

ILGA-Europe call for project proposals

Strengthening the European LGBTI movement in the context of rising anti-LGBTI forces

Deadline: 23 May, Sunday, 23:59 CEST

At ILGA-Europe, we believe that now is a crucial time to stay united, re-claim agency and pro-actively address growing anti-LGBTI and anti-gender rhetoric and state-led anti-LGBTI attacks. That's why we are launching a re-granting programme to strengthen the capacities of LGBTI organisations in Europe to achieve change in the current landscape of rising anti-LGBTI forces. Under this scheme we will support efforts that enable work on communication, alliance building, and the movement's cohesion and resilience.

The context

For years now, we have witnessed mounting anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric, and targeted attacks against LGBTI rights and the LGBTI movement. Populists, religious actors, the far-right, ultra-conservative organisations, but also increasingly government actors and civil society actors are working to curtail LGBTI rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Their tactics are diverse and include (but are not limited to) strategic litigation, lobbying discriminatory legislation and policy, campaigning on-line, publicly presenting signatures against progressive laws, antagonising and pitting pro-rights communities against each other, producing and spreading harmful misinformation.

Some of the concrete examples of ways in which actions by these forces have impacted LGBTI communities over the recent years include - but are not limited to: the ban on legal gender recognition in Hungary; LGBTI-free zones and Family Charters in Poland; the ban on gender studies and LGBTI phobic violence during local election campaigns in Romania; violence during Plovdiv Pride and control over NGO funding in Bulgaria; the rise of anti-trans rhetoric in the UK; the increase in anti-LGBTI rhetoric in the media in Denmark; trials of Middle East Technical University's Prides and scapegoating the LGBTI community for the withdrawal of Turkey from the Istanbul convention; blaming the spread of COVID-19 on same-sex marriages by religious leaders in Ukraine; and the harmful family legislation and laws targeting civil society organisations and freedom of expression in Russia.

Anti-LGBTI actors often use anti-equality, anti-democratic, anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric and tap into different fears and anxieties of specific national contexts. They aim to disrupt alliances, create divides, attack funding of LGBTI organisations and groups, and reduce or halt progressive laws. They also sow discontent and misinformation among the general public, scapegoat LGBTI communities to divert attention from the anti-democratic slide and socio-economic and political failures, deliberately instilling fear around topics of LGBTI rights, marriage equality, gender equality, adoption, inclusive sexual education, abortion rights, trans rights and gender studies.

In essence these are anti-rights actors who are present and active across Europe and who aim to undermine fundamental rights more broadly. Therefore, it is paramount that we pro-actively address these attacks aimed to undermine and disrupt our work and lives. We must stay united, strengthen our solidarity across the human rights sector, boost our capacities, be agile and well-organised, and work on larger progressive agendas with allied organisations in a broader human rights movement.

Aim of the program

This programme aims to strengthen the capacities of LGBTI organisations to be(come) pro-active and to achieve change in the current context of growing populist anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric and state-led anti-LGBTI attacks.

Under this programme we aim to do this through:

- Scaling-up skills, competences and capacities of the LGBTI movement in the areas of communication, alliance building, and sustaining a cohesive and resilient LGBTI movement;
- Developing new approaches and tactics for communication work, effective campaigning, alliance building and evidence-based advocacy on the rights and needs of LGBTI people in the context of rising anti-LGBTI forces.

Projects we are looking for

ILGA-Europe acknowledges that while a lot of funding has been made available by funders for advocacy purposes it's been challenging to find financial and human resources, time and energy to do the necessary work in communication, alliance building and on the movement's cohesion. This scheme shifts the focus and supports projects aimed at work on communication, trust building and alliance building outside and inside the movement. We believe that strengthening these aspects of work will in return create conditions under which our long-term advocacy goals are more likely to be met. Therefore, this scheme is not designed to support projects that solely address advocacy goals. However, we strongly believe the work in the three areas described below can and will feed back into existing advocacy and campaigning work of LGBTI organisations.

ILGA-Europe is looking for projects that will produce tangible results, have the potential of a sustainable impact, and fall into one or more of the three following areas of work:

1. Work in communication that specifically addresses and counters anti-LGBTI misinformation, misrepresentation and harmful anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric.

