



Message from the co-founders

Dear East meets West friends!

You are reading now the **1st East meets West Pages**, the new quarterly newsletter of East meets West (EmW). Up to now the yearly EmW Forum was the only space where our network could meet and share news. But as EmW is growing rapidly, we realized there is a clear need for a new communication tool that delivers quarterly news about all of the many initiatives that are undertaken in the EmW network. When reading The EmW Pages you will be in the picture about what is happening in the East meets West network and which events in the region you simply cannot miss.



Ludo and Pavel

East meets West reaches a milestone

What an incredible EmW year it has been up to now! It started on June 17th with the **3rd International East meets West Forum in Vienna**. Those of you who were present on this Event know what a great international meeting it was. It offered 1,5 days of get-together's, interesting presentations and panels, covering a wide gamut of LGBTI topics. With over 100 active participants from 21 countries, covering 'East' and 'West', the Forum has, after only 3 years, become a real LGBTI melting pot of ideas and best practice exchange. The meeting transcended the usual restricted focus on the 'traditional' groups that compose the major part of LGBTI and gave space to the full diversity that makes the LGBTI community so rich. The co-founders showed their strategy for the coming period, presenting the two pillars East meets West as a brand is based on - EmW Social and EmW Business. One of the highlights of the event was the signing of the official affiliation to the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). This is a milestone. It lays the fundamentals for building up the LGBTI Business readiness of Central and Eastern Europe, our region.



How to navigate through EmW Pages?

As these EmW Pages want to cover LGBTI Social as well LGBTI Business topics, we added a small hint allowing you the navigate easy through the Pages:

- **EmW Social Topic**
- **EmW Business Topic**

The 2016 NGLCC Conference

● We maximized our affiliation by joining the **2016 NGLCC International Business & Leadership Conference** in the USA (more info under nglcc.org/nglcc16). With over 1.000 participants, representing US and international Chambers of Commerce, LGBTI small businesses but also corporate players, the conference gave us the opportunity to have numerous new valuable contacts for EmW. It was for us an exceptional experience and uplifted our motivation for making EmW stronger and better. We are now actively contacting and meeting businesses and officials, strengthening our network with new relationships.



East meets West goes global

● No no no! EmW is not leaving **Central & Eastern Europe** but we all know that the LGBTI community has an international character. As such we are confronted with, on the one hand, similar challenges, but at the same time, this global environment also creates unique opportunities for our EmW network! We are proud to share with you that in September we signed the 'memoranda of understanding' with the **CGLCC (Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce)** and the **FME (Federacion Mexicana de Empresarios LGBT)**. We see this as a recognition of our credibility as a serious representative of the region. In practice this means not only preferential relations between the organizations but the possibility for our network to develop concrete endeavors. These first international partners are just the beginning of East meets West reaching out to the international market / players. Feel free to get to learn more about them.

More about CGLCC and FME



● Established in 2003, the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) is a national, non-profit industry association. The CGLCC is committed to forming a broad-based coalition, representative of the various interests of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-identified, Queer, Two-Spirited and Intersex owned businesses, allied businesses, corporations,

professionals, and students of business for the purpose of promoting economic growth and prosperity, through public and private sector advocacy and engagement, to advance the common business interests and opportunities of its members and stakeholders. The CGLCC has been building LGBT Supplier Diversity in Canada since 2012, and officially launched the program at the LGBT Supplier Diversity Forum during World Pride 2014 in Toronto. For more information visit www.cglcc.ca.



● The Mexican Federation of LGBT Employers is an organization that promotes the economic growth of the LGBT business community, by supporting its members, being it full members of the LGBT community or recognized as such by the FME-LGBT. They cooperate for the good of their community by promoting LGBT beneficiary policies, such as diverse talent

recruitment, equal treatment and by assuring a constant vigilance for the enforcement of regulations against discrimination in the workplace. The FME-LGBT also works on the promulgation and recognition of the economic impact of the LGBT community within the Mexican society by gathering information from their businesses and creating links with corporations, businesses, entrepreneurs, professionals and national and international partnerships. The members of the Mexican LGBT community represent a key asset in the basis of the economy; therefore, the FME-LGBT implements different actions that facilitate economic development of their community. For more details visit www.fmelgbt.mx.



