

EURO-LETTER

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In this issue:

ILGA-Europe:

- Developing next ILGA-Europe's Strategic Plan 2008-2011
- First call for ILGA-Europe conference in Vilnius
- 2nd Workshop of the Pilot Project on Social Inclusion
- The Wind that Shook the OSCE
- LGBT Activists from NIS Gain Skills in Advocacy

Europe:

- Social NGOs are cautious to cry victory on EU leaders' Treaty agreement
- Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner describes events in Latvia as "unacceptable", and homophobic by politicians and officials attitudes as "intolerable"
- Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioners report on Poland strongly critical on LGBT issues
- Lissy Gröner receives award for Moral Courage against Homophobia and discrimination!"

Same-sex families:

- Czechs Back Civil Unions, Not Same-Sex Marriage

Funding opportunity:

- Call for proposals from the EU "Youth in Action" programme - Youth for Europe Pilot Projects on Thematic Networking

Freedom of assembly:

- Pride events in Moscow, Riga and Bucharest

Notice board:

- Conference on LGBT Human Rights: World Outgames, Copenhagen, July 27th – 29th 2009
- Global Survey on Career Experiences of Lesbians and Gay Men

ILGA-EUROPE:

Developing next ILGA-Europe's Strategic Plan 2008-2011: next step

by Patricia Prendiville

Dear all, Thank you for contributing to the development of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011 for ILGA-Europe. We had 13 questionnaires returned, which reflected feedback from 10 different countries. In addition the Board and Staff met for day to reflect on the current plan and to propose developments for the next plan.

You can see the feedback from the members and the board/staff meeting in the document on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/strategic_plan_2008_2011_for_ilga_europe

And as promised, on the website you will find Paper 1 which gives an overview of the feedback received from the membership, the board and staff.

The next step will be to develop language to take account of this feedback – and this will be worked on during the meeting on 7th July in Budapest. (The application process to participate at that meeting closed on 8th June)

You are invited now to give your comments on this Paper 1 until the end of July.

You will have many other opportunities to feedback your thoughts and comments on the evolving Strategic Plan – after Paper 2 is sent in August and after the Paper 3 is circulated prior to the conference in October 2007.

Please do remember that you can comment on the evolving plan directly through the mechanisms described, and you do not have to make proposals for the conference in relation to the plan.

Again, thank you all for your time and consideration of the future direction and focus of ILGA-Europe.

With best wishes, and looking forward to hearing your comments.

Patricia Prendiville

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Working Group

First call for ILGA-Europe conference in Vilnius

by ILGA-Europe, 19 June 2007

ILGA-Europe's first mailing documents for the annual conference on 25-28 October in Vilnius are now available on our website:

http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/annual_conference/vilnius_2007/first_mailing

There you will find registration form, scholarship application form, delegation and board nomination forms as well as a welcoming note from the Lithuanian organisers.

Deadline for applying for scholarship: **16 July 2007**

Deadline for registration for the conference: **7 September 2007**

2nd Workshop of the Pilot Project on Social Inclusion

by Evelyne Paradis

On 7-8 June, participants to ILGA-Europe's pilot project on social inclusion gathered in Brussels to develop a strategy to increase participation of LGBT groups in the EU social inclusion process. Members from Malta, Finland, Italy, Lithuania and the Netherlands identified policy recommendations to make to their own governments to promote social inclusion of LGBT people. The group also developed a joint plan of action for the next year aimed at improving their participation in the elaboration of national action plans on social inclusion. The group plans to meet again twice in the coming year.

If you are interested in finding out more about the pilot project or in joining the group, please contact Evelyne at evelyne@ilga-europe.org.

