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ILGA EUROPE ACTIVITY REPORT 2017/2018



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Introduction

Another year at ILGA-Europe and what a year it has been. Populism, political complacency, attacks on democratic institutions and human rights, rising extremism. It feels like these words, which carry such heaviness, are now sadly part of our daily conversations, a sign that the political environment in which we work is becoming increasingly difficult.

So, all the more reasons to be proud of what ILGA-Europe has achieved since Warsaw. The ILGA-Europe staff and board team has been incredibly active. We have empowered and equipped LGBTI people to drive change in their own communities and in their country. We have held governments and institutions accountable to make sure LGBTI people are on their agendas and that their promises are kept. We have accelerated change by making sure that legal and political wins in one country are transferred across Europe and trigger change throughout the region. We have joined other organisations to stand up for democracy and freedom, for human rights, for equality and fairness. We have worked to ensure that people and groups who are withstanding repression are adequately supported so they can keep a stronghold against further backsliding. And, we have stood in solidarity with other movements because we know that all struggles are connected.

Amidst all this, the year was also a year of reflection, of learning, of taking stock for ILGA-Europe. We looked back over the past five years as we embarked on a strategic planning process, realising that ILGA Europe has collectively

experienced and adapted to extraordinary change since we adopted our strategic plan at the Zagreb 2013 Annual Conference. And so have the LGBTI movements in Europe and around the world, along with the world around us. We have made some extraordinary achievements and brought about positive political, legal and social change in so many countries. We have together enabled the growth and strengthening of LGBTI movements in Europe and Central Asia – something to celebrate again and again. As an organisation, ILGA-Europe has grown in capacity, sustainability and resiliency, having learned immensely over the past few years from our strengths as well as our weaknesses. At the same time, we have faced serious, sometimes unexpected, challenges and have had to respond to new threats to LGBTI activism and to LGBTI people's lives.

And yet, it is clear that we have so much to continue to build from both as an organisation and as movements. For we also live in a time of incredible opportunities. Now is the time to invest in transforming the legal and political wins of the past decade into long-lasting, profound change in the lived experience of LGBTI people across the region. This is the moment to make sure that no one is left behind on the journey for equality and that we build ever more diverse and inclusive communities.

Joyce Hamilton and Brian Sheehan,
co-chairs of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board
Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director

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 during the last year of its current Strategic Plan (2014-2018). This report covers work carried out between November 2017 and October 2018.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 – Achieve full equality and effective enjoyment of human rights without discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, 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.

Over the past few years, we have talked about how our role in driving legal and policy change for LGBTI equality at regional level has evolved. Since the last conference in Warsaw, we have witnessed that evolution continuing. There is not one single reason for this development: the changing political and institutional landscape combined with the growing strength of the LGBTI movement has undoubtedly contributed to changing the nature of ILGA-Europe's actions. As a result, throughout the past year, ILGA-Europe have continued to focus even more on what we are uniquely placed to do, how we can act alongside and in support of our members, and what actions we can take to play an even greater transformative role for LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia.

Given our unique standpoint, one clear role is to **identify common trends** in political opportunities and challenges which impact the LGBTI movements across the region. ILGA-Europe are well-placed to take a lead in bringing the necessary knowledge and expertise together to develop strategies for the LGBTI movement to respond.

In 2018, it became very clear that debates and **discussions on gender** are firmly on the public and political agenda in Europe. From positive developments like the German

Constitutional Court ruling on gender markers in late 2017 and increased visibility of people who identify as non-binary, to the growing opposition to so-called gender ideology and negative public debates on self-determination in some countries, the conversations have been going both in positive and negative directions. Developments such as the Constitutional Court decision in Germany last October are opening up opportunities to advocate for non-binary gender registration models in Europe. To prepare the ground for this, ILGA-Europe carried out research specifically on gender markers in public registration. Not only does the report compile information on developments across the region, but it also looks at the legal and bureaucratic implications of implementing different gender registration models.

This said, the ILGA-Europe team has also had to pay particular attention to the worrying ongoing mobilisation of so-called "anti-gender ideology" groups against LGBTI rights, as well as women's rights and sexual/reproductive rights. Much of this hostile anti-equality opposition centres on the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (or Istanbul Convention). Collective action is key to overcoming this sort of organised opposition, so ILGA-Europe has been actively contributing to coalition work with our fellow European NGOs and partner networks. This includes maintaining current overviews of the situation in different countries and ensuring that the EU and Council of Europe have the timely and accurate information they need to respond to this evolving trend. ILGA-Europe also worked with both institutions on their messages in favour of the ratification of the Convention. We also provided support to members in Bulgaria and Latvia against growing opposition to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in both countries, especially by generating support from the European level.

As the approach employed by the so-called 'anti-gender' forces can vary from place to place, it is particularly important to be proactive and build as much as possible from experiences in different countries. We are working

on a series of activities related to anti-gender forces at the Brussels Conference, so that our members can also get some practical tips on how to counteract their tactics. This includes narrative development workshops, the production of materials with information on the anti-gender movement and a list of resources. We are also exploring opportunities with the Council of Europe (CoE) around the ratification process, including how to ensure full engagement of NGOs in the first round of reporting on the Istanbul Convention.

Unfortunately, a lot of our team's attention also had to centre on **closing space for civil society** and the undermining of democratic institutions. During late 2017 and early 2018, we were closely monitoring developments in countries within as well as outside the European Union, from Poland and Turkey, to Hungary and Romania. We provided direct support on security where necessary and paid particular attention to monitoring and supporting Pride events – knowing that Prides are visible indicators of how well democracies are functioning. We worked with our contacts in European political parties to leverage their influence with politicians from their political family at national level. ILGA-Europe continued to work to urge European institutions and governments to respond as firmly as possible to this undeniable trend, as the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) did with its report published at the start of 2018, which was the first acknowledgement at an institutional level that the phenomenon exists across Europe and that it needs to be urgently addressed.

Together with a broad alliance of NGOs, we also advocated for the strong European Parliament resolution adopted in April in favour of an instrument to support civil society organisations which promote democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights. Over the coming months, ILGA-Europe will continue to actively work with NGO colleagues on getting clear commitments on coherence around EU funding, to ensure that human rights defenders in the 28 (and future 27!) EU member states have access to similar funds that exist for human rights defenders working outside the union's borders. We are doing this in the larger context of our advocacy on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 – 2027, aimed at ensuring strong

commitment for funding on human rights and equality for NGOs at both European and national levels in the EU.

