existence) of policies to acquire ranking points. ILGA-Europe is already exploring how to develop further indicators to assess effective implementation of laws and policies next year.

Thematic advocacy

On a policy level, the European framework proved to be a valuable tool in our work on **education**, with emerging opportunities to set benchmarks which can give leverage in working with national governments. At EU level, the adoption of the Paris declaration on the role of education in promoting citizenship and fundamental rights by European education ministers last March put the issue high on the agenda of the European Commission. This opened up opportunities for us to talk about diversity and inclusion in schools with the Commission and

governments (as a member of a new working group on the role of education to promote values of tolerance and non-discrimination). Through public events at the Parliament and meetings with Commission officials, ILGA-Europe also pushed homophobic and transphobic school-bullying forward on the EU agenda. This is work that will result in the publication of an LGBTI-inclusive Commission report in the near future. The international meeting of education ministers hosted by UNESCO in May, marking the launch of its global report on good practices to combat homophobic and transphobic violence in education, is positively contributing to this momentum. This is why ILGA-Europe has been collaborating with UNESCO, not only by providing input towards the report and the global meeting but also on how to bring more European governments on board.

A large part of this work is the result of what we've done in recent years towards enabling exchange of good practices between LGBTI organisations and government representatives and building knowledge on inclusive education policies at European and national level. To strengthen this work, we have built alliances with GLSEN to connect with their work on creating safe schools environments in central and Eastern Europe. Together we are looking into how to share the knowledge with members from other regions in Europe. We are also cooperating with IGLYO on their education policies project, aimed at assessing education policies across Europe that promote non-discrimination and include teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity.

ILGA-Europe is taking a similar path in the area of health, making the best use of the opportunities currently available at EU level. In 2016, ILGA-Europe joined a two-year pilot project on **LGBTI health** aimed at reaching effective, timely and practical solutions for those experiencing discrimination. Co-funded by the EU, ILGA-Europe are working alongside partners from EuroHealthNet, AOUI-Verona (Italy), the University of Brighton (UK) and the National Institute of Public Health – National Institute of Hygiene (Poland), with the aim of raising awareness among health professionals about the needs of LGBTI people. The project also aims to provide health professionals with specific tools to ensure that they have the right skills to overcome these barriers. The two first tasks of the project have been already completed, thanks to the great contribution of our members. Our work on health advocacy also includes our involvement in the EU HIV Civil Society Forum, which meets twice a year and proposes joint advocacy actions throughout the year. In addition, in March 2016 we launched a membership survey on HIV and STIs, which was answered by more than 50 of our member organisations. This has informed our strategy on health.

Responding to worrying trends

This year again, one of the negative trends that required our sustained attention was the **closing space for civil society**, as we continued to see civil society, including LGBTI organisations, being

silenced in many countries. This marginalisation – either in the form of policies directly targeting NGOs or less overt laws that slow down activists’ work – is happening both inside and outside the European Union. Several countries are at the forefront of ILGA-Europe’s mind when noting the worrying increase of violence targeting LGBTI activists in our region. The concerning reports from **Poland** are an example of how the lack of high-level political support can have a negative impact on LGBTI advocacy and human rights activism in general. Despite the fact that no laws have been passed that aimed to explicitly infringe on the rights of LGBTI people, an atmosphere of a lack of respect for human rights has allowed attacks on LGBTI organisations to occur. In **Turkey**, the LGBTI community there has suffered serious trauma, with the lives of many trans people being ended violently, as well as growing restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, this year culminating in the ban of Istanbul pride. In countries like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Russia, civil society continues to operate in an increasingly challenging environment, with governments actively seeking to limit fundamental freedoms.

In addressing this trend, one of our objectives this year was to get European institutions to see just how urgently action is needed. We are doing this by working with NGO alliances at the European and at the global level (Civicus, Human Rights and Democracy Network, Social Platform) on developing joint campaigning and advocacy actions. ILGA-Europe has worked to analyse the situation on shrinking space concerning LGBTI people to ensure that LGBTI issues are included when concerns around shrinking space are addressed. ILGA-Europe also actively contributed to the organisation of the 17th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum, which focused on shrinking space, bringing attention to this worrying global phenomenon.