The Wind that Shook the OSCE

Report by Maxim Anmeghichean, ILGA-Europe's Programmes Director

The **OSCE High Level Conference on Combating Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding, held on June 5-7 in Bucharest's** People's Palace, started with a one day civil society preparation meeting. A number of working sessions on various discrimination grounds were held. ODIHR has asked ILGA-Europe's Maxim Anmeghichean to be rapporteur for the working group on 'other forms of discrimination'. The introducer of the subject, well-known to many of you Dimitrina Petrova (currently director of the Equal Rights Trust) devoted a lot of time in her opening speech to sexual orientation and gender identity. Jo Anne Bishop, Director of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (TND) Unit of ODIHR was also in the room and made specific remarks about the importance of sexual orientation work. Representatives of LGBT organizations GenderDoc-M (Moldova) and Labrys (Kyrgyzstan) took part in the conference and made recommendations in the working group. As the result a separate section of recommendations within the section on 'other forms of intolerance' was on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression became part of the document entitled "Civil Society Preparatory Meeting. Consolidated Summary of Recommendations" (the text was not published yet on the conference web-site, will share the document and put it on IE web-site once we have final version e-mailed to us). Most of our recommendations related to hate crimes, bodily integrity and freedom of assembly. Sexual orientation was also mentioned in other sections of the document. So recommendations to the OSCE to include sexual orientation in its mandate on TND were a very visible and important part of civil society recommendations. Two days of the actual conference followed...

Official US position is hostile to the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. OSCE works by consensus; therefore together with the Holy See and a few other states that support them behind the scenes, they block the consensus. However, the Chairman of the Helsinki Commission (consisting of members of US Congress and Senate, in charge of OSCE-related matters from US legislative branch) Mr. Hastings (Democrat from a very gay district in Florida) was at the conference and made a very positive statement in favor of sexual orientation, saying: "You may disagree with other people's lifestyles, but the state must still provide protection for each of its citizens". It was said in relation to sexual orientation, and is first time someone from the US officials says it in the OSCE context. Official US position remains unchanged.

Normally there is a **declaration** adopted at the end of the conference. Russia before the conference said it will block any consensus and doesn't find them useful. So what was meant to be the conference declaration became the "Chairmanship Declaration", but still had to be agreed by all the participating states. Negotiation of this declaration was a turning point for ILGA-Europe's work at the OSCE. Some states were trying to 'narrow down' the wording of the previous conference declaration (Cordoba 2005) by excluding any reference to 'diversity' and 'other forms' [of intolerance and discrimination], since these words after Cordoba were interpreted as inclusive of sexual orientation. The EU and its German Presidency strongly declared such position was inadmissible. Negotiations lasted for half a day, and even if sexual orientation was not mentioned directly, everyone knew the discussion in big part was about it. EU threatened to make and read out a dissenting opinion if a declaration with such narrow wording is adopted. The Chairmanship Declaration

which resulted from tough negotiations, to disappointment of both sides, was a repetition of Cordoba, with no progress made in the wording or commitments. But, symbolically, it was a victory for the LGBT movement since the event has put sexual orientation and gender identity strongly on the political agenda of the OSCE and set the tone for more discussions and tough negotiations to come. A right-wing member of the US delegation said to ILGA-Europe's Policy Director Christine Loudes in the corridor: "Its all about sexual orientation this year".

ILGA-Europe throughout the conference has also collected signatures for declaration of civil society on inclusion of sexual orientation into the OSCE mandate. It has already been signed by a 100 NGOs and is open for more signatures till the end of September. We will continue collecting signatures and endorsements and will present the final 'result' at the HDIM in Warsaw later this year.

LGBT Activists from NIS Gain Skills in Advocacy

by Maxim Anmeghichean

On 20-24 May ILGA-Europe has organized a training on documenting human rights violations, planning advocacy campaigns and lobbying European institutions for a group of LGBT activists from Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. The training took place on the shore of a picturesque Issyk-Kuli lake in Kyrgyzstan, and facilitated by experienced trainers from Russia, Ireland and ILGA-Europe's staff team itself. The host organization was NGO "Labrys" (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan).

The participants gained skills in documenting human rights violations through personal interviews and by using specialized computer programs, in lobbying the European Union, Council of Europe, United Nations and the OSCE, in planning and implementing advocacy campaigns. The training lasted for a total of 5 days, the days filled with work, and evenings – with long dinners, karaoke nights and deep conversations around the fire on the beach.

The training is part of a large-scale 5-year program on development of the LGBT movement in the post-Soviet states "Prevention and Empowerment in the CIS [the Commonwealth of the Independent States]" (PRECIS), implemented by COC Netherlands with support of the Dutch Government and in cooperation with ILGA-Europe.

EUROPE:

Social NGOs are cautious to cry victory on EU leaders' Treaty agreement

Source: media release by Social Platform, 25 June 2007

In the aftermath of the European Council, where EU leaders reached an agreement on the revision of the EU Treaties, European social NGOs are cautious in welcoming the outcome.

