

The logo features a stylized white graphic on the left, composed of horizontal lines on the left side and a grid pattern on the right side, resembling a building or a stylized 'E'.

**ILGA**  
**EUROPE**  
**PRAGUE 2019**

# ILGA EUROPE CONFERENCE 2019

## APPLICATION

### Political context

According to The Fundamental Rights Agency LGBT Survey of 2013, **36%** of Czech LGBT felt discriminated in comparison with **57%** Polish LGBTI or **53%** Slovenes. According to Eurobarometer 2015, only **30%** of people surveyed in the Czech Republic believe that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is widespread (which is the lowest in EU). However, when we look at the breakdown numbers we will see that actual acceptance of LGBTI people by Czech society is still rather low - only **24%** of respondents would feel comfortable with openly gay politicians, **15%** would feel ok with their child being LGBTI and only **22%** would feel comfortable with 2 men kissing publicly compared to **58%** accepting men's and women's public affection.

The real challenge of the Czech LGBTI community is the lack of decisive and positive legal and policy developments combating LGBTI stereotypes. A bill legalizing registered partnership (civil unions) came into force in 2006. Unfortunately, the law does not grant parenting rights, widow's pension or joint property rights. Thus, the law is of a symbolic nature as it creates numerous barriers for LGBTI people, putting lives of many children in jeopardy, pushing elderly LGBTI in danger of poverty and not giving same property rights to gay and lesbian couples as to straight couples.

Despite the fact that as described above, there are many struggles for the equality and recognition of gay rights in the Czech Republic, unless something extraordinary occurs in the society, we are on the right path for further inclusion of LGBTI people into the Czech society. Since the 1990's, the public support for the rights of gay people has been steadily rising by tens of percent. Up-dated results of Public Opinion Research Center (CVVM) from 2016 are that **76 %** of the society supports registered partnership, **52 %** support marriage (**45 %** in 2014) and **68 %** supports second parent adoption (**58 %** in 2014). One can only hope that politicians will sooner or later begin to reflect positively developing social attitude on the issue. The question is when.

Six years ago PROUD made a first attempt to amend the law on registered partnership so it would include step parent adoption. Even though the government has adopted the amendment, despite a considerable effort, the Chamber has repeatedly not even allowed any discussion about the bill, it got stuck and eventually failed to pass through the Parliament. Their common excuse is that it is a matter of priorities and there are more important bills to discuss. Moreover, too many of them still consider gay rights as too controversial. Hence, without considerable push and pressure, we may end up in the same situation after the next 4 years of a new government.

In January 2016 five non-profit organizations created an informal coalition with the goal of achieving marriage equality in the Czech Republic through public awareness campaigning, advocacy and education. In April 2017 the coalition started the public phase of the awareness campaign with the aim to increase support for marriage equality in Czech society that will eventually press our politicians to pass the marriage equality bill. The campaign is based on conversation and the value of fairness. The marriage equality team travels across the country and talks to people about marriage as well as other LGBTI issues. Discussions are very rarely about marriage, they more often about children, LGBTI rights, parading in the streets of Prague, transgender issues and so on. Thus marriage equality becomes just a vehicle for increasing sensitization of Czech society to LGBTI issues.

On June 15th the coalition organized, together with the Vice-Chairman of the Senate Jiří Šesták, a roundtable discussion in the upper chamber of Czech Parliament. The roundtable was attended by four Senate members and the Czech Ombuds person. The Vice-Chairman agreed to create a working group for marriage equality that will put together a marriage equality bill. The Vice-Chairman also agreed to sponsor a bill in the Senate.

On October 20 and 21 2017 the Czech Republic is facing general elections, which are crucial for achieving marriage equality. Although no major party has marriage equality in its electoral program, many individual candidates are pro marriage. From meetings and communication with representatives of political parties we know that there are at least 4 parties, including the most probable winner of this upcoming election, that would adopt marriage equality if political constellations are favourable. Unlike Germany however, marriage equality is not a topic that would break coalition talks. As we are submitting the application we have engaged in a public awareness campaign advocating to cast preferential votes for pro marriage candidates.