Our work on protecting the fundamental freedom of assembly became a renewed area of focus this year. Surprisingly, we saw successful prides in places where LGBTI public events had previously faced difficulties (for instance in Kiev and Chisinau). On the other hand, we have also received reports about prides facing new challenges in other places (Istanbul, but also various prides in France had to give in to security restrictions following this year’s terrorism in France). ILGA-Europe called on political leaders to remain alert and provide renewed political support to pride organisers, especially by being present at nearly a dozen prides again this year. Unfortunately, the days when our presence at pride marches will no longer be relevant often seem far away.

One inescapable trend has been public debates and subsequent **mobilisation around family**, understood to exclude diverse rainbow families. Again this year, we were faced with opposition groups launching campaigns aimed at narrowly defining ‘family’, only referring to a ‘traditional’ different-sex union with biological children. This trend is not just a national level phenomenon, as we have seen lately in Romania and a potential referendum there. A European Citizen’s Initiative, entitled *Mums, Dads and Kids*, also centers on this exclusionary ethos. ILGA-Europe

are closely monitoring the situation on the ground in many countries as well as at European level. We want to make sure our members and allies are equipped to deal with this trend and respond confidently in public debates. To help with this, we have been reaching out to other progressive civil society colleagues, and also considering the use of strategic litigation, where appropriate. This is an issue we work closely on with our colleagues from High Ground, The Alliance for Choice and Dignity in Europe, which we officially launched at the European Parliament earlier this year.

ILGA-Europe also considers that joint advocacy with national members is of strategic importance in this area, as political and social debates on family laws and policies essentially take place in a national context. This is why we are increasingly looking at how best to provide direct support advocacy and campaigns on family issues to national groups, as we were able to do – through our *Creating Opportunities* programme – in the successful Italian campaign for civil partnership and the Swiss campaign against a proposal to restrict the definition of marriage. ILGA-Europe are keen to take advantage of all these opportunities for public dialogue and education around issues that affect LGBTI people when they arise, and to seek to empower the voices of diverse families within debates like this. Our relationship with members like NELFA is particularly important to this element of our work, which is why ILGA-Europe took steps to strengthen cooperation between our two organisations in 2016, and explored how we can contribute to amplifying the voices and to giving visibility of rainbow families.

Another area in which alliance-building continues to be extremely important is in relation to religion and human rights. This year again, ILGA-Europe continued to work with progressive faith-based organisations to further strengthen communication on the common anti-discrimination challenges faced by faith-based communities and the LGBTI movement. Through cooperation with the European Network on Religion and Belief (ENORB) and other groups, we have been able to elevate the public debate – moving away from knee-jerk reactions to towards the understanding that LGBTI people can also be people of faith – as we did by speaking at an IDAHOT event on religion and LGBTI people organised by the Dutch presidency of the EU for European policy-makers, NGOs and other allies.

Legal gender recognition

Amidst the challenges, legal gender recognition, specifically national lawmakers' awareness of the improvements required, appears as a positive trend. Many countries in Europe still force trans people to undergo unimaginably invasive processes – but many governments are waking up to the enormity of the task ahead of them if they want to improve their human rights record. More and more policymakers are contacting civil society groups - not just to educate themselves but also to find out what the next steps should be. Thankfully, we have growing

numbers of model countries we can point to as trendsetters, with the move towards self-determination continuing this year in Norway.

ILGA-Europe are keeping momentum going on the issue in a number of different ways. Firstly, we are constantly learning from and working with our members, in particular TGEU at European level. In alliance with them, we are maintaining the spotlight of awareness on the issue of legal gender recognition. We share example of good practices - both with national governments and local trans activists. We are increasingly working to facilitate sharing of the expertise contained within the trans movement to neighbouring activists in different parts of Europe. There were some great examples of this national level work through our *Creating Opportunities* programme, which started actively lending support to members working on the ground. For example, Lithuanian activists were supported to run a campaign raising awareness of the needs of trans people there. As the activity report is being written, another campaign, this time on legal gender recognition laws in France was receiving resources from Creating Opportunities.

