

No. 158
October 2008

EURO-LETTER

ILGA-Europe's monthly electronic LGBT political
and legal news bulletin

ILGA
EUROPE 

Euro-Letter is published by ILGA-Europe - the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)

ISSN 1998-8117

Editor:

Juris Lavrikovs

Contact us:

euroletter@ilga-europe.org

Subscribe to Euro-Letter:

simply send an empty message to euroletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you no longer wish to receive Euroletter simply send empty message to

euroletter-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

Previous issues:

all previous Euro-Letters in English as well as the Greek translations from No 127, January 2006 are available in pdf format on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro_letter

ILGA-Europe is grateful to **Pantelis Ravdas**, **Danae Panagiotopoulou** and **Evdokia Sakka** for the Greek translations.



This publication is supported by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission.

Its funding is provided for under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stake holders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

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

IN THIS ISSUE:

ILGA-EUROPE:

- ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference
- Staff news:
 - Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director, to leave the organisation
 - Two new Programmes & Policy Officer: Beth Fernandez and Lilit Poghosyan
- Employment opportunity with ILGA-Europe: Executive Director
- ILGA-Europe's latest edition of "Destination>>EQUALITY" magazine on proposed EU anti-discrimination Directive is out!
- ILGA-Europe speaks at European Parliament on fundamental rights

EUROPE:

- An update on the new anti-discrimination directive

LGBT FAMILIES:

- Portuguese parliament rejects gay marriage
- Greeks protest government crackdown on gay marriage

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION & ASSOCIATION

- Bosnia and Herzegovina must guarantee freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people. Police must provide security of LGBT events and protect LGBT people from violence

HATE & VIOLENCE:

- Human Rights First's 2008 Hate Crime Survey is now available
- Latvia: Homophobic hooligans sentenced by court

NOTICE BOARD:

- Job opportunity with International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission: Executive Director
- Call for candidates for the 30th International Human Rights Training Program, Montreal, Canada, June 14 to July 3, 2009

ILGA-EUROPE:

ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference

by *ILGA-Europe*



Our 12th Annual Conference takes place on 30 October - 2 November 2008 in Vienna. As our Annual Conference is also the organisations's Annual General Meeting, all formal documents needed for votes and other procedures have been sent in our third conference mailing and are available on our conference website.

The conference website also provides a Provisional Conference Programme. The Programme is subject to changes and the final version will be available to the delegates upon their arrival in their delegate packs.

HOSI Wien has also prepared details instructions for the delegates how to find the conference venue, you will find these useful instructions on our conference website.

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/annual_conference/vienna_2008

ILGA-EUROPE:

Staff news:

• Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director, to leave the organisation



The Executive Board of ILGA-Europe announces that the Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, Patricia Prendiville, has decided to leave the organisation at the end of the year.

"It was with deep regret that we took notice of this information. Patricia's contribution in bringing ILGA-Europe to where we are today cannot be underestimated. Her contribution to forwarding the agenda of equal rights and opportunities for people on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, together with the leadership shown on the multiple-discrimination concept with our allied partners has been enormous. The respect and trust she got from and created in our partners and stakeholders pays testimony to the way she acts and the person she is", says Deborah Lambillotte, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe Executive Board.

In addition, Patricia will be leaving a strong and healthy organisation both when it comes to finances and human resources. With the Executive Board, the very committed and professional staff will ensure that ILGA-Europe will continue its work. The whole Board wishes to thank Patricia for the enormous work she has done, for her outstanding professionalism and incredible personality and wishes her all the best in the next phase of her life, says Martin K.I. Christensen, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe Executive Board.

Reflecting on her time with ILGA-Europe and acknowledging the change ahead, Patricia concludes "The work for equality continues and is in excellent hands in the Board and Staff of ILGA-Europe. I will be with the organisation in spirit as the next phase of ensuring the lived equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people unfolds."

The Executive Board has started the process of recruiting a new Executive Director.