European institutions must remain fully engaged and play their part in holding governments accountable on their human rights commitments. Ensuring that this happens in practice is another key role for ILGA-Europe to fulfil. This role was particularly important over the past 12 months in relation to the current human rights situation of LGBTI people in **Chechnya**. In the absence of any investigation one year after "Novaya Gazeta" broke news of widespread illegal detention, torture and even killing of (perceived) gay and bisexual men in the Chechen Republic, ILGA-Europe joined other organisations to denounce the ongoing impunity. Complementing the immense work being done by activists on the ground, ILGA-Europe made sure that the EU's institutions kept the issue on their political agenda - especially highlighting lack of investigation and impunity – through European Parliament resolutions and a high-level hearing that included a powerful testimony from one of the community members held in one of the illegal detention centres. We provided support to the Council of Europe's Rapporteur on LGBTI rights, Piet de Bruyn, on his high-profile report at the Parliamentary Assembly. This was the first comprehensive report issued by an international organisation on the widespread human rights abuses inflicted on the LGBTI communities in Chechnya, and it was adopted unopposed in a vote on 27 June.

In the recent **Romania referendum** that attempted to restrictively re-define 'family', we proactively engaged with European institutions and political parties, seeking to activate as many allies as possible in support of activists in Romania. Staying in constant contact with members in Romania, ILGA-Europe actively worked with the European Parliament, European political parties as well as with high-level EU officials on getting institutions to put pressure on the Romanian government to respect fundamental rules of free democratic votes, as we continue to receive detailed information about violations to basic rules of impartiality. In addition to connecting activists to relevant expertise to support their campaign, we also embarked on a proactive media strategy, to correct the predominant (and

misleading) public narrative that marriage equality was on the ballot paper during this referendum.

Throughout the year, we did our best to bring **human rights violations** against LGBTI people and LGBTI groups (such as bans on LGBTI events in Turkey and a series of violent attacks in Armenia) to the attention of EU and CoE, actively pushing for appropriate responses. In addition to direct engagement on specific developments which require immediate response, we have also utilised human rights-specific fora to raise issues more structurally. During the year, we raised the challenges faced by LGBTI activists and community members in the region at human rights dialogues, in which we have also started to look at the Central Asian region. In 2018, we also attended the NGO consultation session for the European Parliament's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World.

ILGA-Europe continues to advocate with EU institutions on the adoption of **new laws** which create new or reinforce existing standards for LGBTI equality in the EU and beyond. Despite wide-spread questions about the EU's level of influence at this moment in time, there are still opportunities to establish standards in the EU. Over the past year, we contributed to the coalition work led by COFACE (a European network of organisations defending all family forms), on the adoption of the EU's directive on work-life balance, and ensured the use of LGBTI-inclusive language throughout the new law (including gender-neutral terminology on parenting and parental leaves).

We also continued work with the European Parliament on ensuring the rights of LGBTI **asylum** seekers and refugees are better protected under the reformed Common European Asylum System (CEAS), paying particular attention to the Reception Conditions Directive and the Qualifications Regulation. While the text provides good provisions and protections on SOGI issues, gender expression and sex characteristics were unfortunately not included in all of the texts. Frustratingly, EU Member States will not move forward until agreement has been reached on all the different asylum policy issues, meaning that progress has stalled for now. ILGA-Europe's ultimate goal is to ensure

that the final directive will provide stronger protection for LGBTI people in the CEAS than in existing legislation. In addition, ILGA-Europe became a member of the EU Asylum Support Office (EASO) Vulnerability Experts' Network in order to contribute actively to the full implementation of EU legal standards regarding the protection of LGBTI refugees.

Indeed, where laws and policies are in place, making sure that these existing standards are actively implemented and used is of equal importance to the daily lives of LGBTI communities. At the CoE, we therefore actively engaged on the Review of the 2010 Council of Ministers recommendation on LGBT rights – which remains to this day one of the most comprehensive human rights instruments on LGBTI equality in the world. The Recommendation was ground-breaking when first adopted in 2010 - it was the first and only agreement between governments to combat discrimination against LGBT people in Europe. Therefore an assessment of how it is working is crucial – and this report will help guide the Council's work in supporting member states regarding its implementation. We have been in ongoing dialogue with CoE officials on ensuring that a meaningful review process takes place, building political support where possible both within and outside the institution. ILGA-Europe worked together with TGEU, OII Europe, IGLYO, EL*C and NELFA on a joint report to the CoE on the state of play of implementation of the Recommendation, along with national reports prepared by 11 organisations supported by ILGA-Europe and TGEU. The fact that so many human rights groups and LGBTI organisations have come together to work on this sends a clear message about the significance of this particular review process.

In October, the CoE's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) adopted a resolution calling for the equal treatment of rainbow **families**, one of the most advanced declarations on rainbow families by any international human rights organisation. Based on a report by Jonas Gunnarsson (PACE member, Sweden), the resolution calls for the elimination of all unjustified differences in treatment in the field of private and family life based on grounds of sexual orientation. ILGA-Europe contributed to this over the past year by connecting

the rapporteur and the relevant Committee of the PACE with a wide-range of activists, providing input towards a conference and other preparatory meetings, giving written feedback to the draft report and, ahead of the vote, activating friendly PACE members to help ensure a clear majority for the resolution.

Every year, the power of **strategic litigation** becomes ever more apparent. European courts are vital players, contributing to standard setting and to strengthening legal protection on SOGIESC issues. In 2018, we witnessed, first-hand, the life-changing impact that some judgments can have, with the landmark Coman judgment. The case not only has immense impact at national level but also immediate relevance for married same-sex couples in the EU, opening up many doors for our advocacy on the implementation of the EU's freedom of movement directive. This is why we had lent our support to Adrian Coman, his legal team and Romanian activists over the past few years, wherever we could, including by joining two third-party interventions with ACCEPT to the Constitutional Court of Romania and providing information on the implications of the case to European governments. However, more work is to be done in the wake of the Court decision. In June, ILGA-Europe co-organised a roundtable event at the European Parliament on the implications of the Coman judgement. Hosted by ALDE MEP Sophie in't Veld, we were joined by the legal team from Romania, international law firms and European Commission officials to discuss the effect that this landmark judgment will have on freedom of movement and its impact for same-sex couples in the EU. We are also collecting information about problems that same-sex couples are facing in other member states in order to raise this with the Commission.

