
Dear Friends,

On behalf of the three Belgian umbrella LGBTQI+ organizations, we are particularly happy to welcome you to the ILGA-Europe annual conference that will take place October 24th-28th 2018 in Brussels.

As the capital of Belgium and Europe, Brussels gathers many diverse assets and particularities. Besides hosting European and international institutions, Brussels is also a vibrant capital. Be sure you will enjoy the food, the drinks, the architecture, the comics, the galleries and so much more. As one of the most diverse and multicultural city in the world, Brussels can reveal many different faces and offers a variety of activities and discoveries, with a rich cultural scene, a multi-faceted social life and a strong LGBTQI+ movement, with about 60 organizations registered in the Brussels-capital region.

The year to come is extremely important for European citizens as the Parliament elections take place in May 2019 - exactly a week after the Belgian Pride - through which European citizens will elect new European law-makers. As part of the LGBTQI+ movement, it seems absolutely necessary to be vigilant about the rise of extremist political discourses, which could - and sometimes already does - threaten our fights and the rights we achieved getting in the past years. As European citizens, we have the possibility to resist and have representatives that fight for us and defend our rights and what we believe in. Gathering hundreds of activists in the heart of Europe a few months before the elections is symbolically very strong. Moreover, it will be a suitable opportunity for us to send an invitation for debates and discussions with EU officials. The European Union also has an influence on neighboring countries through its policies that affect non-European citizens. Gathering this year in Brussels is not only a symbol for European citizens but also for LGBTQI+ activists throughout Europe.

This year's conference theme is "Politics for Change: From Words to Action". We will discuss and debate on a wide range of topics which common thread will be "how can we come from a theoretical and empirical approach to a more concrete, useful and productive one?" In other words, how can we come into action as activists? How can we organize with each other in order to create, sustain or develop a movement? What is necessary to keep stability or renew ourselves in our fights for more equality and diversity among societies? The ILGA-Europe annual conference is the perfect time for setting the years to come's priorities and agenda and thinks together for change. It also brings people together, may they be from civil society, the private sector or politics.

As you can see, the program will be thrilling, the talks intense and the gatherings spectacular. In parallel of the conference, we made a social program that will try to satisfy most people. The location of the conference is very central and you will have the possibility to circulate very easily in the city by foot, bike or public transportation.

We are looking forward to hearing from you and meeting you all in Brussels in a few weeks. Let's make a change!

Arc-en-Ciel Wallonie, RainbowHouse Brussels & çavaria

