



ILGA-Europe and the LGBTI Movement: 20 Years of Pride

by Rebecca Cooper



Introduction & methodology

Since the foundation of ILGA-Europe, the organisation has engaged actively in the struggle to achieve LGBTI equality across Europe and beyond. And although this struggle is ongoing, the organisation's upcoming 20th anniversary gives us a chance to look back at the LGBTI movement throughout these decades - and when we do, we can see there is a lot to celebrate. In 20 short years, ILGA-Europe has evolved from a small group of hardworking volunteers with relatively little European influence, to a fully professionalised NGO and one of the leading actors promoting LGBTI issues in Europe. Perhaps even more important, however, is how, in those 20 short years, a European LGBTI community has been bolstered, creating a space in Europe for both national and institutional changes that support the betterment of the lives of LGBTI people. The following article provides a look into the effect ILGA-Europe has had in the past two decades of the LGBTI movement, influencing institutions and being influenced itself by its member organisations, staff, and volunteers, as well as by the evolving LGBTI situation in Europe.

To write this article, I used two primary methodologies: archival research and interviewing. The research component was executed at the IHLIA archive in Amsterdam. An ILGA-Europe member organisation, IHLIA hosts one of the most prominent collections of LGBT material in Europe, including extensive written and visual archives. IHLIA received ILGA-Europe's archives early this summer, where they were catalogued and stored. The archives contain an eclectic mix of material dating back to the organisation's inception in late 1996; everything from meeting notes and emails, to official conference packages and reports, to financial breakdowns and attendance sheets. To begin the article-writing process, I combed through these archives extensively, noting the key figures in ILGA-Europe's history and the plethora of projects the organisation was involved in. However, it became apparent early on that archival research would not be enough to write an article that captured the spirit of the organisation. The archival research constituted the backbone of the article, but it did not exhibit ILGA-Europe's three-dimensionality.

In the world of the internet, it is easy to access facts and figures; it is rarer to get a human view of the narratives that shaped a history.

I reached out to many people linked intricately to ILGA-Europe throughout the years. There are certainly many people I missed, and within the group I did reach out to, some interviews did not come to fruition. I conducted the interviews primarily over Skype. They were informal and unrecorded; they were not focused around acquiring quantitative information about ILGA-Europe, but rather around the specific perspectives of the people involved and their impressions of how the organisation evolved. By the time of writing the article, I had discussed this with ten people: Kurt Krickler, Nigel Warner, Patricia Prendiville, Maxim Anmeghichean, Björn van Roozendaal, Carola Towle, Darienne Flemington, Yuri Guaiana, and Evelyne Paradis. In addition, I corresponded with Steffen Jensen over email. The discussions were incredibly rewarding, particularly in the way they exposed several vantage points at which the organisation could be viewed. As such, this article is not supposed to reflect one prevailing narrative, but rather exemplify the nuanced ways ILGA-Europe experienced its growth. This article is celebratory not through uncritical praise of ILGA-Europe, but through the admission that ILGA-Europe experienced many necessary trials and tribulations to get to where it is today. The road to achieving its status as a leading and influential European LGBT NGO was long and sometimes bumpy. This is also an ongoing and essentially human process.

Although there were many overlaps in opinion, all of my interviewees said a few things in common. First, every person stressed the importance of collaboration when considering ILGA-Europe's progression. There is no way to attribute any change to one actor; all of the organisation's successes are due to the collaborative process between multiple activists, employees and member organisations. This collaboration is also transcendent of time and space, as all decisions on the part of the organisation are in constant conversation with its own history. Second, every person contextualised ILGA-Europe within a larger European LGBTI movement, which began long before ILGA-Europe, and even ILGA World, were founded. All interviewees emphasised that ILGA-Europe could not have evolved into what it is today without the work already done from various, older organisations and activists. Perhaps this is an apt entry point into examining ILGA-Europe's history.

Before ILGA-Europe

Although ILGA-Europe has existed officially since 1996, the European chapter of the wider ILGA organisation began its advocacy when ILGA (then called IGA) was formed in 1978. It is important to note that while 1996 was a historic year, it was far from the beginning of the European LGBTI movement; the key strides made by activists, working together long before ILGA-Europe was founded formally, paved the way for ILGA-Europe to flourish. Apart from laying the groundwork for the European LGBTI network, much of these strides took shape in the form of extensive lobbying efforts. For example, due to a great extent to the lobbying work done by many activists, including those from IGA and prominently from the Dutch organisation COC Netherlands on 1 October, 1981, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolutions 756 and 924, which urged for the abolishment of homosexuality as a disease classification, and the decriminalisation of homosexual acts alongside the equalisation of the age of consent, respectively. In addition, several IGA activists were instrumental in the success of the legendary *Dudgeon v. United Kingdom* case, delivered later that month by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The ECtHR ruled that criminalisation of sex between men was in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), marking the first time the criminalisation of male homosexuality was successfully challenged before an international rights tribunal.

These institutional triumphs were followed by the European Parliament's Squarcialupi report in 1984, which called attention to sexual discrimination in the workplace; the 1990 meeting between ILGA, Stonewall, and the EU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Mme Vasso Papatandreu, led to the funding by the EU of the ground-breaking report, "Homosexuality: A European Community Issue," published in 1993, and the European Parliament's Roth report on equal rights for gay men and lesbians in the European Community, published in 1994. All of these developments were worked on by ILGA volunteers (the "L" was officially added to the "ILGA" name in 1986). On the judicial side, 1996 saw the hearing of *P.v.S. v. Cornwall Council* in front of the European Court of Justice (ECJ); the Court found that EU law banning sexual discrimination in employment also protects transsexual people. This was the first piece of case law in the world to extend sexual discrimination rights to transsexual individuals.

The above examples serve only as a small portion of the indispensable work done by LGBT activists before the founding of ILGA-Europe. There is a rich history of the LGBTI movement in Europe that could, and should, be delved into more deeply. It is safe to say that without these developments,

particularly at the institutional level, ILGA-Europe would have had a considerably more difficult time getting LGBTI issues recognised throughout its years of operation. It is important that we give the activists who pioneered these institutional milestones the consideration they deserve.

