

EURO-LETTER

Euro-Letter is published by **ILGA-Europe** - the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association with support from the European Community - The European Union against Discrimination.

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Previous issues: all previous Euro-Letters in English as well as the German and Portuguese translations from No.76, January 2000 and Greek translation from No 127, January 2006 are available in pdf format on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro_letter.

ILGA-Europe is grateful to the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Front for the German translations of the Euro-Letter which are also available on their website: www.lglf.de

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ILGA-EUROPE:

ILGA-Europe's EU Network Meets in Brussels

by Evelyne Paradis

Members of ILGA-Europe's EU Coordination Network gathered in Brussels on 10-11 March 2006 for a very fruitful 2-day meeting. Members devoted a first half-day to discussing objectives and goals for the European Year of Equal Opportunities at the national level, in the presence of representatives from the European Commission.

Another key item on the agenda was the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive in each Member State. During a useful exchange with the Commission, participants identified the main obstacles to effective implementation, in particular in terms of accessing rights, and proposed specific actions which could be taken at national level to overcome these obstacles.

In addition to discussing how to link up national priorities to the EU agenda, participants also used this meeting as an opportunity to network and exchange information about their work and the situation in their country.

Calls for renewed commitment to social agenda at the Spring Council

by Evelyne Paradis

When EU heads of states meet on 23-24 March in Brussels for the Spring meeting of the European Council, one of the items of their agenda will be review of the Lisbon Strategy. A major concern for NGOs continues to be the overwhelming focus put on the economic dimension of the Strategy to the detriment of the social and environmental aspects.

The Social Platform has adopted a resolution that calls upon the heads of States to put the social objectives back at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy.

ILGA-Europe supports this resolution which, among other things, asks Member States to prioritise the fight against social exclusion and poverty, and to take concrete and immediate measures to ensure effective transposition and implementation of the EU equality legislation.

The text of this resolution is available at our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/european_social_ngos_adopt_resolution_for_march_eu_council_meeting

Opportunity to promote mental health issues for LGBT people

by Evelyne Paradis

In October 2005, the European Commission published a Green paper entitled "Promoting the Mental Health of the Population - Towards a Strategy on Mental health for the European Union". The document outlines the relevance of mental health for some of the EU's strategic policy objectives (prosperity, solidarity and social justice, quality of life of citizens), proposes the development of a strategy on mental health at Community-level and identifies its possible priorities.

The European Commission has invited different actors, including NGOs, to share their view on the relevance of an EU policy on mental health and to comment on initiatives proposed to support this future EU policy. The Commission intends to present its analysis of the responses received and a proposal for a strategy on mental health for the EU by the end of 2006.

This Green Paper provides an opportunity to raise the profile of health issues that are relevant to LGBT people, in the context of a future EU strategy on mental health, and to promote inclusion of equality considerations in other EU policy areas.

This is why **ILGA-Europe will submit a contribution to the Commission** by the end of May, and **would welcome your input** in the form of material or comments on mental health issues relevant to LGBT people, in particular in relation to young and older LGBT people and issues of mental health in the workplace.

Your input should be sent to evelyne@ilga-europe.org by **30 April 2006** at the latest.

ILGA-Europe has also taken part in an informal meeting on "social inclusion and fundamental rights in mental health" (March 8) which was organised as part of the consultation process to start networking with other actors in this field.

The Green Paper is available on the Commission's Website in 20 different languages

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/consultation_en.htm).

ILGA-Europe 'upgrades' capacity on gender identity and expression issues

by Maxim Anmeghichean

Gender identity and expression are not new terms neither for activists, nor for politicians. The European Court of Justice already in 1996 made a judgment stating that according to the EU standards the notion of equality between women and men also includes equality for transgender persons. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted a rather progressive recommendation on the rights of transgender people as far back as 1989. ILGA-Europe has been mainstreaming gender identity and expression issues in its advocacy work for as long as it exists. And yet gender the rights of transgender persons are not high on the European political agenda today, and there is little awareness about the issues in the European institutions, as well as no targeted approach to this social group.

Nature versus nurture, medical and human rights aspects of gender identity and expression, multitude of terms, national and European legislation were just some of the issues discussed during the capacity building workshop organised for ILGA-Europe board and staff by two bright consultants and activists. The goal of the workshop was to create a shared understanding of what is gender identity and expression in social and political terms, as well as to discuss different ways for ILGA-Europe to promote the rights of transgender people.

