

# EURO-LETTER

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**Editor:** Juris Lavrikovs

**Contact us:** [euroletter@ilga-europe.org](mailto:euroletter@ilga-europe.org)

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**Previous issues:** all previous Euro-Letters in English as well as the German and Portuguese translations from No.76, January 2000 and Greek translation from No 127, January 2006 are available in pdf format on our website: [www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro\\_letter](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro_letter)

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- **the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Front** for the German translations of the Euro-Letter which are also available on their website: [www.lglf.de](http://www.lglf.de);
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- **Pantelis Ravidas** – for the Greek translations.

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

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# ILGA-EUROPE:

## Register for ILGA-Europe conference, 26-29 October, Sofia

*by ILGA-Europe*

Registration for our conference opened last July, now you can also register for the conference on-line:

[www.ilga-europe.org/conference](http://www.ilga-europe.org/conference).

You can also access the second mailing documents which were sent out on 16 August on our conference site:

[www.ilga-europe.org/conference](http://www.ilga-europe.org/conference).

## ILGA-Europe Pilot Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund

*by Maxim Anmeghichean*

ILGA-Europe announces second call for proposals within its Small Pilot Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund with support of the Sigrid Rausing Trust. The goal of the fund is to promote documentation of cases of discrimination, hate crimes and other human rights violations against LGBT people according to the international human rights standards.

### **Second call for proposals. Deadline: 31 October 2006**

The small pilot fund will support small-scale projects (up to 2,000 euros) intended to document (cases of) discrimination, hate crimes and other human rights violations committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

### **Priority areas:**

- hate crimes and hate speech (including in media)
- brutalities of law-enforcement authorities
- legal position of LGBT people in an eligible country
- freedom of assembly and association

The information contained in the documentation reports will subsequently be used by ILGA-Europe in its lobbying activities with the European institutions: European Union, Council of Europe and the OSCE.

For more information and application form please visit our website: [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

## ILGA-Europe & IGLYO launch Report on Gay Youth at European Parliament

*ILGA-Europe media release, 14 September 2006*

On 13 September 2006, ILGA-Europe and the International Gay Lesbian Youth Organisation (IGLYO), with the support of Ms. Sophie in't Veld, MEP, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights, and Mr. Proinsias De Rossa, MEP, are officially launching their report on "Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe" at the European Parliament.

On this occasion, ILGA-Europe and IGLYO will present the results of this **Europe-wide survey** on discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) young people in different areas of life, such as education and health.

The survey was conducted with **over 700 young LGBT people from 37 countries**. Respondents gave information about where they mostly experience discrimination.

61% of respondents said to have experienced discrimination and prejudice in school while 51% reported discrimination within their family.

This report clearly demonstrates that discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and gender identity undermines young LGBT people's capacity to be socially included and to become active citizens.

## Leading Gay Rights Organisations Join Premises

*ILGA-Europe media release, 15 September 2006*

ILGA, the International Lesbian and Gay Association and ILGA-Europe, its European Region, moved into shared premises in Brussels last July. Both NGOs had been operating in the European capital for a number of years but occupied different spaces in the city.

"ILGA once operated on the basis of local groups voluntarily taking up specific tasks around the world," recalls activist Tom Hoemig, who managed its administrative secretariat for as long as eight years. "The Belgian gay association Tels Quels once proposed to host ILGA's administrative secretariat, which explains our presence here". Founded in 1978, ILGA is to this day the only international federation of organisations fighting for human rights and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the world, in particular campaigning for the United Nations to recognise and address sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. It currently gathers 550 groups.

Created in 1996, ILGA-Europe, the European Region of ILGA, advances equality for LGBT people at the European level through lobbying work with such principal European organisations as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. ILGA-Europe is also a main network for LGBT organisations throughout the European continent.

The decision to share offices is the outcome of a conference decision urging ILGA and ILGA-Europe to tighten collaboration. It was based on a proposal of ILGA Dutch member COC. "Sharing spaces is simply common sense and a better use of our resources," points out Philipp Braun, ILGA's Co-Secretary General, "but it also makes political sense. It is important at this stage to consolidate ILGA as an NGO in order to be more efficient in our fight for LGBT people in the world. Closer collaboration between ILGA and its most structured region also means we'll be able to use the experience and the success we've had in Europe to allow faster development for other regions of the world".

Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, said: "We are glad ILGA and ILGA-Europe made this significant and practical step. We hope that sharing premises is not only a practical and sensible solution, but that it will also strengthen the cooperation and increase the capacity of the entire organisation and, therefore, our ability to fight discrimination against LGBT people in Europe and worldwide".

**ILGA and ILGA-Europe's new and joint address is**  
**rue de la Charité, 17**  
**1210 Brussels**  
**Belgium**

**Telephone and fax numbers remain unchanged:**

**ILGA**  
**Tel/Fax: + 32 2 502 24 71**  
**information@ilga.org**  
**www.ilga.org**

**ILGA-Europe**  
**Tel + 32 2 609 54 10**  
**Fax + 32 2 609 54 19**  
**info@ilga-europe.org**  
**www.ilga-europe.org**

## **ILGA-Europe goes multilingual**

*by Juris Lavrikovs*

Thanks to our members, volunteers and supporters ILGA-Europe now has more documents available in various European languages.

Last year we published guidelines on two EU directives: one on freedom of movement and same-sex families and the other on LGBT asylum seekers in the EU. Apart from English, the first guidelines are now available in French, German and Spanish and the second in French and German (Spanish is coming soon):

**[http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non\\_periodical](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical)**

ILGA-Europe general leaflet is now available in majority of European languages – 28, and we hope to be able to provide general information about us in all European languages. The idea is that ILGA-Europe board, staff and the members could use it during various international, national and local events to raise profile of the organisation, attract new supporters and potentially members and consequently raise awareness on LGBT issues in Europe among a wider range of audiences and in a more accessible format. We sincerely thank all the translators for their contributions!

All translations re available on our website:

**[www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non\\_periodical/general\\_leaflet\\_about\\_ilga\\_europe\\_june\\_2006](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/general_leaflet_about_ilga_europe_june_2006)**

## Job opportunity with ILGA-Europe

*by ILGA-Europe*

ILGA-Europe is currently recruiting a **Financial and Administrative Manager**. Details and applications for are on our website: [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

## EMPLOYMENT:

### Latvia: Parliamentary committee supports including a ban on discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in labour law

*Source: Latvijas Radio, "Pusdiens", 12 September 2006.*

The parliament's social and labour affairs committee Tuesday **supported** amendments to the labour law explicitly **banning discrimination in labour relations on grounds of sexual orientation**. Representatives of the Welfare Ministry said in the committee meeting that several members of the European Parliament have expressed a request to Latvia to explain why it has failed in two years time to transpose the discrimination prohibition directive. Latvia has to provide explanations by Oct. 2 and the issue will be considered by the European Parliament depending on what will be said in those explanations. The European Commission meanwhile will continue the infringement proceedings against Latvia and it, possibly, could file a claim against Latvia with the court, the Welfare Ministry officials said.

## UK: Law firms must challenge perception of discrimination among gay, lesbian solicitors

*Source: Law Society media release, 29 August 2006*

The Law Society has published its first report on the career experiences of gay and lesbian solicitors.

The report focuses on the factors determining whether a gay or lesbian solicitor would be open about their sexuality in their workplace. Most participants acknowledged that they were reluctant to come out at work for fear that it would seriously hinder their career progression.

While none of the participants in the study reported having experienced overt discrimination on the basis of their sexuality, they admitted feeling restricted by perceptions and expectations of discrimination.

The report lists a number of recommendations for law firms to help tackle sexual orientation discrimination:

- The need for appropriate monitoring practices to collect data on the sexual orientation and experiences of solicitors – Participants in the study said they would welcome the inclusion of sexual monitoring questions for the recognition and choice they offered to gay and lesbian applicants.
- The need to demonstrate commitment to diversity through the cultivation of a climate where gay and lesbian solicitors feel comfortable to declare their sexuality
- Employers should ensure that equal opportunities policies cover discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation.
- Firms should be encouraged to recognise same-sex partnerships and extend any benefits to these as they would to traditional spouses and family groups.

Commenting on the findings, Fiona Woolf, Law Society president, says:

“These findings highlight the concerns of gay and lesbian solicitors. This report should alert firms of the need to review their policies to tackle discrimination based on sexual orientation and ensure a climate of acceptance and inclusivity. The Law Society strives to be at the forefront of embracing equality and diversity and to provide support to address the needs of its members.”