The early years - 1996-1999

ILGA-Europe was founded at the tail end of 1996, during ILGA's 18th international conference in Madrid, Spain. It was decided that ILGA-Europe would act as a regional sector of the wider ILGA organisation, and would base its headquarters in Brussels, operating under Belgian law. ILGA-Europe's work would be carried out by a board of volunteers, who were also elected at the Madrid conference: Mili Hernández (Spain), Steffen Jensen (Denmark), Miluš Kotišová (Czech Republic), Kurt Krickler (Austria), Hannele Lehtikuusi (Finland), Jackie Lewis (United Kingdom), Enric Vilà, (Spain) and Mark Watson (United Kingdom). Kurt and Jackie were chosen as co-chairs of the organisation.

From its inception, ILGA-Europe made clear its goals of representing a unified Europe. Shortly after it was founded, a proposal was made to divide ILGA-Europe into two independent subregions: Western Europe and Eastern Europe. The organisation's founding members, particularly Kurt Krickler, fought hard to ensure that ILGA-Europe would remain as one European-wide organisation. The declaration of unity was solidified at the 1997 ILGA-Europe annual conference in London, UK, where it was confirmed that ILGA-Europe would remain as one European region. This effort marks an early sign of ILGA-Europe's dedication to understanding differences and building alliances across Europe.

Because the organisation was new and was comprised solely of volunteers, it lacked any kind of funding.

There were no official offices and few resources to network with. Often, the board would self-fund trips to conferences and conventions, paying out of pocket and travelling across Europe in a packed car. However, everything changed when the European Commission adopted the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. Article 13 on non-discrimination was of particular significance: after exhaustive lobbying efforts on the part of the ILGA-Europe team and many other activists, "sexual orientation" was included explicitly as a type of discrimination for the first time in the history of EU legislation. Although the Treaty came into full force on 1 May 1999, the decision immediately opened up a wide breadth of opportunities for ILGA-Europe, and the LGBTI movement in Europe as a whole. The mention of sexual orientation in binding legislation meant that the EU institutions were more likely to take a stand against sexual orientation discrimination and be supportive of organisations combatting this discrimination. It is no surprise,

then, that by the end of the year in 1997, ILGA-Europe received its first EU funding from the European Commission, for the project “Equality for lesbians and gay men - a relevant issue in the civil and social dialogue.” As stated on ILGA-Europe’s website, the resulting report “maps the legal and social situation of lesbians and gay men in all 15 EU member states and formulates a series of recommendations to improve this situation.” The report was published in 1998. In 1998, the European Commission also funded the development of ILGA-Europe’s “After Amsterdam: Sexual Orientation and the European Union,” a guide to the implications of the Amsterdam Treaty for gay men and lesbians that focused on the concrete ways they could apply the rights granted from the Treaty to their lives. Available for public consumption once published in 1999, the guide signifies one of the first examples of what has grown to become a strong mode of activism for ILGA-Europe: that of disseminating information and, in doing so, mainstreaming LGBTI concepts.

As ILGA-Europe developed as an organisation, it was able to broaden its networks considerably. For example, ILGA-Europe was one of the founding members of the Social Platform, launched in 1998, which is a platform of European human rights NGOs that promotes human rights for its member organisations. The Social Platform allowed for a more horizontal approach to human rights issues such as non-discrimination. In 1998, ILGA-Europe was awarded consultative status with the Council of Europe (CoE); Nigel Warner and Nicolas Beger were chosen as the ILGA-Europe representatives to the CoE, and were soon making regular visits to Strasbourg during sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly. The CoE has proven to be a key institution for ILGA-Europe in ensuring that the LGBTI community is protected by international human rights standards. This has been solidified strongly through the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the international court that operates within the CoE’s 47 European member states. The ECtHR hears human rights cases and decides whether these cases are in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), an international human rights framework adopted by the CoE. The ECtHR have targeted human rights violations in particular countries, simultaneously setting standards applicable across all the other member states. Although not legally binding, the ECtHR’s decisions possess considerable influence. Resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers have further broadened and consolidated principles established by the ECtHR, which in turn have influenced policy development at the EU. As these involvements illustrate, ILGA-Europe was quick to begin to create partnerships both in institutional and nongovernmental sectors, enabling it to promote issues both horizontally (through other NGOs and member organisations) and vertically (“top down” from

European institutions).

In these first few years of ILGA-Europe, further strides were made under the ECHR towards equality for the European LGB community. In 1997, in *Sutherland v. United Kingdom*, a case initiated by ILGA-Europe member Stonewall, it was found that the UK’s discriminatory age of consent law was in violation of the ECHR. This ruling led to the equalisation of the age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual citizens in the United Kingdom in 2000. In 1999, the ECtHR ruled that limiting custody or visitation rights due to parents’ homosexual orientation was discriminatory and in violation of the ECHR (*Salgueiro da Silva Mouta v. Portugal*), and that the UK ban on LGB people from serving in armed forces was discriminatory and in violation of the ECHR (*Beckett, Grady, Lustig-Prean & Smith v. United Kingdom*). These cases were also initiated by Stonewall. In *A.D.T. v. United Kingdom*, the ECtHR ruled that criminalising group sexual activities in private is discriminatory and violates the ECHR (2000). These cases provided increased recognition toward sexual orientation discrimination and the importance of explicit anti-discrimination measures.

ILGA-Europe’s work with international institutions and NGOs was complemented and supported by its cooperation with its member organisations, most notably through its annual European conferences, which have become a cornerstone of the organisation. In 1998, the conference took place in Linz, Austria, organised by member organisation Homosexuelle Initiative (HOSI) Linz, under the theme “Courage and Joy;” in 1999, it took place in Pisa, Italy, organised by Arcigay Pride!, under the theme “Building Our European Community.” These early conferences proved particularly significant in the shaping of ILGA-Europe to the outward European community, as they provided a space for horizontal networking among member organisations. In addition, the 1998 conference utilised HOSI Linz’s extensive scholarship programmes to host a plethora of Eastern European organisations, reaffirming ILGA Europe’s dedication to representing a diverse LGB European community. However, it was to be some years before ILGA-Europe gained the resources to involve its East European member organisations fully in its activities.

