

Annual report for 2017





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About LGL

The National lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT*) human rights organization LGL is the only non-governmental organization in Lithuania exclusively dedicated to representing the interests of the local LGBT* community. Having begun operations on December 3rd, 1993¹, LGL is one of the most mature and stable organizations in the country's civil sector. The fundamental principle behind the organization's activities is independence from any political or financial interests whilst striving for effective inclusion and social integration of the LGBT* community in Lithuania. LGL seeks to achieve consistent LGBT* human rights progress, drawing on its twenty years of experience in advocacy, awareness-raising and community building.

LGL's team currently consists of 5 community Board Members, 7 permanent staff members, and over 20 volunteers both in Lithuania and abroad. Our team is enthusiastic, dynamic, ever-changing and open to new members, ideas and projects. It is important to emphasize that not only gay individuals are involved in the organization – in addition to the LGBT* community, we are proud of our friends and allies who consider LGBT* rights part of the issue of democratic and effective protection of human rights for all citizens of the Republic of Lithuania without exception.

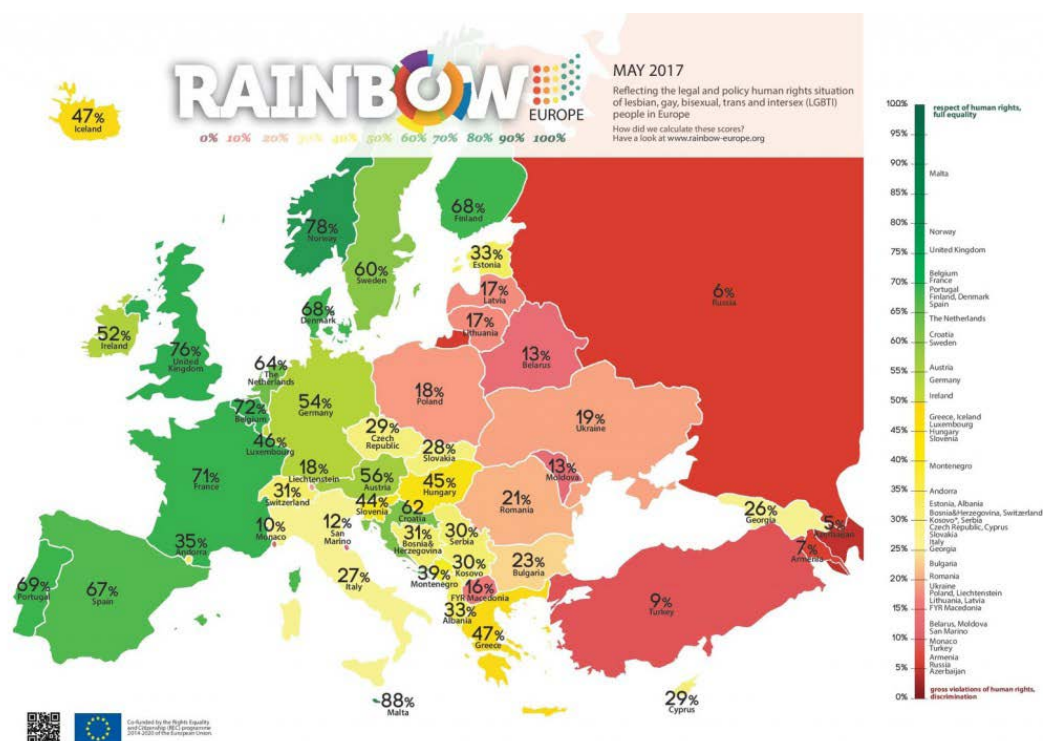
¹ LGL was officially registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania on May 4, 1995.

LGL's office is located in Vilnius, Pylimo str. 21. Here, the LGL team administers and implements projects, organizes meetings, and regularly invites the LGBT* community and its allies to various events. LGL's office contains the only LGBT* centre in Lithuania with a library of literature related to the organization's activities, where visitors can enjoy free wi-fi and a cup of coffee or tea. The LGBT* centre is open to all well-wishing visitors who want to learn more about the organization's activities and the LGBT* human rights situation in Lithuania.

LGL is a member of the National Equality and Diversity Forum ([NEDE](#)) and the Coalition of Human rights organizations. LGL also answers to international organizations **ILGA** (The International Lesbian and Gay Association), **IGLYO** (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization), **EPOA** (The European Pride Organisers Association) and **TGEU** (The European Transgender Network). We believe that we can most effectively pursue our goals by seeing LGBT* rights as part of a broader human rights discourse, and by actively supporting various initiatives both at the national and international level.

You can find up-to-date information about LGL's activities and current issues faced by the LGBT* community at www.lgl.lt/en and LGL's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/lgl.lt/.

LGBT Rights Overview 2017: Challenges and Achievements



In 2016, the international organization *ILGA-Europe's* yearly LGBT* human rights [overview](#) placed Lithuania 38th out of 49 European countries. In 2017, the country sank to 39th place. This demotion was caused by politicians' inaction on necessary legal acts that would secure the minimum required legal protections for the LGBT* community. During 26th session of Universal Periodic Review Lithuania received 22 [recommendations](#) in the LGBT* human rights sphere. Unfortunately, in 2017, no legal initiatives were raised to improve circumstances for the LGBT* community. Legislators even sought to ensure that same-sex couples living in a *de facto* partnership would not be considered family. These efforts went as far as an attempt to change the country's constitution to emphasize the principle of the "union between a man and a woman" in other legal acts. Procedures for legal gender change also remain unregulated. Although na-

tional courts showed leadership in this area, administrative procedures for changing one's identity documents as well as necessary healthcare services for transgender people remain inaccessible. Finally, law enforcement institutions showed systematic inaction in investigating reported hate speech and incidents of hate crime against LGBT* individuals. On the other hand, we can't look at everything in black and white. Regardless of these negative trends, society's views on LGBT* issues are becoming progressively more open, with questions related to the LGBT* community garnering increasing discussion in mass media and the public space. Openly homophobic statements and initiatives receive more critical attention than ever before – little by little, society is becoming more supportive.