What are next steps? ILGA-Europe will develop a fact sheet with definitions and explanation about the human rights and social approach to gender identity and expression issues. On the longer term basis a toolkit may be developed, which will include life stories of transgender people, in-depth description of legal and social aspects of gender identity and expression, possibly some visual materials. And routine thematic advocacy work will continue with European institutions.

Where will the resources come from? ILGA-Europe will allocate resources for the fact-sheet from its current funding, and will seek further funding for the toolkit. Exciting work ahead!

EUROPE:

"Frattini has done his home work"

Source: Media release by the European Parliament's Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights, 8 March 2006

On 2 February 2006, the officers of the EP Intergroup on gay and lesbian rights met with Commissioner Frattini to discuss strategies to fight homophobia and discrimination of LGBT people, a follow up on the plenary debate the 16th January, in which Frattini did not present any planned EU actions, nor answered the questions from the Intergroup officers, representing four of the major political groups in the Parliament.

The commissioner Frattini promised that they will finally present a horizontal directive to combat all sorts of discrimination, and a green paper on "wills and inheritance". He added that he had recently launched a study on "age of consent"-discrimination.

"Commissioner Frattini had clearly done his home work since January. However, I want to see this in writing before I give him a good grade", said Michael Cashman (PES), President of the Intergroup.

Although Commissioner Frattini, in an interview after the resolution, said "I am happy that in my country, Italy, the concept of marriage is not discussed, and that in fact it is said that it cannot be different from that established by Italian Constitution, that is to say between persons of different sex" [Vatican Radio channel "One Or Five Live", 20 January 2006], he agreed with the Intergroup that the discrimination of same-sex couples has to end.

"We welcome the commitment made by Commissioner Frattini to see to a fast transposition and correct interpretation of the Directive 2004/38 on the right of European citizens and their family members to move and reside freely, to ensure free movement also for same-sex couples", said Sophie in 't Veld (ALDE), Vice-President of the Intergroup. "It is totally unacceptable that married same-sex couples lose their rights - property rights, pension entitlements, social security and even custody of their own children, as soon as they cross the border, solely on the basis of their sexual orientation," Sophie in 't Veld added.

"We welcome the promise of a horizontal directive on discrimination. We have been following up on President Barroso's promise of such a directive, we were informed that there is no unanimity in the Council, but that is no reason to delay the directive," said Raúl Romeva i Rueda (Greens/EFA), vice-president of the Intergroup.

"I am happy that Commissioner Frattini has realised that the when it comes to free movement of same-sex couples, the Commission cannot continue hiding behind the subsidiary principle and ignore full scale discrimination", ended Alexander Stubb (EPP/ED) vice-president of the Intergroup.

Making human rights clauses more effective

Source: European Parliament, 14 February 2006, www.europarl.eu.int

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) adopted a non-binding report on the human rights and democracy clause in EU agreements. It points out that the clause had now been introduced into more than 50 of the EU's international agreements.

Ten years after it was first drafted, it is now time to evaluate how it has been implemented and how it could be improved.

The report notes that many sectoral agreements, such as those on textiles, agriculture and fisheries, as well as agreements with developed countries, still lack the clause. MEPs warn that Parliament is *"no longer prepared to give its assent to new international agreements that do not contain a human rights and democracy clause"*. It points out that, on many occasions, the EU had not been able to respond adequately to serious and persistent violations of human rights and democratic principles. The House concludes that the EU must draw up new procedures and new criteria for applying the human rights and democracy clause, which must apply without discrimination between States or between their levels of development.

The report also calls for the establishment of human rights subcommittees under EU-third country agreements, to be responsible for reviewing compliance with the clause, monitoring its application and implementation, and proposing actions to address democracy and human rights problems.

MEPs say that one of the factors which has compromised the application of the clause was its vague language, which did not spell out detailed procedures for *'positive'* and *'negative'* interventions in EU/third country cooperation - unlike the democracy clauses in the Cotonou Agreements with the ACP States which had been very effective. MEPs also call for the expansion of the positive dimension of the human rights clause, which entails the need to take effective measures to contribute to the enjoyment of human rights within and by the respective parties, to include an ongoing assessment and monitoring of the impact of the agreement itself on the enjoyment of human rights, as well as to adopt a human rights approach when implementing all aspects of the agreement.

