

Intervention LGBT network, 2nd EL Congress

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Dear Comrades,

The European Left is growing.

On one Hand more parties are joining the EL, but on the other hand the EL is growing thanks to the membership of the member and observer parties.

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Our objective is to get together gay, lesbian and trans members of the European Left. Our goal is to bring together those, women and men, who inside the European Left in the diversity of their sexual orientation and their gender identity have at heart to struggle for equal rights.

This respect for diversity is enriching and humanly uplifting. It embodies our common fight everywhere in Europe and beyond its borders. For the moment, 2 main issues are on our agenda :

Equal rights Building a society free from any kind of domination.

Equal rights means for us, left LGBT, not the right to be seen as pink consumers as long as we can participate in the pink market of gay middle class white men.

Equal Rights means equal access to social benefits, medical treatment, cultural life, labour, civil rights and of course the political rights to fight for our interests in every European country. In some countries of Europe it is a fundamental fight for social benefits e.g. in some countries it is a problem for transsexuals to get the operation paid for by the state or the insurance company.

The fight for equal rights does not end with the access to marriage, although we think, it is a basic right we have to fight for. Other questions include the right to adoption or the discrimination in the work place. The fight against discrimination, stigmatization in the every day life (job, accommodation access, family, open spaces...). An information and

awareness job is necessary on every level of the society to change prejudices.

Last year a distinguished group of international human rights experts met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia to outline a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. The result was the Yogyakarta Principles: a universal guide to human rights which affirm binding international legal standards with which all States must comply. Presenting the principles at the ILGA-Europe's conference the rapporteur of the group said: "Implementing these principles we could make this world a better world." Isn't it that what the left wants to do? Building a society free from any kind of domination goes beyond the limits of the capitalist society we are living in. This society is deeply marked by a lasting patriarchy.

As leftists, we have to go beyond the construction of gender in our societies and to question institutions like family and marriage.

That does not necessarily mean that we have to throw this institution away in the nearest garbage can. But we have to think about the tasks these institutions are playing in our society in order to discipline people, oppressing women to keep them away from the labour market and getting organized to express their own interests and wishes.

Being LGBT means for us the privilege to image more. More than actual society has to offer.

Very much like the societies in which they have evolved, the EL member parties have not always had the tolerance and the respect for sexual freedom.

Even there are moments in the early process after the Russian revolution, which 90st anniversary we celebrated a few weeks ago. Some communist parties have a long history of expulsion for openly gay and lesbian militants, not talking about transsexuals. Hopefully, for the past 15 years our parties grown the right way and are often the very first to claim and put forward emancipation laws. We have to be aware of this history and we have to learn from it and draw the lessons to avoid repeting the same mistakes. Furthermore, it is our duty to foster trust between us and the Lgbt movement.

But we have to understand, that our history is a burden in order to establish and maintain contacts to the lgbt movements.

Therefore we ask you and encourage you to

1. work closely and openly with lgbt groups in your countries and

2. lets face our history and lets be honest about mistakes that were made in the name of a better world for all,

3. encourage lgbt members and affiliates to join our network.

In the Berlin meeting the participants agreed on 4 points for the upcoming year.

You can find the agenda at our table. We want to purpose that instead of just doing a women plenary on the day before the congress, to do a day of the networks – women, trade unionists lgbt, education and others, to overcome national perspectives and work together on common issues.

Dear Delegates,

We know, that not every question, every issue we raise and we'll raise is a question we all can agree without any debate. That's okay. That's all we want: An open debate about the society in which we all want to live.