Legal (non)recognition of same sex families

In recent years, legislators have not only refused to consider opportunities to legally protect same-sex couples' family life, but have even taken direct action to eliminate them from the Lithuanian Constitution and other legal acts based on the definition of family. On June 28th 2016, Parliament held its first convention on a constitutional [amendment](#) that would ensure that "family is based on marriage". Although procedures to amend the constitution were given the green light through voting, the amendment received no further vote in 2017. On June 15th, 2017, Parliament rejected a [project](#) proposing changes to the Civil Code establishing the opportunity to enter a gender-neutral partnership, with registered partners gaining "family member" status. Although 59 members of parliament voted against the project, 29 were in support, a number LGL considered a [victory](#) in its own right.

On May 30th, legislators supported an initiative by the "peasants" and two conservatives to implement Civil Code [amendments](#) allowing persons living together or owning joint assets to enter into "joint activities" by contract. Although this proposition was publicly presented as an opportunity for same-sex couples to regulate their joint affairs, persons entering a "joint activities" contract would not be considered "family members". Such a legal measure denying same-sex partners the opportunity to desig-



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nate themselves as “family members” would discriminate against same-sex couples in the fields of criminal justice (the right not to testify against one’s family member), patients’ rights (the right to receive information on a family member’s health condition), taxes (reduced taxes applied to family members) and other fields. Meanwhile, the definition of “family members” was narrowed through [amendments](#) to the Law on Equal Opportunity, as well as the [Law on Strengthening Families](#). In the latter law, the “union between a man and a woman” is enshrined in the preamble as the “foundation of family”.

Right to legal gender recognition and medical gender reassignment

Although the obligation to regulate gender reassignment procedures was addressed with a 2001 amendment to the Civil Codex, Lithuania remains one of few European countries where legislation has not been established on transgender people’s right to change their personal identity documents and receive necessary healthcare services. In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights established in [L. vs. Lithuania](#) that the lack of a procedure for gender reassignment violated the right to protection of private life as

established by the Convention. Over a decade later, Lithuania has still not taken action on the Strasbourg court's orders.

In March 2017, the government [instructed](#) the Ministries of Health and Justice to draft suitable legal projects in this area. A work group in the Ministry of Justice drafted a [Law on Legal Gender Identity Recognition](#). The project defines administrative procedures for changing one's identity documents (i.e. submitting a request to a civil registry institution). Meanwhile, a work group in the Ministry of Health prepared an Overview of Gender Identity Disorder Diagnosis and Treatment, which defines conditions for obtaining specific healthcare services. Regardless of the projects' progressive content, neither has been implemented so far.

In the spring of 2017, national courts made two historic decisions requiring civil registry institutions to grant two transgender individuals new personal documents with no surgical requirement. In one of these decisions, the court declared: "Since legislators still have not implemented legislation on procedures for gender reassignment, [...] the court is eliminating this gap in the law [...] by determining that the concept of 'gender reassignment' must not be associated only with irreversible surgical reassignment of the biological sex characteristics [...]." During 2017, six transgender individuals had their personal documents [changed](#) with no surgical requirement by way of the court.

In November 2017, the Parliament's members Laurynas Kasčiūnas and Paulius Saudargas registered a [project](#) to amend the Civil Codex to completely prohibit both legal and medical gender reassignment. Non-governmental organizations representing the interests of the transgender community have [called](#) this legal initiative an attempt to ignore "the scientific, legal and social reality of transgender people".

Hate speech and crimes against LGBT* individuals

According to [data](#) collected by an anonymous survey carried out by LGL in September 2016, more than half (54%) of LGBT* respondents in Lithuania had faced hate crimes and/or expressions of hate speech in the last 12



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months. Of these respondents, just 13% had reported the incidents to law enforcement institutions, giving the impression of an inherent “latency” to hate crimes and hate speech committed against members of the LGBT* community.

The following autumn, non-governmental organizations worked with a Lithuanian police school to [educate](#) over 160 officers on how to react to incidents of hatred perpetuated against LGBT* individuals. In September 2017, LGL [presented](#) an online platform and a mobile app [UNI-FORM](#) to encourage the LGBT* community to report potential criminal activity to law enforcement institutions.

In June 2017, the European Court of Human Rights informed the Lithuanian government that it would investigate the case of [Beizaras vs. Lithuania](#), which addresses law enforcement institutions' inaction in investigating online expressions of homophobic hate speech. The complainants assert that prosecutors and national courts acted unlawfully by declining to conduct investigation into homophobic hate speech posted on Facebook, thus discriminating against the complainants for their sexual orientation. According to non-governmental organizations, this case could



potentially expose a systemic [problem](#) in state institutions' ineffective response to hate crimes against LGBT* individuals.

Homophobic bullying in schools

In summer of 2017, LGL carried out an anonymous [survey](#), attracting responses from almost 600 LGBT* high school students between the ages of 14 and 18. In their survey responses, the students revealed what is taught in Lithuanian schools and what LGBT* adolescents who are still in the process of discovering their sexual orientation and/or gender identity face there. 82% of students who participated in the survey said that they encountered homophobic bullying over past year. 90% of students who encountered homophobic bullying felt uncomfortable because of it. According to the students, 50% of teachers didn't react to homophobic bullying at all or reacted to it inappropriately.

"During an ethics lesson, the teacher said that gays are no different from child molesters. That children's shelters are an appealing place for them to work, because, as she understood, they can abuse children there," one respondent said. "Once, during a lesson, the teacher said that people of 'the other orientation' are ill, and gave examples of how a person can re-

cover from this," another LGBT* teen recalled. "My school director was very vocal about her attitude toward LGBT* people. She said that we're unnatural, and that we should be hiding," one student complained. "Teachers shy away from LGBT* topics in lessons," another said. These are only a small sample of the experiences reported by LGBT* students who participated in the survey.