Parliament says if one of the governments concerned in the human right clause, the European Parliament or the national parliaments concerned or, in the case of ACP countries, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, calls for the human rights and democracy clause to be invoked, through the suspension of a bilateral agreement or the implementation of dialogue or other appropriate measures, the Association Council should automatically include that debate on its agenda.

MEPs note that the European Parliament has formally expressed its view to that effect in several cases, but that the Association Council has simply ignored those requests.

In order to ensure a more coherent, effective and transparent approach to European human rights policy, a revision of the current wording is indispensable, says the Parliament. The revised text should take into account the following principles: reciprocity, with regard both to the territory of the EU and that of the other countries involved; gender equality and women's rights; no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation

or disability; temporary suspension of a cooperation agreement as well as a "*warning mechanism*" in response to a breach of the clause; and consultations between all parties.

MEPs stress that, for elections to be considered democratic, free and fair, certain preconditions must be met, including, inter alia, respect for political and civic rights, respect for freedom of expression and information, equal access to the media and respect for political pluralism, so as to offer electors a real choice.

Lastly, MEPs wants Parliament to be involved to a much greater extent in drawing up the negotiating mandate for EU/third country agreements, and insists on the need for it to be a joint decision-maker with the Commission and the Council when it comes to initiating consultations, suspending an agreement or suspending any negative measures already imposed on a country.

PS: Reference to sexual orientation discrimination in the report is a combined effort between ILGA-Europe and Arcigay. During the preparation of the report rapporteur Agnoletto met with Arcigay to discuss this reference.

UK: Powerful New Equality and Human Rights Body Gets the Go-Ahead

Source: Media Release by the Department of Trade and Industry, 16 February 2006,

www.gnn.gov.uk/content/detail.asp?ReleaseID=187937&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromSearch=True

A powerful new body to put equality at the heart of modern Britain got the go-ahead as the Equality Act gained Royal Assent.

Individuals experiencing discrimination and prejudice on the basis of race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief or sexual orientation will have easier access to help and support and businesses will have improved advice and information through the single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) from October 2007.

The CEHR will work with individuals, communities, businesses and public services to find new, more effective ways to give everyone in society the chance to achieve their full potential.

The CEHR will bring together the work of the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission from October 2007; and that of the Commission for Racial Equality from 2009, putting expertise on equality, diversity and human rights in one place.

For the first time the equality areas of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation will come under the remit of a single equality body, as well as continuing work that has been done previously to tackle racism and other forms of discrimination. It will have a better range of powers to enforce legislation flexibly and promote equality for all.

The Commission will also promote awareness and understanding of human rights and encourage good practice by public authorities in meeting their Human Rights Act obligations.

The CEHR will be required to produce a regular 'equality health check' for Britain and to work with individuals, communities, businesses and public services to find new, more effective ways to give everyone in society the chance to achieve their full potential.

The Act will introduce a new 'gender duty' which will require public bodies to take account of the different needs of men and women to ensure equality of opportunity when preparing policies or providing services.

The Act will outlaw discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in providing goods, facilities or services, education or rented accommodation.

Meg Munn, Deputy Minister for Women and Equality, said:

"The Equality Act marks a transformation in the way modern Britain tackles discrimination.

"The CEHR will be a powerful body dedicated to fighting discrimination, prejudice and inequality and promoting fairness for everyone. The new Commission will bring together the expertise and knowledge of

the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. It will also have new powers to champion equality, diversity and human rights across the UK."

The purpose of the Equality Act is to:

- establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and to define its purpose and functions;
- make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions;
- create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women (the gender duty) and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions;
- provide powers to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, etc.

The duties and powers of the CEHR include:

- a new duty to consult with stakeholders to ensure all groups have an opportunity to participate and engage in its work;
- a new duty to monitor progress on equality, human rights and good relations between communities, through publishing a regular 'state of the nation' report;
- a new duty to promote good relations between and within communities, across all sections of society;
- an explicit role to combat prejudice and work to reduce crime affecting particular communities, including new powers to monitor hate crimes; and
- a regional presence in England, Scotland and Wales.

Victory for Isle of Man's lesbians and gay men

Source: Stonewall media release, 2 March 2006, www.stonewall.org.uk

Members of the House of Keys on the Isle of Man voted to repeal Section 38 of the Sexual Offences Act – the Manx equivalent to Section 28 which banned the 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools.