EU funding & professionalisation 2000-2004

The new millennium proved to be a formative time for ILGA-Europe. In 2000 the EU drafted its Charter of Fundamental Rights, whose non-discrimination article included sexual orientation; this was the first international human rights treaty to do so. 2000 was also the year that the Treaty of Amsterdam officially took effect. Provisions under Article 13 led to two new directives: the Race Directive, which covers race discrimination in both employment and goods

and services, and the Employment Directive, which covers employment discrimination in the fields of sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and belief. Although they were met with some criticism regarding the lack of protection for discriminated groups other than race outside of employment, these directives were an important institutional step after the Amsterdam Treaty. In addition, the EU developed a Community action programme to combat discrimination that was meant to operate alongside these directives. As David Paternotte explains in his article, "The NGOisation of LGBT activism: ILGA-Europe and the Treaty of Amsterdam," "The action plan, running from 2001 to 2006, entailed a subsidy scheme, which allowed the Commission to grant substantial funding to ILGA-Europe" (Paternotte 2016).

Indeed, the implementation of the action programme led the European Commission to a call for funding applications; ILGA-Europe submitted an application in April 2000, and in August, the organisation was informed that their request had been accepted. This was a major turning point in ILGA-Europe's trajectory, as it exponentially increased the level of funds the organisation possessed, which meant it gained far more resources to put toward not only its projects at the institutional level, but toward improving its internal structure. After receiving core funding in 2001, ILGA-Europe was able to rent its own office space in Brussels and hire paid employees, the first of whom were Mette Vadstrup and Olivier Collet. Ailsa Spindler became ILGA-Europe's first Executive Director in 2002. Initially, the board of volunteers remained the primary decision-making body of ILGA-Europe, while the newly hired staff members dealt primarily with organisational and communicational matters (Paternotte 2016). Core funding also led to other internal developments, such as the creation of the ILGA-Europe newsletter (now called "Destination>>Equality"), a leaflet introducing the organisation, and a newly refurbished website. These developments provided ILGA-Europe with greater visibility internationally, which strengthened its legitimacy as a leading actor promoting LGB issues in Europe. However, with new changes come new challenges. While very welcome, the EU funding came with restrictions: it could only be spent on EU policy-related initiatives, and within EU countries. Until other funds were raised, ILGA-Europe's scope for supporting its non-EU member organisations remained very limited. But it was not just dependence on EC funding that led ILGA-Europe to prioritise EU-related initiatives during this time: the fledgling organisation was faced with an unprecedented level of opportunities to promote LGBT rights at the EU, including the implementation of the employment directive, negotiations over the Charter for Fundamental Human Rights, the EU enlargement process and its possibilities, the free movement directive, various asylum directives, and the beginnings of the EU constitution debate

all in play. For a small, relatively inexperienced organisation, this was a huge agenda that dominated ILGA-Europe's focus in the early 2000s.

ILGA-Europe began its process of professionalisation after receiving core funding and consequently hiring employees. This professionalisation initiated several structural shifts for the organisation. The role of the board changed, from that of a group of activist volunteers carrying out the work of the organisation, to that of a traditional NGO board, setting out the goals and policies of the organisation and monitoring the work of the staff in implementing these goals and policies. While originally the board of volunteers handled all matters related to ILGA-Europe, funding and the hiring of paid staff meant jobs could be better distributed throughout the organisation. At this stage ILGA-Europe started hiring new employees, including Birgit Hardt, Christine Loudes, Miha Lobnik and Don Bisson.

The necessary structural shifts did not take place overnight - on the contrary, they were lengthy processes that required a great deal of work and dedication from the board, staff, and member organisations. The lack of structural coherence between ILGA-Europe's three sectors (board, staff, members) post-EU funding left the organisation with substantial difficulties, in areas including scheduling, organising, and planning, because there was no formal reallocation of jobs and resources as the organisation grew. In response to these issues, a board manual was developed, setting out the role and responsibilities of board members, the role of co-chairpersons in relation to the Executive Director, and establishing a board member as line manager for the Executive Director. Key organisational policies, on employment for example, were developed. The changes led to several new employees being hired in 2004-2005, including Patricia Prendiville as executive director, Evelyne Paradis as policy officer, Juris Lavrikovs as communications and information officer, and Maxim Anmeghichean as the director for East Europe, the Council of Europe, and transgender programmes. Before 2004, ILGA-Europe created its agenda - then called the "Work Programme" - on a yearly basis, culminating in an annual report. However, this led often to goals of an unrealistic scope, along with a lack of long-term reflection or planning. The board continued to hold the most considerable amount of influence, and there was confusion among member organisations about their role and the avenues through which they could get their issues heard. This resulted in the impression that representation on the board was the best way for a member organisation to gain consideration, and as such fostered feelings of resentment in member organisations that were not represented on the board. In order to attend to these issues, in 2004 ILGA-Europe began developing its first three-year strategic plan, which

considered input from every corner of the organisation. The staff involved created surveys that were sent to member organisations to evaluate their concerns and coordinated peer group workshops in which the staff and board discussed how they could strengthen the organisation.

As mentioned, the implementation of the first strategic plan signified a shift from a one-year cycle to a three-year cycle, with emphasis placed on thematic learning and understanding. Instead of a working plan that catered to the issues of specific member organisations, ILGA-Europe decided on overarching themes in an attempt to encourage collaboration, reflexivity, and to dismantle membership hierarchies. These themes served as a unifying force, as they showed member organisations commonalities within the kinds of human rights issues they dealt with, while remaining broad enough to be attentive to the unique ways these issues manifest themselves in different locations and spaces. Instead of a configuration where ILGA-Europe responded to member organisations in a closed-circuit fashion, the strategic plan opened up the modes of advocacy and the avenues through which member organisations could be heard. The strategic plan was also realistic, and as such could show member organisations what ILGA-Europe could reasonably accomplish within a given timeframe. In addition, the strategic plan provided a clear delineation of roles between the board, staff, and member organisations, which diminished confusion regarding responsibilities and promoted ways to work together.