Having assessed the critical shortage of science-based information on LGBT* topics for teachers and students, LGL appealed to the [Education Development Centre](#), suggesting that the EDC include the organization's 2015 [publication](#) "Homophobic Bullying in Lithuanian Schools: Survey Results and Recommendations" in its list of teaching materials on its [web-site](#). After an "expert" assessment of the suggested material, however, the EDC's work group compiling the General Program for Health, Sexual Education and Family Planning [concluded](#) that they could not recommend "ideological publications" to teachers and that homophobic bullying should not be given priority over other forms of bullying.

STRATEGIC MEASURES

COMMUNICATION	<p>Providing objective and impartial information to local community members, international partners, media representatives, policy makers and the general public is one of LGL's most effective methods. We distribute information related to LGBT* human rights using the organization's official websites (www.lgl.lt and www.atviri.lt), social media (www.facebook.com/lgl.lt, www.facebook.com/BalticPride), newsletters, public service announcements aired on TV and radio, print and online media, and direct engagement with the local LGBT* community.</p>
ADVOCACY	<p>Effective implementation of human rights standards (stated in European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations documents) at the national level is an obligation Lithuania has to its LGBT* citizens. We do not hesitate to remind our government officials that there is still „home-work“ to be done. There must not be second-class citizens in Lithuania.</p>
LITIGATION	<p>We identify legal cases with the potential to improve protection of LGBT* human rights at the national level, and seek legal recourse to solve them. Strategic litigation is effective, but its benefits are costly. Participating in this process requires significant financial, organizational and human resources.</p>
AWARENESS-RAISING	<p>Raising awareness of challenges faced by the local LGBT* community and giving a „human face“ to human rights issues are some of the most effective approaches to promoting LGBT* social integration in Lithuanian society. Some events we have organized for this purpose include the Baltic Pride March for Equality, Rainbow Days, various social campaigns, and trainings for the general public, ensuring that the human rights issue of representation in public spaces is recognized. It is not our goal to „demonstrate“ anything but a desire to live openly, both to ourselves and others.</p>
COMMUNITY-BUILDING	<p>The Lithuanian LGBT* community is gradually realizing that human rights are not given automatically – obtaining equal opportunities is a struggle, and this struggle continues each day. For this reason, we work to provide our community members with the knowledge they need to fight for our equality and yours. We organize seminars, workshops, provide individual consultations and strive to increase community awareness of the legal field of human rights. We also aim to bring together the motivation and knowledge of our volunteers who could benefit from LGL as a platform for their ideas and projects.</p>

STRATEGIC MEASURES

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY- RAISING

In order to meet challenges in the field of LGBT* human rights, we are constantly looking for ways to build our skill and competency in advocacy, awareness-raising and community-building. We want to work harder and more effectively. This is why we ourselves participate in workshops, seminars and discussions and plan fundraisers to support the activities of the organization so that our volunteers will be able to receive more knowledge and skills from LGL. We are constantly strengthening the organization and our LGBT* centre's inventory to make it accessible to the entire LGBT* community, without exception.



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LGL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

LGL pursues the following objectives through its activities:

- PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
- PROMOTING EQUALITY IN THE EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SPHERES
- PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION
- PROMOTING FAMILY RIGHTS, AS WELL AS EQUALITY AND RECOGNITION OF DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES
- ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES THAT EDUCATE AND DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- BUILDING THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION

In order to implement its strategic plans and achieve the above-mentioned objectives, LGL carried out a series of activities in 2017, the most important of which are briefly summarized below.

Activities

Awareness Raising

Partners meet at Swedish Embassy in preparations for Rainbow Days 2017



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On February 7, 2017, the National LGBT* rights organization LGL, various nongovernmental organizations and foreign embassies in Vilnius met at the [Swedish Embassy](#) to discuss preparations for the upcoming *Rainbow Days 2017* festival.

Social campaign in the streets of Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda encourages those experiencing discrimination to speak up



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In May 2017, the [Rainbow Days 2017](#) billboard campaign was displayed in the public places of Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. The campaign was organized by the National LGBT* rights organization [LGL](#) in attempt to draw attention to discrimination against LGBT* people and encourage LGBT* people to speak up when faced with discrimination.

Vilnius Town Hall goes rainbow



Orestas Gurevičius and delfi.lt photo

On May 12, 2017, the National LGBT* rights organization LGL together with foreign diplomatic missions in Lithuania and other supporters organized a [Rainbow Days 2017](#) event at the Vilnius [Town Hall](#) to commemorate the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT).

In celebration of the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), the pillars of the Vilnius [Town Hall](#) were lit up in rainbow colours. The initiative was aimed to demonstrate to city's residents and guests that Vilnius is an open and tolerant European city.

Rainbow Bus passengers protest at Russian Embassy



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On 13 May, 2017, seeking to draw the attention to the persecution of LGBT* people in Chechnya (Russian Federation) and severe human rights violations committed there, the National LGBT* rights organization LGL organized a protest next to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Vilnius (Lithuania). To demonstrate solidarity with gay people terrorized by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, a 30 meters long rainbow flag was rolled out. We hope that this move will encourage people responsible for shaping Lithuanian foreign policy to not be indifferent to the human rights violations perpetrated to the East of our country's borders.

Advocacy

On April 6, 2017, representatives from LGL participated in a coordinating meeting organized by the Ministry of Justice to discuss the [recommendations](#) for Lithuania received during the second cycle of the UN Human Rights Commission's Universal Periodic Review; during the meeting, special concern was expressed regarding the Lithuanian Government's proposal to reject the recommendation to review the Law on the Protection of Minors Against Negative Public Information; attention was also drawn to the need to legally regulate same-sex couple's family relations and to adopt the Law on Legal Gender Identity Recognition.

On May 23, 2017, representatives from LGL participated in a discussion between representatives from internet media outlets, IT companies, governmental agencies and civil society organized by the Ministry of Justice regarding incitement to hatred on the internet; during the meeting, participants discussed preventative measures, their effectiveness, issues that emerge when reacting to posted hate-inciting content, civil society's role in recognizing and reporting hate speech, as well as opportunities to develop closer cooperation between governmental agencies, private companies and civil society organizations; during the meeting, LGL presented their experience in monitoring hate speech on the social networks Facebook and Youtube.