If we manage to incite people to vote for pro marriage candidates, we have a support of a winner of elections and we have a sponsor that will introduce marriage equality bill we actually may have a chance to win marriage in the Czech Republic.

Despite the fact, that these elections are crucial, it is still only the first step in our attempts to achieve marriage equality. Our experience says that if bills such as this are not introduced in the first two years of governance, the chance for its introduction and adoption is fast sliding away. Autumn 2019 is two years after elections and the last chance to have a bill discussed in Parliament.

Hosting an ILGA Europe conference can give this extra necessary push for the Czech politicians to act. The Czech Republic would come to an international spotlight - LGBTI activists from all over the world, EU representatives and international media will be present at the conference and no politician wants to have a bad press. Moreover hosting ILGA Europe conference would boost the Czech LGBTI community spirit. Advocating for legislative changes is a long term, invisible work. The Czech LGBTI community has lived in this lack of change for too long. Strong support from the international community would be a new stimulus for all us to push harder.

The ILGA Europe community can become part of a change that this part of Europe deserves and desperately strives for. The Czech Republic could become the first country in the CEE region with full marriage equality, which in the long term may create a snowball effect in this part of our continent. Sometimes we just need a positive signal and ILGA Europe conference may be that one necessary step that is needed to send yet another positive signal for the LGBT community worldwide. Hosting ILGA Europe 2019 will without a doubt contribute to creating a change in the Czech Republic.



# Conference Organising Team

The conference bid is put together by a collaborative effort of five LGBTI+ organisations that are grouped in an informal coalition for equal marriage in the Czech Republic. It is put forward by a member of the coalition and a member of ILGA Europe - Proud.

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Member organizations are:

**Amnesty International Czech Republic**, a leading human rights non profit founded in 1991. They focus on human rights education, monitoring of human rights violations and actively changing discriminatory laws and practices.

**Mezipatra**, a queer film festival. It is the oldest queer event in the Czech Republic. The festival's main part takes place in Prague and Brno, and its echoes follow in selected towns across the Czech Republic.

**Logos**, an ecumenical community of LGBT believers that spices up the Church as well as LGBT community in Prague, Brno, Ostrava and other cities of the Czech Republic.

**Prague Pride**, the biggest LGBTI organization focusing on raising public awareness about harmful stereotypes towards LGBTI people in the Czech Republic. It organizes the biggest LGBTI pride festival in Eastern Europe. It also runs a peer mentoring portal for LGBTI in crises and manages Pride Business Forum - LGBT workplace equality initiative.

**Proud**, a leading LGBT advocacy organization in the Czech Republic focusing on changing legislation that is harmful to LGBT, education and research. Proud is ILGA Europe member.

The coalition also works intensively with **regional groups**. We have direct working and collaborative contact with groups in Plzeň, Hradec Králové, Liberec, Brno, Ostrava, Olomouc and Zlín. Hence the bid, and the conference reflects the regional aspects of the LGBT community in the Czech Republic.

These organizations work with different constituencies, different environments and uses different tools to achieve the goal. Through their coordinating effort, they maximise the effect of their work towards improvement of LGBTI situation in the Czech Republic. They have extensive experience in organizing big public events, expert conferences or social gatherings. For example the Prague Pride festival consist of hundreds of events and attracts 80 000 people annually. The Pride Business Forum is a business conference attended by almost 300 people etc. Each organization has an experience working with volunteers that we plan to engage during the conference.

In order to maximise diversity of opinion and experience we will extend an invitation to the **hosting committee** to the representatives of:

- Život 90 (the leading non-profit working with seniors),
- Ara Art (the non-profit working with LGBT Roma) and
- Transparent (the leading non profit that works for and with trans people).



The hosting committee will meet once a month. The hosting committee will make strategic decisions on the preparatory steps and will make regular oversight of preparation and logistics. Adéla Horáková, representative of Proud, will be the chairwoman of the hosting committee.

