

EURO-LETTER

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THE NATIONAL DANISH ORGANISATION FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS
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Congratulations to all of us on ILGAs consultative status with the UN!

This Euro-letter contains an update (after the successful Barcelona annual conference) on ILGAs lobbying towards the European Institutions and the mandates of the two working parties. See annex 1.

A. Council of Europe Business

Additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights (prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation).

No news! But see enclosed report from COC on talks with the Dutch foreign ministry.

NGO status of ILGA to the Council of Europe

A new application shall be sent off to the Council of Europe this fall. As it must be signed by one of the secretaries general, we propose that LBL in collaboration with Hans Hjerpekjøn produces the application before October 1993.

On July 30 the UN Economical and Social Council (ECOSOC) voted on ILGAs NGO status with the UN - and we won the vote! See enclosed information from Douglas Sanders (who has been doing a great job in Geneva) and a press release sent out from Copenhagen while Hans Hjerpekjøn was here. This must push our application to the CoE.

Lesbian and gay rights in Central- and Eastern European countries applying for membership of the Council of Europe

At the Barcelona conference it was decided that two letters should be sent to all members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

Letter 1: From ILGA members groups to their national members (if possible). This letter with the fact sheet is enclosed. The letter and fact sheet should be sent out according to this list:

glf, Cologne:	Germany, Cyprus, San Marino and Slovakia
EOK:	Greece
SETA:	Finland, Estonia and Portugal
LLH:	Norway and The Czech Republic
Archi Gai:	Italy
LBL:	Denmark, Iceland and Latvia
C-GL:	Spain
RFSL:	Sweden, Lithuania, Malta and Turkey

HOSI Wien: Austria, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary
COC: The Netherlands
ILGA Adm. gr: Belgium and Luxembourg
HACH: Switzerland and Liechtenstein
Jonathan
& David: France
Stonewall: U.K.
GLEN: Ireland.

Addresses has been sent out to all by glp, Cologne.

We have up till now received information that **LBL, RFSL and HOSI** have sent out letters. Others are requested to inform us when the letters are sent. Several Danish parliamentarians have already informed us that they will do their best to secure that new member states of the CoE only are admitted if they fulfil the convention on human rights.

Letter 2: A protest letter from SIRDO and the Helsinki Committee (from Rumania). The letter should be faxed or sent from Rumania to LBL, who will distribute it to the following organisations so that they can sent the letter to the parliamentarians:

glf, Cologne: Germany, Cyprus, San Marino and Slovakia
EOK: Greece
SETA: Finland, Estonia and Portugal
LLH: Norway, Italy and The Czech Republic
LBL: Denmark, Iceland, Spain and Latvia
RFSL: Sweden, Lithuania, Maltha and Turkey
HOSI Wien: Austria, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary
COC: The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg
HACH: Switzerland, France and Liechtenstein
Stonewall: U.K. and Ireland

Unfortunately we have not yet received the letter from Rumania. A reminder has been faxed to Scott Long.

Members of the working party should furthermore lobby members of the Committee of legal affairs (see list of members in Euroletter 16).

A press release from UPI about Rumania is enclosed.

News from Europe

A new updates edition of Alexandra Dudas "Comparison of the Legal Situation of Homosexuals in Europe" is enclosed.

A letter from Peter Leuprecht to HOSI is enclosed for general information about the CoE proceedings.

Draft European Convention on the Rights of the Child

Due to postal confusion(!) we only now enclose copies of John Clarks letter to the CoE regarding the draft convention and the answer from the council. The documents mentioned in the answer

is a survey of international instruments of the council of Europe dealing specifically with family laws. Copies can be obtained from LBL (contact Steffen Jensen).

Is anybody interested in investigating this issue?

Draft European Convention on the Equality between Men and Women

It was decided in Bruxelles that the working party should monitor this work. Who will do that?

B. The CSCE - CHD process

The implementation meeting on Human Dimension issues; Warsaw 27 Sept. - 15 Oct.

Agenda, timetable and modalities are enclosed.

It is very important that we are represented at that meeting. We have learned that Kurt Krickler (what we do without his hard work?) is willing to take part in the meeting on ILGAs behalf. Are there other members of the working party who consider participating?

Furthermore it is important to produce an information package for the meeting. Can we use some of the material from the UN Vienna conference together with our former CSCE material? Could IGLHRC deliver relevant updating?

The UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna

The report on ILGAs successful input to the conference is enclosed for information.

C. EC Businesses

The EC Bureau

Report from the EC bureau is enclosed.

Draft report of the EP Committee on Civil Liberties and Equal Treatment of Lesbians and Gays in the EC

No news.

The ECAS-seminar on discrimination

The final program and registration form are enclosed.

EC budget

An article (from ECAS) about lobbying the European Parliament on the budget is enclosed.

Poverty: Lesbians and gay men

Information from GLEN is enclosed.

D. Editorial

The editorial staff of the EURO-LETTER has been expanded with Lisbeth Andersen. She is a former member of the board the LBL.

Inputs to the EURO-LETTER can be sent either on paper, but preferable on diskette (DOS, WP or another widely used word processing program).

Now the EURO-LETTER is being send to 80 addresses throughout the world.

