Ljubljana proposal to host ILGA-Europe Annual Conference 2018

ILGA-Europe conference will help strengthen the local LGBTI movement.
City of Ljubljana
Zoran Janković
Mayor

2 September 2016

The European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association

Invitation to host ILGA Europe Conference 2018

Dear ILGA Europe members,

It gives me a great pleasure, on behalf of the City of Ljubljana, to endorse the bid for the ILGA Europe Conference 2018 to be held in the Slovenian capital. Over the last years, Ljubljana marked several notable anniversaries, hosted a number of events of international significance, including larger congresses and major sports events, as the EuroBasket 2013, proving excellent organisational skills and hospitality.

Our city has furthermore seen the completion of major projects defined in its medium-term development strategy, all aimed at improving the city's functionality and the quality of life of its residents and visitors alike. Urban interventions have created vast pedestrian spaces open to new purposes. The expansion of the traffic-free zone, the construction of underground parking garages, the landscaping of the Ljubljana riverbanks, which has won the prestigious European Prize for Public Open Space 2012, and the further implementation of green policies are among many projects included in the city's sustainable development masterplan.

I am also very proud that, after winning this prestigious title, Ljubljana celebrates a very special year as European Green Capital 2016, which is awarded by the European Commission, thus commending the best performing city for its achievements in environmental sustainability.

Ljubljana has proven many times to be an open, tolerant and friendly city committed to the principles of equality and diversity. The City Municipality of Ljubljana provides support to LGBT NGO's as well as the Ljubljana Pride Parade since its beginning. It has also introduced a “LGBT-friendly” certificate which can be applied for by any interested organization, whether private or public.

On top of the necessary infrastructure, a city's image as a tourist destination is also shaped by the human dimension, which is what visitors from abroad, including congress delegates, appreciate highly in Ljubljana. Meeting planners often say that it is a logistically stress-free conference destination. Due to the city's compact size, meeting venues, hotels and many places of interest to delegates are at a walking distance. Ljubljana also has that extra something which makes people feel relaxed, including the feeling of safety. Its picturesque Old Town turns into an elegant urban lounge, where delegates can easily meet and network in their time at leisure.

Once again, the City of Ljubljana and its residents would be delighted to extend a warm welcome to the organisers and delegates of the ILGA Europe Conference in 2018!

Yours sincerely,

Zoran Janković
Organiser proposing a bid

ŠKUC-Magnus is a Slovenian gay group active in the field of gay culture, LGBT activism and HIV prevention. It was founded in 1984, and we are ILGA member since 1992.

Our local partners: SKUC-LL, Legebitra, DIH, TransAkcija which are all ILGA members.

Slovenian LGBT+ invites to ILGA-Europe conference in Ljubljana

With a population of less than 300,000, Ljubljana will never be accused of being a huge city and as such the gay and lesbian scene here isn’t exactly massive. This doesn’t stop it being vibrant and very much alive however. Socially Slovenes have a tendency to be a little reserved, but with it’s relatively young population allied with a large number of students Ljubljana quickly opens up.

Ljubljana’s position at the forefront of the gay and lesbian movement in Eastern Europe stretches way back to the Yugoslav days. Homosexual acts were decriminalised here in 1976. The mid 1980’s saw the founding ŠKUC’s gay section (called Magnus), which put a rocket on to the back of the movement so to speak. This led to the establishment of the Ljubljana Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in 1984, which is actually the oldest gay and lesbian film festival on the continent, as well as a weekly club night at K4 in Ljubljana centre.
Magnus would continue to fight for gay and lesbian rights through the 1990’s, campaigning for same-sex marriage to be legalised as early as 1992. This fight reached its culmination (for now, at least) in 2015 when the definition of marriage in Slovenia was changed to include same-sex couples. Along the way came newsletters, discussion groups, events and Ljubljana’s pride parade, organised for the first time in 2001 and running annually ever since.

We want to welcome organisations and activists from all over Europe to our work place in politics and human rights.

Miran Šolinc, president, Association ŠKUC

**Conference Organising Team**

A dedicated organising team already consists of ŠKUC staff Miran Šolinc, Jasmina Kožar, Jernej Škof, Tatjana Greif, Nataša Sukič, and from partner organisations Legebitra Simon Maljevac, Miha Lobnik, Mitja Blažič, Lana Gobec, from TranAkcija Anja Koletnik, from DIH Andrej Pišl and many others, all well known to and familiar with ILGA-Europe, plus a large network of volunteers.