ILGA-EUROPE:

• Two new Programmes & Policy Officer:



Beth Fernandes:

Beth's key responsibilities are the PRECIS project (Prevention and empowerment in the CIS), which aims to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STIs among LGBT communities via capacity building of LGBT organisations in the NIS. Her particular role is to support the advocacy efforts of partners for inclusive policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as for the enhancement of human rights of LGBT people on the national and international level in respect of the project countries. She also monitors the EU European Neighbourhood Policies in respect of

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in order that anti-discrimination legislation inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity is stipulated in country action plans and that the European Commission is aware of human rights violations against LGBT people. In general, she monitors developments relating to the fundamental human rights of LGBTI people in NIS countries and serves as a channel between national partners and European Institutions.

Beth joined ILGA-Europe in September 2008. She previously worked at Interights in London, coordinating training projects in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union which focused on the European Convention of Human Rights and EU anti-discrimination law. Holds a degree in Politics and Russian, and is finalising a Masters in Human Rights at University College London. Her particular interests are the right to equality and non-discrimination across different grounds, challenges to the protection of human rights in the countries of the former Soviet Union, systems of monitoring and evaluation for human rights projects, and training methodologies for human rights.

ILGA-EUROPE:



Lilit Poghosyan:

Lilit is responsible for the Advocacy Project which aims to strengthen the advocacy capacities and competences of project partners. She also monitors the developments in the field of human rights of LGBT people in Western Balkans and Turkey and channels the information on human rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity to relevant EU institutions in order to ensure that LGBT people enjoy equal rights and protection in candidate and potential candidate countries for the accession to the EU.

Lilit holds a degree in Psychology and Education and has completed her MSc in Human Rights at London School of Economics in 2005. She has eight years work experience in field of sexual, reproductive and mental health of which around six years in Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) filed projects in Armenia, Kashmir/Pakistan, Zambia and Uganda.

Lilit is Armenian and joined ILGA-Europe in October 2008.

ILGA-EUROPE:

Employment opportunity with ILGA-Europe: Executive Director

by ILGA-Europe

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Salary €79,100 per annum increasing to €85,427 in four annual increments

The Executive Director is the key link between our growing team of professional staff and the ILGA-Europe Board and is responsible for supporting the board's effectiveness through their key relationship with the Board's Co-Chairs. The staff team is organised into four service areas: Policy, Communications, Programmes and Finance and Administration.

We are looking for someone with an empowering and supportive management style to lead the staff through the next phase of organisational development, consolidate the current work programme and effectively respond to new opportunities and challenges.

You will have strong analytical skills and a track record of commitment to equality and diversity. Your previous experience must include managing in a professional public or not for profit organisation and a familiarity with the EU and its institutions.

Application deadline: 17.00 CET Friday, 7 November 2008

For further details about this vacancy, including application pack,
please visit our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/job_opportunity/executive_director

*ILGA-Europe is equal opportunities employer
and welcomes applications from all sections of society*

ILGA-EUROPE:

ILGA-Europe's latest edition of "Destination>>EQUALITY" magazine on proposed EU anti-discrimination Directive is out!

Source: ILGA-Europe media release, 16 October 2008



ILGA-Europe's latest edition of its "Destination>>EQUALITY" magazine is entirely dedicated to the issue of a proposed EU anti-discrimination Directive. The aim of this edition is to demonstrate the strong and broad support for the proposed Directive as well as to refute existing arguments against the adoption of this Directive.

This edition provides an exclusive interview with Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities whose portfolio includes the proposed Directive and who shares his views not just on the proposal but other issues of the rights of LGBT people in Europe.

In this edition we also provide a platform to various European and national governmental and non-governmental organisations working in various equality and non-discrimination areas that overwhelmingly and in unison support this Directive. Each of them provides their specific perspective on why this proposed Directive is important and necessary as well as highlighting the shortcomings of the proposed Directive.

Our contributors are:

- Member of the European Parliament
- EU Fundamental Rights Agency
- The Netherlands' Government
- EQUINET – the European Network of Equality Bodies
- European Trade Union Confederation
- Tiesibsargs – Latvian Equality Body
- European Network Against Racism
- European Women's Lobby
- European Disability Forum
- European Older People's Platform
- European Youth Forum
- Equality and Diversity Forum (UK).

