

## How we support the movement

First and foremost, we focus on empowering and training activists who work to advance LGBTI people's rights in Europe and Central Asia.

The LGBTI movement is the driving force behind creating sustainable change for LGBTI people. It consists of paid LGBTI activists, NGOs and community groups, volunteers and academics. But it also reaches even further to include like-minded people working on our issues in other environments — such as policymakers, journalists, trade unions or employers.



Annual Conference, Prague 2019

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people's rights in Europe. A strong movement that can adapt and respond effectively to changing environments is key to making the change we seek a reality.

By 'change', we mean both European-level and domestic change. European human rights standards can help drive change within countries — but we also need strong domestic organisations to push for change across the continent.

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## **Who does ILGA-Europe define as the LGBTI movement?**

Depending on who you ask, 'movement' means different things. However, the basic understanding is that the LGBTI movement reaches beyond LGBTI organisations and their hard-working activists: it includes allies and supporters, too. But in our work, ILGA-Europe primarily focuses on our 600-plus member organisations — and secondarily, on allies and supporters. While we occasionally work with individual activists, we mostly focus on organisations and initiatives — because we believe that unity is key to driving change.

## **Why is this work so important?**

Without an invigorated LGBTI movement, change simply would not happen. That's why ILGA-Europe mainly focuses on empowering LGBTI activists and other people in Europe — no matter what approaches we embrace.

You might be wondering: how can we possibly empower a movement that's spread across hundreds of thousands of kilometres? To start, we can help our members increase their legal knowledge, hone their strategic planning skills or organise educational opportunities. After all, anything we can do to assist our members contributes to our own advocacy goals.

The European LGBTI movement needs people championing equality at every level — from organisations working on legislative bills in capital cities to local organisations supporting religious communities. Across all levels, advocates for equality need to be able to carry out their work in environments that are often complex or quickly changing. Ensuring that LGBTI activism is powered by the right set of skills to cope with this dynamic is crucial.

Equally important is ensuring that the movement is adequately-resourced. In other words: effectively implementing human rights-based approaches costs money — but so does providing services to the community.

## **What does ILGA-Europe mean when we talk about supporting the LGBTI movement?**

For the movement to achieve its goals, activists need to have a very wide set of skills and deep knowledge about a variety of issues. They must also be able to engage an extensive network of allies. ILGA-Europe offers a diverse range of activities that empower our members and other relevant stakeholders to effectively realise political, legal,

institutional and social change.

Tailored to the needs of the movement, ILGA-Europe provides capacity-building capabilities — from community services to domestic and international advocacy. For example: Do you need to understand how to litigate or undertake an awareness raising campaign? We can help. From offering fundraising tips to giving out advice on managing an organisation or a group of volunteers, ILGA-Europe stands alongside the movement in any way we can.

Our capacity-building activities take many different forms. For example, ILGA-Europe offers regional training, coaching, re-granting, study visits and various methods of in-country support. We also advocate to ensure that the European LGBTI movement can access financial resources. And above and beyond, ILGA-Europe functions as a large network of activists, an important crossroad for exchanging experiences, and — perhaps most importantly — a strong solidarity network for the European LGBTI movement. The will to support the movement holistically underpins all of our work.

## What is the current status for the LGBTI movement in Europe?



Photo by [Delia Giancini](#)

The LGBTI movement in Europe has been around for a long time and has grown immensely over the past decades. However, the environments in which the groups operate vary significantly — from Italy to Finland to the UK

to Azerbaijan. With that in mind, the LGBTI movement's needs are always unique and require context-specific and individually-tailored responses.

Despite these differences, the LGBTI movement has become increasingly professional. NGOs are run following democratic governance principles, reflect the movement's diversity and meet legal and other accountability standards. This has enabled an increasing number of organisations to carry out their work with paid staff — although many NGOs continue to depend on volunteers for the biggest part of their work.

At the same time, many new groups have emerged and need more basic capacity-building to get on their feet. (For example, intersex activists started organising relatively recently.) So at ILGA-Europe, we've heavily invested into collaborating with organisations so that they can use a human rights-based approach in their work. Together with litigation work that advances the LGBTI rights agenda through the court, this approach has been tremendously helpful in pushing forward domestic and regional agendas through an evidence-based approach.

In recent years, it has become increasingly important to combine the human rights-based approach with winning people's hearts and minds — and turning them into allies. The reason is simple: legislative debates on LGBTI issues have become highly visible battles, increasingly involving both supporters and opponents. This means that the European LGBTI movement's capacity needs to grow to effectively mobilise its own supporters and win the backing of politicians, allies and citizens.

The need to raise awareness and campaign has grown rapidly — combined with increased pressure on financial resources. That's why effectively supporting the European LGBTI movement includes answering questions around finding sustainable resources to make sure the movement can carry out its work.

## What are our main focus areas?

- [Communications](#)
- [Community organising](#)
- [Documentation and advocacy](#)
- [Management and organisational development](#)
- [Security and wellbeing](#)

### [Communications](#)

We work to strengthen activists' communication skills and the LGBTI movement's collective thinking around shaping public conversations and changing attitudes. We help frame narratives and test them — and strengthen LGBTI advocacy and campaign capabilities.

### [Community organising](#)

Community organising underpins success in the LGBTI movement. It helps ensure that whatever we work on is based on real needs, actively involves those most affected and helps mobilise the community. To date, ILGA-Europe has supported various initiatives and created learning resources that organisations can easily access.

### [Documentation and advocacy](#)

Supporting organisations in documenting and reporting human rights violations is an important part of our work. We provide organisations with resources and learning opportunities to strengthen LGBTI advocacy capabilities.

#### [Management and organisational development](#)

Ensuring that LGBTI organisations are strong and accountable contributes to activism’s sustainability and transformative potential. That’s why we help organisations in their financial and administrative operations — as well as their organisational structures, processes and ways of organising and decision-making.

#### [Security and wellbeing](#)

ILGA-Europe supports the LGBTI movement by ensuring that we can proactively respond to emerging threats and/or security issues. We do this by training organisations around security planning and by providing security grants. We also support initiatives that ensure staff and volunteer wellbeing at LGBTI organisations.

## See also

**COMMUNICATING FOR**

**CHANGE**

Report

19.04.2021

**Communicating for Change**

A communications needs assessment of the LGBTI movement in Europe and Central Asia, for donors to help create new grant opportunities to support communications efforts. [...]

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Report

24.03.2017

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Report

06.04.2010

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It is primarily concerned with how and where LGBT human rights advocates in the domestic setting can employ international and regional human rights instruments to [...]

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News

12.04.2021

## **Join The Hub, ILGA-Europe's free Resource Sharing Centre for LGBTI activists in Europe and Central Asia**

Today we are publicly launching The Hub – ILGA-Europe's free Resource Sharing Centre for LGBTI activists in Europe and Central Asia.

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## Blog

06.12.2021

### **5 profound lessons we learned from working with disabled LGBTI activists and organisations**

Making our work more inclusive is at the core of ILGA-Europe's purpose. This is especially true in the case of disabled LGBTI people, who continue to be marginalised in our movement. In this blog, we share some of our learnings from working alongside disabled LGBTI activists. If you are part of a queer rights organisation, this may be particularly useful for you!

[read more](#)



News

25.01.2021

## Watch a series of short campaign videos created by LGBTI activists

Watch this series of short campaign videos created by LGBTI activists who got expert help to make easy, free homemade videos under lockdown conditions – and get some tips and inspiration for making your own!

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