An example of these observations can be seen when examining the first Strategic Plan, for the cycle 2005-2008. The plan lays out six strategic objectives: increased recognition of fundamental human rights; working towards full integration in the labour market; working towards full social inclusion, particularly with regard to access to goods and services; increased recognition of the diversity of family relationships; strengthened capacity of member organisations; and strengthened capacity of ILGA-Europe to achieve its mission. After stating these objectives, the plan lists “Over-arching approaches to achieving strategic objectives,” which includes, “Creating links between strategic objectives.” This stresses the importance of making connections between issues to find creative and collaborative solutions. The following page of the plan lists the strategies ILGA-Europe would use to achieve the objectives; it cites things like “awareness raising,” “lobbying,” and “capacity development.” Making strategies explicit clarifies what ILGA-Europe can do when dealing with a given issue, which is important information for member organisations. Later strategic plans, beginning in the 2008-2011 cycle, include diagrams of ILGA-Europe’s governance and organisational structures, which only furthers

the organisation’s transparency and ability to illuminate the particular roles required for its cohesion.

The strategic plan was also innovative for its uniquely reflexive approach. The plan stated that ILGA-Europe was to continue publishing its annual reports, now as a means of reflecting on the year and re-evaluating the organisation’s goals. The staff who implemented the plan, most notably Patricia Prendiville, pushed the board to consider its own structure and pinpoint where work needed to be done internally. This resulted in the current staff configuration, with four “teams” (programmes, advocacy, communications, and finance) that work jointly with the board and members to accomplish their goals. The strategic plan encouraged ample feedback, which was carried out internally through ILGA-Europe meetings, and externally through the annual conferences, which provided a space to gauge what thematic issues the organisation should attend to and, in this sense, give member organisations ownership over their concerns and how those concerns are incorporated into the wider ILGA-Europe agenda.

Integrating the strategic plan into common practice at ILGA-Europe was not easy. As with all major structural changes, the strategic plan was met with some resistance and its implementation proved to be rocky at first. This is due to a variety of factors, but can be boiled down to the natural “growing pains” of an expanding organisation. The reallocation of tasks through the strategic plan meant those working with and for ILGA-Europe had to reconceptualise their place in the organisation. The strategic plan made ILGA-Europe a unified whole whose parts must continuously interact in order for the organisation to run soundly; this process requires time and patience. Because the plan and those pushing it supported increased reflection and collaboration, the steps to mediate conflicts due to the plan’s implementation were clear. Patricia Prendiville ran focus groups in which people were able to not only voice their frustrations, but remind themselves of the aspects of ILGA-Europe they were proud of.

The shift to the strategic plan also greatly affected the annual ILGA-Europe conferences. Towards the middle of the decade they had become contentious, with divisions particularly on the line between West European, “old” EU countries, and Central, Eastern, and Southeast European countries. This particular division had a number of causes, including the overwhelming focus on EU issues in ILGA-Europe’s early years, the lack of funding for work outside the EU, and the fact that these countries were underrepresented on the board. This lack of representation was in turn due on the one hand to inadequate funding for conference scholarships leading to the presence of relatively few delegates from these countries, and on the other to ILGA-Europe’s propensity for the membership

to elect individuals long involved with the organisation, rather than relatively unknown newcomers.

The inclusive nature of the strategic planning process, increased funding, EU enlargement in 2004, and the emergence of more experienced and better resourced member organisations throughout Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe were important factors in healing this divide.

EU enlargement - 2004

Beginning in the mid-90s, a major change in the makeup of the EU was beginning to take shape as many countries in Eastern Europe began applying for accession. Homosexuality was still a crime in some of these countries, and even more had discrimination in particular aspects of the criminal law, such as the age of consent. ILGA-Europe was hyper-cognisant of this fact, and from as early as 1998 the organisation fought to ensure that the rights of LGBT people would be protected throughout the accession process, working closely with the European Parliament (EP) Intergroup. In September of that year, ILGA-Europe's lobbying campaign led to the adoption of a landmark resolution in which the EP stated that it would "not give its consent to the accession of any country that, through its legislation or policies, violates the human rights of lesbians and gay men." The resolution also urged all applicant countries to repeal any legislation discriminating against lesbians and gay men and called on the European Commission to take the human rights of lesbians and gay men (naming the six countries which had such legislation - Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, and Romania) into consideration when negotiating the accession of applicant countries.

Although the adoption of this resolution constituted a huge success, the fight was not over. In particular, the European Commission remained uncommitted on the topic. ILGA-Europe continued in their campaign for the rights of LGBT people in the candidate countries by publishing several reports, the first of which examined the situation for LGBT communities in all candidate countries, published in 2001, under the title "Equality for Lesbians and Gay Men: A Relevant Issue in the EU Accession Process." In addition, in 2001 ILGA-Europe coordinated extensive research projects on sexual orientation discrimination in Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia, which were carried out by member organisations Háttér Baráti Társaság a Melegekért in Budapest, Lambda Warszawa in Warsaw, ACCEPT in Bucharest, and S'KUC-LL in Ljubljana, and was funded by the Open Societies Institute in Budapest. These projects' results were presented at a hearing in the European Parliament called "EU Enlargement: A Gay Perspective," attended by a representative of the

EU Enlargement Commissioner, Gunter Verheugen. In a subsequent letter to ILGA-Europe, he confirmed that the "principle of elimination of discriminations due to sexual orientation" was among those "that new Member States will be expected to accept upon accession." Due to these various efforts, by the end of the year in 2002, all six accession countries in question had repealed the discriminatory provisions in their criminal laws, progress which could have taken much longer to achieve through campaigning at the national level.

It was decided through the Treaty of Accession (2003) that ten countries would be accepted into the European Union: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Though Bulgaria and Romania had applied, it was determined that the situations of those countries did not meet the EU criteria for accession. As a means of continuing to empower these nations, in 2004 ILGA-Europe and COC Nederland co-sponsored the "Preventing and combating discrimination" capacity-building conference in Sofia for Romanian and Bulgarian NGOs, organised by Bulgarian Gay Organisation (BGO) Gemini. The 2004 EU enlargement brought increased attention not only to the accepted acceding countries, but to the human rights concerns of the wider Eastern European region. Though ILGA-Europe aided in many legal victories regarding acceding countries, these legal battles in conjunction with the dissatisfaction of member organisations from the Western Balkans and former Soviet Union highlighted the importance of recognising the specific needs of organisations from these areas. Enlargement held the realisation that people must learn to address and accept difference and diversity within and beyond the EU if they wish to achieve a supportive, more united European community.