On June 15, 2017, representatives from LGL participated in a round table discussion "Effective response to hate crimes" organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs; after the [discussion](#) between representatives from the Internal Affairs Ministry, the Police department, the General Prosecutor's Office, the National Court Administration and nongovernmental organizations, the Ministry prepared a list of recommended measures that could encourage effective response by the government and law enforcement agencies to the alarming phenomenon of hate crimes and hate speech; the working paper highlighted the "latent" nature of hate crimes and recommended cooperating with organizations from the nongovernmental sector representing socially vulnerable groups in order to encourage members of those communities to report cases of hate crimes and hate



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speech; it must be noted that these necessary measures require adequate financial support; the ES programs could be one of those sources.

On June 16, 2017, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [informed](#) the Lithuanian Government that it will consider a [petition](#) by Pijus Beizaras and Mangirdas Levickas regarding refusal by national authorities to investigate instances of online homophobic hate speech. Applicants represented by [LGL](#) claim that the Prosecutor's office and the national courts have unlawfully refused to start a pre-trial investigation regarding homophobic online [comments](#) against the applicants on the social network "Facebook"; thus, the Lithuanian authorities have violated the applicants' rights to respect for private life, effective legal remedy and non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. We hope that the ECtHR's judgement will help to address the systemic [problem](#) regarding ineffective response by the national authorities to the negative phenomenon of hate crimes against LGBT* people in Lithuania. Legal representatives of the applicants and the Lithuanian Government had exchanges information between October 2017 and January 2018. The European Court of Human Rights is expected to announce its decision on the case in 2019.

On September 28, 2017, the National LGBT* rights organization LGL [launched](#) the mobile application and reporting website [UNI-FORM](#) in order to encourage members of local LGBT community to report possible hate crimes to the law enforcement agencies; using the mobile application or reporting website [UNI-FORM](#) allows to report cases of hate crime and hate speech against LGBT community members in an easy, fast and secure manner; the platform can be accessed through www.uni-form.eu or by downloading a free app from *AppleStore* and *GooglePlay* app stores.

On November 18, 2017, a representative from LGL participated in a working group meeting organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs; participants discussed this year's statistical data and individual cases of hate crimes, the implementation of proposed projects and measures aimed at effectively addressing hate crimes; during the meeting, the LGL representative drew special attention to the latent nature of the hate crimes against LGBT people and encourage the Police department to develop an effective network of communal officers.

From November to December 2017, the third evaluation of the European Commission's [Code of Conduct](#) on countering illegal online hate speech took place. Over the course of the current monitoring period, [LGL](#) reported 105 instances of homophobic and transphobic hate speech on Facebook and Youtube. 99% of these cases resulted in removal of hate speech comments.

Shadow Reports

In 2017, LGL submitted a [briefing](#) under the Rule 9.2 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministries for supervising execution of the European Court of Human Rights (EctHR) judgments evaluating the effectiveness of proposed measures in the case L. v. Lithuania; the shadow report draws the Committee of Ministries' attention to national courts' progressive jurisprudence in realizing transgender people's right to gender identity recognition, and the work of working groups in the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health in preparing necessary legislation regulating legal gender reassignment process; the report asks the Committee to continue enhanced supervision for the execution of the decision in the case of L vs. Lithuania until the Law on Law on Legal Gender Identity Recognition has been adopted.

Advocacy for Transgender People's Human Rights

In April 2017, the Vilnius City District Court obliged the Vilnius Civil Registry to change personal identification documents without undergoing the compulsory gender reassignment surgery; main requirements to realize the right of legal gender identity recognition include: psychiatric diagnosis (F64.0) and identification with the opposite sex; by using this judicial precedent, LGL helped six transgender people to change their personal identification documents in 2017 and eight more people – before June 1, 2018.

From May to September 2017, LGL participated in a work group on regulating the right of legal gender identity recognition organized by the Ministry of Justice; the work group drafted a progressive [Law on Law on Legal Gender Identity Recognition](#) which provides for a quick, transparent and accessible administrative procedure for recognizing gender identity; the project also establishes the general principal against discrimination of transgender people; the Council of Europe's [Sexual orientation and gender identity \(SOGI\)](#) unit and the international organization [Transgender](#)

[Europe](#) (TGEU) describes the legislative project as an ambitious step forward in effectively safeguarding transgender people's human rights in Lithuania; however, due to the lack of political will, the project has yet to be presented for consideration in the Lithuanian Parliament.

In April, 2017, the representatives of the National LGBT* rights organization LGL and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI), and members of the local transgender community [met](#) with Aurelijus Veryga, the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania; during the meeting, the participants discussed principal transgender needs in health care; from May to September 2017, the working group in the Ministry of Health drafted the Overview on the Procedure of Gender Identity Disorder (Transsexuality) Diagnosis and Treatment which would provide conditions for transgender people to access certain health care services (i.e. psychiatric consultations and hormone therapy); LGL representatives participated in two working group meetings (in March and August 2017) during which they gave constructive criticism and suggestions on the Description on the Provision of Treatment; although the progressive Description on Diagnosis and Treatment was prepared in time (i.e. before September 1, 2017), the document (the Order of the Minister) hasn't been adopted yet due to the lack of political will.

In March 2017, the largest daily newspaper in Lithuanian Lietuvos rytas published a front page [story](#) about a transgender person who successfully realized their right of gender identity recognition; an independent creative group Dokumentikos namai presented a documentary series [It's only a body. I am HERE](#) in which four transgender people from Lithuania openly shared their life stories; in November 2017, LGL in cooperation with the European Committee made a #EU4LGBTI [documentary](#) about a young trans man named Tovaldas and his grandmother Genovaitė. It allow Lithuanian transgender people's stories to be heard outside our own borders; all the initiative helped to increase transgender people's visibility.

In April and July 2017, LGL organized two meetings with members of the transgender community in the LGBT* community centre in Vilnius during which the organization provided consultations on legal opportunities to change personal identification documents; the meetings were streamed

on LGL's Facebook so people who couldn't participate physically would also receive the necessary information; the meetings contributed significantly towards building and mobilizing the transgender community in Lithuania.