The vote was won by 12 votes to 9 and will see the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill amended, to bring about the repeal of Section 38.

The Isle of Man's Education Minister David Anderson had opposed scrapping the law, commenting that section 38 offered "good guidelines on the way sexual relationship boundaries are taught in schools". He had previously stated that homosexuality had "huge health implications" and that it was wrong to equate gay relationships to straight ones.

"This move is welcome and long overdue" said Ben Summerskill, Stonewall chief executive. "The House of Keys' rejection of such bigoted views as expressed by the Health Minister represents a huge step forward for lesbians and gay men everywhere".

If passed, the Bill will also equalise the age of consent in the Isle of Man for gay and straight people.

SAME-SEX FAMILIES:

Czech MPs approve gay rights law

Source: BBC, 15 March 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4811030.stm>

The Czech Republic has become the first former communist country in Europe to grant legal recognition to same-sex partnerships. The vote was passed in parliament by the absolute minimum needed to overturn a veto by President Vaclav Klaus. He had argued the legislation amounted to excessive regulation by the state of people's private lives. The law will give gay couples rights to inherit a partner's property and raise children, but does not allow adoption.

The BBC's Rob Cameron in Prague says Czech society is one of the most secular and sexually liberal in Europe. Homosexual campaigners appear to have the Czech public on their side, he adds.

'Defeat for family'

Although the lower house of parliament approved the legislation in December and the Senate in January, an absolute majority was required to override the presidential veto imposed in February. The proposal had strong backing from Social Democrat Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek, who said it was key issue ahead of general elections in June. In a statement released after the vote, Mr Klaus said the result was not a personal defeat but rather "a defeat for all of us who believe that the family in our society is fundamental, unique, unrivalled". Martin Strachon, a spokesman for the Gay and Lesbian League, told AFP news agency the vote meant gays and lesbians were now recognised as "normal members of society". "The law is a compromise," said leading gay rights activist Jiri Hromada, quoted by Associated Press. "It will harm no-one and will make many happy." Parliament has turned down similar proposals four times in the past.

France gives gay couples joint parental rights

Source: Reuters, 24 February 2006,

http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2006-02-24T174824Z_01_L24690189_RTRUKOC_0_UK-FRANCE-HOMOSEXUALS-CHILDREN.xml

France's top court ruled that both partners in a homosexual couple can exercise parental authority over a child, rather than just the biological parent.

The ruling by the Cour de Cassation, which decides how to interpret French law but does not hear trials, could open the way for further debate in France on gay marriage and the adoption of children by same-sex couples, which remains illegal.

"The civil code is not opposed to a mother, as sole holder of the parental authority, delegating all or part of the duties to the woman with whom she lives in a stable and continuous union," the court said in its verdict.

The decision also applied to male homosexual couples, where one of the partners was the biological father of a child.

The court said the right for same-sex couples to jointly exercise parental authority depended on the circumstances requiring such an arrangement and that it must be in the child's best interests.

Until now, French courts have ruled that the law only allowed parental responsibility to be delegated to a person other than the biological parents in unusual cases. This was not regarded as sufficient to include homosexual couples.

Friday's ruling came as the first French same-sex couple to form a civil union -- a right which the then Socialist-led government granted in 1999 -- got married in Belgium.

"It's a shame to have to go abroad to get married," said Dominique Adamski, 52, who married Francis Sekens, 60, in Mouscron, a small Belgian town just over the border from France.

The present, conservative government opposes gay marriage and does not allow same-sex couples to adopt children, but has given homosexual couples who form a civil union more financial rights.

Gay rights enter Italian election

Source: BBC News, 24 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/4747436.stm>

A transgender opposition candidate in Italy's general election this April is campaigning for improved gay rights.

Vladimir Luxuria, standing for the Communist Refoundation party, intends to challenge conservatives in her own country and Europe.

Ms Luxuria, who considers herself neither male nor female, told the BBC that having a transgender MP would be an important symbol.

She wants to promote civic unions and press for asylum rights for gay people.

Italy was one of the very few nations in the European Union that did not recognise civil unions, she told the World Today programme.

She called for political asylum for "all the gays who try to get into Italy from countries where homosexuality is punishable by death".

Serious message

The hardline Communist Refoundation is the third biggest party in the opposition alliance led by Romano Prodi, which has seen disagreements between its factions over the rights of same-sex and unmarried couples.

