



THE PLATFORM

Vienna Nov. 3-6 2008 / 24th ILGA World Conference

First time ever at an ILGA conference?

Here's your chance to understand how it works and how to make the best out of it...

When a group of activists gathered back in 1978 to create what would later become the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), their intention was to create an international network of activists that could efficiently respond to homophobic attacks - and act as an international platform to collectively campaign against any discrimination faced by homosexual people around the world.

Today, ILGA has broadened its activity scope to include all sexual minorities and to embrace the struggle of trans and intersex people - but it is still very much inspired by those founding values. The previous ILGA conferences which have been held for the last 30 years and are traditionally organised by local member groups are the place where a network of now over 600 LGBT groups around the world meet to share their experiences. But there's more to an ILGA conference than networking and sharing skills.

ILGA is above all a political project. One that aims at providing people who suffer from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity a platform to voice their concerns and achieve stronger visibility internationally.

Not any platform. Their own. ILGA members are entitled to elect representatives among their peers, fellow activists like themselves, decide what ILGA should concentrate its efforts on, look into its budget, question the association's priorities, help shape its strategy.

In that sense, ILGA is no different from most of the LGBT local groups around the world. It is a living, open and democratic process attempting to best serve the LGBT world movement. And a beautiful one too.

Who can vote at the conference? How many voting cards does each group get?

Because participants to the conference can in many ways shape ILGA's work, only ILGA members who support the organisation by having paid their membership fees from 2006 to date can vote. New groups which wish to vote in Vienna have until October 6 2008 to apply to become members. Fees can be paid on the spot at the conference at its secretariat where voting cards will also be distributed.

The current Standing Orders of ILGA states the following: "delegations with female and male members will have two votes. Delegations of women's organisations with two female delegates will have two votes. Delegations with only male members will have one vote. Associate (commercial LGBT organisations, governmental organisations, or non-LGBT voluntary organisations) and individual members are entitled to attend World Conferences and speak in all workshops and plenary sessions but do not have the right to vote. The Executive Board can permit others to attend and take part in any World Conference." Traditionally, this has meant ILGA conferences are open to all.

Mixed organisations which send only one participant to the conference are asked to present a letter authorizing the participant to vote on behalf of the members of the same group who are of a different gender identity than the participant present at the conference. If, for example, the group sends a person identifying as male to the conference, then he should present a letter signed by a representative of non male members of the group authorizing him to vote on their behalf.



How do I become a full member of ILGA?

As stated in ILGA's constitution, organisations can become full members of ILGA if they represent lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or transgendered people and support the aims of ILGA. Intersex groups are also welcomed. Organisations can become full members, as well, if they meet the above criteria but form part of a larger organisation, such as, for example, a lesbian grouping organised within a trade union or professional organisation or business.

Since the last world Conference in Geneva – 2006, many groups have chosen to join ILGA's network. Groups first need to be approved by regional board members and then by the ILGA World Board as a whole. Ultimately, ILGA members present at the World Conference vote to accept them as fellow members. Members can also object to a group becoming a member of ILGA in the first plenary of the conference. This series of "approvals" are meant, for example, to prevent groups condoning pedophilia to become members.

A member may also be expelled from membership by motion at a World Conference for failure to comply with the constitution.

In recent years, yearly fees to be paid to contribute to ILGA's work have changed. Groups in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand are asked to pay 125 euros while groups outside these areas, pay 20 euros.

Can my organisation vote even if we cannot come to the conference?

A full member not present at the conference who would otherwise be entitled to vote may nominate an individual participant or member or the Women's or Trans Secretariat to represent its interests at the conference by intervening and voting.

A letter of authority provided by the full member organisation to the nominated representative must be presented before proxy voting cards will be issued. With the exception of the Women's and the Trans Secretariats, no

individual or member may exercise more than four proxy votes. The Women's and the Trans Secretariats may exercise up to ten proxy votes each, provided that such have been nominated to it in writing.

The Women's and Trans Secretariats may nominate other individuals or members to exercise those proxy votes transferred to it, provided the absent member has agreed to this in advance in writing.

Members who wish to transfer their votes can contact the administrative office at admin@ilga.org.

How does ILGA make sure every member can influence the work of the organisation? What are the rules to respect? Can we change them?

For so many members to agree on a common agenda, it requires respect, a bit of planning ... and a few rules. Those are listed in ILGA's Constitution and its Standing Orders. Answers can be found there as to when and how amendments to the Constitution can be made, how and when specific themes can be proposed to be discussed in the conference, and who is entitled to make those propositions. A consultation process, prior to the World conference allows groups to propose changes to ILGA's constitution (until August 11 2008) and amend those proposals (until September 22, 2008) in order for them to be circulated four weeks prior to the World Conference (October, 13 2008).

Proposals submitted by ILGA members or its board to change ILGA's constitution and its standing orders are available on line on the www.ilga.org. A series of "General Workshops" (only open to ILGA members) will allow members to discuss those changes and make a series of "recommendations" to be adopted during the final plenary, Thursday morning.

Adoption of changes to the Constitution requires a majority of 75% of the votes cast for and against.

Who makes sure rules are respected during the conference?

Approving its Chairing Pool is one of the first actions of the conference. It is composed of ILGA members and is elected the very first day of the conference. It is responsible for the respect of ILGA's standing orders and Constitution and ensures the conference runs smoothly.

Which positions are to be filled? Can I nominate myself?

As a network, ILGA is a democratic organisation. To facilitate decision-making and ensure that the organisation represents its members, Board elections are organised during ILGA conferences.

The World Board is composed of two Secretaries General (one female, one male, one representa-



tive of the Trans Secretariat, one representative of the Women's Secretariat and two Representatives for every region. If members of a region organise a regional conference, they elect those two representatives and alternates (called "reserves") who will sit on the World Board of ILGA. Regional conferences are also the place to elect representatives and alternates for a region, to sit on its regional Board.

The regions to be represented are

- Africa
- Aotearoa/New Zealand/Australia/Pacific Islands (ANZAPI),
- Asia,
- Europe,
- Latin America/The Caribbean and
- North America.

The conference also decides which groups will act as Women's and Trans Secretariats and groups to be reserves.

Candidates for the Women's secretariat and Secretaries General (male and female) shall submit their nomination to the Chairing pool before Tuesday November 4th at 18.00.

Where can members know about the work achieved since the last world conference? How can we influence ILGA's workplan?

You should attend general workshops on ILGA's internal affairs. Those are only open to ILGA members. The general workshop on the ILGA's Board and Women's and Trans Secretariats reports allow members to meet the current board of ILGA and discuss the work done since the last world conference. ILGA members are asked to formally approve those three reports. A specific workshop is dedicated to financial matters and to ILGA's budget. Finally, the workshop on ILGA's Strategic Plan is an opportunity to get to know better and discuss ILGA's orientation and strategies. By presenting specific ongoing projects, it also aims at exploring in which ways member groups can contribute to their achievement.

Where will be the next World Conference?

The decision to organise a conference in one or another city is also taken by participants at the conference. In the past, their decisions have brought an international LGBT conference to countries where the local movement truly benefited from such a presence. Any group willing to candidate to organise ILGA's next world conference shall submit its proposal to the Chairing Pool before Tuesday November 4th at 18.00.