

Message from the co-founders

Dear East meets West friends!

Just in time to close 2016, we are happy to send you the 2nd East meets West Pages! From the many reactions we received after sending out The Pages #1, we know that you really appreciate this initiative. If you expected Pavel and Ludo to slow down after the great EmW Event, we have to disappoint you! As Vienna based but internationally oriented association, it is important for us to actively participate on local and international LGBTI events. Honestly, making this newsletter becomes more and more challenging, as so many interesting activities happen in our community; we risk soon having an EmW Newspaper instead of EmW Pages. But of course, we are happy with this proof of energy that drives our EmW network as there still is so much to work to do. It also motivated us to be actively present on a number of local and international events so we could also this way grow and strengthen our network.



Finally we want from the bottom of our heart thank all of you for the great support you gave us in 2016. It is for us the oxygen that pushes us daily to work on making our community stronger. We wish you a great start of a very challenging but also very promising New Year.

Pavel & Ludo

Did you ever thought

Sympathy and support from external partners are essential to realize your LGBTI initiatives but nothing beats the power of Euro's and Cents. Long term cooperations with small or corporate businesses, need to be based on realistic LGBTI business cases. Too difficult? Not really! In this new chapter of the Pages, East meets West will show examples of how to create such cases and profit from them.

3+ Mio
EUR yearly spent

At least 3 Million Euro is our East meets West Business high-level estimate of a yearly economical impact of same-sex civil partnership in Austria. How did we derive to this number? In 2015 in Austria, more than 500 same-sex couples entered into a civil partnership. The average spent on 'wedding' arrangements in Austria according to an ING DiBa 2015 International Survey is € 4.700 (which by the way is by far below neighboring countries like Italy or Germany). On top of this we need to consider the spent of the non-resident guests on food and lodging. Finally, civil partnerships have also a direct impact on collected taxes and employment in the service and hospitality industry. We used a study from The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, as inspiration [williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu].

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**

Panel Discussion at Wirtschaftskammer Wien

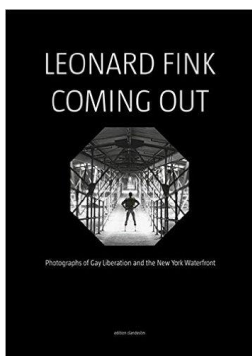
On the 13th of December **Wirtschaftskammer Wien**, the **Vienna Chamber of Commerce**, organized a panel discussion on a topic which is not often discussed: sexual orientation as an economic-relevant dimension. EmW co-founder Pavel Šubr participated on this initiative and explained why and how EmW Business focuses exactly on this element of LGBTI empowerment. He made clear that for EmW, next to the important social element of fighting discrimination and supporting workplace inclusion, an equally important effort has to be made in enhancing the powerful role of coming out in business and having LGBTI business role models to change the perception in society on the LGBTI community. The talks with the participants afterwards confirmed that for EmW this was an important opportunity to communicate their vision on what they consider the next LGBTI dimension. An initiative that deserves to be repeated!



Coming out... in pictures

The Gay & Lesbian community has a long history and fortunately, there are people who documented this in pictures for later generations, the so-called *Histeriographers*. One of them was Leonard Fink (1930 - 1992) who became an important protagonist of this movement. **The Gershon Vienna Gallery** organized in autumn an exhibition with about 60 original photographs from the 70s by Leonard Fink under the title "Coming Out - Photographs of the Gay Culture and New York's Waterfront". The city as a space for life away from the mainstream is the focus of his work. He used the interiors of decaying pier facilities to show the daily gay life on the NYC piers, such as cruising or posing in front of the typical gay bars. As one of the most influential, Fink documents the sexualization of a place as well as the decay of an architecture no longer existing on the west side of Manhattan, which led to the gradual extinction of those subcultures.

EmW was fascinated by the pictures that were shown and if you share our interest in this facet of LGBTI culture, we would be happy to put you in direct contact with the organizers.



Useful links

Wirtschaftskammer Wien - The Vienna Chamber of Commerce

https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/wir/Austrian_Economic_Chambers_Home.html

<https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/Charta-der-Vielfalt/Startseite---Charta-der-Vielfalt.html> [German only]

