

EURO-LETTER

SPECIAL EDITION

**1st World Outgames & International LGBT Human Rights Conference
26 July - 5 August 5, Montréal, Canada**



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Message from ILGA-Europe:

by Patricia Prendiville

Executive Director of ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is very pleased to introduce this special edition of Euro-letter outlining the 1st World Outgames and International LGBT Human Rights Conference being held in Montreal from 25th July to 5th August.

We will be at the International LGBT Human rights conference presenting a number of workshops, and outlining in particular the abuse of the human right to freedom of assembly that is so prevalent in Europe at the moment (as well as elsewhere, obviously). It will be stimulating to meet with human rights activists from around the world, for a second time this year, after the ILGA World Conference in Geneva – re-making connections, and most importantly making new connections and alliances.

In this Euro-letter the different elements of the event both conference and games are described, and we are introduced to the second World Outgames and International LGBT Human Rights conference which will be held in 2009..

We hope to see as many of you as possible from Europe in Montreal to share in the discussion, strategising and cop-operation as well as in the spirit of the games. It will be a time to plan for the changes we want to see in the world of LGBT human rights, and to have fun and delight in the sporting achievements of so many.

All further information about both the games and the conference on the website: www.montreal2006.org

1st World Outgames Montréal 2006

by Mark Tewksbury

Co-President, 1st World Outgames Montreal 2006

From July 26 - August 5th of this year, tens of thousands of people from around the world will descend upon Montreal for 10 days of sport, culture and, for the first time on such a major scale, human rights. The organising committee of the 1st World Outgames has long believed that sport has the power to make social change, and later this year we are looking forward to seeing this idea brought to life.

Europe has long understood that the right to play is a basic human right. The EGLSF has included advocacy as a fundamental part of their activities. Inspired by this vision for the difference LGBT sport can make on a broader scale, the 1st World Outgames is distinguishing itself from global LGBT sport events of the past by including a major human rights conference as part of the official program of our event.

Sport transcends nationalities, religions and cultures. It brings people together on a level playing field where everyone has the chance to participate and do their own individual best. In Montreal this year we are taking this idea one step further, not only inviting athletes and cultural people to participate, but also providing a platform for the leading LGBT advocates from around the world to speak. Presenters such as the United Nation's high commissioner of human rights, Louise Arbour, several Supreme Court justices, politicians and global LGBT advocates will examine various issues that are important to our community. And through this dialogue we intend to collectively take a stand for basic human rights for all LGBT people of the world.

We look forward to welcoming the world to Canada, a country recognised for its progressive stand on human rights issues. And in Montreal, a city known world wide for its festivals, it will be our honour to have you share in the celebration of our LGBT global community. Let the Outgames begin!

International LGBT Human Rights Conference

by Joke Swiebel

Former Member of the European Parliament and Co-President of the International Scientific Committee of the Conference

The 1st World Outgames will be based on three 'pillars': Sports, Culture and Human rights. The *International LGBT Human Rights Conference* will take place from 26 to 29 July, just preceding the Opening Ceremony of the sports events.

One of the main purposes of the conference is to raise the profile of LGBT human rights at the United Nations level, in other international forums and at the level of all other powers that be, national governments, private corporations and non-governmental organisations.

The Conference will be opened with a plenary session on the United Nations, starring Louise ARBOUR, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Furthermore, there will be five plenary sessions with a focus on and various keynote speakers from different parts of the world.

In the session on Europe, *inter alia*, Vladimir SPIDLA, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities will address the Conference. We are very grateful such a high ranking EU politician will participate and discuss what the European Union stands for concerning LGBT human rights, in Europe and elsewhere. We are working hard to ensure that the Council of Europe will also send a evenly high ranking official to present what this important European human rights organisation can do to promote and protect LGBT people from discrimination and violence.

The closing session will be dedicated to The Future of LGBT Human Rights. Martina NAVRATILOVA (Winner of 18 Grand Slam Championships in singles tennis) will be one of the keynote speakers.

In between the five plenary sessions there will be five timeslots of 90 minutes each for 40 workshops. So, in total at least 200 workshops will take place, on at least 30 themes and sub-themes, ranging from the right of assembly to same-sex partnerships, from the strategy of the LGBT movement to the struggle against HIV/AIDS. Already 1100 participants from 80 different countries around the world are registered, among them 800 speakers and presenters in various workshops.

At the end of the Conference a Declaration of Montreal will be presented, holding the main demands of the world-wide LGBT movement addressed to the international community. A draft of the Declaration of Montreal will be put at the Montreal2006 website shortly.

Future LGBT human rights conferences, beginning with the 2nd one to be organized by the 2nd World Outgames taking place in Copenhagen in 2009, will have to take stock of the progress made in realising these demands. In this way, the LGBT Human Rights Conference hopes to leave an important legacy, a legacy that can be used to carry on our world-wide fight for equality and justice.

The full Programme and all other information can be found at www.montreal2006.org/en_conference.html

2nd World Outgames Copenhagen 2009

by Ole Udsholt

Member of the Organising Committee, 2nd World Outgames 2009

From 1st to 8th August 2009 Copenhagen will welcome you all to take part in 2nd World Outgames. More than 30 sports will be offered, several cultural activities such as a chorus and a film festival will take place, and a human rights conference will be part of the programme as well.

Denmark has a long tradition of using sport and culture to build social awareness. Being part of a sport club or taking part in cultural activities is an important tool in the socialisation. The three aspects of Outgames - Sport, Culture and Human rights - are by no means new to us. Our hope is that the athletes will not only find themselves being part of a great tournament, the cultural participants will not only find themselves involved in a fantastic show and the conference participants will not only share knowledge and give each other inspiration for the ongoing work around the world, we sincerely hope that all three groups will learn something from each other by being part of this unique event. Everyone should return from Copenhagen empowered on many levels.

In 2009 it will be 40 years since Stonewall – in 2009 we in Denmark can celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first same sex marriage in the world. Both Stonewall and the anniversary of the first same sex marriage is worth celebrating, but where have these events brought us?

The LGBT family is at some points very homogenous and united we stand stronger. We are at the same time divided into many different sub-groups, often with very different aims and objectives. At some points the interests of these groups might even conflict.

Our hope is that an event like 2nd World Outgames could teach us about each others wishes and needs, so we can act with greater respect inside the LGBT family.

We look forward to welcome you all in Copenhagen. We want to share with each of you this fantastic event, but we also need each of you - and your different ways of thinking and acting - to make this a unique event!