News from the EmW Network

EmW works in a region where the LGBTI topics are touched by many people and in a variety of ways. Sometimes political or linked to business, often social, but always very driven! Enjoy this network news and be amazed. For more information about country News feel free to contact us under info@eastmeetswest.eu.



Albania

- IDAHOT – The International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia was celebrated in a grand fashion in Albania, with a total of 23 activities. Among these events, was the first LGBTI Employment Equality Index, presented by the Headhunter, awarding 5 out of 70+ Albanian and international companies on their LGBTI friendly standards. Hundreds of LGBTI community members and LGBTI supporters joined the Tirana Bike (P)Ride while some public staircases at the Tirana main Park were painted in the rainbow colors. On May 19th [OMSA - Open Mind Spectrum Albania](#) hosted the first Civil Society Forum covering the political participation of LGBTI people.



Austria

- On June 18th, Vienna celebrated its annual Rainbow Parade which is the highlight of the gay and lesbian year in Vienna. Around 100,000 people participated on the Pride that takes place in the center of Vienna. For the 1st time in the history the Austrian Chancellor, Christian Kern participated in the Pride and addressed the Pride public, confirming his support for all political initiatives that lead to an equal treatment for straight and LGBTI couples!

- On September 5th, the [Austrian Queer Business Women](#) (QBW) organized in Vienna their annual Forum, in cooperation with [Erste Bank](#), a leading Central & East European financial institution. The focus of the event was on the workplace diversity and was attended by HR managers, professionals and other interested parties. A great example of a successful event with real and practical take-aways for all participants.



Bosnia & Herzegovina

- The level of prejudice against LGBTI people is still high in Bosnia & Herzegovina. This year the SOC – [Sarajevo Open Centre](#) – decided to point out the need to improve the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersexual people. On May 17th people gathered in front of the Federal Parliament of Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) just before the start of their daily session. They performed a peaceful protest with five specific demands. [Read more here.](#)

- By adopting on July 14th, amendments on the BiH Anti-discrimination Law, the country finally advanced in its legal framework on anti-discrimination. Sexual orientation and gender identity are now explicitly covered by the law, and the correct legal terminology in local language is used. The Anti-discrimination Law of BiH now provides full protection from discrimination for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people.



Bulgaria

- Sofia hosted its 9th Pride with more than 2.100 participants (youtu.be/9fEGB0zJwqw). Even more successful was the 4th edition of the Sofia Pride Art Week with a number of interesting exhibitors and hundreds of visitors (facebook.com/sofiaprideartweek).



- A very nice initiative was created by the [Trastena](#) wineries producing a special limited edition of raspberry wine and this was done in support of GLAS Foundation (glasfoundation.bg). This shows that even small business initiatives can have a huge positive impact.



Czech Republic

- More than 40 thousand people joined this year's [Prague Pride](#) on August 13th.

There were not only local, but also quite a number of international guests, among others Omar Sharif Jr., the son of the legendary Actor Omar Sharif who played the main role in the Oscar winning masterpiece Dr. Zhivago.



- Prague Pride, Eastern Europe's largest Pride festival, show casting diverse cultural and business events, featured this year for the first time a two-day symposium to allow the private and public sectors to get a better understanding of LGBTI travel market. The first day revolved around **LGBTI tourism** in the private sector as well as marketing support for LGBTI tourism by public tourism authorities. The 2nd day, the focus moved to **transgender tourism**. Panelists discussed how the travel and tourism industry could best offer a great holiday without personal identity issues and compromises.



Kosovo

- IDAHOT 2016 was the highlight for the LGBTI community in Kosovo. On the 17th of May a march and a concert in the center of Pristina was organized. Among the approx. 300 participants was also the President of Kosovo (H.E. Hashim Thaçi), the EP Vice President Ulrike Lunacek, as well as large number of national and international dignitaries. During IDAHOT 2016, the Kosovo Government organized a press conference and in the evening the Government Building was lightened in rainbow colors.