**Fundraising**

With regards to fundraising, ŠKUC and LGBT+ NGOs seeks to get the necessary funds at government level, from national foundations and regional organisations.

ŠKUC Magnus will also organise some fundraising events prior and during the conference together with its partners.
Suggested conference venue – Hotel Union congress center


Grand Hotel Union is the largest hotel conference centre in Ljubljana. 21 conference halls and salons, with 10 to 850 participants capacity, are a perfect venue for a conference, organized according to our wishes. Hotel team will not only take care of everything, from planning to performance, but also enrich the event with outstanding cuisine.
Budget Accommodation


The Central Hotel is 3 minutes away from Union hotel, is a smaller business hotel, which offers excellent location and full comfort. The hotel is only a step away from the main bus and railway stations. The sights of Ljubljana and the old city centre are accessible on foot. The hotel has 71 comfortable rooms and 3 suites. If you travel by car you can use the parking garage in close vicinity of the hotel.

Programme and Speakers

SKUC and other NGOs can assist ILGA-Europe in obtaining participation of a high profile speaker like a member of the government, maybe prime minister itself, relevant minister, Ombudswomen or the city mayor at the opening ceremony of the ILGA-Europe conference 2018 in Ljubljana. We already have the support of the City of Ljubljana and will also be able to draw on high-ranking politicians.

Social Events

The added value is that ŠKUC is bringing culture to the conference. We will organise with our LGBT artists a theatre play, a concert, a movie screening and a poetry reading in different languages to enrich the programme during the conference and in the evenings.

ŠKUC has contacts to experienced party organisers who will ensure cool parties and an interesting social programme for the delegates. Ljubljana is a vibrant and modern city so the opportunities for having a good time here are great for every pocket.

We will do our best that a complimentary welcome reception for delegates will be offered by the mayor, relevant ministry or Ombudswoman. Complimentary city sightseeing tours will be organised in 3 different languages.

Volunteers

All local organisations has a certain number of volunteers so finding people who would be delighted to help out during the ILGA-Europe conference 2018 will be easy. A one day training will be organised for them prior the conference.
Why Ljubljana

Good value for money

When talking about Ljubljana’s advantages as a conference destination, delegates from abroad like to point out the residents’ good knowledge of foreign languages, a feeling of safety, relaxed efficiency and sincere hospitality.

Relaxed Atmosphere

Ljubljana is regarded as a logistically stress-free destination – its compact size allows walking between most venues and hotels, including the proposed congress centre, which enjoys a very convenient location in the city centre; the public transport network, or even biking, are an option to move around from less central hotels.

• Safety counts: Slovenia is a safe country. Wherever you are, even late at night in the cities, you have no need for concern. Two Reader’s Digest social experiments placed Ljubljana among the most honest cities in the world (the lost wallet or mobile phone test). Slovenia also ranks in the top 30 safest countries on the world crime and safety index published by Numbeo.

With a rich agenda of cultural events, a lively café society and an active youth scene, Ljubljana has a truly dynamic flair. It is also distinguished by an attractive historic quarter with a cozy, lounge-style feel that is ideal for networking. For young and old, it is the ideal city to combine business and leisure and re-energize from a successful meeting, mingling or team bonding.
Easy to get to

Ljubljana lies halfway between Vienna and Venice, at the crossroads of different cultures, geographical regions and historical developments.

Its location within a convenient two-hour flight from almost all major European airports makes it a readily accessible destination for meetings.

All flights are operated through the Ljubljana International Airport (www.lju-airport.si), which is located at 25 km from the city. The current non-stop connections comprise around **220 weekly scheduled flights** to 23, mostly European destinations. They are operated by 6 regular and 2 low-cost airlines: Adria Airways (Slovenia's national carrier, www.adria.si, member of the Star Alliance), Air Serbia, Air France, EasyJet, Finnair, Montenegro Airlines, Turkish Airlines and WizzAir.

The closest airports in the neighbouring countries serve as additional gateways (Trieste and Venice – Italy, Graz and Klagenfurt – Austria, Zagreb and Rijeka – Croatia).

Good road (mainly motorway) and train connections are another alternative to reach Ljubljana.

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**Welcome to Ljubljana to ILGA-Europe 2018!**

ŠKUC-Magnus and partners LL, Legebitra, DIH and TransAkcija