Visibility of intersex issues

Another, and sometimes more subtle, approach to advocacy is our awareness-raising ability. ILGA-Europe are privileged enough to be able to speak out about equality issues to both European and national policymakers; this includes our work on raising awareness of the human rights violations faced by **intersex people** in Europe. The success of all these efforts is directly linked to the determination and great work of the European intersex movement. As questions from national policymakers increase, we are doing our best to link them immediately with local activists so they can develop an in-depth understanding of the obstacles faced by intersex people in Europe. The voices of intersex activists are crucial to this work. ILGA-Europe are pushing for more opportunities for intersex activists to directly address policymakers. They were heard in the European Parliament for the first time in June, as OII Europe addressed members of the European Parliament (MEPs). This study visit also included opportunities to talk directly to MEPs and met with national government representatives about the definite steps they can take; all of which was pushed by ILGA-Europe and OII Europe.

Workplace diversity

ILGA-Europe's cooperation with groups committed to **diversity in the workplace** continued to grow in 2016. On one hand, ILGA-Europe recognises that we need to work with the European institutions in a very practical way. While they are an advocacy vehicle, with the potential to aid workplace diversity with their legislative action, they are also employers themselves. First and foremost, we need to make sure that the institutions as employers are creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTI employees. That is why we have started to work with EU LGBTI employee networks to advocate with EU institutions for LGBTI inclusive workplace policies.

Another piece of our work is supporting the on-going workplace diversity projects carried out at national level. To build on existing work, ILGA-Europe hosted a strategy meeting with national LGBTI organisations to map current issues for LGBTI people in the workplace, and to take stock of existing expertise and knowledge within the movement. The meeting enabled us to identify next steps for our work with our members. Another critical piece of this work is strengthening benchmarks for workplace diversity, which give us as civil society tools to assess employers' track record and create a sense of accountability. To this end, we invested in strengthening our partnership with Workplace Pride, including by providing input towards their global benchmark exercise, as well as by joining forces on workshops at their annual conference in Amsterdam, and ILGA-Europe's conference in Nicosia.

All of this strategic advocacy work is supported by ILGA-Europe's **work on media and communications**. Communicating in a clear and compelling way about LGBTI equality in Europe is of the utmost importance to ILGA-Europe. If we cannot succinctly outline what needs to happen and why, how could we expect policymakers, allies and partners to engage with us? A significant proportion of ILGA-Europe's media work and external communication uses the Rainbow Europe package as a central tool. Every year, as a result of our ongoing investment in strengthen relationship with media, a growing proportion of media outlets cover the launch our Rainbow Europe. It is clear that the map continues to be one of the most effective tools to educate about the situation of LGBTI people in Europe, which is why we continue to welcome opportunities to disseminate it to new audiences, as we did this year with partnering with Brussels Airlines in-flight magazine.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 – Enhance the capacity of ILGA-Europe (members, board, staff) to achieve political, legal, institutional and social change by:

A – 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.

B – 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

Every year, we fill twice as many pages to report on achievements and highlights under our Strategic Objective 1 as we do under Strategic Objective 2. It could be easy to draw conclusion that ILGA-Europe achieve more advocacy-related results than we do on movement building. But

nothing would be further from the truth. Movement building is at the core of ILGA-Europe's work. The organisation's ability to support the intricate work that is involved in movement building continues to be one of our proudest achievements. Empowering activists, from all corners of the continent and from across the diverse spectrum of the LGBTI community, is both our job and our privilege. There is no doubt that the strength of our advocacy work for LGBTI equality depends on the strength of the LGBTI movement in Europe. The creativity, resilience and talent contained in our movement are undoubtedly a driving factor behind the profound and sustainable political achievements we have seen since 1996. It is essential for ILGA-Europe to continue to foster this energy as we search for ways to move forward in the complicated political context we discussed at the beginning of this activity report.

In fact, this is what most of the thinking around our 20th Anniversary Annual Conference in 2016 focused on: the growth of ILGA-Europe's membership and the change we have all built together. Looking back over the past two decades, it is clear to ILGA-Europe that the sheer strength of the European LGBTI movement is a cause for much celebration. With the Annual Conference being the central, most visible, piece of ILGA-Europe's movement building work, it was obvious that this was the place to talk about the Power of the People. Indeed, with 500 participants in Athens and 450 participants in Nicosia, our Annual Conference is the largest physical gathering of LGBTI activists and their allies in Europe. It is a place for networking, peer learning, good practice exchange, strategic discussions, alliance-building, skills-building, and solidarity. It is the moment when, as an organisation, we get alignment on our priorities and needs. It strengthens our sense of common purpose. Every year, the event becomes richer and more complex, and thus ever more important for our organisation and our movement. This is why ILGA-Europe are taking steps to ensure that we have the necessary capacity and resources to meet the growth of the conference.