Community Building

A Decade of EVS at LGL: What does it Mean to Volunteer at Lithuania's National LGBT* rights organization?



2017 marks 10 years since the National LGBT* rights organization LGL began accepting EVS volunteers. In a special series of articles, former LGL volunteers share their experiences about volunteering at LGL.

International Coming Out Day celebrated with Film Premiere and Discussion



Giordano Campanelli photo

On October 11, 2017, the National LGBT* rights organization LGL in cooperation with the Embassy of Israel in Lithuania celebrated the International Coming Out Day and organized a lovely evening for the LBGT* community and all of their friends. The evening started in the movie theatre *Pasaka* where evening guests were greeted by Vladimir Simonko, LGL's Executive Director, and Efrat Hochstetler, the Deputy Chief of Mission from the Embassy of Israel in Vilnius. The greetings were followed by the screening of *Out in the Dark*, an Israeli movie from an emergent director Michael Mayer.

Largest LGBT* themed library in Lithuanian now includes digital catalogue of articles



The Headquarters of the National LGBT* rights organization LGL houses the LGBT* community centre's library where you can find not only books in Lithuanian and other languages but also various periodical publications with articles on LGBT* human rights topics. During the summer, LGL's volunteer Antanas assembled a catalogue of articles printed in Lithuanian publications.

Achievements

Baltic Pride 2016 wins National 'Breakthrough of the Year' Award



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On March 29, 2017, the *Baltic Pride's March for Equality 2016* was awarded the 'Breakthrough of the Year' Award during the *National Equality and Diversity Awards 2016*, held in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius. The *Baltic Pride's March for Equality 2016*, organized by the National LGBT* rights organization LGL on June 18th, 2016, was the most successful LGBT* community event in Lithuanian history, attended by more than 3000 LGBT* community members and their allies.

LGL's Executive Director re-elected to ILGA-Europe Board for Second Term



During the 21st Annual ILGA-Europe Conference, which took place in Warsaw, from November 1 to 4, LGL's Executive Director Vladimir Simonko was re-elected to the organization's Board for the period of 2018-2019. "I'm pleased that for the 2018-2019 term, Lithuania will remain visible with a representative on the Board of the international LGBTI organization," commented the Executive Director of LGL.

LGL's Executive Director Listed Among Most Influential Lithuanian Public Figures of 2017



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On August 23, 2017, Lithuanian news portal Delfi.lt [announced](#) a list of the most influential public figures in Lithuania from its project *Lithuania's Most Influential*. Vladimir Simonko, the Executive Director of the National LGBT* rights organization LGL, appears on the list compiled by Delfi.lt and *Reitingai* magazine. Vladimir Simonko was [named](#) 42nd most influential public figure in Lithuania out of 70 nominees. This honour was awarded to LGL's Executive Director by politicians, lawyers, journalists and other public figures who participated in the selection.

Inspector of Journalist Ethics Issues Warning for Degrading LGL Employee's Honor and Dignity



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On June 30, 2017, Gražina Ramanauskaitė-Tiumenevienė, the Inspector of Journalist Ethics of the Republic of Lithuania, [reached](#) a decision on a complaint lodged by Eglė Kuktoraitė, the Communications Coordinator of the National LGBT* rights organization LGL. The Inspector issued promoter (disseminator) Laurynas Ragelskis a warning for violating the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania in his publication *Get to know the skinhead faggots!* (lit. Susipažinkite – skustagalviai pederastai!) (www.ldiena.lt, 17-01-2017) and on his public Facebook profile (www.Facebook.com, 19-01-2017). It has been determined that the content published was libellous, abusive, and degrading to the LGL employee's honour and dignity.



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Volunteering

LGL's **volunteer team** is one of the strongest pillars of the organization's activities. LGL has enjoyed help from volunteers from Lithuania as well as various foreign countries, such as Italy, Finland, Germany, Slovakia and the Netherlands. Everyone who donates their time, ideas, energy and experience contributes to the fulfilment of LGL's goals and truly enriches the organization.

Here's why it's **worth volunteering** at LGL:

- You can contribute to LGBT* human rights activism, becoming a part of human rights history;
- You will have the opportunity to participate in conferences, seminars and trainings both in Lithuania and abroad;
- You will be introduced to LGL's workspace, methods and projects;
- You will gain work experience, knowledge, and learn from your colle-

agues' feedback;

- Your English skills will improve;
- Your social circle will broaden as you meet a variety of inspiring, fascinating people!.

The spectrum of activities undertaken by LGL's volunteers is very broad. It includes opportunities to write articles and provide administrative assistance, as well as plan LGBT* community activities such as workshops, lectures, meetings and film screenings.

LGL welcomes any person interested in volunteering, and those who would like to contribute their individuality, ideas and work ethic to the organization's success. Volunteers support one another at every turn, and to make it easier to cope with the challenges of keeping track of numerous activities and staying motivated, LGL's volunteer coordinator is always ready to help.

If you would like more extensive and detailed information about volunteering at LGL, we prepared a list of **frequently asked questions (FAQ)**, which can be found on our website by following this link: http://www.lgl.lt/en/?page_id=239.

If you couldn't find the answer to your question, have comments or suggestions, or would like to contribute to our team yourself, you can reach our volunteer coordinator at the following address: volunteers@gay.lt.

Projects

UNI-FORM: Bringing Together NGOs and Security Forces to Tackle Hate Crimes and On-Line Hate Speech against LGBT Persons



Implementation period: November 2015 – November 2017

Funding: European Union

UNI-FORM is a European project, financed by the European Commission, and being implemented until November 2017 in ten (10) European Union countries. After collecting relevant information from interviews with key stakeholders (security forces, justice professionals, victim support services and victims), this project will develop an online reporting form and a mobile app. Both the website and app will be directly linked to the national LGBT partner organisations and may or may not also be linked to the relevant national security force.

