WHO WE ARE

OLKE is a non governmental organisation (NGO), founded in Athens in April 17th, 2004 with basic aims to combat discrimination and protect human rights of LGBTI people in Greece. The organisation also strives to raise awareness on issues like sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sexual health, marriage equality and same-sex parenting.

Furthermore, OLKE strives to eradicate prejudice, stereotypes, stigma and social exclusion against the LGBTI population, homophobia, hate speech and crimes, plus lobbying for LGBTI rights along with the political parties.

One of our most important projects is the Helpline “1528”, a national help line for sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Our organisation initiated the creation of the first LGBTI Social Centre, namely the “Athens Rainbow House” on 2012. OLKE is also coordinating the LGBTQI Organisations Platform, an umbrella of more than 15 LGBTQI Organisations and Groups in Greece.

OLKE organised the 2nd Mediterranean ILGA – EUROPE Solidarity and Network Meeting and International LGBTI Family Conference (Grundtvig Learning Partnership Project).

Other participations:
1) Documentation of homophobic and transphobic violence, the ongoing survey coordinated by ILGA – Europe in 12 countries during 2013,
2) Participation at the Strategic Plan meeting 2014 – 2018 of ILGA – Europe in Athens, June 2013,
3) Annual International HIV Festival,
4) Participation to the International Research “EMIS” (Health Research without boundaries),
5) Be Positive (NGO for HIV bodies): cooperating against discrimination,
6) Annual Athens Pride Festival,
7) Annual Antiracist Festival,
8) Annual International Day against Homophobia, and
9) FRA: the first LGBTI European Survey

OLKE, as a small but the most active LGBT organisation especially in a country dealing with an economic crisis where there is no legal right to safeguard the lives of LGBT people, is a shining example of efforts and successes with limited means.

OLKE succeeded in realising the first two LGBTI marriages in Greece, and is under litigation with the Greek state; it has managed to become a founding member of NELFA (Network of European LGBTI Families Associations) and to deal with issues that concern the LGBTI families.

We can make the best for our community. We defiantly just need the support of a European event especially the ILGA Annual Conference in order to give us visibility, solidarity, experience and a chance to speak more openly with the politicians.

We need you to be a part of our story...

**Political situation of LGBTI in Greece**

In the last three years homophobia has grown in Greece. The country has always been conservative regarding the sexual issues, but in the years previous to 2010, the LGBTI rights have experienced considerable change. Laws protecting LGBTI people from discrimination have been voted from the parliament, but also the society turned to be more and more tolerant. The pride since 2005 kept growing and also a gay village right has been created in the centre of Athens in the area of Gazi.

But in the last years in accordance with the growing influence of the extreme right wing in the political scene, discrimination against LGBTI people has grown. Especially in the last year since the 2012 elections and, for the first time in
modern history, the parliamentary representation of the extreme rightist party of Golden Dawn, the discrimination incidents became more often. In 2012, twenty (20) such incidents were reported, but surely more have happened. In 2013 we are already counting more than 25 incidents! People have been physically and verbally abused mainly in the streets and some of them have been injured.

The political situation still being very unstable both financially and politically favourites this kind of treatment not only to the LGBTI rights, but also to the human rights in general. In this political environment to organize a congress like this one will not only be a challenge for ILGA, but also will be a huge support for all the work we are trying to do here with the LGBTI community.

**CONFERENCE ORGANISING TEAM**

OLKE eagerly has already got in contact with other LGBTI Organisations and Groups of Greece, and set up the organising team of the following seven people:

Konstantina Kosmidou (OLKE): Coordinator

And in an alphabetical order:

Marina Galanou (Transgender Association): Transgender Issues

Penelope Kaouni (Colour Youth of Athens): Volunteer Manager

Marianella Kloka (Positive Voice: people living with HIV): Public Relations and Fundraising Manager

Zak Kostopoulos (Athens Pride): Social Events Manager and Social Media

Zacharena Karathanasi (LGBTI Parenting by OLKE): Programme and Speakers Manager

Stefanos Papaconstantinou (OLKE): Communication and Media Manager
FUNDRAISING

As a key issue for the conference, we will work towards raising the highest possible sum in order to support ILGA – EUROPE causes.