Apart from Coman, there was a positive judgment in the case of *Orlandi and Others v Italy* from the European Court in December 2017, requiring establishment of a specific legal framework to provide for the recognition and protection of their same-sex unions, for the couples married abroad. ILGA-Europe had intervened with five other partner organisations in this case. This year's developments tell us that this work is impactful – hence

our 11 third party interventions to the European Court! We also made submissions to the Committee of Ministers on implementation of 3 cases, because the impact of litigation does not end on 'judgment day'; the spirit of the legal decision must be brought to life and its benefits felt by LGBTI people in their daily lives.

Part of our advocacy with European institutions focuses on setting good practices for policy-makers and ensuring that commitments on LGBTI equality are anchored in a sustainable manner within institutional policies and practices. In this context, we actively engage with the EU Commission on the **EU's List of Actions** to advance LGBTI equality – which sets out all actions to be taken by the Commission to integrate LGBTI issues across different policy areas of the EU (such as education, health, combating hate speech, among others). We contributed to the planning and implementation of some actions, provided input towards review of the current work, and actively cooperated with government representatives through the EU High-Level group on non-discrimination and the High-Level group on Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Discrimination on the implementation of relevant Commission policies.

We also started looking beyond the elections in 2019 which will see a new Parliament and Commission. To this end, we met with Commissioner Jourova to work with her on building strong political support for an EU policy in the next Commission, met with EU government representatives to gain their support, and are working with the LGBTI Intergroup on a Parliament resolution calling for follow-up of the list of actions in the next EC 2019-2023. Meanwhile, ILGA-Europe remains an active contributor to the **EU enlargement** annual consultation processes. This annual assessment of the accession countries' readiness to join the Union continues to be another key tool to move governments to take action in relation to LGBTI equality. The process has propelled the prospective Member States to develop their anti-discrimination legislation and equality action plans – but implementation continues to be a key concern, raised by ILGA-Europe and our members alike in our own assessment reports, prepared as part of the process.

There is still a huge need for the adoption of strong and ambitious legal and policy standards on SOGIESC at national and regional levels. A key role the LGBTI movements should play is to clearly define the level of ambitions that decision-makers need to reach. This is where ILGA-Europe's **Rainbow Europe module** comes in. A high ranking on the Rainbow Europe Map is now synonymous with high international standards of SOGIESC law-making. The annual intergovernmental Forum to mark 17 May each year has become a vital date in our calendar as it offers a regular opportunity to meet policymakers face to face and have honest discussions about why their country is stuck at the middle of the league table for equality or even sliding down. Equally, the Rainbow Module gives very clear directions to governments for moving forward, not only by looking at gaps on the Index, but also because of specific recommendations being included and directed at national lawmakers in the Rainbow Europe package each year. In 2019, our Rainbow Europe Map will celebrate its 10th birthday; a milestone in our collective advocacy worth celebrating after a decade of holding governments to account and challenging them to step up their game. With input from members and our team of talented country experts, ILGA-Europe will therefore be reviewing the Rainbow Europe package to see how implementation, social experience and an even greater level of legislative scrutiny can be included in the Map next year.

Data about the lived reality of LGBTI people is essential to understand the impact of existing laws and policies, and to inform policy-makers and civil society alike about what still needs to be done. The 2nd round of the Fundamental Rights Agency's EU-wide LGBTI survey, which will be conducted in 2019, therefore represents a very important opportunity to inform European and national policy-making in the years to come. ILGA-Europe took part in the first experts' and stakeholders' consultations, bringing learning from the previous survey and providing input to ensure that the second survey goes further by being fully inclusive of intersex and non-binary people. In the next year, ILGA-Europe will work with FRA on dissemination and outreach of the survey, including by connecting FRA directly with member organisations from the onset of the data collection

process. We also contributed to the Subgroup on Equality Data (composed of representatives from the European Commission, FRA, Eurostat, representatives from national administrations, national statistical institutions or bodies responsible for implementing or monitoring equality policies) in the development of a set of non-binding guidelines on improving the collection and use of equality data.

Another role that ILGA-Europe are uniquely placed to play is to mobilise broad political support within regional institutions for LGBTI human rights and equality. There are a number of ways to achieve this goal; awareness-raising and campaigning activities at European level are two particularly effective examples. In 2018, we witnessed the growing visibility of LGBTI issues in European institution events. First Vice-President Timmermans joined the Belgian Pride, after a morning meeting with ILGA-Europe and other local organisations. The Commission's Berlaymont and EU External Action Service building were both lit up in rainbow colours and there were multiple events marking 17 May at the Parliament, different parts of the Commission, Committee of the Regions and European Economic and Social Committee.

Looking ahead to the **European elections** in May 2019, we have started to work on ensuring a strong commitment to the advancement and protection of the human rights of LGBTI people by candidates and political parties. Building from our 2014 Come Out campaign, we consulted members from EU countries on their priorities and their own campaign plans for the 2019 EP elections. This input has fed into the team's own analysis, as we developed an election pledge defining ILGA-Europe's key political priorities with the EU over the next five years (to be finalised later in 2018). Over the past months, we also engaged with European political parties, providing input on their party manifestos where possible. We are organising our 1st public election event at this 2018 annual conference by bringing representatives from five parliamentary groups to a Town Hall debate with conference participants. The team is also actively participating in conversations with a wide range of NGO allies and trade unions, to coordinate activities around the elections at European level.

As much as working directly with people who lead political institutions and have power to decide on adopting new laws and putting them in practice is a core part of our work, it is an equally important part of our mission to create space for LGBTI voices, in all their diversity, to be heard by European policy-makers. We do this in many ways, starting with facilitating meaningful participation of LGBTI organisations in European policy-making, as we did by organising roundtables and seminars between LGBTI organisations working on asylum and representatives from national governments, EU Commission and Council of Europe earlier this year. Starting with personal testimonies of LGBTI asylum seekers, these events were aimed at naming and discussing specific needs of LGBTI asylum seekers, including the integration of LGBTI asylum seekers into the broader community, trans-specific healthcare, and safe shelters.

This year, we continued to work with OII Europe on building on the momentum around the human **rights of intersex people** at European level. Together, we are producing a legal toolkit for policy makers (a check-list of indicators for ideal legal protection regarding intersex human rights) which will first be presented in Brussels with representatives from EU governments. ILGA-Europe has taken a lead in building political support in the European Parliament on adopting a resolution on the human rights of intersex people before the end of its term in 2019. In addition to gaining wide political support for such a resolution, one of our key roles in this process will be ensuring that the voices from intersex activists and of OII Europe are at the core of this process.