Project objectives: 1) combat discrimination and violence against LGBT persons and underreporting figures and increase knowledge on homophobic and transphobic hate crime; 2) implement applicable EU legislation; 3) create a uniform reporting mechanism; 4) promote networking among all involved actors, in particular security forces and LGBT NGOs; 5) raise the awareness of LGBT victims of hate crime and encourage trust building relationships among relevant stakeholders.

#LGBTs_Matter: Raising Awareness and Encouraging Reporting on Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity in Lithuania



Implementation period: March 2016 – August 2017

Funding: German foundation “Erinnerung. Verantwortung and Zukunft”

The project is implemented by the National LGBT* rights organization LGL and the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson in Lithuania.

The project and its partnerships seek to achieve four main objectives through the implementation of the project activities.

- to raise awareness by members of the local LGBT* community about their rights under the national law through the community meetings with the representatives from the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the National LGBT* rights organization LGL;
- to encourage members of the local LGBT* community to report the instances of violation of their rights (i.e. alleged instances of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and experienced or witnessed instances of hate crimes or hate motivated incidents) to the relevant public authorities through the targeted awareness raising measures;
- to further accelerate the public debate on the topic of legal recognition of same-sex relationships through organizing an international human rights conference within the framework of the Baltic Pride 2016;
- to advocate for the adoption of legislation on quick, accessible and transparent gender reassignment procedure through engagement with the international human rights protection mechanisms and developing alternative proposals at the national level.

Sharing Expertise and Fostering LGBT Human Rights in Belarus



Nordic Council of Ministers

Implementation period: January 2017 – February 2018

Funding: The Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers

The project “Sharing Expertise and Fostering LGBT Human Rights in Belarus” involves civil society stakeholders from three countries: Belarus, Norway and Lithuania.

The project was coordinated by the National LGBT* rights organization LGL as the lead partner in partnership with Belarusian LGBT organizations, Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Lithuanian Human Rights Centre.

The project aimed to:

- Promote progress towards democracy and support civic society's development. Particularly emphasizing capacity building in the area of communication, advocacy, engaging young people;
- Mobilize community members and volunteers of LGBT organizations in Belarus;
- Strengthen their advocacy work and visibility of the human rights context in Belarus in general and LGBT rights in particular;
- Mainstream LGBT rights issues, engage in networking activities with other relevant stakeholders in Belarus and abroad;
- Foster openness and understanding between society members.

NEDF Institutional Development Project



Implementation period: September 2017 – December 2017

Funding: the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania

The National LGBT* rights organization LGL, in cooperation with organizations from the National Equality and Diversity Forum (NEDF), is carrying out a project for institutional development of associations uniting non-governmental organizations, which aims to strengthen the activities of the NEDF NGOs coalition.

The project aimed to:

- participate in social and equal opportunity policy formation and implementation processes, to develop the representation vulnerable groups;
- educate and raise awareness in the public, to promote human rights, equality and diversity;
- ensure the sustainability of NEDF activities and strengthen it institutionally.



Implementation period: September 2017 – December 2017

Funding: the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania

The National LGBT* rights organization LGL, in cooperation with NGOs from the Human Rights Coalition (HRC), is carrying out a project for institutional development of associations uniting non-governmental organizations, which aims to strengthen the activities of the HRC coalition.

The project aimed to:

- develop competences and abilities of HRC coalition organizations members with a view to strategically carrying out public policy advocacy and developing communication;
- develop HRC coalition, cooperation between its members, to create a clear self-regulation structure, implement transparency and accountability standards and to raise the public's awareness about HRC activities;
- participate in the formation of human rights principles and Lithuanian public policy that meets international standards and the creation of long term partnerships between governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Come Forward: Empowering and Supporting Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes



Implementation period: December 2016 – February 2018

Funding: European Union

The project “Come Forward: Empowering and Supporting Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes”, in line with the Directive 2012/29/EU, aims at addressing a common need within the European Union to increase reporting of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes through building capacity of civil society and official partners and empowering victim communities.

The project aimed to:

- Increase the number of dedicated front line reporting centres by building capacity of civil society and official partners on local and national levels;
- Improve the access to specialized support by building capacity of victim support service providers;
- Share good practices, strengthen cross-border and multi-agency partnerships;
- Raise awareness and empower victims.

We Are People, Not Propaganda: Consolidating the Status of National LGBT* rights organization



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

Implementation period: December 2016 – December 2018

Funding: Open Society Foundation

The main goal of the project “We Are People, Not Propaganda: Consolidating the Status of National LGBT* rights organization” is to consolidate the status of LGL as the National LGBT* rights organization in the country through strategically tailored awareness raising, advocacy and community building activities with the view of tackling discrimination and social exclusion of the local LGBT* community in the country.

The main objectives of the project are:

- To maintain the public visibility of the local LGBT* community in the public sphere and to seize the opportunity of increased visibility with the view of advocating for comprehensive legal and social changes.
- To encourage the members of the local LGBT* community to report the experienced instances of alleged discrimination and hate speech/hate crimes on grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity to the competent national authorities.
- To achieve the introduction of legal procedures for quick, accessible and transparent legal gender recognition and provision of corresponding medical services.
- To provide the specifically tailored social services to the members of the local LGBT* community and to diversify the funding sources of the organization through the reconceptualised and expanded LGBT* Community Centre.
- To establish the “emergency fund” with the view of ensuring the sustainable development of the organization in the long term period.



Rainbow Rights

Implementation period: January 2017 – December 2018

Funding: European Union

Promoting LGBTI Equality in Europe" develops LGBTI -equality policy measures in four Member States: Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The main objective of the project is to advance LGBTI equality by:

- Promoting LGBTI awareness through equality mainstreaming in different fields (education, employment and health);
- Developing local LGBTI policies together with public officials and LGBTI NGOs;
- Promoting mutual learning and exchange of good practices of LGBTI NGOs by cross border cooperation;
- Raising awareness on multiple discrimination and harmful stereotypes towards LGBTI people within minority communities.

Developing research capacity in Eastern Europe



Giordano Campanelli iliustr.

Implementation period: January 2017 – January 2019

Funding: US organization GLSEN

The project „Developing research capacity in Eastern Europe“ aims to increase the capacity of NGOs working on LGBT youth and education issues in Eastern Europe to work on LGBT issues in education.