We will make sure that we will have at least one media sponsor from television, radio and the newspapers.

We will seek sponsoring from:

- LGBTI Café – Clubs
- The Private Banking and Enterprises Sector
- Public Authorities such as:
  1) General Youth Secretariat
  2) General Secretariat For Gender Equality
- Public and Educational Sector.
- Fundraising Social Events such as:
  1) Parties
  2) Movie Screening
  3) Athens Pride Festival
  4) Crowdfunding

CONFERENCE SITE

Athens is not only the capital of Greece but also one of the most important cities of the Mediterranean congressional tourism.

Hence you can trace many hotels close to the historical centre of Athens that offer the highest level of services such as:

1) Conference facilities
2) A great variety of single and double rooms
3) Accessibility by people with mobility and special needs
4) Aproximity to the metro station and in short distance of the centre of Athens and the archaeological monuments
5) Hotels with special offers for big events such the ILGA Annual Conference, like: the Athenaeum Intercontinental, the Electra Hotel, the Ledra Marriot, the Titania Hotel, the President Hotel and the Divani
Caravel; hotels that completely fulfil the high level of services for an International Conference.

PROGRAMME / SPEAKERS

Our experience in two International Conferences as organisers, two Lifelong Learning Grundtvig programmes as partners and organisers, our participation in six Pride Festivals in Athens, and the only LGBTI Legal Organisation who set up the national helpline for LGBTI people, provide us with the know-how of organising effectively International Conferences.

We will work hard in order the Annual Conference of 2015 in Athens, will include high profile speakers such as academicians from Greece and other countries, members of the Hellenic and European Parliament, members of local authorities such as the Mayor of Athens, activists, entrepreneurs, researchers, psychologists, etc.

SOCIAL EVENTS

We will get in contact with the Mayor of Athens so us to provide us the “Hop on – Hop off”, a bus tourist line for the participants of the Annual Conference. All the venues that we are considering to organise the social events have wheelchair access.

The venues in Gazi Area, also known as the Gay Athens Village, give us the opportunity to meet with the local LGBTI Community and talk with LGBTI people.

It is very important for our visibility that some of the social events will be held in the Gazi Area, with people around us who are not involved in any organised group. But also LGBTI NGOs will support the organising team and OLKE not only with volunteers but also with promotion and advocacy of the cause of the Annual Conference.

Activists from all around Greece will be in Athens to meet the participants, talk with them and work hard to promote our community’s needs.
Social events that we are planning to organise are:

1) Parties
2) Movie Screening
3) Athens Pride Festival
4) Reception at the City Hall
5) A meeting with MPs, EMPs and Local Authorities
6) Special Events in the square of Athens, informing the general public for the Annual Conference
7) Posters and flyers
8) Press Conference with the Local and International Media
9) TV Spots in private channels
10) Giving interviews in the Local and International Media

**VOLUNTEERS**

The organising team is a group of members of different LGBTI Groups and LGBTI NGO’s.

More than fifteen (16) LGBT Groups and LGBTI NGOs will support the organising team and OLKE with volunteers, promotion and advocacy for the cause of the Annual Conference.

That means that we have already the opportunity to gather more than seventy (70) volunteers to help us before and during the conference.

People that they have already helped the Athens Pride Festival are ready to support the OLKE’s candidacy for the Annual ILGA - EUROPE Conference 2015.

OLKE is ready and wishes to organise the ILGA - EUROPE Annual Conference of 2015.

We can make it and we need your support to show to the Greek community that we are here to fight for our fundamental rights.

We need you to be a part of our story…

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