"We don't want privileges - we want our rights," said Ms Luxuria.

Asked about attitudes towards gay people in Italy, she argued that the views of ordinary people were changing but politicians and the Roman Catholic clergy were "far behind".

Speaking earlier to Reuters news agency, she suggested she would ditch her trademark drag costumes - sequins, feather boas and bouffant wigs - once elected.

"Parliament is not a theatre, it's not a discotheque," she said.

"It wouldn't be useful to provoke [people] in such a stupid way."

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY:

Gay Pride challenges Moscow

Source: BBC, 17 February 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4714818.stm>

Inna Svyatenko, chairwoman of Moscow City Council's security commission, does not have a problem with the city's gay community.

"This city and civic society here are very protective of our sexual minorities," she says.

Gay people work freely in the city and are greatly respected for their contribution in areas such as retail and the creative professions, according to Ms Svyatenko.

They have their own clubs and, she adds, you need only look out the window of her downtown office to see where a gay lifestyle store opened its doors recently.

But she argues against the parade on three grounds:

- that much of the gay community allegedly oppose it themselves
- that similar events in East European capital cities like Riga last year ended in violent clashes
- that the preferred route would cause massive traffic disruption.

According to her information, most gay people in Moscow do not want the Pride because "it is their private life and they do not want to put it on show" and because such an event could provoke violence.

"In our fragile society, do we really need to provoke a situation in which the ultra-right and so-called skinheads rise up and the law enforcement agencies are unable to guarantee the safety of the paraders?" she asks.

Of course, the police could suppress any disorder if necessary, she says, but nobody in the city authorities would be prepared to take responsibility for "artificially provoking the disorder".

To allow a parade down Tverskaya Street, Moscow's central artery, would cause massive disruption in a city already choked with traffic, she adds.

"If the gays chose an area on the outskirts of the city or somewhere in Moscow Region, I think the authorities might take a different view," she says.

Inna Svyatenko accuses the organisers of the parade, and their supporters outside Russia, of "wanting to make a name for themselves without any thought for the impact of such an event on other people like them".

"I realise there are certain European countries where these parades have a long history and nobody cares but let's not drag Russia into this - Russia is not ready," she argues.

Full story on BBC website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4714818.stm>

HATE CRIME:

Portugal: Call for action following a murder of a trans person

by Portuguese LGBT organisations

LGBT activists in Portugal ask for your support in their protest action following a murder of a trans person:

The appeal

Towards a terrible murder that more and more is becoming a hate crime, towards the biased omission of the sexual and transphobic component of the crime, towards the confused reaction of most LGBT Portuguese associations that contributed to the huge amount of mediatic confusion and misinformation, because they weren't able to inform correctly about the victim's identity nor about the difference between homophobia and transphobia, towards the openly mediatic and political attempt of minimisation of the crime, of the omission of the "hate" component in the death of a person, who accumulated so many social exclusions, towards the attempt to blame the victim, and the public "silencing" of this case, we appeal to the urgent support of all LGBT collectives and entities all over the world:

- to denounce as widely as you can the facts occurred in Portugal, specially in the movements and national and international media;
- to protest – with knowledge to the Portuguese LGBT associations– near the Portuguese Government, official entities, political parties and media because the way they are dealing with this case (the contacts are in the end of this message). The model letter, also in the end of this message, can be used to do it;
- to manifest near this same entities and Portuguese LGBT movement your solidarity with the efforts made to change this dramatic situation.
- WE FIND IT FUNDAMENTAL, AT THIS POINT, A STRONG INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE OVER PORTUGAL.

For more details of this hate crime and suggestions for actions please go to:

http://tgeu.net/Gisberta/Languages/Gisberta_E.htm

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

ILGA-Europe Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund

by ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is pleased to announce the launch of its Small Pilot Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund for 2005-2006 with support of the Sigrid Rausing Trust. The goal of the fund is to promote documentation of cases of discrimination, hate crimes and other human rights violations against LGBT people according to the international human rights standards.

The small pilot fund will support small-scale projects (up to 2,000 euros) intended to document (cases of) discrimination, hate crimes and other human rights violations committed on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The deadline for the first round application: 15 April 2006

Priority areas, eligibility criteria and application form is available at our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/funding_capacity_building/funding_opportunities/ilga_europe_human_rights_violations_documentation_fund

NOTICE BOARD:

ILGA-Europe capacity building seminar in Slovenia

by ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is inviting its members to take part in the second phase of our capacity building seminars, which will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 20-21 of April. There will be two seminars organised simultaneously on the subjects of fundraising and human rights monitoring.