Czeslaw Walek, chairman of Prague Pride will be the **core team** manager. Other team members are Eliška Borová, Viktor Heumann, Markéta Navrátilová and Martin Maryška. The core team will be involved in everyday preparatory work of the conference including logistics, coordination of volunteers and preparation of social events and receptions. The core team are half time employees of the marriage equality campaign sitting in Prague Pride offices. The core team will report to the hosting committee.

Adéla Horáková and Czeslaw Walek are the official representatives of the host.

## Fundraising

| Outline of the fundraising plan for ILGA Europe 2019 conference in Prague |  |                   |   |
|---|--|-------------------|---|
| Time  | Fundraising activity   | Goal              | Comments  |
| March 2017  | Grant proposal to European Commission that includes an international conference in autumn 2019 | 5 000 EUR         | The grant proposal was successful. Therefore we already have a seed funding that we can use for ILGA Europe 2019 conference.                            |
| June 2018   | Grant proposal to the City of Prague   | 5 000 EUR         |   |
| October 2018  | Grant proposal to the Czechtourism Agency  | 2 000 EUR         |   |
| 2018  | Grant proposal to EEA and Norway Grants that will include the conference                       | 5 000 EUR         | The EEA and Norway grants are not yet available in the Czech Republic, however according to our information should be open for application during 2018. |
| Autumn 2018   | Negotiating corporate sponsorship - brewery, Brown Forman, winery etc.                         | 2 000 EUR         | This could also be in-kind contributions.   |
| Winter 2018   | Individual donors  | 2 000 EUR         |   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |  | <b>21 000 EUR</b> |   |

## Conference site

Prague has several hotel venues that fit all criterias. Following hotels were contacted by the organizing team and expressed interest in hosting a conference.

### 1. The Vienna House Diplomat Prague

The Vienna House Diplomat Prague is located in the peaceful diplomatic district, not far from the historic city centre. The hotel is one of the most popular conference venues in the City of Prague. Prague Castle is strikingly close. The hotel utilizes 25 flexible conference rooms for up to 1,260 people (3 with access to the roof terrace) and 1,650 m<sup>2</sup> conference & event area. The ballroom fits 500 people. The hotel is surrounded by a many budget accommodation options. The Vienna House Diplomat Prague was a partner of Prague Pride festival 2017 and we had the best experience. The hotel also already submitted a proposal for ILGA Europe 2019. It would be our top contender for the venue.

### 2. Orea Hotel Pyramida

Orea Hotel Pyramida has 336 rooms and suites, 9 fully air-conditioned conference rooms that can host up to 1100 people over an area of 1200 square meters. The hotel is walking distance to Prague Castle. The hotel is surrounded by many options for budget accommodation.

### 3. Clarion Congress Hotel Prague

Clarion Congress Hotel Prague is one of the largest congress hotels in the Czech Republic. Because of the large space of the congress facilities (up to 2,500 people), cutting-edge technical equipment, a corresponding accommodation capacity and, primarily, a comprehensive offer of services, the hotel became a popular venue for a number of specialist, social and sports events and meetings. The location of the hotel is not the closest to the center, however it is a top choice because of its facilities. The position of the hotel offers some budget accommodation options.

### 4. Marriott Prague

Marriott Prague is an award winning hotel next to Old Town Sq. The hotel has 11 event rooms beautiful. Its ballroom has a capacity of 400 people, which is less than required, however Prague Pride has cooperated with Marriott Prague in the past. Because of our experience and its close vicinity to the Old Town Sq. we put Marriott on the list as one of our shortlist contenders. The hotel is in the center with many budget accommodation options.

### 5. Hilton Prague

Hilton Prague is an award winning hotel in the heart of Prague. The hotel utilizes over 4,500 sq. metres of versatile function space, including 38 meeting rooms and the beautiful Grand Ballroom. Prague Pride is cooperating with Hilton Prague on regular bases. The Pride Business Forum is hosted there annually. Hilton Prague is surrounded by a plethora of budget accommodation options. Hilton Prague would be our first choice for the venue.