We also work on increasing the visibility and knowledge of issues of concern for LGBTI people under-represented in laws and policies. Over the past year, ILGA-Europe published its position paper on the human rights of LGBTI **sex workers**, launched through a social media campaign which attracted attention not only of our membership, but also NGO colleagues and European policy-makers. In addition to putting a spotlight on our policy, the campaign was also an opportunity to amplify the voices of LGBTI sex worker groups and hear from LGBTI organisations whose

work supports sex workers. We ran a similar social media campaign earlier in the year to raise awareness about sexual health, bringing together blogs from different LGBTI activists and sexual health and rights activists. Other social media campaigns focused on increasing the visibility of parts of the LGBTI communities which are under-represented, including Bi-visibility Day.

To accelerate political and legal change across the region, ILGA-Europe seeks to enhance the capacity of LGBTI organisations on **national advocacy and campaigning**. Over the past year, ILGA-Europe provided support to LGBTI groups on campaigns on issues that are key to our communities, but often lack public understanding and support. Examples included a video on intersex issues and a number of campaigns to raise awareness on legal gender recognition. We also did this through peer learning among LGBTI groups as we did this year with a 3-day workshop on campaigning for intersex rights for activists from 6 different countries to support ongoing or upcoming campaigns on intersex visibility. We also connect activists to relevant institutions and expertise to support national advocacy, especially where legislative development in one country can contribute to setting standards in others. An example of that this year was supporting national NGOs working towards the adoption of stronger legal gender recognition legislation in a number of countries. A special focus was placed on Portugal, as the reform not only led to changes in the Portuguese legal gender recognition laws, but also made Portugal the 2nd country in Europe to ban medical interventions on intersex babies.

Another significant aspect of ILGA-Europe's work revolves around building **strategic alliances** with other civil society actors. Over the past year, we devoted time on building strong alliances with a range of actors active in the field of migration and asylum, especially mainstream asylum organisations and equality bodies. Through events with LGBTI organisations, we have worked on supporting mainstream asylum organisations to better support the specific needs of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and also started exploring how we as LGBTI organisations can also support their work on broader migration and

asylum policies. We have also looked at alliances in the field of sexual health: we organised our 2nd capacity-building seminar on HIV-STIs, and a strategizing meeting on sexual health with key partners in this field, such as the European Aids Treatment Group and the International Planned Parenthood. As a follow-up, we participated at the Global Village of the World AIDS Day conference with some of these partners, and are discussing joint action in the coming year to push for strong commitments on sexual health from the next EU Commission in its health programmes.

Looking beyond NGOs, part of our time was dedicated to strengthening partnerships with professional sectors at European level. Over the past two years, ILGA-Europe has built very good relationships with several **health** organisations through the project Health4LGBTI. The project was aimed at increasing understanding specific health inequalities experienced by LGBTI people, and at providing European health professionals with relevant tools to allow them to develop the right skills and knowledge to overcome these barriers. The project came to a close this year with a conference of 134 persons registered, including our members from 25 EU countries and health ministry's officials from 16 EU countries. We now have very strong training modules to disseminate widely amongst health practitioners in Europe, and strong alliances to help us push policy-makers at both national and European levels to adopt policies and programmes to make health systems more LGBTI-inclusive.

The ILGA-Europe team has also continued its conversation on engagement with the **private sector**, both on ensuring equality in the workplace and on the role of corporate actors in bringing political and social change. In the past year, we have been invited by companies to educate staff on LGBTI rights in Europe and Central Asia, and have used these opportunities to encourage them to play a more significant role in setting LGBTI-inclusive standards and facilitating sharing of good practices in their respective sector. We have also been creating spaces – as we will at the Brussels conference – to discuss the role of private sector in advancing equality: how do we hold businesses

accountable? Is it possible to build genuine partnerships between civil society and the private sector? These are only some of the many questions we continue to ask ourselves as a rapidly growing number of private sector actors are reaching out to ILGA-Europe.

Indeed, these questions have been particularly present in our team, as at the same time, ILGA-Europe have been recognising more and more the importance on connecting our work on LGBTI equality to broader social justice struggles. From entering into discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals at EU level to exploring potential cooperation with organisations working to end homelessness, the ILGA-Europe team is starting to look into how to address structural inequalities in our work. As we embark on our next five-year Strategic Framework, taking into consideration structural inequality and power imbalances that impact the lives of LGBTI people – connected to socio-economic status, age, race, gender, mental and physical ability, nationality and other factors – will become a guiding principle for ILGA-Europe.

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.

Looking back over the past five years, one thing is clear: the growth and strengthening of LGBTI movements in Europe and Central Asia has been nothing short of extraordinary – something to celebrate again and again. As an organisation, ILGA-Europe has grown in capacity, sustainability and resilience, having learned immensely over the past few years from our strengths as well as our weaknesses in supporting LGBTI activists, groups and organisations across the region. The strategic planning process of the past year has provided a space to think about how we can remain as relevant as possible for LGBTI movements in Europe and Central Asia over the next decade. This requires us to continue to adapt the way we work with our members and with the broader movement. With rapidly growing expertise and capacity among members at local and national levels, the need for the staff team to build up that expertise in-house is becoming lesser. The staff team's added value is increasingly in knowing where to find the necessary expertise and in connecting activists to those who have it; in creating connections between all relevant actors and their expertise in making change for LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia; in amplifying change by increasing exchange of knowledge and facilitating peer learning; in building expertise in areas of work that are new for the movement and in taking a lead in creating space for much needed discussions within the LGBTI movements.

This shift in how we work has increasingly become clear over the past twelve months throughout our programmatic work. Firstly, the prominence of conversations on **community organising** in our programmes is a signal of the journey we embarked on a few years ago to expand our understanding of capacity-building. Over the past year, we developed specific resources for LGBTI groups and organisations to contribute to strengthening their capacity to engage in community building and organising. The resources look deeper into community needs assessments, reaching out to and engaging with communities. We devoted the 2018 edition of our Destination Equality Magazine to the topic of Community Organising. ILGA-Europe's larger Community Organising project—which supported project partners in 7 countries through a mix of re-granting, peer support and coaching, is coming to an

end this year. This scheme – aimed at strengthening LGBTI communities' mobilisation, especially around human rights work – provided the basis for the resources we have been developing.