**Full text of the report is available at:**

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/aboutlawsociety/whatwedo/researchandtrends/researchpubs/view=researchpubsarticle.law?PUBLICATIONID=298855>



# SAME-SEX FAMILIES:

## Denmark: Ban on assisted conception for lesbians lifted

*by Søren laursen, LBL, the Danish National Association for Gays and Lesbians*

From January 1, 2007 lesbians and single women will have the same access to fertility treatment as other women. The law on assisted conception has become neutral to sexual orientation. Nine years of criminalization has come to an end.

In 1997 Denmark got its law on assisted conception. Before there were no legal regulations. Before the law was passed a ban on assisted conception for lesbians and single women was added. Since then removal or weakening of the ban has been attempted several times. May 24 was the ninth attempt, and with a majority of a single vote – 53-52 – the proposal was surprisingly passed.

This was during the second parliamentary hearing of a law proposal on the revision of the law on assisted conception. For the third hearing there were two new proposals: one was to reintroduce the ban, the second was to deprive lesbians and single women access to funding for fertility treatment in the public health care. Both fell.

Passing of the law was a crisis for the Danish liberal-conservative government. The original proposal for a law revision came from the minister of health. The opposition proposed to include a lifting of the ban, which was strongly opposed by the conservatives. Several members of the liberal party, however, decided to vote in favour of it. The prime minister and the vice-prime minister had several meetings on the subject, and for the final passing of the law proposal, the whole government voted neutral, neither yes nor no.

The Danish law on assisted conception rules only the doctors, but not e.g. midwives. Because of this midwife Nina Stork was able at the second anniversary of the law to make an insemination clinic open to lesbians and single women. However infertile lesbians had no possibility for treatment.

## **Ireland: Submissions on wider gay rights 'largely negative'**

*Source: Irish Independent, Monday 21 August 2006*

The group set up to examine the issue of granting tax, pension and other rights to gay couples has received over 4,000 submissions - the vast majority of which are staunchly opposed to the move, writes Breda Heffernan.

Justice Minister Michael McDowell established the Working Group on Domestic Partnership to provide an analysis of the categories of partnerships and relationships outside of marriage which are in need of legal recognition.

The deadline for submissions was the end of April, although it has continued to accept submissions after this date.

The Department of Justice said the group had received more than 4,000 submissions from both individuals and groups representing a broad spectrum of opinion.

They fall largely into two categories. In the first, there were 180 separate submissions in total - of which 51 came from groups and organisations; while the remainder came from individuals.

These submissions cover a wide range of issues, including calls for equal rights generally and limited rights for cohabitants; immigration issues; and protection against violence for cohabitants.

However, the second category, in which there are about 4,000 submissions, came from people opposed to any change whatsoever in the area.

The group will report back to the minister in October.

## Sweden: Gays could be granted church weddings

Source: *The Local*, by Adam Ewing, 25 August 2006, <http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4694>

Homosexuals will be able to marry in church if the Swedish government follows the suggestion of a report due to be presented next year.

The report will suggest ditching the civil partnership law and allowing church weddings for gay people, according to Swedish public service broadcaster SVT.

One in ten priests in the Church of Sweden has signed a protest against allowing homosexuals to marry in church. Many others in the former state church have said they are in favour.

The report suggests each priest should be able to choose himself whether he wants to marry a homosexual couple.

According to a survey to which the report refers, some 46 percent of Swedes are positive to gay marriage, while 31 percent are negative. About 23 percent are undecided.

A poll done by the report showed that 84 percent of Swedes felt a religious body should be able to decide for itself whether it wanted to perform such marriages.

Christian Democrat Yvonne Andersson, who took part in the reports reference group, is critical to the recommendation.

"Less than half of the people support homosexual marriage and you still want to carry it out," she said. "I am disappointed that the report is so nonchalant about the opinion."

The suggestion is welcomed by Arthur Thiery, head of Riks-Ekho, an association for Christian homosexuals.

"Those of us who have entered a civil union would have chosen to marry if the opportunity had existed," he said, according to SVT. "The important thing for us is that marriage in church is upheld. We don't want to do away with the church ceremony."

# YOUTH:

## Swedish experience in LGBT youth financing

*by Maris Sergejenko, RFSL Ungdom*

RFSL Ungdom is an abbreviation for The Swedish Youth federation for LGBT rights. Our organisation was created in year of 2003. Before we have been a part of RFSL, The Swedish federation for LGBT rights, but on many circumstances spoke that young people should create their own independent youth federation. One of those circumstances was financing.