ILGA-EUROPE:

Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, in her address to the readers of this edition says:

“We know all too well that the 27 EU Member States now have to agree on this proposed Directive. We know that fierce opposition towards this Directive is coming from one of the largest EU Member State – Germany. The arguments are difficult to understand. That is why we put together this special edition on the Directive to demonstrate the overwhelming support for the Directive from a wide spectrum of organisations. We also provide personal testimonies which prove that this Directive is badly needed.”

She further stresses the importance of a united collaboration to make European level law:

“In the coming months the importance of our togetherness cannot be overestimated, our strength will be in unity. It is time for all of us to think big and beyond our usual grounds. This Directive is a historical opportunity for all of us to ensure that each person, regardless of personal characteristics, is equally protected against discrimination in the European Union. The time when some grounds of discrimination are more acceptable than others needs to be ended. Let’s help Europe make this historical decision and prove that it means business when it comes to equality for all, without hierarchies or distinctions”.

A PDF version of this edition is available on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/magazine_destination_equality/2008

More details about ILGA-Europe’s campaign supporting this proposed Directive is on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/campaigns_projects/campaign_for_new_european_anti_discrimination_legislation

ILGA-Europe speaks at European Parliament on fundamental rights

by ILGA-Europe

On 6 October 2008, Christine Loudes, ILGA-Europe's Policy Director delivered today a speech at the public hearing organised by the European parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on Fundamental Rights in the EU.

This public hearing was organised with an aim to exchange views within the framework of drafting the report on Fundamental Rights in the EU. The rapporteur on this report is Giusto Catania, MEP.

On our website you can find the texts of the draft report (in English and French) and ILGA-Europe's contribution delivered by Christine Loudes:

www.ilga-

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

An update on the new anti-discrimination directive

by Evelyne Paradis, ILGA-Europe's Senior Policy Officer

Since the adoption of the proposed anti-discrimination directive by the Commission in July, a lot of work has already been done to move the legislative process forward.

At the European Council level....

EU ministers of employment and social affairs have met in July and in October to discuss the directive. At the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting on 2 October, an overwhelming majority of EU ministers expressed support for the proposal for a directive and for the objective of ensuring equal protection to all grounds in the EU.

This being said, many states expressed concerns over the cost of the new legislation and the respect of the principle of subsidiarity in areas of national competence, such as education and health. Many states also called for greater clarity on some of the concepts and terminology included in the text. While the German Minister Ursula von der Leyen, the most vocal critic of the directive, indicated that Germany's position has not changed, the Czech Republic proved also to be very critical of the new legislation, after a similar law was recently rejected by both the Czech Senate and the government.

The EPSCO meeting followed the 2nd EU Equality Summit organised by the French Presidency of the EU on 29-30 September, where participants – NGOs and state representatives alike – issued a strong statement of support for the proposed anti-discrimination legislation.

Meanwhile at the European Parliament....

Dutch Green MEP Kathalijne Buitenweg, who was appointed rapporteur on the draft directive in the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee, has started consultation with civil society, social partners and other actors.

Other parliament committees are also involved in the consultation on the proposed directive, under the reinforced cooperation process. MEP Liz Lynne, rapporteur for the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, already prepared her report on the text.

EUROPE:

Ms Buitenweg's report is expected to be presented in the LIBE committee in January 2009, and then to be adopted in plenary in March 2009.

ILGA-Europe is actively engaged in the parliamentary process, working with committee rapporteurs and LGBT Intergroup members on amendments to the proposed text.

For information on the proposed directive, please contact evelyne@ilga-europe.org.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Portuguese parliament rejects gay marriage

Source: AFP, 10 October 2008,

http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jhZ4VUBFgR_Mrifz7Njsfk_wFRtA

Portugal's ruling party and the main opposition shot down Friday the latest proposals to allow same-sex marriages in the Roman Catholic country.

"The debate has not yet matured" enough in Portuguese society, ruling Socialist Party lawmaker Jorge Strecht said after the measures were defeated by a large majority.