Recognising needs: Eastern Europe

As already noted, while EU funding provided ILGA-Europe with a significant influx of resources, the absence of funding from other sources also limited their latitude for action in countries outside the EU, and regarding issues the EU had not yet formally recognised, such as trans issues. While working at the institutional level with the EU and its affiliated institutions is important, ILGA-Europe does not just aim to recognise the human rights of LGBTI people in a legal setting within the EU's 28 member states, but in all avenues of life within the entirety of the European region. Two endeavours enabled it to mitigate the EU focus, and develop a representative and inclusive approach: its work at the Council of Europe (CoE), and the pursuit of funding for projects outside of the EU. As mentioned earlier, 47 European states are members of

the CoE, in contrast with the EU's current 28. The CoE also holds a considerable amount of influence over its member states, particularly through the ECtHR. ILGA-Europe was granted participatory status at the CoE in 1998, a relationship which has strengthened as ILGA-Europe expanded and professionalised.

ILGA-Europe received its first substantial non-EU funding from the Sigrud Rausing Trust in 2003 and was granted funding for a project from the Open Society Institute (OSI) in 2004. These new funders allowed ILGA-Europe to begin placing greater emphasis on projects outside of the institutional realm during this time period, prompted not only by the new modes of funding, but by the more accommodating strategic plan. Throughout ILGA-Europe's history, there has been a strong desire to represent a unified and inclusive Europe. However, this was not always reflected in practice. Well-resourced Western organisations were able to influence institutions and ILGA-Europe itself in ways Eastern organisations were less equipped to do, even after the strategic plan attempted to level the playing field. ILGA-Europe's staff and board noted this continued disparity.

One way ILGA-Europe attempted to attend to this issue was through their conference scholarship programme, in which organisations without the resources can apply to attend the European conference that year, sponsored by ILGA-Europe. Sometimes, the applying organisations include some of the most prominent in their respective countries, as many are operated by volunteers. The scholarship programme has improved the level of representation at conferences; the team working on scholarships at ILGA-Europe works hard to sponsor a diverse set of applicants, both those who are the "authority" in their country and newcomers. Still, the scholarship has its limitations: in attempting to give the most people a chance to get to the conference, it remains difficult to give certain organisations repeated scholarships.

This means they may not get to have a continued presence at conferences, which is important for getting issues heard.

Another reason that there was such a dissonance between the Eastern and Western European LGBT organisations within ILGA-Europe was because of the differences in how the regions conducted their advocacy. While many of the prominent Western LGBT organisations were founded in the mid-20th century, the majority of the Eastern LGBT organisations emerged in the very late 1990s and early 2000s.

These young organisations were also run by young activists, who had different conceptions of advocacy not only due to regional difference, but due to generational difference. Well-established Western organisations have well-established and deeply ingrained modes of advocacy; on the contrary,

younger Eastern organisations came with a fresh perspective and unique ideas regarding how to deal with their specific human rights issues. In order to heighten attention to Eastern Europe's specific needs and empower the organisations there, ILGA-Europe began several projects starting in 2004. That year, backed by their new funder OSI, ILGA-Europe was able to carry out the project, "Integration of LGBT health issues into state health policy in Central and Eastern Europe," which was the first substantial funding the organisation received for a project focusing on these regions. ILGA-Europe also made capacity building in the former Soviet Union and Western Balkans a priority from 2004-2007, increasing the number of seminars and workshops in the area, on topics such as human rights monitoring, human rights documentation, and fundraising. ILGA-Europe also conducted capacity building workshops regarding the EU institutions so that countries could take an active part in institutional processes that were historically closed off to them.

In 2004, ILGA-Europe lent support to the logistics of the fifth regional meeting of the South-East European Queer (SEE Q) Network, which took place in Macedonia. This was significant because it displayed a growing network within Eastern and South-Eastern Europe itself, connecting communities. By 2006, ILGA-Europe was able to launch its three-year project, "Take Action! United Against LGBT Discrimination in Eastern Europe," its first project exclusively for member organisations in the Western Balkans and former Soviet Union. Also in 2006, ILGA-Europe became a joint partner in the five-year project, "Prevention and Empowerment in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)," known under the acronym "PRECIS," with COC Netherlands and the Moldovan organisation GENDERDOC-M. PRECIS aimed at combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs among LGBT communities via capacity building with LGBT organisations in the CIS, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Since 2007, ILGA-Europe has done a lot of crucial work in order to provide support to Eastern and Southeastern European LGBTI communities. In 2008, ILGA-Europe co-sponsored the conference "Different Families, Same Rights?" in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which resulted in two significant ILGA-Europe publications on the topic of family. In 2009, ILGA-Europe organised a fact-finding and needs-identification mission to the Western Balkan countries of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. That same year, ILGA-Europe published the report "Forced Out: LGBT People in Armenia." Additionally, ILGA-Europe began to place direct focus on Russia, whose LGBTI needs were distanced from ILGA-Europe due to accessibility issues, for example language barriers (ILGA-Europe conferences are conducted in English). In 2009,

ILGA-Europe launched the project “Enhancing pluralism and combatting discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Russia” known as “EIDHR Russia,” in which ILGA-Europe worked with Russian LGBT groups to identify their specific needs and conduct capacity building in the area. ILGA-Europe also contributed to the training conference “Health and Human Rights,” organised by OSI, by facilitating a session on sexual health and rights for health and human rights professionals from the former USSR.

2010 and 2011 proved to be fruitful years for advocacy in the Eastern European region. For example, ILGA-Europe launched its new project, “Step Up! Stronger LGBT movements for equality in the Western Balkans,” which ran for three years, supported by the Open Society Institute and the European Commission. Within the framework of this project, ILGA-Europe conducted training in Belgrade, Serbia, on human rights monitoring and advocacy. In addition, ILGA-Europe organised a study visit to the CoE for nine activists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, who were partners in the PRECIS and EDIHR projects. ILGA-Europe was able to organise several of these study visits and training workshops during 2011, including a study visit to the CoE for six LGBT human rights defenders from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia; a training on “Human Rights Violations Documentation and Advocacy” with the representatives from Juventas and LGBT Forum Progress, two organisations working on LGBT issues in Montenegro; and another study visit to the EU institutions plus a training workshop on strategic litigation for nine LGBT human rights defenders from the Western Balkans and Turkey.