Beyond the Annual Conference, one new visible demonstration of this movement building work is our action on LGBTI **community organising**. This emerging component of ILGA-Europe's work stems from that the way in which LGBTI communities organise has a huge part to play in creating long-term social change. Working from the ground up, breaking down the isolation and exclusion of LGBTI people, finding our voice and using it fearlessly, creating safe spaces, and bringing others with you to push for change. This type of empowerment is what community organising is all about because, in the end, making sure that positive change truly affects all members of our community is what our work is all about. In the past year, ILGA-Europe have prepared and carried out an in-depth study session dedicated to LGBTI community organising. The session was developed in a participatory manner, sought to tease out what the essence of LGBTI community organising is and also seeks to develop a toolbox of techniques and good practices.

Several key questions were explored during the community organising sessions that are just as relevant to all areas of our movement building work. When we talk about 'community', who exactly do we mean? Are only certain members of the LGBTI community included in our planning by default? Our movement's strength is forged out of its diversity and we strive to make sure that this thinking is at the core of all our work. Athens was an invigorating learning process for us, one we followed up with a meeting with member organisations we invited to share ideas on how to improve our work on **intersectionality**.

Realising this objective requires ILGA-Europe to analyse our own privilege and our own capacity to act. We must think about who has access to power within the movement and whose voices we are still not hearing loudly enough. With this in mind, and inspired by the rich feedback from members, ILGA-Europe's Board and Staff Working Group on Diversity further stepped up its activities in 2016. Meeting several times throughout the year, the Working Group focused its efforts on two goals: bringing intersectionality to the core of the Annual Conference, and giving visibility to intersectionality in the movement. A significant part of our work thus will culminate in Nicosia. Having made an increased effort to enable more diverse participation through the scholarships and greater outreach, we hope that an ever-greater diversity of experiences will be represented at the conference. We took steps which will hopefully create more inclusive spaces for participants, give visibility to a wide diversity of issues, and most importantly, elevate the importance of the conversation on diversity and intersectionality by placing it at the core of the conference programme.

In addition to the conference, ILGA-Europe continue to use social media campaigns to give visibility to different experiences within the LGBTI community. Building on the successful campaigns featuring LGBTI women in the movement, older LGBTI people and LGBTI people of faith, we now are in the phase of planning a new campaign on race and ethnicity. The idea behind these online campaigns is not only to raise awareness of the diversity within our own movement, but also to make us individually aware of our potential prejudice and assumptions. As you can imagine, this work is far from finished. This is why the learning will not stop after Cyprus or ease off in its intensity. We still have a long way to go if we want to ensure that no one is left behind on the road to greater equality. Our ambition for 2017 is to widen and deepen our work on intersectionality, by reaching out and increasing our dialogue with several groups whose voices are still not heard or heard enough, such as bisexuals, LGBTI people from racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

It follows that an important priority within our movement building actions is to empower those working with emerging organisations and under-represented groups within LGBTI communities, in line with ILGA-Europe's objectives to strengthen diversity within the organisation and the movement. Over the past year, ILGA-Europe continued to provide organisational development

support to many groups including queer Muslim groups, NELFA and IGLYO. Activities aimed at empowering **intersex** activists continued to feature prominently this part of our movement building work. With a view to strengthening the organisational capacity of OII-Europe, ILGA-Europe organized a three-day study visit with EU institutions, a training session on organisational development, and an annual one-day strategising meeting for intersex activists in Nicosia prior to the Annual Conference. ILGA-Europe also enables the participation of several intersex activists at the Conference. As in previous years, ILGA-Europe also took steps to consolidate our own capacity as well as the capacity of LGBTI organisations to be inclusive on intersex. We did it this year by publishing a toolkit with OII-Europe on how to be a good intersex ally called “Standing Up for Human Rights of Intersex People – How can you help?”, a publication we started to actively use as an awareness-raising tool with our movement.