Activities that can be supported under this strand of work include (*but are not limited to*):

- developing and implementing a new strategic communication plan;
- conducting research to inform communications;
- developing and implementing new communication approaches to and tactics for advocacy and campaigning in the context of growing anti-LGBTI forces;
- developing new creative approaches and message frames that address populist anti-LGBTI rhetoric and attacks (this can include developing new visual and audio components);
- strengthening communication strategies that reinforce positive message about LGBTI people and their rights and are based on values and a vision of society rooted in human rights;
- developing and implementing communication tactics to tackle smear campaigns and hate speech that LGBTI activists are facing;
- developing a toolkit on countering anti-LGBTI rhetoric and attacks using real, recent experiences of LGBTI people and/or organisations in the country/region;
- organising training/meetings to develop alternative communication strategies with established external experts and/or LGBTI organisations that have expertise to share;

- building up organisational capacities if the organisation has strong communication expertise in countering anti-LGBTI rhetoric and want to support the work of other organisations as mentor/leader.

2. Alliance building across civil society with relevant allies outside the LGBTI movement to have better and more aligned strategies to counter and withstand anti-LGBTI and anti-gender backlash, to seize opportunities and to (further) mobilise allies. This can be to strengthen and expand existing alliances and/or to build new networks across social justice movement.

Activities that can be supported under this strand of work include *(but are not limited to)*:

- analysing the forms and strategies of anti-LGBTI/anti-gender rhetoric and attacks and translating this analysis into concrete new approaches and practices to build alliances, influence public opinion, develop campaigning and advocacy etc;
- mapping possible allies/partners and their positions and priorities in order to find the common ground and entry points into building new alliances and solidarity networks (for example, it can be shared interests in advocating for anti-discrimination legislation that covers multiple grounds, or challenging harmful legislation that limits space for civil society);
- meetings/events/capacity building with existing allies - human rights and social justice actors, service providers, business sector, professional associations, trade unions etc – to find common ground, develop common positions, foster joint argumentation and narratives in the face of anti-gender, anti-LGBTI and anti-rights rhetoric and attacks;
- meetings/events/capacity building with prospective allies to develop broad human rights alliances that work towards and on overarching political and social goals with the focus on human rights values (it can focus on LGBTI rights, women’s rights, sexual and reproductive rights etc);
- building, supporting and strengthening the cross-national and/or cross-movement human rights networks of expertise on strategies and tactics of addressing anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric and attacks;
- developing and implementing strategies in mobilising allies in opposing the attacks, including mobilising parts of the population and civil rights movement who might never before have spoken out in favour of LGBTI rights.

3. Support LGBTI movement cohesion and its capacity to be more resilient, inclusive and impactful in the face of growing anti-LGBTI and anti-gender rhetoric and state-led anti-LGBTI policies and practices.

Activities that can be supported under this strand of work include *(but are not limited to)*:

- meetings/events aimed at building stronger ties within the LGBTI movement across different sub-groups and regions and developing together common advocacy, campaigning, and/or fundraising strategies;
- meetings/events/training across various LGBTI groups for developing and sharing resilience and wellbeing strategies and preventing burnout in the face of anti-LGBTI and anti-gender backlash;
- training/guiding support to:
 - build and sustain trust and cohesion within the team (in a particular organisation and/or network);
 - build skills and capacities in sustaining motivation and agility, working on conflict prevention and resolution within the team/organisation;
 - work on alignment and affirmation of shared values within the team/organisation;

- meetings/events to build new partnerships within the LGBTI movement;
- meetings/training/events to have critical conversations around resilience, wellbeing, inclusivity, power and privilege.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of activities which could be supported under this call for proposals. This list should be used as a guidance in thinking through the project proposal.

Budget & scope

ILGA-Europe can support 10 to 15 grants in the size of €12.500 to €17.500. Projects involving two or more organisations working in a partnership can increase their budget to €20.000 in total.

If the project involves more than one organisation it has to be developed in cooperation. Contact and other information about the applicants should include all partnered organisations. In the project and activities descriptions, there should be clear division of task and responsibilities indicated for each organisation. The budget also has to reflect clearly the distribution of the requested funds amongst partnered organisations. ILGA-Europe may contact the partner organisation(s) to verify that they commit to the project as described in the application.

The project should start between 1 and 30 September 2021, and should end by 30 September 2022. The final reporting will be due no later than 15 October 2022.