The project has shown potential to support organisations in developing successful work around community engagement and the role that ILGA-Europe can play in facilitating learning across the region. Therefore the hope is that ILGA-Europe will acquire new resources in 2019 to support work around community organising, intersectionality and working in shrinking space contexts. Meanwhile, ILGA-Europe aims to integrate elements of this work in other activities. ILGA-Europe will launch an initiative to support work which connects community organising to mobilisation activities and intersectionality. Organising for change is hard work which often takes time – and ILGA-Europe want to support our members and individual activists as they undertake this inspiring task and to do so in an inclusive way to ensure no one is left behind.

As collective capacity in the movements continues to grow, the ILGA-Europe team is increasingly focusing on offering capacity-building programmes which respond to emerging needs and/or to identified gaps within LGBTI movements in Europe and Central Asia. In the field of **Strategic Communication**, we launched and widely disseminated the manuals on Framing and Message testing, co-produced with Public Research Interest Centre. We reached a large number of activists through our series of webinars on the toolkits and various workshops integrated in different trainings and seminars. In addition, we developed a new programme through which we will be able to support small-scale message testing initiatives over the coming year. The toolkits rapidly became popular resources beyond our movement. ILGA-Europe received several invitations to present our work to other human rights organisations, many of which we had to decline for lack of capacity. We did however join the informal expert group of Human Rights Communicators setup by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, as a channel to share our learning to a wider number of people.

Through the Creating Opportunities programme, we continued to provide regional capacity building and country-level coaching to support LGBTI organisations in the development of **campaigns and message testing**. Over the past year, we paid special attention to campaigning on legal gender recognition and intersex issues, and organised capacity building events on these specific topics. The programme supported 10 in-country campaigning projects in 2018 (including in countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Russia), focusing on a wide range of thematic issues. Whilst Creating Opportunities provides small financial contributions, the majority of the programme's work focused on coaching activists in delivering successful campaigns. The programme has outrun its own success as the budget for 2018 was already exhausted by August. Over the coming period, the programme will focus on responding to the anti-gender movement, trying to bring together actors to mobilise more widely. Sadly, Creating Opportunities is threatened with discontinuation from 2020 as a result of the departure of its main funder from our region. ILGA-Europe has therefore started to explore alternative sources of funding to continue this work. In light of this, a campaign has been launched in August to shed light on the impact that Creating Opportunities has brought to activism.

This year again, a strong focus in our programmes was put on strengthening the capacity of organisations to mobilise allies. Several of ILGA-Europe's projects and re-granting initiatives have been used to bolster the LGBTI organisations capacity for **alliance-building** strategies. For example, we have issued grants to support groups or coalitions of organisations to effectively respond to shrinking space for civil society in their countries. We have also continued to learn from projects which go beyond the very obvious allies and make links with partners in all walks of life – from medical professionals and artists, to journalists and parents groups. In the coming year, we intend to bring the learning around alliance building together and make it more widely available to the movement, so to further strengthen the movement's capacity in this area.

Sadly, the need for trainings on **security, well-being, and safety** issues remains high in our region. In partnership with the Dignity for All consortium, we continued to issue emergency grants across the region. These grants and training sessions relevance in both the short and long term – they can be organised quickly, providing a rapid response to members in need, but always aim to contribute to the longer term sustainability of the movement. Overall, our security and wellbeing trainings continue to be a central element of our work with members in countries such as Russia and Turkey where the external threats have been clearly documented, but with growing opposition in other countries (such as the anti-gender movement) the need for ILGA-Europe to constantly standby has only grown. The hope for our security work in the coming year is to be extended more effectively in Central Asia. We also continue to look at digital security as an area for development. Beyond digital security, digitalisation is a growing area of importance for the movement in Europe and Central Asia. There is an evident need for the further development of skills and competencies within the movement around digitalisation. The development of an online learning platform is one example, strengthening the movement's capacity to carry out online campaigning is another one. ILGA-Europe is working with Google to open up the position of a 6-month fellowship in 2019 to create capacity to explore the potential for new pathways of change making through digitalisation.

The ILGA-Europe team constantly assesses where there are unmet needs from a geographical perspective, and seek to address such needs through our programmes and projects. However, more and more of this work bring us in parts of the region where LGBTI activists carry out their activism in increasingly difficult contexts. We are highly aware of our responsibility to support and protect activists working in hostile environments. A lot of that work however can – for exactly those reasons – not be shared publicly. So please rest assured – there is more going on than included in these pages. Such work is not only about security, it is also about identifying new ways of creating change. Organising spaces where activists can strategise or talk about how they stay 'healthy' as a community are perhaps the most

critical activities we organise today. This said we do want to name that we have started our work in Central Asia. We are rapidly increasing our engagement with activists to better understand their needs and explore advocacy opportunities, and we have started integrating activists in our programmatic activities. We will step up this work and hope to create links between activism in Central Asia with our broader work programme over the coming year.

This year ILGA-Europe has also begun to reflect on how the organisation and the broader movement have responded to urgent “crisis” situations (such as Chechnya) which occurred in recent years. The need to do so was widely felt within our own organisation and more broadly, amongst groups involved in providing direct support to people affected by crisis. The nature of crisis response work has left deep marks on the lives of many activists and raised questions about our readiness to respond to large scale human rights abuses in the future. We are only at the beginning of such reflections and will initiate concrete efforts to take this forth in the year to come.

To do justice to all the work carried out by the ILGA-Europe team over the past year, it is important to note that, in addition to the projects described above, several other activities took place, including:

- The Annual Conference 2018, with over 500 participants, and more than 70 programme spaces, discussions, pre-meetings, consultations, etc. As our conference continues to grow in terms of size and expectations, ILGA-Europe continues to assess how the gathering can continue to provide the greatest value to activists and other participants, but also remain sustainable for the organisation.
- Capacity-building seminars, trainings and workshops at national or European levels on: campaigning, message framing, community organising; strategic communication; financial management; advocacy on HIV; security planning and digital security; strategic planning; wellbeing; strategic litigation; human rights monitoring and documentation; EU advocacy; hate crimes reporting; migration and supporting asylum-seekers.

- Webinars on strategic communications; fundraising; campaigning for legal gender recognition, funding for LGBTI issues, community organising, etc.
- Study and advocacy visits to the Council of Europe and the EU institutions.
- Coaching/mentoring on organisational management and development.
- Documentation of good practices in a variety of areas
- 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.