For youth organisations it is much easier to financing for their activities and projects. Today there are many organisations and institutions which are very willing to give financial support for youth projects. Most of the funds have a common perception on what is a youth project – an activity runned by or for young people. Funders usually give priority to projects runned by young people.

These funds have an aim, that young people would get new skills and knowledge by “learning by doing” method – that means they try out themselves to realise an activity and they learn through mistakes they have done and improve the project next time they do it.

Other opinion usually funders have is that young people are an important part of the society and they should be treated like that – they can and have a will to change society around. They also want to take part in solving actual problems of our society and through that already in early age engage themselves in political and social life.

To foster all these processes, governments and different private foundations give money to activities initiated and run by young people.

And where do young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons fit in this? The foundations usually are keen to give money to young people from socially disadvantaged groups in society. In simple words that means young people, who haven't had a chance to participate in similar activities. And here we, young lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons come in the picture. It is not easy to be young and open about your feelings if you are an LGBT person, you can experience a lot of physical violence and exclusion in general.

The biggest player in the field of financing youth projects is a programme called YOUTH which is administrated by European Union. The program has it's own local offices in every EU member state, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and also accession countries like Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. This programme is offering many opportunities for young people to organise international activities like youth exchanges and seminars. The YOUTH program also offers opportunities for youth leaders to organise training courses and well as organise different exchange-of-experience activities.

We at RFSL Ungdom have developed good relationships with our National Agency of the YOUTH programme in Sweden. Thanks to financial support from them we have been able to organise a youth exchange with Irish LGBT youth organisation BelongTo.

The support of the YOUTH programme has helped us to meet and develop good cooperation with our sister organisations in Baltic, Nordic countries and Poland.

It can seem scary for LGBT youth to take a contact with some authority in order to organise a project since it is not as often that we are received in society with understanding and tolerance. But this is the bright case. YOUTH program as one of it's main objectives has to include disadvantaged youth in the program, so actually they should be very happy if some LGBT organisation or group will arrive to their office to get to know more about possibilities to organise a project. And usually persons working at National Agencies throughout Europe are open and tolerant. And if they are not, please let us know. With a help of Swedish National Agency we have already overcome homophobia in some YOUTH agencies in other European countries.

Read more about opportunities for LGBT financing and other LGBT youth news on: [www.rfslungdom.com](http://www.rfslungdom.com)

## Poland: “We will do everything we can to stop LGBT youth projects from getting any funding,” – aka The Polish Case with Youth Programme

*by Lisette Kampus, European Voluntary Service volunteer in Campaign Against Homophobia*

Just to give you a brief background knowledge, I start from September 2005. Campaign Against Homophobia (Poland) organised a youth-exchange on the topic of gender stereotypes and discrimination. The project was funded by the European Youth Programme. The project was successfully finished, accepted and approved by the Polish National Agency (a body controlling Youth Programme in each country).

In the spring of 2006, Roman Giertych (an ultra-right politician from League of Polish Families) became a Minister of Education. Why is it important, you ask? Well, the National Agency is de facto under the Ministry of Education, and this means that the Ministry has certain... control over it. And that's where the real story begins.

**In spring 2006**, we get the news that the Ministry of Education has just held a press-conference during which they stated that *“they have information of a pedophile-project, organized by Campaign Against Homophobia, during which children were forced to wear the clothes of opposite sex and to think about changing their sex many times during their lives”*. The Ministry also made very clear allegations indicating that the money for this project had been defrauded and misused.

But this was not the end of the saga, it was only the beginning. The next months continued the same, our youth project was continuously lied about in public, politicians were literally appearing in TV-shows holding the application files of our project, claiming that we are pedophiles, and we are teaching perversions to polish children.

The most important statement of the Ministry, however, was the following: *“We will do everything to assure you that such [LGBT] projects will never get funded again; the guidelines of such programmes that allow funding for perversions, need to be changed”*.

I can tell you now that they were not kidding, but I will come back to this later.

**We immediately contacted the Polish National Agency** and asked them how it is possible that a government institution is lying not only about a project, but also about a programme of the European Commission? The Polish National Agency kept silent and diplomatically sent out a signal that it is not in their hands and even though they know the truth, they can not do anything.

In June 2006, Minister Roman Giertych held a speech in front of the Polish parliament. During this speech he, once again, mentioned the project and here's what he had come up with this time: *“Campaign Against Homophobia held a camp for children during which they taught about how sex can be changed several times in one's lifetime; camp, where young boys were dressed up as girls and girls as boys; where visits of German transvestites were organized in Polish kindergarten. “*

Just to get the facts straight – participants were adults, we did not have any German participants and the project was about gender stereotypes and discrimination. Roman has a fruitful fantasy.