Criteria

- Projects should respond to the aim, objectives, priorities and criteria of this call. The project should fit in one or more of the three areas of work outlined above.
- Projects should be implemented by LGBTI-run organisations and initiative groups in Europe¹.
- Considering the size of grants, your organisation will need to show how you will be able to manage the funds. Organisations should demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement projects, both substantively as well as administratively.
- In selecting proposals, ILGA-Europe will prioritise projects that:
 - Present a clear plan for how the envisaged change is going to come about by providing a good analysis of the current context and define the steps that will be taken to work towards the envisioned change;
 - Seek to establish practices/tools/solutions that can live beyond the project's lifetime and that have the potential to enhance the movement's thinking on addressing anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric and attacks in a longer-term perspective;
 - Are submitted by organisations working in challenging circumstances where their work has been severely affected by the current anti-gender and/or anti-LGBTI rhetoric and/or state-led anti-LGBTI attacks and they have limited or no access to the funding to do the much-needed work in the areas covered by this scheme.

¹ For this call Europe is considered to include the following countries: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

Further information:

- ILGA-Europe aims to support a pool of projects that is diverse in terms of their focus (geographically, focus populations, approach, etc). With this we aim to maximise the potential for learning for grantees and ILGA-Europe. Our hope is to make the learning from these projects available to other organisations.
- Non-registered organisations are eligible to apply, but must partner with a registered legal entity that is able to receive funds from ILGA-Europe. This entity cannot be a physical person.
- The submitted projects must be clearly distinct from other projects currently implemented by the applicant.
- Implementation period (= period of cost eligibility) is up to 13 months (1st September 2021 to 30th September 2022).

Key aspects of working with ILGA-Europe under this re-granting scheme

ILGA-Europe realises the focus of this call means that we will be supporting projects taking place in challenging contexts. Changing realities may mean that grantees and ILGA-Europe need to adapt plans. Things may not go as planned. ILGA-Europe values the learning that comes from supporting this work, which we want to support in the following ways:

- We will answer any questions you may have during the preparation of your project proposal.
- Once projects are selected we will work with those involved to discuss any questions or doubts, look together at the planning for the project and revise the budget if needed.
- When project activities will be implemented we will be available to support you in case you experience problems or need suggestions on how to go about some aspects of your work. We can work together to make changes as required.
- We believe that the broader LGBTI movement can benefit from the learning of these projects. We would like to share learning from the work done under this funding with other LGBTI activists in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This knowledge can be shared through articles, educational materials, online learning sessions among others. This work will be our responsibility and we will work with you to identify what information can be shared and with whom. From your side, we expect you to commit to take part in regular peer-learning activities which will take place as part of this programme, involving future grantees under this scheme. Throughout the project, this may take-up up to two days of your time (please consider this when budgeting staff time).
- During the duration of the project we will have regular contact with you (every 3 months). We expect you to commit to these regular conversations with ILGA-Europe staff to discuss projects implementation, threats, opportunities, and possible capacity building needs. Conversations will include an update on the progress made and any issues that might be relevant for the continuation of the project (incl. overall national context in which the project is being implemented, and applicant overall strategy for change).
- You will need to report financially on how the funds were spent mid-way and at the end of the project. Financial reporting will require some basic knowledge of Excel and the applicant will require some basic administrative and financial systems in order to manage the grant (e.g. cash management, tracking of expenditure, record-keeping). For more information, please contact [ILGA-Europe](#). Full information on reporting financial and administrative requirements will be provided to successful applicants.
- You will be required to attend a webinar to inform you on financial and administrative requirements under this call.

Deadline and timeline

- Proposals should be submitted using the [attached application form](#) and [budget template](#).
- The last day to submit your application (deadline) is **23 May, Sunday, 23:59 CEST**.
- We will review applications and decide on projects to be supported by **16 June**.
- We will inform all applicants about the results of the review via the e-mail address provided in the application by **18 June**.
- Administrative work will take place throughout **July and August** to prepare for the launch of projects. Successful applicants should be available to respond to requests during that period.

On **28 April, Wednesday, 13:00 CEST** we will hold a webinar for prospective applicants. We will talk about the focus, priorities and criteria of the funding opportunity. The participants will be able to ask questions about the call and the application process.

To register for the webinar, [click here](#).

To submit an application or if you have any questions in the preparation of your project proposal, please contact Nadzeya Husakouskaya, ILGA-Europe's Senior Programmes Officer
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