Over the past year ILGA-Europe has made progress in the **development and strengthening of learning methodologies**. In 2018, we started hosting webinars around various issues (fundraising, campaigning, message testing, dissemination of funding needs assessment). This has allowed ILGA-Europe to test new ways of working that have the potential to reach larger audiences and make knowledge sharing more accessible. In 2019, ILGA-Europe foresees the creation of a new **online learning platform** for LGBTI activists (and allies) in Europe and Central Asia, containing knowledge and resources that can further the movement’s capacities in a variety of fields. The aim is for the online learning platform to include a database/knowledge repository that can give activists access to information in a variety of fields (research, court cases, best practices, etc.). Beyond the online learning platform, ILGA-Europe is also strengthening materials that support facilitators of workshops and small events with the development of methodologies and approaches. In the years to come, the development of support around facilitation will continue to be important, in particular when it comes to addressing matters around privilege and class, which are increasingly discussed within the movement.

For years now, ILGA-Europe has placed great importance on providing support to **European networks** and under-represented groups within the LGBTI movements. With the growth of the movements and emergence of new organisations, we have been reassessing how

best to offer this support, within our existing resources. Believing in the value of peer learning, ILGA-Europe therefore hosted in April the first networking meeting of European networks. TGEU, OII-Europe, the European Lesbian* Conference, IGLYO, the European network of LGBTI Parents, the European Forum for LGBT Christians and the European Bisexual Network all joined us in a two-day meeting where we learned from each other on organisational development, governance and fundraising; we identified ways to strengthen cooperation and identified shared needs and goals. The days proved to be very successful and networks have asked ILGA-Europe to organise a similar meeting next year. In addition to this meeting, ILGA-Europe also continued to support OII-Europe towards their organisational development, as the organisation welcomed their first paid staff, through coaching and support for governance meetings. It was also very important for ILGA-Europe to take part at events organised by the larger networks, where we could: TGEU's Council, NELFA General Assembly, the European Network of LGBTI Parents.

In recent years, there have been changes in how we look at ILGA-Europe's role in relation to **resource mobilisation for LGBTI movements** in Europe and Central Asia. The reasons for this are obvious: a growing movement in size and diversity requires access to new funding, and a rapidly changing environment requires that funders adapt to the changing needs of the movement. For some years now, ILGA-Europe has cooperated with the Global Philanthropy Project (GPP) to bring funders together to discuss priorities on funding in Europe. This year, we also worked with GPP on significantly strengthening knowledge about the state of funding of the LGBTI movements in Europe and Central Asia. Indeed, to complement GPP's second global research on funding for the LGBTI movement from a grant-makers' perspective, ILGA-Europe published the first-ever region-wide survey of the funding needs and priorities of the LGBTI movement in Europe and Central Asia. Thanks to our successful partnership with Strength in Numbers, the research brought together data collected from 287 groups in Europe and Central Asia. ILGA-Europe presented the outcomes of this research to both activists

and donors at events and through webinars, the goal being to make the case for better and more resources for our movements in the years to come.

ILGA-Europe and GPP then joined forces to produce a third report: a ground-breaking cross-analysis of ILGA-Europe's and GPP's reports, which brings together data from funders and activists to draw compelling conclusions about the need to support LGBTI equality activities in Europe. The report is the basis for this year's Donor Pre Conference meeting in Brussels, and will also provide a strong basis for ILGA-Europe's expanding work in mobilising resources for our movements. One of our current goals is to reach out to governments and funders that are currently not supporting the LGBTI movement in our region yet, but have the potential to do so.

Beyond our role in identifying needs of LGBTI activists and groups and making the case for funding at regional level, we also continue to expand our role as grant-makers through our growing **re-granting** schemes. Our re-granting initiatives are closely linked with our movement building work, as our approach is not focused on funding alone, but on combining financial resources with additional capacity building. Where possible, ILGA-Europe facilitate learning spaces between grantees (and often also other activists) with the goal of creating peer-learning opportunities where ways of working can be discussed. On a more ad hoc basis, ILGA-Europe also provide ongoing informal support and mentoring to partners on financial management and organisational governance. Many of these conversations also serve to increase transparency and communication within the movement, contributing to trust building and a growing cohesion of work. This holistic approach has seen our re-granting work steadily expand, with targeted calls launched this year for specific in-country work across the region. We are conscious that the scenarios faced by LGBTI activists can widely differ and that mobilising resources takes time, in particular when it comes to ensuring that activists have the necessary means to respond to emerging priorities. Through various targeted re-granting programmes, ILGA-Europe aims to affect the capacity to rethink change of the movement in various fields.

Illustrative of this are re-granting programmes in place in Georgia and Russia, but also the upcoming re-granting work in Armenia, Central Asia, Georgia, Macedonia, Russia and Turkey.

ILGA-Europe's expanding re-granting work – 86 grants were awarded over the past year – led us to further strengthen our internal practices by developing clear procedures based on principles such as accountability, transparency and being needs-based. We also reworked our re-granting manual for grantees and now have an easy guide to assist grantees with the implementation of projects. In addition to this, we continued to provide finance trainings to grantees wherever needed. In 2019, we foresee the creation of a small body of members to provide feedback to ILGA-Europe on its re-granting work.

Our contribution to resource mobilisation also takes the form of support to LGBTI organisations on fundraising. In 2018, we organised webinars to the movement based on our funding needs assessment report, so to provide data and arguments that could strengthen organisation's own efforts in resource mobilisation. We provided coaching to organisations on accessing EU funding mechanisms. We also co-organised a series of webinars based on the good practices guide on fundraising with individual donors published with GPP.

ILGA-Europe's own efforts at **fundraising** from individuals continued in the past year. This fundraising work is important to meet ILGA-Europe's own co-funding requirements, but also in creating the ability for the organisation to remain flexible in responding to emerging needs. The European Equality Gala, ILGA-Europe's annual flagship event in Brussels, raised a record number of funds. Yet, the funding raised is not sufficient to make the event self-sustainable for the future. We are thus assessing how to move forward with the event, as part of our overall fundraising strategy. Over the past year, we strengthened relationships with a few private sector actors, which have been supporting our work either financially or by providing expertise pro-bono. Companies like Google, Levi's, ING and Diageo have invested in our work with grants or supported

our events. Smaller companies have raised funds for us with products like clothes and accessories, and we've benefitted from schemes where companies match employee donations. A growing number of law firms are providing pro-bono support in our litigation work. Building such partnerships requires mutual trust building and long-term time investment, ILGA-Europe continues to assess how this is done in ways that carry most impact and remains in line with our core principles and values.