Implementing organizations GLSEN (USA), KPH (Poland) and LGL (Lithuania) will collaborate on:

- Development of knowledge base on the experiences of LGBT students in the Eastern Europe region for programming and advocacy purposes;
- Increasing NGO capacity to conduct research;
- Increasing NGO capacity to use research findings for programmatic efforts and advocacy purposes within each country

Change in Business, Public sector and the Public – New Standards of Reducing Discrimination



Implementation period: May 2017 – April 2020

Funding: European Social Fund Agency

The project is implemented together with the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute. The National Equality and Diversity Forum members will also be involved in the project's activities.

The main goal of the project is to combat discrimination in the labour market on the grounds of the Equal Opportunities Law by systemically raising business and public sectors and society's awareness in the human rights sphere.

Health4LGBTI: Reducing health inequalities experienced by LGBTI people



Implementation period: April 2016 – April 2018

Funding: European Social Fund Agency

This pilot project aimed to increase our understanding of how best to reduce specific health inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, focussing in particular on overlapping inequalities stemming from discrimination and unfair treatment on other grounds (e.g. older, younger, refugee, immigrant, disability, rural, poverty).

The project explored the particular health needs and challenges faced by LGBTI people and analyse the key barriers faced by health professionals when providing care for LGBTI people. The aim is to raise awareness of the challenges and provide European health professionals with the tools that give them the right skills and knowledge to overcome these barriers and contribute to the reduction of health inequalities.

European Volunteer Service's (EVS) projects



Erasmus+

Heading towards Visibility and Equality



Implementation period: September 2015 – June 2017

Funding: European Commission, Erasmus+

The overall objective of this European voluntary service (EVS) project is to combine our knowledge and experience with the fresh ideas of volunteers and to create initiatives in order to develop new tools for encouraging young people to be active and informed citizens of the EU. This project foresees incorporating two EVS volunteers who, in addition to regular office activities, would be responsible for specific tasks. One volunteer, in addition to regular office activities, would be responsible for the community mobilizing (developing LGBT centre activities) and assisting on the communication work of the LGL staff. The second volunteer would be working on LGBT visibility in Lithuania through art. The latter would be responsible for creating various LGBT related artistic material, having art related activities in LGBT centre for community, designing merchandise and campaigns style for the organization, creating publications for printings, books, reports, posters and panels.

Democracy and art intertwined: working towards empowered and active LGBT community and allies in Lithuania



Implementation period: August 2016 – March 2018

Funding: European Commission, Erasmus+

Studies and research shown that many LGBT* people in Lithuania lack legal awareness, therefore they tend not to be active in the democratic processes, they do not cooperate with the law enforcement and report hate crimes, and many of them neither know about the laws protecting them from discrimination.

Taking part in this EVS experience, volunteers not only will have the chance to learn more about human rights in general and LGBT* rights in particular, but they will be also involved in the local democratic processes and advocacy action.

Disappearing Borders: Empowering LGBT Community and Allies in Lithuania



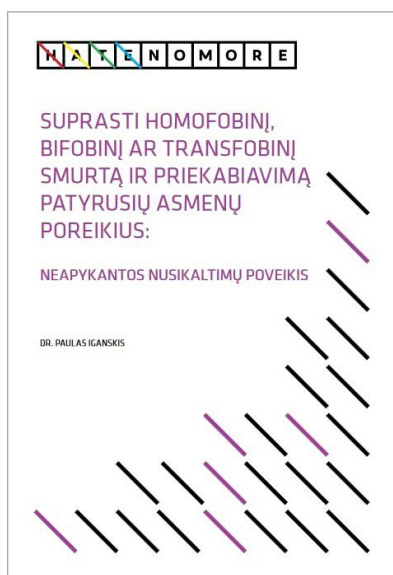
Implementation period: March 2017 – July 2018

Funding: European Commission, Erasmus+

Throughout the years of working with the local volunteers and experience implementing EVS projects LGL observed that volunteers working in the field of human rights are not only empowering local LGBT* youth and community to live more openly and be much more active when it comes to standing up for their rights. With the help from LGL these activists gain knowledge, skills and experience needed for their further work in the area of human rights.

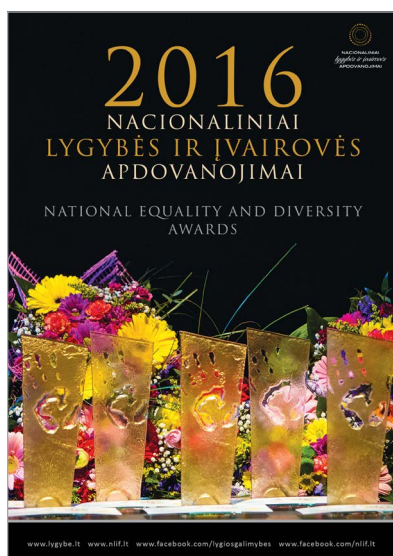
An overall objective of this project is to combine our knowledge and experience with the “fresh” ideas of volunteers and to create initiatives in order to develop new tools for encouraging young people to be active and informed citizens of the EU. This project foresees to host two EVS volunteers who, in addition to regular office activities, would be responsible for the development of the first LGBT* community centre in Lithuania and for activities of re-integration of older LGBT* people (54+) in the society.

Publications



The Impact of Hate Crime: Understanding the Needs of Persons Who Experience Homophobic or Transphobic Violence or Harrassment

The publication presents main findings from a study on people experiences of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment or violence. It also examines possibilities for law enforcement agencies in five participating countries to address these specific experiences. We hope that this study report will become an accessible information source for activists, support services of crime victims, policy makers, journalists, officers of criminal justice institutions and anybody studying to work in this area.



National Equality and Diversity Awards 2016 programme

The official programme of the National Equality and Diversity Awards was published in Lithuanian and English in March 2017.