Another on-going and critical part of ILGA-Europe’s interaction with our members concerns their well-being. Our movement can only continue to make these wonderful advances if it is cared for and sustainable. In recent times, activists everywhere are coming under a lot of pressure for many different reasons, from ever-increasing workloads and expectations from communities and allies, to threats to their own personal safety. This pressure tends to be particularly acute in countries where civil society is being side-lined by unsupportive governments. ILGA-Europe feels a responsibility to address the impact of **well-being of activists and teams** on the sustainability of our movement’s work. Through the Dignity for All Consortium, we have supported trainings on **security issues**, mobilised advice for adapting NGOs own security systems in their offices and are offering more support – including emergency grants - to organisations and activists to allow taking care of themselves and their staff teams when living in the midst of these threats.

Adapting to rapidly-changing circumstances at national level and linking up our members with suitable support is another key part of ILGA-Europe’s work. The **Creating Opportunities** programme, which entered its second year, embodies that flexibility. This programme enables ILGA-Europe to leverage the campaigning efforts of groups operating at national level by providing strategic expertise on messaging and strategic communication, small, flexible grants to produce campaign materials and providing support for message testing. Since Athens, Creating Opportunities has supported 10 national campaigns, with several open conversations on-going as ILGA-Europe travel to Cyprus. This is in addition to the detailed compilation of good practices on campaigning that has been going on since the programme was created in 2015, good practices that ILGA-Europe is now able to share with LGBTI groups from different parts of our region. Moreover, through this programme, ILGA-Europe further enhanced its capacity to monitor developments at national level through regular communication with members in more countries.

Another exciting project that continued to build momentum this year is our **strategic communication** project. In partnership with the Public Interest Research Centre, we are examining the power of particular values and frames and how we can upgrade our communications work to positively influence public opinion. During 2016, a comprehensive information gathering phase resulted in the creation of a literature database. The project partners were then able to analyse how LGBTI equality issues are framed in many parts of Europe. This thinking will be used in the coming months as the project enters its second phase to develop some strategic narratives of which we will test various messages with audiences, in cooperation with some of our member organisations.

Another important strategy that is at the core of ILGA-Europe is to **work with allies**. In 2016, ILGA-Europe helped to create a European network of parents of LGBTI children, which is expected to be formally launched early next year. We also fostered alliances in a variety of countries by providing strategic advice and small grants. The vision of this work is that alliances with groups of professionals or other supporters to the LGBTI community can create links that prevents further isolation of LGBTI communities and strengthens the realisation of human rights.

Every year, we strive to respond to the broad spectrum of needs identified across the region. As our movement continues to grow in size and diversity, we constantly have to assess how best to meet the needs of as many LGBTI organisations as possible, given our existing – unfortunately not unlimited – capacity and resources. We prioritise our action based on a needs assessment process, a complicated and sensitive exercise which we strive to improve every year, thanks to advice from our own members, supportive donors and our many partner organisations. We do not have access to unlimited resources, so not every expectation can be met 100% of the time. When this happens, to the best of our ability, ILGA-Europe move quickly to connect our members with local experts, regional contacts or enhanced information.

This said, it is important to that ILGA-Europe still maintains a geographical focus in its work, largely in Eastern Europe, where circumstances faced by certain member organisations and activists are more severe, and therefore require a different approach. Through a variety of programmes, ILGA-Europe provide support to organisations working in challenging circumstances. This work takes different forms, including training on finances and organisational management, on documentation of human rights violations, advocacy and communication. In certain situations, ILGA-Europe are able to provided targeted funding for the development of organisations.

Every day, the ILGA-Europe staff team are in touch with members. Every day, we are 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, 450 participants, numerous pre-meetings, consultations, etc.
- Capacity-building seminars, trainings and workshops on: campaigning, documentation and advocacy message framing, community organising; financial and organisational management; security; strategic planning; wellbeing; strategic litigation; how to provide support to asylum-seekers
- In-country sessions on strategic planning and project and financial management.
- Study and advocacy visits to the Council of Europe and the EU.
- Coaching/mentoring on organisational management and development.
- Documentation of good practices
- Documentation grants on LGBTI discrimination on employment and rainbow families; grants to strengthen work with allies; general capacity strengthening grants; urgent advocacy and security grants in the framework of the Dignity for All programme and various grants to support other documentation activities.