Intersectionality has continued to be a core focus on ILGA-Europe's agenda over the past year, from placing intersectionality at the heart of the conference to ongoing learning on adopting an intersectional approach across our work. Over the past few years, the whole ILGA-Europe team has invested time and energy to thinking about how we create ever safer spaces to have conversations about power and privileges, how we amplify the voices of those who are not heard within LGBTI communities and how we can contribute to empowering under-represented groups within the LGBTI communities. Our Board and Staff Working Group on Diversity continue to steer our reflections throughout the year and led on this work, particularly in relation to conference preparations. Indeed, the Annual Conference is where many of our diversity initiatives are at their most visible. At all stages of the event, ILGA-Europe are working with inclusion and access for all in mind. Our scholarship (and recently introduced partial scholarship) scheme aims to enable more groups to participate and underrepresented voices at the conference. This year, there are several workshops and spaces that give participants opportunities to talk about the experiences of intersecting aspects of our identities: workshops on the experiences of Roma LGBTQI people, of asylum seekers, sex workers, intersex people, lesbian women, people living with HIV, of bisexuals, of LGBTI people of faith, of LGBTI youth and homelessness. Social activities are also shaped to allow conference participants to relax in the best way for their own wellbeing – including everything from childcare facilities and a quiet room for reflection.

Beyond the conference, we have been strengthening our intersectional approach in our projects and programmes.

To name a few examples: we have increasingly used our small grants programmes to provide support to groups or initiatives that have limited access to financial resources. A key principle of our project on community organising was to develop knowledge and capacity on how to ensure that LGBTI organising work is inclusive and intersectional, that there is ownership of the spaces created and of the agenda, and that organisations are increasingly representative of the needs in the communities. Active support is given to under-represented groups within the LGBTI movements, such as by ensuring participation in trainings and by providing peer learning opportunities. We are also on learning journey when it comes to adopting an intersectional approach in our advocacy work. We strive to: use our platform to create space and to amplify the voices of under-represented groups within LGBTI communities in European policy-making; to continue our long tradition of working in alliances with other organisations and movements (which not only strengthens our messages but allows us to learn and gain new perspectives); to consider the impact of our positions from a wide range of experiences and strengthen our messaging in advocacy with the lived experiences of the diversity of our LGBTI communities in all their aspects.

This said, it is clear to the whole ILGA-Europe staff and board team that much more work in this area remains to be done. We need to continue strengthening our own knowledge and capacity to work on intersectionality, especially strengthening of our own capacity to facilitate and engage in conversations around intersectionality, such as class and privilege. We are determined to learn from and with our members, sharing the growing awareness, knowledge and expertise on intersectionality, so that we have a movement that fully includes everyone.

This reflection, and all the other pieces of ongoing learning mentioned in the report, fed into our **strategic planning process** for the next five years. Over the past six months, the ILGA-Europe team created as many spaces as possible to bring the input from members, Board and staff alike towards developing our new Strategic Framework 2019-2023. Together, we worked on articulating the larger picture and vision, identifying goals for LGBTI movements in Europe

over the next five years, identifying ILGA-Europe's roles in achieving these goals, and articulating ILGA-Europe's specific strategic objectives for the next five years. This was done through two online consultations with members, a two-day Strategic Planning Meeting in Brussels with representatives from 32 member organisations and the ILGA-Europe team, several internal meetings with staff and board. All of it is coming together at the Annual Conference in Brussels, where we hope that our proposed Strategic Framework will receive the full support from the membership.

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 2017-2018 herewith presents a report on its activities from November 2017 till October 2018 to the European Regional Conference.

At the 2017 Regional Conference in Warsaw five Board members were elected: Soudeh Rad was elected for a first term on the board; Vladimir Simonko and Darienne Flemington were re-elected for a second term; Yuri Guaiana

and Micah Grzywnowicz were re-elected for a third term. 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, Anastasia Danilova was elected as a Reserve. She replaced Chaber, who stepped down from the Board in April 2018.

The board convened on six occasions since the 2017 Annual Conference in Warsaw (in third column, number of attendance to meetings per member):

- 4th November 2017 Warsaw
- 1st – 3rd December 2017 Brussels
- 2nd -4th March 2018, Brussels
- 11th – 13th May 2018, Brussels
- 31st August – 2nd September 2018 Brussels
- 24th October 2018 Brussels

Composition of the Board

NAME	POSITION	TERM	TERM SERVED	CURRENT MANDATE ATTENDANCE
Joyce Hamilton	Co- Chair	2016 – 2018	Third	5 meetings
Brian Sheehan	Co-Chair	2016 – 2018	Third	5 meetings
A. Chaber	Treasurer	2016 – April 2018	Second	3 meetings
Costa Gavrielides	Treasurer	2016 – 2018	Second	4 meetings
D. Flemington	Co – Secretary	2017 – 2019	Second	5 meetings
Yuri Guaiana	Co-Secretary	2017 – 2019	Third	5 meetings
Micah Grzywnowicz	Member	2017 -2019	Third	4 Meetings
Soudeh Rad	Member	2017 -2019	First	4 Meetings
Olena Shevchenko	Member	2016 - 2018	First	5 meetings
Vladimir Simonko	Member	2017 - 2019	Second	5 meetings
Anastasia Danilova	Member	April 2018	Reserve placement	3 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 (until April 2018), Vladimir Simonko, Costa Gavrielides, Soudeh Rad
Employment sub-committee	Joyce Hamilton, Brian Sheehan, Darienne Flemington, A. Chaber (until April 2018) , Costa Gavrielides, Vladimir Simonko
Governance sub-committee	Micah Grzywnowicz, Yuri Guaiana, Olena Shevchenko, Darienne Flemington, Anastasia Danilova, Costa Gavrielides (until April 2018)
Diversity Working Group	Micah Grzywnowicz, Darienne Flemington, Costa Gavrielides, Olena Shevchenko, Soudeh Rad
Constitution/Governance working group	Joyce Hamilton, Micah Grzywnowicz, A.Chaber (until April 2018), Darienne Flemington, Costa Gavrielides, Brain Sheehan

II. Overall direction and priorities

One of the main highlights undertaken by the Board was the preparation of the process to formulate the ILGA-Europe’s Strategic Framework 2019 – 2023 as we have been entering the last phase of the current plan’s implementation period (2014 – 2018). The Board designed a process of consultation to actively engage with members on the content and create a space for interactive and constructive exchange. The Board, along with ILGA-Europe staff and representatives from a range of member organisations, met on 1-2 June in Brussels to decide the direction of travel. There were also webinar opportunities for engagement. The result of all this work will be presented to the conference in Brussels for the membership to approve.