Introduced by the tiny Left Bloc and the Green Party, the proposals needed to find broad support from either the Socialists or the main opposition Social Democratic Party if they were to pass.

Gay rights campaigners argue the law stipulating that marriage must be between a man and a woman is illegal as it contradicts the constitution, which was altered in 2004 to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Gay couples were in 2001 given some of the same legal and tax benefits enjoyed by heterosexual couples in common law marriages. Public opinion polls show a majority of Portuguese oppose allowing gay marriages.

Since neighbouring Spain legalised same-sex marriage and adoptions by gay couples in 2005, pressure from gay rights campaigners has been mounting in Portugal for Lisbon to do the same.

Prime Minister Jose Socrates' Socialist government, which enjoys a majority in parliament, has said it has no plans to alter the legal definition of marriage.

It did however overcome strong opposition from the Catholic church to legalise abortion in 2007.

The gay marriage issue gained prominence in February 2006 when a lesbian couple filed a legal challenge to the law after their request for a marriage license was turned down by a Lisbon registry office.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Greeks protest government crackdown on gay marriage

*Source : Reuters Life!, 29 September 2008,
<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnLT695789.html>*

Dozens of gays and lesbians protested outside parliament on Monday against the conservative government's attempt to overturn Greece's first same-sex marriages. Waving banners reading "These Weddings Are Valid", dozens of homosexual couples gathered in central Athens ahead of a court ruling due this week on the two marriages celebrated on the tiny Aegean island of Tilos in June.

The Justice Ministry has filed a legal suit to overturn the union of one gay and one lesbian couple after they took advantage of a loophole in Greek civil law that fails to specify gender in matrimony.

"We are here because we want equality," said Christina Neofotistou, 28, a designer. "These marriages were the first step, but this government wants to cancel it: instead they should be doing something for us."

The marriages drew strong criticism from the powerful Orthodox Church, which officially represents more than 90 percent of the 11 million-strong population.

While many European countries have established legislation recognising gay marriage or same-sex partnerships, Greece's traditional society has preferred to turn a blind eye to homosexuality.

The Netherlands was the first EU country to offer full civil marriage rights to gay couples in 2001 and Belgium followed in 2003. Spain legalised gay marriage in 2005, despite fierce opposition from the Roman Catholic Church.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION:

“Bosnia and Herzegovina must guarantee freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people. Police must provide security of LGBT events and protect LGBT people from violence”

Source: ILGA-Europe's statement, 2 October 2008

ILGA-Europe is deeply concerned with the news about the Queer Festival in Sarajevo: attacks on the participants of the events, attacks on the office of LGBT organisation, lack of police protection, death threats to the organisers of the festival.

Freedom of assembly and expression is one of the fundamental principles of a democratic society. The European Court of Human Rights has confirmed that freedom of assembly cannot be denied to events organised by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people or to those supporting equality for LGBT people. Similarly, the European Court of Human Rights repeatedly ruled that freedom of expression is not limited to the ideas which are received favourably by the majority of society. Moreover, the European Court of Human rights ruled that a state has a positive duty to protect the participants of public events.

ILGA-Europe is calling on Bosnia and Herzegovinian authorities to immediately ensure the security of LGBT activists and to fully respect international human rights standards related to freedom of assembly and expression.

ILGA-Europe is also calling on the European Union and the Council of Europe to continue monitoring the situation with regards to the rights to assembly and expression for LGBT people in Bosnia Herzegovina.

More information about the events around Sarajevo Queer Festival and reactions from other organisations (Council of Europe, Amnesty International, and European Parliament) please visit our website:

www.ilga-

[europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/bosnia_herzegovina/attacks_at_sarajevo_queer_festivals](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/bosnia_herzegovina/attacks_at_sarajevo_queer_festivals)

HATE CRIME & VIOLENCE:

Human Rights First's 2008 Hate Crime Survey is now available

by *ILGA-Europe*

Human Rights First's 2008 Hate Crime Survey includes sections examining six facets of violent hate crime in the 56 countries that comprise the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): Violence Based on Racism and Xenophobia, Anti-Semitic Violence, Violence Against Muslims, Violence Based on Religious Intolerance, Violence Against Roma, and Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Bias. The Survey also examines government responses to violent hate crimes in sections on Systems of Monitoring and Reporting and The Framework of Criminal Law and includes a Ten-Point Plan for governments to strengthen their responses. The Survey also includes an in-depth look at the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United States and contains a Country Panorama section that profiles individual hate crime cases from more than 30 countries within the OSCE.