"Yes we have a legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights, yes we have the horizontal social clauses, yes we have the provisions on participatory democracy, we also have an additional protocol on services of general interest, but it's not a done deal. The Treaty will be formally agreed in December, we will not lower the guard as of yet," said Social Platform president, Fintan Farrell.

As civil society organisations, representing large segments of the population, European Social NGOs have fought to promote a more democratic Union, based on fundamental rights and social objectives. Weeks before the June European Council, social NGOs launched a wide campaign to mobilise national and regional NGOs to send an open letter to EU heads of state and governments asking to keep the social provisions stated in the European Constitutional Treaty. The mandate given to the Intergovernmental conference, which is supposed to draft as soon as possible the so-called Reform Treaty, includes all the social provisions the Social Platform called for in its open letter. But the Treaty is not finalised yet and social NGOs feel it is too early to claim victory.

Indeed, the process is reverting to a "closed door" method with no public involvement. *"Transparency and democracy is the only way for people to feel confident that the Europe which is built today will not serve short term narrow national interests but rather the interests for a European Union for all,"* added Farrell. *"The great challenge now is to keep citizens well informed so that we don't widen the gap between Europeans and the European project,"* ended Farrell noting that the drafting of the Reform Treaty could shy away thousands of people because of the technical nature of the exercise.

Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner describes events in Latvia as "unacceptable", and homophobic by politicians and officials attitudes as "intolerable"

by Nigel Warner, 30 May 2007

In a memorandum to the Latvian government, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg, has raised serious concerns about discrimination against sexual minorities (para 87-89).

He reports that "discrimination against LGBT [people] is apparently becoming usual in Latvia, which is an unacceptable development in any democratic country."

After outlining events around the 2005 and 2006 Prides, he describes the attitudes of some officials and politicians as "intolerable". He stresses that peaceful events defending the rights of sexual minorities should be authorised, that the police must protect demonstrators "rather than giving a free hand to homophobic activities". All incitement to hatred and violence "must be severely punished".

Turning to the Latvian Parliament, he describes proposals to amend the constitution to ban homosexual marriage, as "explicit discrimination against sexual minorities."

He concludes by strongly urging the Latvian authorities "to honour their international commitments regarding freedom of expression and assembly, actively combat all forms of intolerance, guarantee the security and safety of sexual minorities and ensure the conditions for developing associations representing them."

The full text of the section of the Memorandum on discrimination against sexual minorities follows below. The text of the complete Memorandum and can be found at:

https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1134279&BackColorInternet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679#P368_63836

Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioners report on Poland strongly critical on LGBT issues

by Nigel Warner, 20 June 2007

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, has published a Memorandum on Poland, which is strongly critical of a number of aspects of the Polish government's approach to LGBT people. The section on LGBT issues 51-57. There is also a series of responses by the Polish government at the end of the report. The full text can be found at:

https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1155005&BackColorInternet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679#P249_33335

Lissy Gröner receives award for Moral Courage against Homophobia and discrimination!"

Source: media release by Lissy Gröner' office, 23 June 2007

The German MEP Lissy Gröner (SPD) was awarded with the "Zivilcouragepreis" (a prize for moral courage against Homophobia and discrimination) today in Berlin for her gay-lesbian and feminist commitment.

"This award is a fantastic recognition of the European efforts to fight discrimination and I want to thank all the organisers and the thousands and thousands of participants of this gay pride event in Berlin", says Lissy Gröner at the award ceremony in Berlin.

Lissy Gröner: "Today we gave a vital example for a tolerant and cosmopolitan society. But that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons can at all times live without discrimination everyone in policy, in companies have to act. No one should be a victim of discrimination at the workplace, in their free time or in their every day live because of their sexual orientation says the treaty of Europe".

"We do not allow anyone to take this right away from us- also not the Polish government, which recently initiated a law against Homosexuals. From the summit of the heads of states and governments in Brussels I expect a clear language: Who discriminates and disregards fundamental human right has no place in Europe. Europe stands for Equality, Tolerance, Respect and Diversity", so Lissy Gröner.

But also in Germany the MEP Lissy Gröner sees need for action. "The equal treatment of civil unions and marriages is not implemented in tax law, heritage law, civil service law and adoption law", concludes Lissy Gröner.