## Programme / speakers

As we have upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections it is impossible to bindingly suggest high profile political speakers. However here are some tips for high profile speakers that we would suggest:

### Political speakers:

- EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumer Rights and Equal Opportunities, Věra Jourová who is supporting our bid and will make a short video for presentation in Warsaw;
- Mayor of Prague Adriana Krnáčová who is supporting our bid and will make a short video for presentation in Warsaw;
- Current Minister for Justice Robert Pelikán;
- Current Minister for Regional Development Karla Šlechtová;
- Current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lubomír Zaorálek
- Vice Chairman of the Senate Jiří Šesták
- MP, chair of Permanent Commission on Family Issues (possible future Minister of Labour and Social Affairs) Radka Maxová
- Ombudsperson Anna Šabatová



## Sport

- Šárka Pančochová, openly gay snowboard world champion
- Martina Navrátilová, a legend, former tennis champion

## Business

- Karel Foltýn, CEO of Amazon Czech Republic
- Armin Borries, CEO of Clearstream Operations

# Social events

Prague is an amazing place with number of breathtaking locations that give an opportunity to network and mingle with locals. Below are just some suggestions.

## Opening reception:

### Alternative 1:

An opening reception at the Dancing House, Frank Gehry masterpiece that became a main part of our proposed visual identity for ILGA Europe 2019 conference in Prague. With its intriguing architecture and stunning views over the City of Prague it is one of the most iconic locations in Prague. The House itself is owned by an openly gay entrepreneur. Throughout the conference the house will be lit with rainbow colours.

### Alternative 2:

An opening reception at the residence of the Mayor of Prague. It was set up in a new building of the Prague City Library, which was built in 1925-1928. Its stunning architecture and interior are reflecting a secession style. The current Mayor is a big supporter of LGBTI events in the City. She also supports this bid and is happy to host an opening reception.

## Cultural event:

### Alternative 1:

Adolf Loos tour to celebrate the work and legacy of early modernist architect Adolf Loos and see something else than Charles's bridge. Loos's work are gradually rediscovered and opened to the public. In Prague we can visit Villa Müller and Villa Winternitz, in Plzeň few of his amazing apartments. That is why we would propose to divide group to two. One would go to Plzeň, where they would also have a chance to meet with local activists. The Prague group will also have a chance to see a museum of the Czech LGBT history and talk to Center for Queer Memory members.

### Alternative 2:

Hot Chocolate. An evening out and about with Roma LGBT. Roma LGBT people face a range of facets of discrimination: firstly as Roma, secondly as LGBT people, thirdly as LGBT people in Roma communities. Ara Art is the Czech non-profit that actively works with Romani LGBT and with the LGBT and general public to make them aware of issues and problems that Romani LGBT are facing. We would work closely with Ara Art to create an afternoon / evening that will present complexity of their life through culture and art.

## Closing Gala:

### Alternative 1:

A closing gala in Prague Crossroads. The International Spirit Center Prague Crossroads is one of the projects of the Dagmar and Vaclav Havel Foundation VIZE 97, which also takes care of saving and managing this unique space. The Prague Crossroads is housed in a long-tempered church founded by St. Wenceslas in 927 AD. The Prague Crossroads is a suggestive place for a wide range of meetings. The main mission of these meetings is to respond to the now widely shared need for unprejudiced and creative conversation of people of different beliefs, beliefs and professions about the state of our civilization and the dangers that threaten it, about its hopes and the future. The philosophy of the place, its history and person of Václav Havel - makes it an ideal spot for a closing gala.

### Alternative 2:

A closing gala in stunning Prague castle ballroom. Prague castle is an ancient symbol of the Czech State, the most significant Czech monument and one of the most important cultural institutions in the Czech Republic. It would actually be for a first time that Prague castle would host an LGBT event - it's about time to make Prague castle rainbow.