The report is available online:

www.humanrightsfirst.org/pdf/fd/08/fd-080924-lgbt-web2.pdf

¹ Anti social behaviour orders – Euroletter

HATE CRIME & VIOLENCE:

Latvia: Homophobic hooligans sentenced by court

by Kārlis Streips

A court in the Latvian capital city of Rīga has sentenced two men convicted of hooliganism during a LGBT Pride event in the summer of 2007 to suspended prison terms. Gints Krīgers and his juvenile son set off explosive petards during the event. The father was sentenced to a suspended one-year sentence with two years of police supervision, while the son received a suspended sentence of six months with another six months of supervision. Both men will have to sign in with the National Probation Service from time to time.

During the trial, the senior Krīgers admitted that he had exploded the petards and that although this may have been “naïve,” he nevertheless believes that representatives of sexual minorities “must not be allowed to march around in the city centre and waste taxpayer money on guards.” A representative of Mozaika, the LGBT organisation which organised the pride event, testified that she believed that the petards were aimed at participants, “and someone might have been injured.” She added that research shows that such explosions can be fatal.

The court’s detailed ruling will be handed down on October 27, after which both the defendants and prosecutors will be able to file an appeal in 10 days’ time if they should decide to do so. Mozaika representative Linda Freimane said that the attorney for the two men “behaved in an absolutely revolting way” during the hearing, talking about “family values”, the article in the Latvian Constitution which defines marriage as being exclusively between one man and one woman, and suggesting that those who were gathered for the event “are not people who belong in society.”

Pride events in Latvia have always attracted fierce opposition. In 2006, participants were pelted with sacks of excrement while police looked on. In 2008, the pride march occurred along a closed and empty section of road, with police controls so tight that at least some would-be participants were not admitted.

NOTICE BOARD:

Job opportunity with International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission: Executive Director

Source: IGLHRC, 16 October 2008, www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc/content.php?type=1&id=185

IGLHRC is looking for a dynamic leader to assume the role of Executive Director. The next Executive Director should be as comfortable and capable of promoting IGLHRC's mission among the world's foremost human rights leaders and human rights bodies as she/he is in meeting and strategising with local LGBT and human rights advocates.

IGLHRC's Executive Director will:

- Provide outstanding human rights leadership and organizational management for IGLHRC's diverse, multi-national staff.
- Partner with the Board and Staff to provide the vision for implementing IGLHRC's five-year strategic plan
- Communicate, inspire and engage people in supporting and advancing IGLHRC's mission.
- Raise the organisation's profile and influence in promoting its mission.
- Develop and maintain successful relationships with a variety of funders, including corporate, foundation and individuals.
- Recruit, mentor and retain talented staff.
- Develop, present and implement annual operational plans, lead all fiscal and budgeting activities, and report to the Board of Directors and other stakeholders on IGLHRC's progress in implementing its plans.

NOTICE BOARD:

Call for candidates fro the 30th International Human Rights Training Program, Montreal, Canada, June 14 to July 3, 2009

Source: International Centre for Human Rights Education

The next session of the International Human Rights Training Program (IHRT) Equitas will take place from June 14 to July 3, 2009. Now in its 30th year, this annual three-week education event brings together over 120 participants from approximately 60 countries. The IHRT is an intermediate-level program. It provides a unique opportunity for human rights workers and educators to deepen their understanding of human rights and of the essential role of human rights education in effecting social change.

The application form, the memorandum of agreement and additional information on the IHRT are available on

www.equitas.org/english/programs/IHRT.php

Please note that the deadline for receiving international applications is November 21st, 2008 and that only the 2008 Application Forms will be accepted.