PS Last year this Prize was awarded to ILGA-Europe

SAME-SEX FAMILIES:

Czechs Back Civil Unions, Not Same-Sex Marriage

Source: Angus Reid Global Monitor, 11 June 2007

www.angus-reid.com/polls/index.cfm/fuseaction/viewItem/itemID/16072

Many adults in the Czech Republic believe gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form registered partnerships, according to a poll by CVVM. 69 per cent of respondents agree with this concept, up seven points in two years.

Still, 57 per cent of respondents are opposed to allowing same-sex couples to get married, and 67 per cent reject the possibility of gay and lesbian partners adopting children.

In 2005, both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate approved a bill that sought to allow same-sex couples in the Czech Republic to form registered partnerships. In February 2006, Czech president Vaclav Klaus vetoed the legislation. In March, the legislative branch overrode the veto. The law-which provides inheritance, alimony and hospital rights to same-sex partners-came into effect in July.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

Call for proposals from the EU “Youth in Action” programme - Youth for Europe Pilot Projects on Thematic Networking

by ILGA-Europe

This call for proposals aims to **support the networking of youth exchange projects**, youth initiatives and democracy projects underway now or in the past under the Youth in Action programme and the Youth programme. The deadline to submit projects is **1 September 2007**.

You can find all the information at http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/calls2007/action1/index_en.htm and a useful summary on the Website of the European Network against Racism at www.enar-eu.org/en/funding/calls.shtml

The International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organization (IGLYO) is looking into the possibility of submitting such a project. If this is of interest to you or other organisations you know, it would be good to get in touch with IGLYO to discuss common interest and potential cooperation...to avoid duplicating the exercise and to join forces! To do so, you can contact me (Evelyne@ilga-europe.org) or write directly to Bjorn at IGLYO (bjorn@iglyo.com).

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY:

Pride events in Moscow, Riga and Bucharest

by ILGA-Europe

Since the last Euroletter three pride marches, which were attended, closely observed and monitored by ILGA-Europe and other organisations, took places – Moscow, Riga and Bucharest.

ILGA-Europe together with the Human Rights Watched produced a report on the Moscow Pride and compiled archives on the Riga and Bucharest events:

- **Moscow:** www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/moscow_pride_2007
- **Riga:**
www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/latvia/friendship_days_riga_pride_2007
- **Bucharest:** www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/romania/bucharest_pride_2007

NOTICE BOARD:

Conference on LGBT Human Rights: World Outgames, Copenhagen, July 27th – 29th 2009

by Steffen Jensen, 7 June 2007

World Outgames 2009 is much more than just sports and culture; we also want to make a difference in the daily lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people in the world. That is a key objective of the Conference on LGBT Human Rights. .

The banner "Love of freedom. Freedom to love" summarizes what it is all about; namely love for the freedom that allows us our love life and our sexuality without fear or discrimination.

The conference aims to cover many of the present challenging political and social aspects of LGTB-people's lives around the world. We hope that people will become wiser, meet new people and come up with new ideas of how to make the world a better place for all. And we want the conference to emphasize that celebrating diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society is the way forward if we want a progressive world community.

The conference program will include high profile international key-note-speakers, workshops within various aspects of the proposed themes as well as regional workshops and space and time for informal meetings. We hope to publish the preliminary conference program in early 2008.

Further information: http://www.steff.suite.dk/conference_sheet.doc

Global Survey on Career Experiences of Lesbians and Gay Men

by Raymond Trau, 12 June 2007

A global online survey is being undertaken to assess the factors that affect the career experiences of lesbians and gay men *who work in office/professional environment and/or are professionally employed*. Specifically, this research will yield important evidence on the effects of identity, stigmatisation and disclosure of lesbians and gay men on their social and developmental relationships at work. Additionally, this research will provide important information on the consequences of these relationships for the career outcomes and general wellbeing of lesbians and gay men.

The findings of this research will provide much needed scientific evidence on the career development issues of the lesbian and gay populations which will assist the educational community in understanding the career experiences of these unique populations; assist the business community to implement better policies and practices relating to its lesbian and gay employees; and also provide important information for lesbian and gay communities worldwide as to the specific strategies associated with a better career trajectory and quality of life.

Your participation in this research is critical to achieving a full representation of lesbians and gay men from around the world. To participate in this online survey, go to the web address below and enter the password indicated to log in:

<http://www.unipark.de/uc/careerofgaysandlesbians/>

Password to log in: 2007

Should you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact the lead researcher, Raymond Trau, via this email address (raymond.trau@buseco.monash.edu.au).