The ILGA Euro - working parties

1. The Council of Europe/CSCE working party:

GLF, Cologne	HOSI Wien, Austria
COC, The Netherlands	Stonewall Group, UK
Rechtskomitee Lambda, Austria	RFSL, Sweden
LLH, Norway	SETA, Finland
HACH, Switzerland	IGLHRC, USA
LBL, Denmark (Coordinator)	

The tasks of this working party was set out at the European regional meeting of ILGA in Copenhagen december 1990:

- a. Lobbying in relation to the proposed protocol to The European Convention of Human Rights and NGO status for ILGA in relation to the Council of Europe.
- b. Influencing the CoE so that the council will also consider lesbian and gay rights when assessing whether countries in central and eastern Europe can join CoE.
- c. Influencing the CoE in respect to the drafting of model aids legislation.
- d. Trying to get gay and lesbian rights recognised as a part of the human dimension of the CSCE-process.

2. The EC working party:

CG-L, Spain	SETA, Finland
gpl, France	SVD, Germany
GLEN, Ireland	Homostudies, The Netherlands
COC, The Netherlands	RFSL, Sweden
LLH, Norway	Rechtskomitee Lambda, Austria
HOSI Wien, Austria	ILGA Administrative Office
Stonewall Group, UK	NALGO, UK
LBL, Denmark	The EC bureau, Bruxelles (coordinator)

The guidelines for ILGAs work towards the EC was passed at the Stockholm conference and has been confirmed at the Copenhagen conference and at the Berlin conference. The guidelines for the work are these:

"The ILGA has the responsibility of defending and promoting the needs of lesbians and gay men wherever and whenever possible, within the current powers of the EC institutions. Thus, if directives or recommendations emanating from the Commission, or Parliamentary reports or resolutions, are not sensitive to the needs of lesbians and gay men, or if any EC institution is failing to make use of its powers relating to lesbian and gay rights, the ILGA must speak and act. The role of the ILGA is to work actively to ensure protection and development of the rights of lesbians and gay men also within the EC.

The ILGAs remit covers only lesbian and gay rights and thus the ILGA cannot campaign on the general issues of expansion of EC powers or harmonisation of social policies between EC states."

At the European regional conference in Bruxelles the following recommendation was passed:

"The European meeting mandates the EC working party to continue its work in accordance with the ideas discussed at the study conference in Sitges October 1992. The European meeting welcomes the launch of the report at a joint ILGA/ECAS seminar in Brussels in the autumn of 1993.

The working party should

- 1) lobby the EC Commission to present the report to the European Parliament and the appropriate community institutions and the community social partners asking those bodies to present their opinion on the report,
- 2) present the Commission with concrete example of EC policy leading to discrimination of gay men and/or lesbians and ask it for its view on the example if we were to take it to the European Court of Justice as a test case,
- 3) lobby for recognition that discrimination on the basis of "sex" in the Equal Pay Directive and in the Sexual Harassment Code of Practice includes discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation",
- 4) lobby for inclusion of sexual orientation in the Directive on Dismissal when discussions on this resume,
- 5) appoint a lobbyist based in Brussels and
- 6) establish contacts with other NGO's in Brussels (e.g. ECAS, AI, women/feminist groups etc.) and trade unions in the member states."

Furthermore it was agreed to establish a bureau based in Bruxelles and working according to the following guidelines:

"To work effectively towards the European institutions, it would be necessary to create a Brussels-based ILGA EC Bureau which is mandated to speak on behalf of ILGA towards European Community institutions, within the policy of ILGA as laid down by the annual and European regional conferences.

Function:

The function of such a group would be:

1. fundraising;
2. trying to implement and develop plans as agreed by the working party at annual conferences and regional conferences and other meetings;
3. prepare the ECAS/ILGA seminar and other concrete activities;
4. establish contacts with other NGOs in Brussels.

At a later stage it should concretise the EHRF study and actively lobby the EC. It would also coordinate ILGA initiatives towards the EC, e.g. applications for funding.

All CoE and CSCE work would be done directly by those who are currently already active in this field in the working party.

Structure:

The members of the ILGA EC bureau would be appointed by the working party. The EC bureau as such is a member of the working party. The bureau would consist of people based in Brussels (or who can get there easily and without additional expense to ILGA). These people would be appointed because of their expertise in the field. We propose that it would consist of approximately six persons: women and men, and that in its composition gender parity is aimed at.

The persons should have the following skills:

1. links with the European parliament;
2. links with the DGV;
3. links with the (rest of the) ILGA Euro working party.

Within the bureau one person will be appointed who would be the official ILGA link with the EC institutions. Initially this would be Micha Ramakers, who has agreed to accept this responsibility as a volunteer (i.e. outside the information secretary working hours) until funding can be secured to employ a staff person who would then become the main contact. Micha Ramakers will not be working in these matters in his working hours as ILGA information secretary and will, as said, be acting as a volunteer in this field.

The bureau would operate from the information secretariat office in Brussels and would have its own stationary. This seems the most practical solution and it would provide ILGA with a central contact address for EC institutions.

Reporting back:

In general, the bureau would report back to the working party

- through sending information on relevant EC initiatives to the Euroletter;
- through sending minutes of its work to the Euroletter;
- at EC workshops at regional and annual conferences;
- possibly at one or more annual meetings such as the Sitges conference which it could call as it sees necessary."

Currently the members of the EC bureau are:

Peter Ashman, David Geer, Hein Verkerk, Micha Ramakers, Mikkel Emborg, Susie Jolly and Wouter Wils.

At the Barcelona annual conference the action plan in chapter 16 of "Homosexuality: A European Community Issue" was adopted as ILGAs action plan towards the EC.

The Euroletters are sent out regularly by the LBL to members of both working parties and several other people. The Euroletters are the main means of communication for the working parties between conferences.

Members of the working parties (and other) should report to LBL and we will see to the spread of information through the Euroletters.