These visits and trainings were extremely productive, as they not only gave activists and human rights defenders access to European institutions that they may not have had access to otherwise - they also equipped these people with the skills to influence them.

ILGA-Europe’s projects in the Western Balkans, former Soviet Union, and CIS proved advantageous to the coherence of the European LGBTI movement. The long-term nature of these projects meant ILGA-Europe developed ongoing partnerships with the organisations involved. ILGA-Europe and the organisations were able to engage in a symbiotic learning process in which organisations acquired important operational skills from ILGA-Europe, while ILGA-Europe learned about different modes of activism and particular issues from the organisations. In turn, this enabled ILGA-Europe to tailor capacity building workshops towards the specific needs of different regions and places. This can be seen through the shifting role of capacity building. Earlier, capacity building endeavours were focused primarily through an organisational lens - in other words, workshops usually centered around on

strengthening skills relating to the governance and structure of organisations, emphasising ways to efficiently run an LGBT activist organisation. However, as Eastern European organisations grew and developed, their needs changed as well. Now, capacity building in the area focuses on movement building: strengthening communication, building message frameworks, campaigning, community mobilisation, and community organising. This is particularly important in countries where LGBT rights are less widely recognised, as this means the movement is less visible and less accessible to the public.

Recent years have also seen ILGA-Europe putting increased legal pressure on Eastern European countries with discriminatory laws against LGBTI people in all arenas. For example, in 2014, with the input of ILGA-Europe, the European Parliament adopted a resolution criticising Russia’s federal ‘anti-propaganda’ law and its law on foreign agents. In March of 2015, Transgender Europe and ILGA-Europe filed a collective complaint against the Czech Republic before the European Committee of Social Rights, challenging the requirement for trans persons to undergo sterilisation to obtain legal gender recognition.

Another way ILGA-Europe worked (and continues to work) to empower LGBTI organisations and communities in the movement is through their Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund, which was launched in 2006. The Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund, now called the Documentation and Advocacy Fund, was ILGA-Europe’s first regranting programme, and serves to provide small grants to applicant organisations, given to provide capacity building in skills such as documenting human rights violations. An important advocacy tool to all LGBTI communities, human rights violations documentation is particularly crucial in Eastern and South-Eastern European countries where underreporting is prevalent. As stated on the current ILGA-Europe website, the grants organisations receive “help to document (cases of) discrimination, hate crimes and other human rights violations committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, as well as dissemination of the documented information.”

The choice to move ILGA-Europe into the role of funder was largely contested amongst the board. Some board members were concerned that becoming a funder would alter ILGA-Europe’s relationship with its member organisations on a fundamental level. Becoming a funder, even for small to medium-sized grants, also changes the organisation’s capacities and, as such, part of its identity. When put to a vote, the Human Rights Fund was approved 4-3. As time has shown, the Fund was a huge success; currently ILGA-Europe runs three funding programmes, including the Documentation Fund, the

Creating Opportunities programme, and the Allies in Action programme. In addition, it accepts certain grant requests on a case-by-case basis. Much of an organisation's success is dictated by the resources it obtains; while capacity building is an indispensable part of ILGA-Europe's work, ILGA-Europe can only successfully build those capacities if the organisation also has the means to foster them. In this sense, ILGA-Europe only provides grants to organisations where the support will contribute to the work already being done within a country. The small regrating process was beneficial to Eastern and Southeastern European organisations, as mentioned, but was also beneficial to other groups, such as trans organisations.

Recognising needs: Trans inclusion

Many people say that ILGA World (and, by extension, ILGA-Europe) went from a "G, to an LG, to an LGB, to an LGBT, to an LGBTI" organisation. Indeed, processes of inclusion took place gradually over the history of these organisations. The delay of certain groups' inclusion is due to a multitude of factors, which differ to some extent from group to group. In the case of the trans community, these factors included misconceptions and negative attitudes about trans people within the LGB community, a lack of knowledge about their needs, a lack of consensus within the trans community on objectives, and a lack of resources to facilitate action. As such, it was a long road to full trans inclusion within ILGA-Europe. The organisation had aspirations from its inception to address gender identity issues; for example, this was reflected in the attempts to get "gender identity" recognised alongside "sexual orientation" when lobbying for the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. This attempt, among many others, proved unsuccessful, and uncovered the need to more explicitly take on trans issues. Additionally, there became the issue of the acronym: ILGA-Europe was using "LGBT" in official documents as early as 2000, but this did not mean all letters were getting equal attention. If anything, transgender rights remained less visible, as they were typically lumped with LGB issues when the reality is that trans issues are often quite different than sexual orientation issues. ILGA-Europe realised this, and as a result the Trans Working Group was formed in 2003 to focus specifically on trans issues. Working groups are one of the crucial first steps ILGA-Europe takes to inform their actions on a given issue. Working groups are comprised of people with intimate knowledge of whatever is being addressed; in the case of the Trans Working Group, it contained trans activists, those knowledgeable in trans legislation, members from organisations focusing on trans issues, and the like. The Working Group was able to collaborate on the best ways to educate the wider organisation (staff, board) about trans lives, livelihoods, and concerns - plus ways to approach them. This internal education is necessary if outward change is desired;

it stems from notions of self-empowerment and creates solutions that listen first and foremost to the voices who are most affected.

Trans issues began taking an even more central role in ILGA-Europe's agenda with the foundation of Transgender Europe (TGEU) in 2005, which ILGA-Europe helped fund (thus displaying an example of the effectiveness of the regrating programme). TGEU is a member-based organisation that works specifically for trans rights across Europe. While the creation of TGEU was underway and ILGA-Europe was working to develop its own trans platform, ILGA-Europe had many important and challenging conversations with trans activists regarding how to go about these processes. Every activist has an individual conception of their movement and how they engage with it - this means that different voices may have differing ideas regarding which direction is best for an organisation or movement. However, instead of shying away from these difficult debates, ILGA-Europe embraced them as learning opportunities and points of growth.