Last but certainly not least, enhancing ILGA-Europe and the European LGBTI movement's ability to **mobilise resources** to carry out and sustain our work is more a priority than ever for the organisation. It is very clear that, given the significant growth of the movement and increasing complexity of the work to be done at local, national and regional levels, it is essential to increase the amount of resources going to the European LGBTI movement. This is the message that ILGA-Europe continue to convey to public and private donors with whom we actively engage throughout the year, especially potential new donors. Together with private philanthropy, we also co-organise an annual donors' meeting prior to the Nicosia conference, with a view of not only bringing the needs of the movement to the attention of donors, but also of further connecting in a strategic way the expertise and insights of the movement to donors' conversations, and strengthening alignment between the priorities of the movement and those of the donor community.

A significant part of our work does focus on strengthening ILGA-Europe's own fundraising capacity and resources. We thus organised our second **European Equality Gala**, which brought together 400 friends and supporters in Brussels, including several high-level European decision-makers, members of the European Parliament, journalists and NGO allies – and of course the fabulous Panti Bliss! In addition to the tangible political support harnessed during the evening, ILGA-Europe's first matching fundraising drive, which combined individual donations with

pledges from generous individual donors, proved very successful. We also secured the support for several sponsors for this year's Gala – from Brussel's based businesses to Google, an important step towards making the event financially sustainable. On an organisational level, these growing opportunities for sponsorship prompted ILGA-Europe to review its current corporate engagement policy, in order to clarify the principles guiding us in accepting financial support from business. In short, we are rapidly building our own fundraising capacity, learning every step of the way, and expect to make great leaps in the area in 2017, as we create a new staff position dedicated to resource mobilisation and fundraising.

It is essential for ILGA-Europe as we continue to move forward in this area to foster a philanthropic culture on LGBTI equality in the region, which would benefit the movement as a whole. In this context, it is clear that as ILGA-Europe increase its capacity in the area, we intend to use it to facilitate wider learning for the European movement. ILGA-Europe are also currently exploring how it can strengthen and expand our grant-making work, with a view of enabling funding for a greater diversity of LGBTI groups and types of work. To help us move forward in this thinking, we will carry out a large scale needs assessment next year, aimed at gaining more in-depth knowledge about the kind of financial support which is in the region. As part of this process, we are also assessing our own structures and processes relating to re-granting, looking at opportunities for the development of community participatory grant-making structures.

Report on Governance Activities of the Executive Board

Introduction

As the main acting body representing the member organisations of ILGA-Europe, the Executive Board provides overall direction to ILGA-Europe, acts and makes decisions in line with ILGA-Europe's vision, mission and values and in the framework of its constitution and policies laid down by the European Regional conference between conferences, in particular in line with the strategic plan agreed by members.

In accordance with article E.5.d of the Constitution, the Executive Board of 2015-2016 herewith presents a report on its activities from October 2015 till September 2016 to the European Regional Conference.

Board Set-Up and Functioning

At the 2015 Regional Conference in Athens five Board members were elected, two of which (Micah Grzywnowicz and Yuri Guaiana) were re-elected for a second term in office. Together with the existing five members, the composition of the new Board was set for the new mandate and a division of positions followed as presented in a table below. In addition to the Board members, Magali Deval and Sasa Gavric were elected as Reserves.

The board convened on five occasions since the 2015 Annual Conference in Athens (in third column number of attendance to meetings per member):

- 31 October 2015, Athens
- 4 – 6 December 2015, Brussels
- 27 – 28 February 2016, Brussels
- 21 – 22 May 2016, Brussels
- 3 – 4 September 2016, Brussels

Executive Board, 2015 – 2016:

Name	Position	Term	Term Served	Current Mandate Attendance
Brian Sheehan	Co-Chair	2014 - 2016	Second	5 meetings
Joyce Hamilton	Co-Chair	2014 - 2016	Second	5 meetings
Konstantina Kosmidou	Co-Secretary	2014 - 2016	First	5 meetings
Micah Grzywnowicz	Co-Secretary	2015 - 2017	Second	5 meetings
A. Chaber	Treasurer	2014 - 2016	First	5 meetings
Costa Gavrielides	Member	2014 - 2016	First	4 meetings
Darienne Flemington	Member	2015 - 2017	First	5 meetings
Dragana Todorovic	Member	2015 - 2017	First	5 meetings
Vladimir Simonko	Member	2015 - 2017	First	5 meetings
Yuri Guaiana	Member	2015- 2017	Second	4 meetings

In the past year, the Executive Board organised its work in the following sub-committees covering different areas of responsibilities and working groups on issues that required further development in the work of ILGA-Europe:

