

Announcing the Cancellation of ILGA-Europe's 2020 Annual Conference

[News, ILGA-Europe Annual Conference](#)

After thoughtful consideration, it is with a heavy heart that we are announcing the cancellation of [ILGA-Europe's 2020 Annual Conference](#).

The ILGA-Europe board made the difficult decision as countries across the world take unprecedented measures to slow down the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the [conference](#) is some months away, there are many risks in continuing to plan this event, with so much uncertainty about how this pandemic will evolve over the coming months. We have considered several scenarios: playing our part in limiting large gatherings when social distancing is still required; having to cancel the event at the last minute due to new waves of restrictions (with important financial consequences for ILGA-Europe and participants); ensuring the health and safety of all participants at the event and their communities back home upon their return; and significant travel restrictions limiting the ability of a huge number of people from attending the conference, among others.

We also considered the impact of the response to the pandemic on our movement. **Our communities are amongst the most vulnerable at the moment.** Many of your groups and organisations are already seriously impacted by this crisis, financially and politically. We see how the work of all our organisations is quickly shifting and how our priorities will change over the coming months to meet new emerging needs. In this context, too many may not have the time, space and resources to attend the ILGA-Europe conference, thereby limiting attendance to the more privileged amongst us.

After having carried out an extensive assessment of the situation, we have concluded that it would be irresponsible to go ahead with planning [this year's annual conference](#).

While cancelling the annual conference is heartbreaking for the ILGA-Europe team, it will also enable us to **continue to support our movement as best as possible in these times.** We will reprioritise our time and resources to adapt and shift huge pieces of work in order to stay relevant to the rapidly-evolving needs of LGBTI activists and groups across Europe and Central Asia in these unprecedented times. In the coming days, weeks and months we want to work alongside all of you in making sure that LGBTI communities get the support they need during these times; to make sure that our changing advocacy needs get heard; to find new opportunities for our movements to work together; and to work with funders in ensuring that our critical work is seen and supported.

Over the coming weeks and months, the ILGA-Europe staff and board will work on alternative ways for our membership to come together. We of course need to think about *alternative ways* of holding the **Annual General Meeting** which is essential to our organisation's good governance. The board will work hard to make sure that we are able to go ahead with creating a virtual space for members where can take part in the democratic life of the organisation, especially as there are a number of elections to take place this year. Who knows? This might be an opportunity to bring more people to participate in board elections and make discussions about our work programmes and finances accessible to a wider number of members!

We all know that the [Annual Conference](#) is so much more than the general assembly. It is a place where we connect, network, learn from each other, offer solidarity and support to each other. At a time when social distancing is the best way to care for each other, the ILGA-Europe team will take on the challenge to explore alternative ways to serve the important goals traditionally met by the conference, and further ways for the movement to come together this year to learn from each other and mutually support. We will dedicate a portion of our time in the coming months to learning and **enhancing our capabilities to create new platforms for sharing good practices and organising online spaces** for the movement to connect.

We are grateful to our local hosts [Bilitis Resource Center Foundation](#), [GLAS Bulgaria Foundation](#), and [Youth LGBT Organisation, Deystvie](#) for being so understanding about the cancellation of our conference. To our friends there we say: you have been wonderful working with us so far, we will continue to work with you and **bring the 2021 conference to Sofia**.

For now, let's all take care of each other and of our communities. Let's protect our communities and our work, let's adapt to continue to advance equality and social justice, and let's rally to overcome the current challenges. Let the work continue and let's open ourselves to many innovative initiatives in between.

Until we come together ever more resilient and stronger to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ILGA-Europe in 2021, we are with you as all of our work goes on.