One member of the board at ILGA-Europe who played a key role in putting trans issues on the agenda was Nicolas Beger. His insistence on trans rights, together with his openness about his experiences, did much to raise awareness amongst fellow board members. Another member who was instrumental to integrating trans issues into the agenda was Deborah Lambillotte. A prominent trans activist in Belgium (through organisations like Cavaria) and beyond, Deborah served on the board at ILGA-Europe starting in 2003, and was elected co-chair in 2005. It was through her continuous support and attention to trans issues that ILGA-Europe was able to make such strides during this time. She stayed on the board through 2010, and afterward remained intimately linked with ILGA-Europe. Her colleagues describe her with the utmost fondness; they stress that Deborah was one of the most caring souls they knew. Evelyne Paradis explains that she was "over the anger" that came with the insurmountable injustices trans individuals face every day, and instead focused on reaching out to others with a great deal of kindness and understanding. Deborah got things done by not only fighting hard for what she believed in, but by making deep, lasting human connections with others. Deborah passed away this July, and the trans community lost an inspiring, influential voice.

As a result of the hard and challenging work done by the staff and board at ILGA-Europe, TGEU, and trans-specific member organisations, ILGA-Europe was able to incorporate trans issues into its platform fully by 2008. This inclusion has taken many different shapes. One way ILGA-Europe was able to manifest this was by ensuring that trans issues were equally represented in LGBT presentations and reports by ILGA-Europe - for example, this can be seen in the 2008

publications, “Different Families, Same Rights?” which focus not only on the rights and recognition of gay and lesbian families, but give considerable attention to trans families as well. However, beyond this level of trans integration, ILGA-Europe dedicated projects specifically to the trans cause, such as the “Transgender Euro Study: Legal Survey and Focus on the Transgender Experience of Healthcare,” which was published in 2008 and highlighted the unfair conditions trans people are subject to within the healthcare system due to the ongoing pathologisation of the trans identity. ILGA-Europe also conducted capacity building workshops, in Western and Eastern Europe, that focused on trans identities and the importance of trans issues.

Many institutional strides were made in the area of trans rights as well during this time period. In 2007, the ECtHR heard the case *L v. Lithuania*; Lithuanian laws for gender reassignment surgery and changes to legal gender identity were incongruent and could not accommodate transgender persons effectively. The court ruled that the failure to introduce implementing legislation to enable a trans person to undergo gender reassignment surgery and change their gender identification in official documents violated the ECHR. Although ILGA-Europe was not directly involved in this case, it worked to enforce its application. The case constituted a huge victory in trans rights, as it acknowledged gender identity legislation as a basic human right. Furthering this progress, in 2009 CoE Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg published the “Issue Paper: Human Rights and Gender Identity,” to which ILGA-Europe made substantial input. This was a groundbreaking paper for its explicit and sole focus on gender identity in multiple avenues of life including legislation, healthcare, employment, family, and safety, illuminating its deeply encompassing importance as a European human rights issue. The influence of the issue paper was clear: by the following year, CoE institutions adopted two further resolutions in which gender identity issues, and to which ILGA-Europe made extensive input: the Parliamentary Assembly’s “Resolution on Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity,” and the Committee of Ministers’ “Resolution on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.” The former addressed all the major issues of discrimination against LGBT people and encouraged the 47 member states of the Council of Europe to take steps to fight such discrimination. The latter went a step further, setting out the agreed position on the ways in which European human rights law protects the rights of LGBT people across the whole range of issues where discrimination is involved, and the specific measures which they should take to combat this discrimination. Although not legally binding, this was the world’s first comprehensive intergovernmental agreement on LGBT rights. In 2011, the CoE

adopted the “Violence Against Women convention;” ILGA-Europe fought to get sexual orientation and gender identity aspects included.

They were successful: the Violence Against Women (or Istanbul) convention was the first legally binding international convention to mention gender identity. The most recent contribution to trans advocacy by the CoE was in 2015, when its Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution “Discrimination against transgender people in Europe,” calling for the abolition of the legal requirement of sterilisation and other compulsory medical treatment in laws regulating the procedure for changing a name and registered gender. Although there is still no explicit mention of gender identity or expression in any binding, overarching EU human rights legislation, there has been mention within specific directives. For example, the Asylum Qualification Directive, enacted by the European Commission in 2004, dictated that persons from third countries could qualify for asylum for having a well-founded fear of persecution on the ground of their sexual orientation; the directive was redrafted in 2011, and this time included gender identity persecution as a grounds to seek asylum, which was a huge step forward. In 2012, the EU enacted the Victims’ Rights Directive, which provides protection and support for people who are the victims of crime, calling particular attention to discrimination based on gender identity. Due in part to lobbying by ILGA-Europe, this constitutes the first binding EU legislation for citizens in member states that recognises gender identity as a grounds of discrimination. That year, the EU also published its report “Trans and intersex people -- Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression,” which was the first report of its kind to be written by an international institution.

ILGA-Europe continues to fight for trans rights today, alongside TGEU and a plethora of member organisations. It accomplishes this in a variety of ways, including working together with member organisations to call out the many governments that pathologise trans identities or impose abusive preconditions such as sterilisation for legal gender recognition trans individuals, conducting studies on trans experiences throughout Europe, and participating in continued lobbying efforts. ILGA-Europe remains dedicated to strengthening trans visibility, achieving trans rights victories, and empowering trans communities throughout Europe.

Recognising needs: Intersex inclusion

The intersex platform found inclusion at ILGA-Europe through a very different route than the trans platform. Due to an increased level of advocacy and pressure from other sectors of ILGA World, it was declared at the ILGA World conference

at the end of 2007 that intersex issues must be added to the agendas of all ILGA regions. This meant that the inclusion had a much more clear-cut beginning: “intersex” was added to ILGA-Europe’s mission statements in 2008. However, this implementation came with its own difficulties. Although there were intersex activists in Europe, ILGA-Europe had not been asked to take part in their issues. Because of this, the staff and board at ILGA-Europe knew very little of concerns to the intersex community, let alone whether those who are a part of it wanted ILGA-Europe’s aid in their endeavours. To develop knowledge on intersex identities and needs, ILGA-Europe sought out intersex activists and those knowledgeable on the subject, adopting practices similar to the method used to learn more about trans issues. As with any identity-based community, there are divisions about how intersex individuals want to view their identities. While some embrace a human rights framework, others view their intersex status solely as a medical issue. In order to remain respectful of everyone involved, ILGA-Europe resolved to work with those who were receptive without implicating any intersex person who had non-social conceptions of their identity.