- In 2016, the [CSGD](#) started providing pro bono legal aid and psychological support for the LGBTI community in Kosovo. This type of support guarantees a full legal protection and defense in case of violation of LGBTI rights and the same goes for the psychological support, which covers an existing need in the community



Russia

- In April 2016 right after Diversity Month 2016, the Russian IBM Country Manager agreed to become the Executive Sponsor of the LGBTI Business Recourse Group. After a rapid official registration of the BRG, two of its members were sent to the Amsterdam's Leadership Development Workshop.

- In August 2016 the IBM Russia local management accepted the fact that the BGR was a reality and proposed real tangible help. Internally within the Russian IBM company, the management and employees agreed that no cases of homophobic behavior is acceptable within the company.



Macedonia

- Skopje organized on April 18th the first civil society forum on political participation of LGBTI people. The forum aimed to bring different political parties together and discuss the level of inclusion of LGBTI people in their agendas, as well as the support these political parties have shown so far toward the campaign for equal rights for LGBTI people in Macedonia.

- During IDAHOT 2016, the "Ally of the year" award was granted for the first time in the history of Macedonian LGBTI activism. The award, which is given to individuals and organizations that have significantly contributed to the campaigns for equal rights of the LGBTI people in Macedonia, was granted to Ognen Janeski, TV host and journalist at the Macedonian national TV station "24 Vesti", who has continuously been showing extraordinary efforts of support and solidarity in the combat against homophobia and transphobia in Macedonia.



Serbia

- The International day against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia 2016 was celebrated by a number of events organized by [Gayten-LGBT](#) and [Labris](#). It was also visually supported by rainbow flags from the windows of the Ombudsperson office building.

- Gayten-LGBT organized an event to mark the International transgender day of visibility on March 31st, with a movie screening. The event was excellently attended by trans people, volunteers, allies and friends. State institution representatives were also present like the Office for human and minority rights and the Serbian Ombudsman.

Important Events in the Network

The EmW Network offers a mosaic of events and activities, produced and hosted by various LGBTI dedicated organizations. You will find here the most important events which were communicated to us. For additional information you have each time the link to the organizers or contact us under info@eastmeetswest.eu.

Type & Date	Event	Location	More info & registration
● 6 - 8. Oct 2016	ERA Annual Conference	Pristina, Kosovo	lgbti-era.org/conference
● 11. Oct 2016	fair.versity Austria	Vienna, Austria	fairversity.at/en
● 13. Oct 2016	LGBT Business Forum	Vienna, Austria	agpro.at/lgbtbf16
● 11-13. Nov 2016	LGBTQIA Family Conference	Moscow, Russia	resourcerus.org/en/conference-2016
● 17-18. Nov 2016	OPEN Conference	Budapest, Hungary	nyitottakvagyunk.hu/en
● 19. Oct 2016	LGBT Professionals Meeting	Bratislava, Slovakia	diversitypro.eu/events
● Dec 2016	1 st National Conference on LGBTI	Skopje, Macedonia	s-front.org.mk/en

Share with us your news

You made a huge step forward? You plan an important event or a specific campaign? Share it with us on info@eastmeetswest.eu. A chain is as strong as its individual links. We count on you to participate actively in the East meets West Pages.

About East meets West

East meets West is a Vienna based association, founded in 2013 by Ludo Swinnen and Pavel Šubrt, two colleague bankers who are professionally active in the Eastern part of Europe. The original idea was to setup a network of local East European LGBT organizations, bringing these together with their counterparts from the West, to share experiences and best practices. After a very successful start, with the first International East meets West Forum in Prague in 2014, both co-founders decided to continue the initiative in 2015 but based on a more mature and sustainable concept. East meets West wants to be, in addition to the original East-West LGBT social function, also and mainly, a facilitator of business awareness and experiences among a professional European LGBT Community by supporting, in a broader sense, LGBT linked, micro business set-ups, especially in Eastern Europe. East meets West will be the place for the creation of the awareness that LGBT men and women can be successful entrepreneurs and become role models inside and outside of the LGBT community.



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