Name	Members
Finance sub-committee	Joyce Hamilton, Brian Sheehan, A. Chaber, Vladimir Simonko, Dragana Todorovic, Costa Gavrielides
Employment sub-committee	Joyce Hamilton, Brian Sheehan, Darienne Flemington, A. Chaber, Costa Gavrielides, Vladimir Simonko
Governance sub-committee	Micah Grzywnowicz, Konstantina Kosmidou, Yuri Guaiana, Dragana Todorovic, Darienne Flemington
Working group on Diversity	Micah Grzywnowicz, Yuri Guaiana, Darienne Flemington, Konstantina Kosmidou, Dragana Todorovic

Organisational Development

A key element of the work of an Executive Board is to ensure a smooth running of business through organisational development, adequate governing of processes, acting as a responsible employer and through sound financial risk management. One co-chair also acts as line manager to the Executive Director of ILGA-Europe involving regular discussions on staff and management issues.

This last year has seen ILGA-Europe continue to grow in resources, activities and impact. With the goal to ensure an appropriate framework that can make this growth sustainable, the Executive Board has focused on the following issues:

I. Fundraising

Throughout the year multiple fundraising efforts were carried out. They were directed both at traditional sources (foundations and governments) and at individual donors who provide non-restrictive funding and have a great impact on the organization's sustainability. The Executive Board engaged in discussions on strategy but also in outreach activities and donor targeting. The second European Equality Gala took place on June 29th and over 300 supporters from non-governmental organizations, European institutions and the LGBTI movement attended. The event enabled ILGA-Europe to start impactful relationships with small businesses and individual donors, who contributed both directly at the event or pledged to match donations raised. Additionally the Gala had a political and movement building impact. Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Vicepresident of the EP Ulrike Lunacek and TGEU Executive Director Julia Ehrt were amongst the speakers. A few members of the Executive Board were also present at the Gala.

In order to further contribute to innovative ways of expanding ILGA-Europe's fundraising strategy, the Executive Board discussed a possibility of introducing a Voluntary Membership Fee, which would be a way to stimulate and appeal to member organisations to contribute to strengthening the European movement by donating an extra amount on top of their annual membership fee, relative to their capacity and budget. This idea will be brought up and consulted with the membership at the Annual Conference in Cyprus.

II. Overall direction and priorities

One of the main highlights undertaken by the Board was the preparation of the process to revise the ILGA-Europe's Strategic Plan 2014 – 2018 as it is half-way of the implementation period. The discussion focused on designing a consultation forum to engage members in the process and create a space for interactive as well as constructive exchange. This will take place at the annual conference in Nicosia.

III. Work on policy and programmes

In its duties to provide overall direction to ILGA-Europe and oversee the implementation of the strategic plan (as adopted by the Zagreb Regional Conference for the period of 2014 – 2018) and annual work programme, the Executive Board has engaged in discussions with the Executive Director (and where relevant other staff members) in relation to key advocacy priorities and the development of organisational policies.

When it comes to policy work, there were a few policy documents that the Board focused on. One of them was policy paper on intersex. The discussion was based on Maltese Intersex Demands (2013) and held in the context of broader positions of ILGA-Europe so that the official policy paper on intersex of the organization would be in line with guiding principles agreed on by intersex activists as well as general positions of ILGA-Europe. It will be finalized and adopted by end of 2016.

Due to the fact that ILGA-Europe is increasingly working with fundraising from different actors, the Executive Board identified a need to revise a policy on corporate engagement. The goal is to develop a new policy to define how the staff and Executive Board interact with the corporate sector, in particular when deciding whether to accept public and/or financial support from a corporate or private entity. It has been an interesting and important process in the light of ever-growing organization.

The Executive Board have also looked into a possibility to create a risk management document, which would map potential risk areas for the organization as well as ways of preventing and/or addressing them. The Executive Board saw the need of providing such a tool to be able to better respond to potential crisis situations.

IV. Staff Affairs

We are very fortunate to have a highly skilled, dedicated and passionate team who work effectively and efficiently to drive forward change and implement our strategic plan. The team has grown again this year, and we would like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks to them for their hard work on behalf of ILGA Europe members and their commitment to our shared vision and goals.