The **Human Rights Monitoring** seminar is targeted at participants with little or no experience in this area. It aims to introduce human rights monitoring and, as important part of it, documentation of human rights violations as a practical tool for LGBT activists. External experts and ILGA-Europe staff will share their experience on how to monitor and gather evidence, how to document human rights violations and finally how to use the information to lobby both national governments and international organisations.

The **Fundraising** seminar is targeted at participants that may have some experience but want to deepen their knowledge on raising funds and understanding funders' mentality. Together with external experts, participants will have the opportunity to improve their skills in writing project proposals and communication with funders, explore alternative ways of fundraising. The seminar will be practically-focused. It aims to give participants concrete advice and realistic tools on how to raise money for their organisations.

ILGA-Europe can provide scholarships, which will cover travel, accommodation and meals for a total of 50 participants.

If you are interested in attending the seminars, please fill in the application form available on our website (www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/ilga_europe_capacity_building_seminar_in_slovenia) and send it to Maxim Anmeghichean at: maxim@ilga-europe.org. You can also send additional information or requests to the above e-mail address.

ILGA-Europe Seeks Two Stagiaires for Brussels Office

by *ILGA-Europe*

ILGA-Europe is seeking two stagiaires to work on its programmes and projects in the Brussels office.

Post 1. Eastern Europe, Council of Europe and Transgender Programmes (ECT).

The post holder will be employed for six - twelve months, to work on a number of projects within the ECT Programme and will assist the Programmes Director with the current work programme. Themes of the ECT Programmes include lobbying at Council of Europe and OSCE, Health, Gender Identity and Expression, Capacity Building for member organisations in the field of advocacy and human rights violations documentation. This post will give valuable work experience in a busy, European-level NGO and is an excellent opportunity to develop a range of programme and project skills.

If you are interested, please send your CV and a covering letter to maxim@ilga-europe.org no later than 31 March 2006. Candidates selected for interview will receive further information with the interview appointment.

Post 2. EU and General Programmes

The post holder will be employed for six months, to work on a number of projects within the EU workplan, including website updating, media contacts and data compilation. Other activities in the programme include lobbying, capacity building, network development and seminars. The post will give valuable work experience in a busy, European-level NGO and is an excellent opportunity to develop a range of programme and project skills.

If you are interested, please send your CV and a covering letter to patricia@ilga-europe.org no later than 31 March 2006. Candidates selected for interview will be contacted with details of interview date and time.

Both posts

We are seeking enthusiastic graduates with a commitment to the human rights values which underpin our work. In return we will provide interesting and challenging work and a salary of €500 per month.

Interviews will be held in Brussels in late April, with the successful applicants starting as soon as possible thereafter.

European Conference on Equal Opportunities - new deadline for proposals

Source: *Equal is Not Enough*, www.equalisnotenough.org

The deadline for the receipt of abstracts by the Programme Committee will be postponed with a month, giving candidates for the paper sessions the possibility to hand in their abstract the 28th March 2006 at the latest (instead of the 28th of February). We strongly suggest submitting abstracts on LGBTQ issues! Up until now we have only received few abstracts concerning this theme.

Authors will be notified of the acceptance of their abstract before the 16th of April.

To stay informed about the conference proceedings you can subscribe to our EO-mailing list on the conference website: www.equalisnotenough.org.

Social Platform is looking for two dynamic Policy Officers

by *Social Platform*, 15 March 2006, www.socialplatform.org

The Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform) brings together 40 leading NGO networks working on issues such as poverty, social exclusion, equality between women and men, non-discrimination, quality social services, integration of migrants and fundamental rights. The role of the Social Platform is to support the sector to take an active part in key EU processes - for example at the moment the Lisbon strategy, the 'Services directive', and the EU fundamental rights agency.

In order to contribute to its strategic development the Social Platform is looking to recruit two dynamic Policy Officers, knowledgeable in relevant EU affairs and highly committed to the role and values of Social NGOs.

An application pack, including details of the positions and the application form, can be downloaded on www.socialplatform.org

Closing date for application is Friday, 31 March 2006.