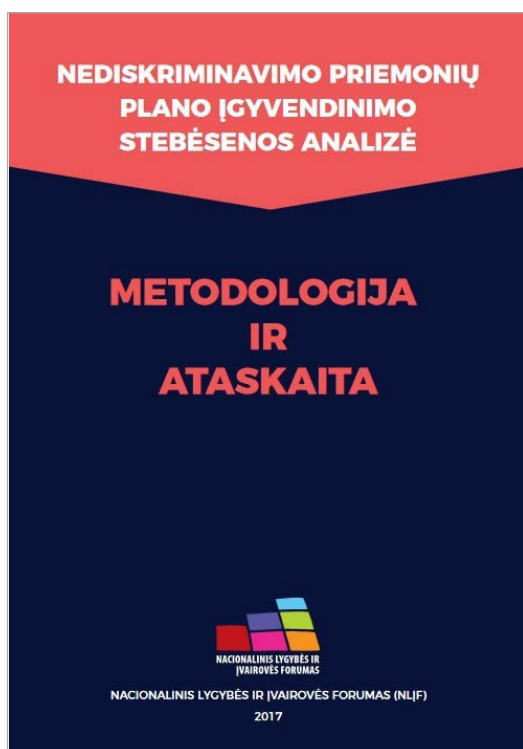
NEDF Brochure

The member organizations of the National Equality and Diversity Forum (NEDF) published a brochure introducing the Forum and its activities in October 2017.



NEDF Annual Report

The Annual Report of the National Equality and Diversity Forum (NEDF) for 2016 was published in December 2017. The richly illustrated NEDF annual report presents information on member organizations, Forum activities, completed projects and released publications. The report draws special attention to a joint initiative between the National Equality and Diversity Forum and the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson – the National Equality and Diversity Awards.



Analysis on the Monitoring of the Nondiscrimination Measures Plan Implementation

The member organizations of the National Equality and Diversity Forum (NEDF) published the Analysis on the Monitoring of the Nondiscrimination Measures Plan's Implementation in December 2017.

The publication presents the Analysis on the Monitoring of the Nondiscrimination Measures Plan 2017-2019 Implementation with a purpose to strengthen skills and competences of the National Equality and Diversity Forum as a consultative body to participate in the implementation and evaluations of national nondiscrimination promotion and equal opportunity policies.

Visi žmonės, įskaitant lesbietes, gejus, biseksualius ir transžydus (LGBT) asmenis, turi teisę jaustis saugiai ir nebijoti būti savimi.

SMURTAS, PRIEKIAVIAVIMAS AR PATYČIOS DĖL SEKSUALINĖS ORIENTACIJOS IR (AR) LYTINĖS TAPATYBĖS YRA PROBLEMA VIŠOJE EUROPOS SĄJUNGOJE

Kita vertus, informacija apie LGBT bendruomenės narių patiriamus neapykantos nusikaltimų ir neapykantos kaubos atvejus yra sunkiai prieinama. Nukentėję nuo šių incidentų asmenys nėra linkę apie tai pranešti kompetentingoms institucijoms ir policijos pareigūnams.

MES NORIME TAI PAKEISTI

UNI-FORM

yra pirmoji tokio pobūdžio internetinė platforma, apjungianti LGBT bendruomenės narių, nevyriausybinių sektoriaus organizacijų ir policijos pareigūnų pastangas įvaldyti Europos Sąjungos šalyse, siekiant paskatinti pranešimą apie prieš LGBT bendruomenės narius nukreiptus neapykantos nusikaltimų ir neapykantos kaubos atvejus.

Available on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

SENITI UNI-FORM KODINATORIŲ SAVO SALYJE

f t i

VISI MES GALIME BŪTI POKYČIŲ DALIMI

UNI-FORM partneriai

Portugalija
ILGA Portugal | www.ilga-portugal.pt

Belgija
Covaria | www.covaria.be

Estija
Estonian Human Rights Centre | www.humanrights.ee

Vengrija
Háttér Society | www.en.hatter.hu

Latvija
MOZAIKA | www.mozaika.lv

Lietuva
LGL | www.lgl.lt/en

Malta
MGRM | www.maltagayrights.org

Ispanija
FELGTB | www.conlavozbienalta.org

Jungtinė Karalystė
Galop | www.galop.org.uk

PASINAUDOK IŠMANIAJĄ PROGRAMĖLĘ



PADEK SUSTABDYTI NEAPYKANTĄ

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Malta • Portugal • Spain • United Kingdom

LGL
Lietuvos Gejų ir Lesbietų Lyga
LITHUANIAN GAY & LESBIAN ORGANIZATION

UNI-FORM transnacionalinė Europos Sąjungos Jungtinių valstybių programė

UNI-FORM
Lithuania

www.uni-form.eu

UNIFORM Booklet: Stop the hate

The booklet for the UNIFORM project was published in December 2017.

Financial Report

INCOME AND EXPENDITURES IN 2017		
UNUSED PROJECT FUNDS (2016-12-31)	122.707 €	

INCOME	€	%
European Union	208.386,14 €	51,3 %
Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania	51.076,13 €	12,6 %
Open Society Foundation	42.104,07 €	10,4 %
European Commission's Erasmus+ programme	22.557,32 €	5,6 %
Nordic Council of Ministers in Lithuania	19.058,73 €	4,7 %
European Social Fund Agency	17.480,55 €	4,3 %
German foundation Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft (EVZ)	12.030,00 €	3 %
ILGA-Europe	7.192,00 €	1,8 %
Embassy of Norway in Vilnius	7.250,00 €	1,8 %
US Department of State and US Embassy in Lithuania	4.467,93 €	1,1 %
Amnesty International	3.500,00 €	0,9 %
US foundation The Miami Foundation	2.752,29 €	0,7 %
The Flemish Government	2.646,30 €	0,7 %
Other donors	5.422,90 €	1,3 %
YEARLY INCOME	405.924,36 €	100 %

EXPENDITURES	€	%
Salaries (gross)	92.213,22 €	38,6 %
LGBT centre expenses	25.358,59 €	10,6 %
Project implementation	121.403,41 €	50,8 %
YEARLY EXPENDITURES	238.975,22	100 %
UNUSED PROJECT FUNDS (2017-12-31)	290.095 €	