As with every organisation particular attention was placed to make sure that ILGA-Europe's staff have high job satisfaction levels with the Executive Board being particularly interested to make sure that optimal working conditions exist with high attention to management style and organisational culture. Moreover a few members of the Executive Board actively participated in recruitment process in early 2016 as well as contributed to development of job descriptions for new staff positions.

ILGA-Europe is an Equal Opportunities Employer. It aims to ensure that all full-time, part-time, potential employees and other individuals receive equal treatment. The Staff Manual was updated to include best practice initiatives as well as to indicate Belgium Law requirements. The Staff Manual illustrates policies that enhance current legal requirements making IE a good employer. The Equal Opportunities Policy is included in both the Board and Staff Manuals. ILGA-Europe promotes gender and equality mainstreaming actively promoting equality in all policies and actions.

V. Communication

Rainbow Europe 2016

2016 was an important year for the further improvement of Rainbow Europe. Due to ever-changing landscape in Europe when it comes to laws and policies, there was a need to change some of the criteria, which are used to calculate countries ranking. The whole Executive Board was consulted on the proposed changes brought forward by the staff members so that the updated Rainbow Europe would better reflect the realities on the ground.

VI. Internal Structure

One of the main priorities for the Executive Board is always governance and issues related to internal structure and communication. These included further development of roles within the board to make

the Executive Board's work as efficient as possible, creating a new online space to archive internal documents as well as enhancing internal communication.

Moreover, there is an on-going process of improving governance processes and routines. These can be found in the Governance Manual, which keeps being updated on regular basis.

VII. Expanding Membership

The boards of ILGA, ILGA-Asia and ILGA-Europe have been approached by representatives of the LGBTI movement from various Central Asian Republics asking to move their membership from the Asian Region of ILGA to the European Region of ILGA. The Central Asian region for ILGA is understood to cover Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Board had in-depth discussions in consultation with ILGA-Europe staff as well as the European representatives to the ILGA world board to ensure the feasibility of the changes. The main reasons why ILGA-Europe was positive towards changes was that the five Central Asian organizations are:

- Members of OSCE, the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe, making it possible for ILGA-Europe to use this body for advocacy;
- Historically, culturally and linguistically part of CIS, the Commonwealth of Independent States (Former Soviet Union Countries). The other CIS Countries are part of the European Region.

There will be a broader discussion with European membership held during the Annual Conference in Cyprus.

VIII. Annual Conference

The Board has actively supported the Staff in the preparation of the conference, in particular in the adoption of the conference theme, developing the theme, approval of the conference programme, identification of keynote speakers, and selection of scholars. Each Board member will be assigned a list of duties to perform during the event.

The Executive Board and particularly the Co-secretaries took active part in preparations of the Annual General Meeting to support the staff and ensure a smooth governance process.

Moreover, the Executive Board monitored the progress of preparations for next year's conference in Warsaw, Poland.

Due to the fact that Annual Conferences have been growing with each year, the Executive Board devoted some time to discuss organisational capacity to organise larger conferences, which included among others focus on human resources and financing.

Focus on Diversity

With a growing interest and feedback following the Annual Conference in Athens, the Executive Board prioritized its work on diversity. There is a Diversity Working Group (DWG), which is composed of a few members of the Executive Board and a few staff members representing each of the Departments. The

idea behind the structure of the DWG is to mainstream diversity within the organization but also to make best use of expertise existing within the staff and board members.

The DWG used to meet once a year in February to outline the work plan for the upcoming year. However, the new DWG formed after elections in Athens decided to meet prior to each board meeting in order to do more work in person and to create a routine around diversity work.

The focus was not only put on preparations of the Annual Conference in general terms, but also making other activities organized by ILGA-Europe more accessible.

IX. Representation

Over the past year, ILGA-Europe has been invited to many occasions, LGBTI events and NGO or government conferences. Board members have represented ILGA-Europe on some of those occasions, particularly where most impact was anticipated and a European LGBTI perspective was deemed necessary.

Special effort was made to co-ordinate the visits with ILGA-Europe staff to minimise costs as much as possible meaning, unfortunately, that it was not feasible to have representation to all requested events.

Executive Board members attended below-mentioned Pride events:

- Moldova Pride, Chisinau, May 22nd.
- Baltic Pride, Vilnius, June 18th.
- Sofia Pride, June 18th.
- Budapest Pride, July 2nd.
- Kiev Pride, June 11th.
- Istanbul Pride, June 25th.