Since intersex was included into the ILGA-Europe agenda, the organisation has worked together with the organisation Intersex International Europe (OII Europe) and others to achieve many important strides regarding rights and recognition for intersex individuals. In 2011, ILGA-Europe co-organised the first intersex forum, which has met on a yearly basis since then. The first forum met in Brussels between 3 and 5 September 2011, bringing together 24 activists representing 17 intersex organisations, from all continents. The forum serves as a space where intersex activists can discuss intersex rights concerns, and emerge as a united front against a plethora of intersex issues, including “normalising” medical procedures, infanticide, non-consensual sterilisation, and the pathologisation of intersex individuals. The forum promotes awareness and support surrounding those born intersex, and the flexibility of gender identification legislation to reflect the intersex individual’s personal self-conception.

As seen regarding a multitude of social justice issues, the CoE has been active in supporting the rights of intersex people in collaboration with ILGA-Europe. In 2013, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution, “Children’s right to physical integrity,” which touched upon the rights of intersex persons, particularly in relation to early childhood medical interventions. In 2014, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement expressing concern at intersex people’s lack of recognition, urging governments to take necessary action to address their problems. In the EU institutions, intersex recognition has also been increasing. As mentioned above, the 2012 EU report

“Trans and intersex people -- Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression” made history for its inclusion of intersex discrimination.

In 2015, the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency launched its focus paper, “The fundamental rights situation of intersex people,” highlighting the human rights violations intersex people still suffer in Europe. The Fundamental Rights Agency collects and analyses data relating to human rights offenses as they pertain to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The choice to include intersex is a huge step, as it indicates that the rights of the intersex community are implicit in the Charter.

Recognition of and attention to the rights of the intersex community continues to expand each year, both at ILGA-Europe and institutionally. Every year, ILGA-Europe sees greater intersex representation at conferences, an increased amount of workshops pertaining to intersex issues, and places increased importance on the rights highlighted at the forum. At the international level, intersex persons and their specific concerns are given more and more consideration.

Looking forward: Rainbow Europe, themes, and human rights

When considering which contributions to the European LGBTI movement from ILGA-Europe have made the most prominent impact, it is important to mention the Rainbow Europe Map. Since its launch in 2009, the Rainbow Europe Map has become arguably ILGA-Europe’s most well-known project. Each year, ILGA-Europe evaluates all of the European countries based on their levels of LGBTI equality legislation, then colour-codes them based on their scores and releases a map with the findings. This has proven to be a great tool in ensuring representation across Europe, as it shows tangibly that ILGA-Europe calls attention to the situations in all European countries. However, the Map has also been quite telling when considering the development of the criteria it evaluates.

In 2009, when the map was launched, it assessed the legal situation in Europe for LGB rights only. In other words, a country’s score was only determined by its laws (or lack thereof) concerning sexual orientation discrimination and/or equality. Considering ILGA-Europe’s dedication to trans and intersex issues alongside LGB issues, early iterations of the Rainbow Map and Index presented a decidedly incomplete picture of the European situation. By 2011, trans rights were included in the evaluation criteria, and by 2012, both trans and intersex issues were considered.

The addition of trans and intersex issues to the Rainbow Europe Map influenced countries’ overall equality scores, some considerably and perhaps surprisingly. For instance, some West European countries that scored highly when only LGB

rights were considered saw fairly significant drops in their scores once trans and intersex issues were included, such as the Netherlands. By the same token, some countries that scored lower previously had higher scores due to their trans or intersex laws, such as Malta. Currently, steps are taken to reflect more actively on the actual implementation of laws and policies as well, to more realistically reflect the realities in which LGBTI people live. These shifts show how conceptions of “progress” shift throughout space and time and, as such, support a more nuanced and nonlinear approach to LGBTI activism.

As the evolution of the Rainbow Europe Map and Index suggests, there is always more to work on, and more to consider, in the fight for LGBTI equality. As movements evolve and adapt to an ever-changing European socio-political landscape, activists and activist organisations must also shift to accommodate them. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan, one of the primary ways ILGA-Europe has recognised issues is through the definition of specific themes toward which attention to LGBTI issues must be brought. Some of these themes have remained at the forefront of ILGA-Europe’s concerns for well over a decade, including LGBTI families and free movement, the recognition and enforcement of fundamental rights (such as freedom of assembly), and the documentation of human rights violations.

Other themes have been introduced throughout the years, such as education, health, LGBTI youth, and foreign policy.

In the past few years, there has been a particularly strong push toward a greater recognition of diversity, in ILGA-Europe’s staff, its board, and in its member organisations. For example, the recognition of intersectionality (also called “multiple discrimination”) has become an important component in understanding the importance of diversity. An LGBTI person is not solely defined by their status as such - on the contrary, the LGBTI community is defined by a deeply diverse group of people. It is important to acknowledge that discrimination manifests in multiple ways. This means that full acknowledgement of the LGBTI community is only achieved when considering its intersections with race, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, and beyond. Better understandings can be materialised by the presence of a diverse group of people, for example at annual conferences, who can speak toward their specific experiences with systemic discrimination, particularly when their voices are likely to be drowned out by those with a greater level of privilege. This also necessitates a more complex understanding of discrimination and the way it looks in different places; for example, discrimination against the Romani population is a significant issue in Eastern European countries - perhaps, to an activist from a country where this discrimination is less known, the significance of

Romani attendees at an ILGA-Europe conference will also go unnoticed. This is why it is important to be explicit about these issues and listen to the voices of a diverse group of LGBTI people.

Looking toward the future, ILGA-Europe remains open to understanding new and changing perspectives surrounding the European LGBTI situation. In the future, new themes and areas of focus will undoubtedly take shape. As ILGA-Europe continues to evolve, it will engage in the necessary process of redefinition. Its role as a human rights supporter must be reflected upon, especially as the needs of the LGBTI community broaden with increased rights in some countries. It has been a long and fruitful twenty years for ILGA-Europe. Although it was a challenging process, ILGA-Europe has managed to emerge as a fully developed NGO, a granter in its own right, and a highly respected voice in European LGBTI issues. Here is to another incredible 20 years, of growth, learning, and teamwork!

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