III. Organisational management and development

An essential part of the work of the Executive Board is to ensure the continuity of the organisation. This includes resource mobilisation, risk mitigation strategies and sound financial oversight. Over the past year, the Board has had extensive conversations on diversification of funding and resource mobilisation strategies, including institutional and individual donor strategies. Part of those conversations concerned potential financial losses (e.g. co-funding requirements, end of funding, conference) and ways to mitigate those. The Board discussed recommendations by the Auditor in its Management Letter, including

changing the approval of accounts to meet Belgian legal requirements. New financial software and tools that improve long term cash flow management, and produce more adequate budgeting and cost overviews have been introduced.

The Board approved an updated Procurement Policy that included general principles and thresholds for procurement procedures by the organization. Given the increase in re-granting by ILGA-Europe, we continued the thinking on strengthening our re-granting practices, including discussions around the creation of participatory grant-making bodies to guide our re-granting processes.

An important governance issue on the Board agenda was the EU General Data Protection Legislation entering into force from 25 May 2018. A policy was approved and implemented to ensure compliance, privacy is guaranteed and all data are handled with care by ILGA-Europe.

To ensure good governance the Board included at the start of each meeting an internal check for any conflicts of interest, confidentiality or other integrity / governance issues that need to be brought to the attention of the Board. There were three potential conflicts of interest declared and noted in the Minutes, which allowed the Board to ask respective Board members to step out of conversations and decision-making where this could be relevant.

IV. 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, the Board focused on the development of a few policy documents. The Executive

Board continued the discussion and policy development on sex work. The process included consultations and capacity building with the International Committee on the Rights of sex Workers in Europe. In 2018 the Board adopted a position on LGBTI sex workers.

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 an ever-growing organisation.

The Executive Board also started the discussion and policy development on PrEP and surrogacy. The Board developed a process towards the adoption of a position on both topics, which will likely be finalised by both the board and the staff next year.

Finally, 2018 was an important year for the further improvement of Rainbow Europe. Due to the 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.

V. 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. 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. This was particularly true this year as the board had to make difficult choices for the first time in terms of staff employment, because of increasing financial constraints on

the organisation. The Board therefore made the decision to cut one position in the Finance & Administration team during the year, and to leave one position vacant for the time being. This said, there were recruitments this year to replace staff members who left the team. In total, the board has taken part in five recruitment processes since last November (including approving job descriptions, reviewing applications, short-listing and interviewing candidates).

In addition, in its role as a responsible employer, the Board has initiated work to update the Staff manual to bring it further in line with Belgian legal requirements (to be completed in 2019). We are also paying particular attention to strengthening diversity and inclusion across our workplace policies and practices.

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 is updated on a regular basis.

VII. Expanding membership

The staff team have started to work with the Central Asian region covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan who we welcomed to our ILGA-Europe family in 2017. The five Central Asian countries 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 they form part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Former Soviet Union Countries), which have always been part of the European Region of ILGA.

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. This year in Brussels we will have a number of *starred workshops where you, the membership, have the opportunity to help shape the future ILGA Europe Board and influence the governance procedures. We look forward to seeing you there!

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

Focus on diversity

With a growing interest and feedback following the Annual Conference in Athens (2015), the Executive Board prioritised 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 organisation but also to make best use of expertise existing within the staff and board members.

The DWG used to meet once a year, but now meets 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 to enhance preparations of the Annual Conference in general terms, but also to make other activities organised by ILGA-Europe more accessible

– to this end there is now a bespoke Diversity Fund that members and/or individuals can donate to.

The Board members and IE staff who had the task of scholarship selection paid particular attention to those members who fulfilled one or more of a range of diversity characteristics.

In addition, this year we have created the opportunity for prospective Board members to meet the membership in an informal way over 'tea and cake', and offered the opportunity for prospective Board members to deliver their hustings speech via a pre-recorded video link in either Russian or English.

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.

Two Executive Board members attended ILGA-Europe's European Equality Gala in Brussels (Brian Sheehan, Soudeh Rad).

X. Current issues and ongoing work

Based on the resolution to the Cyprus conference (2016) from TGEU, the Board initiated a process of engagement with pan European Experts to establish the levels of understanding amongst the membership as well as to canvass expectations and desires of the membership regarding the makeup of the board.

Broadly speaking TGEU asked the board to look at ways that would make the constitution and standing orders more diverse and inclusive. To this end the Board established a Governance Working group, at the 2016 Cyprus Conference to assess how the European LGBTI movement's diversity is reflected in the Governance of the organisation, such as the Constitution and the Standing Orders, Board composition and how elections are organised, and to propose any suggested changes to members. In addition to that, the Board formulated a simple survey monkey in January 2017 seeking wide views on the composition of the board, and the election process. This was followed up with a supplementary survey monkey in August 2017. Early analysis indicated that the membership needed clarification around the board function and a better understanding of the Governance responsibilities of the Board. To this end we held a Town Hall type workshop in Warsaw, last year, to attract as many interventions and good ideas as possible. During 2018 we continued to reach out to our membership via webinars, a weekend working meeting with pan-European groups and a catch up survey with the membership prior to the IE Board submitting proposals to change the constitution and standing orders of ILGA Europe.

The Board has ensured that there are good links, and open communication with the IE board subcommittee on diversity. They are different roles but may have some cross over and we are mindful that the External Diversity Working Group does not re-inventing the wheel.

The Governance subcommittee has been working on the implications of the ILGA World proposals regarding the replacement of the Secretariats with Committees and made connections with the well-established Pan European organisations that identify with the Secretariats. To this end we have also established a closer working arrangement with the IE representatives on the ILGA World Board.

In order to carry out an efficient program of work, members of the board and IE staff have 'met' via Skype and other mechanisms between meetings as appropriate. This has enhanced our ability to work together, and improved communications. It has been a very busy and productive year.