Campaign sent letters to the Commission asking them how to act in such a situation and what do they think about a member state's Ministry that publicly lies about a Commission programme. We have received no answers until today, the letters were sent in May.

**As I mentioned before**, the Ministry publicly stated that we should be not funded again by this programme. Campaign Against Homophobia applied for a European Voluntary Service project on June 1st, the project would allow a volunteer from Poland work for a Swedish LGBT organization for one year. The decision was supposed to be made on August 4-th; when we checked the results of selection committee, we found that the only project without a decision is ours. The only explanation being: Ministry needs more consultation. Polish National Agency says that it's again out of their hands and the Ministry will make a decision.

The project was officially supposed to start on September 1st. Until today (Sept 5) we haven't received any information or an answer.

The Youth Programme finishes with this year and from 2007 European Commission will have a new programme for young people that is called Youth in Action. So far there have been serious discussions whether to include LGBT youth into the programme guidelines as a target group or not, until now has been up to every National Agency to decide this.

From the point of view of Polish LGBT youth work, I say that I insist LGBT youth to be included as a target group, otherwise Polish LGBT youth will not have a chance to be a part of the European Union.

## NOTICE BOARD:

### **International Conference: Homophobia and Discrimination of Lesbians and Gays in an Enlarged Europe: Challenges and Social Inclusion, 9-10 November 2006, Kaunas, Lithuania**

This conference is directed towards lesbian and gay communities and NGOs, their leaders, policy makers and researchers, students and others interested in LGBT issues and human rights. This event is a part of the trans-national cooperation TRACE and the project ATVIRI that are co-funded by the European Commission and Lithuanian Government.

**Aim of the Conference** – to broaden the public discourse on homophobia and discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and to discuss the challenges of democracy and social inclusion of LGBT people in an Enlarged Europe. Particular attention will be paid to the issue of homophobia and discrimination in the new member states of EU and the Baltic States in particular.

#### **Conference Themes:**

- Voices to be heard: Individual Experiences of Discrimination and Exclusion
- Silent Sexualities at Work
- Homophobia and Education
- Homosexuality, Social Capital and Civil Society
- Lessons Learned and Prospects for Social Inclusion

**The selected conference papers** that meet the requirements of publishers will be published in the academic journal until the end of the year of 2006. **Conference language is English.**

**Send your abstracts (250 words) and the registration form until October 10, 2006 to:**

**[a.zdanevicius@smf.vdu.lt](mailto:a.zdanevicius@smf.vdu.lt)**

**Conference** is free of charge, the participants will be provided with food and accommodations. Travel expenses should be paid by the participants themselves.

**Contact:** Ms. Skirmante Cesiene, Sociology Department, Social Research Center at Vytautas Magnus University, Donelaicio 52-309, LT-44244 Kaunas, Tel/fax: +370 37 327 822, E-mail: **[s.cesiene@smf.vdu.lt](mailto:s.cesiene@smf.vdu.lt)**

**More information** about this conference will be available at **[www.atviri.lt](http://www.atviri.lt)**



## 2006 International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference

*by Patrick Bruner*

The International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference offers senior-level, openly LGBT leaders in the public and non-governmental sectors a unique opportunity to gather in a peer community to share ideas and best practices. Top decision-makers are brought together by the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute to review the year's progress and explore future strategies. The only conference of its kind today, the event provides a collegial, informative and friendly environment for networking and leadership development.

Openly LGBT international, national, state and local political and non-government leaders are building a global network of out officials to advance true equality for all. Please join us in that effort.

**[www.victoryinstitute.org](http://www.victoryinstitute.org)**

November 16-19, 2006

Houston, Texas

## Human Rights Watch Job Posting: Researcher on LGBT Rights

*by Scott Long*

Human Rights Watch ("HRW") is an international human rights monitoring and advocacy organization known for its in-depth investigations, its incisive and timely reporting, its innovative and high-profile advocacy campaigns, and its success in changing the human rights-related policies of influential governments and international institutions.

More details including job description and application form:

**[www.hrw.org/jobs/lgbt\\_researcher\\_2006-08-21.htm](http://www.hrw.org/jobs/lgbt_researcher_2006-08-21.htm)**