

# Our Executive Director Leaving: ILGA-Europe Board's Response

[News, ILGA-Europe](#)

“Although we are deeply sad that we will have to say goodbye to Evelyne, her departure will also present an opportunity, both for the organisation and for whoever takes on the role.

After having Evelyne as part of the movement for so long, and also leading ILGA-Europe itself for so many years, it came as a bit of a shock when she announced to the board her intention to step down. But having spoken to Evelyne at length, both individually and in a collective setting, it is clear that she has decided to take this step, both out of consideration for herself, and considering the future and innovation of the organisation.

As members of the board, we fully respect and applaud Evelyne's decision. Of course, we are emotional too. Evelyne has been right there since all of us on the board became activists in the movement. She has been a level-headed, clear-sighted constant in an ever-changing world. Her consistency of vision, combined with highly-intelligent and informed adaptability, has provided a core, calm underpinning as we navigated huge change as a movement during the years of her tenure.

The world may continue to be in flux, but Evelyne is leaving ILGA-Europe at a time when the organisation is in a more stable position than it has ever been, not only in financial terms, but in the strength of its staff team, which is solid, cohesive, engaged and ready to step up where necessary. This is a testament to both Evelyne's leadership, the leadership of other managers in the organisation, and the commitment and passion of every team member. Knowing this as a board, we are calm about the transition because we know whoever is appointed will be leading a holistically healthy organisation.

## A strong mandate

Amid such organisational strength and stability, this change in leadership will not put ILGA-Europe in a vulnerable position. Although we are very sad to that we will have to say goodbye to Evelyne, her departure will also present an opportunity both for the organisation and for whoever takes on the role.

That person will not only get to lead a structurally sound organisation, but one that is cohesive in its values, and which has grown over recent years, not only in terms of finance and staff, but also in approaches to the work, such as increased flexibility, expanded connection with the movements in different countries, and deeper connections to institutions, politicians and policy makers, both in Brussels and nationally across the region. There is a very strong mandate from the membership for ILGA-Europe, and there is a definite opportunity for whoever takes over the role to develop their own vision alongside the team, to see how this can be further delivered upon. To see how we further develop an organisation that constantly adapts to meet what is relevant to the movement in circumstances and an environment that is changing, shifting and becoming more and more critical.

It's a lot of responsibility – Evelyne will be the first to tell you that! – but it's also an opportunity to lead an organisation that encourages and embraces innovation and creativity.

Working directly with Evelyne, the entire board has taken on the task of ensuring that the recruitment of ILGA-Europe's next Executive Director is done in a timely and proper fashion and ensuring that everyone who needs to be involved in the process has a place at the table. We will be having a General Meeting in June and we encourage members to join and ask any questions they may have, which we will be more than happy to answer.

## **Smooth and easy transition**

Our goal is to make this transition in leadership as easy and smooth as possible. We are working with a recruitment company who will assist us at every stage. We have appointed a selection committee of six members from the board, and the staff have all been consulted about what they think is needed in terms of both soft and hard skills for the position. The role will be advertised this week and recruitment will happen in early summer.

There will be several more occasions for us to express our gratitude for Evelyne's commitment, consistency, tireless work and frankly great company over the years, and for us to wish her well in her future endeavours, which we know will be of benefit to the world. But at this juncture we want to express our deep appreciation for how involved and considerate Evelyne has been in her process of departure. That she is leaving in such a structured and well-thought out way is a testament to her leadership. There were tears from the board when she told us of her plan to leave, and I know from the staff too. It is hard to imagine an ILGA-Europe without Evelyne, but we know her work has ensured that it will continue to thrive in its crucial role working for a world in which each and every LGBTI person in their everyday lives is free, equal and safe.

*Natia Gvianishvili & Yves Aerts Jacobs, ILGA-Europe, Co-chairs*