The Gershon Vienna Gallery

<http://www.gershonvienna.com/>

<http://www.gershonvienna.com/exhibitions/fink/>

Across the Ocean

The NGLCC Global Business Week & The NGLCC National Dinner

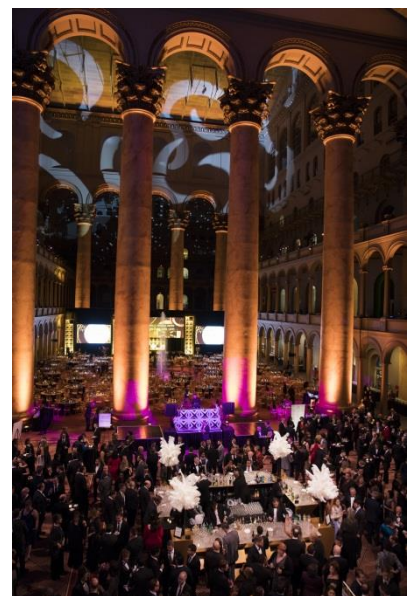
NGLCC celebrated The 2016 National Dinner Awards Gala on Friday, November 18. The record-breaking event followed the successful launch of the inaugural NGLCC Global LGBTI Business Week, which brought LGBT and allied business leaders from around the world to Washington, DC. You certainly understand, that despite our location in Vienna (Austria), and our focus on Central & Eastern Europe, we had to cross the ocean, travel to Washington DC and be present! With this we bring our region on the World map.

● The creation of an **NGLCC Global LGBTI Business Week** follows the mission of NGLCC Global - to build an inclusive global economy in which LGBTI entrepreneurs and their allied business partners are free to trade, develop, and succeed. Governments, multinational corporations, and small business each play a role in the critical connection between LGBTI human rights and economic development.

Hosted by the British, Dutch, and Canadian Embassies in Washington, DC, the presenting partners included the NGLCC, the Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce of Argentina (CCGLAR) and the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC), business leaders and honored guests included representatives from The World Bank, The United Nations Foundation, multinational corporations, educational institutions, along with LGBT and economically focused NGOs.

● NGLCC celebrated 14 years of connecting the US LGBTI business communities with a premier gala at its **2016 National Dinner Awards Gala** at the stunning National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. Each year, this signature event with more than 1.000 guests is dedicated to celebrating leading LGBTI business owners and entrepreneurs, corporates and supplier diversity advocates, and government and community leaders.

Part of the gala dinner was also traditionally an exclusive auction managed by a famous auctioneer house. Among the auction highlights was the "5 Days in Flanders" package donated by Visit Flanders and Brussels Airlines. We are very happy East meets West assisted in organizing this auction item and contributed this way to the development of NGLCC global LGBTI projects.



Useful links

National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)
<http://www.nglcc.org/>
<http://www.nglcc.org/events/global-lgbti-business-week>
<http://www.nglcc.org/events/2016-nglcc-national-dinner>

International LGBT Supplier Registration
https://my.nglcc.org/register/business_enterprise

Selling Diversity in a World of Diversion

The 7th EU Diversity Charters' Annual Forum in Dublin

● **The European Commission** and the Department of Justice and Equality of Ireland in collaboration with the **Irish Diversity Charter** co-organized this year's Annual Forum under the theme "Selling Diversity in a World of Diversion" at Dublin Castle, Dublin. Aiming to promote diversity management at the workplace it focused on how to overcome the challenges to demonstrate the value of the diversity message and sell it more effectively internally, externally and in the media. The event brought together 150 representatives from businesses, civil society, governments and media.

Opened by Tánaiste and the Minister of Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald, this event staged numerous of political, diplomatic leaders as well as business leaders. Many of the presented real examples of Diversity implementations in Irish and international businesses included Sodexo, L'Oréal, Shell and Accenture. Feel free to follow the links below to watch the recording of this Forum and enjoy reading the Forum report.

At this event, The European Commission announced the publishing of a report "**The Business Case for Diversity in the Workplace: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.**" It was a pleasure for us at East meets West to contribute to this report on good practices and this way to be recognized as an international partner network. You can download and read the full report following the links below.



○ The night before the Forum, the **European Journalists Award on Diversity** took place together with a gala dinner at the very special location for Ireland – Dublin's General Post Office, which served During the Easter Rising of 1916 as headquarters of the uprising's leaders.

Useful links

Report "The Business Case for Diversity in the Workplace: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity"

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/report_companies_final_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=35768

Video recording of the Forum

http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=35128

Forum Report

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2016-50/annual_forum_dublin_report_40582.pdf

The Initial ERA Conference in Kosovo

ERA stands for "LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey". They held their first ever regional conference on 6-8 October in Pristina, Kosovo. More than 170 delegates, among them 40 LGBTI organizations, government officials, equality bodies, donor community, international organizations, media, independent activists, researchers etc., attended the event. The main conference theme was "Why laws are not enough!" aiming to look at the existing gap between valid legislation and poor implementation in practice. Mainly due to the EU integration process, Western Balkan countries have created the habit of ticking the boxes by passing anti-discrimination and other inclusive laws which are of great benefit to LGBTI people. Unfortunately, lacking political will, absence of resources and experience and the still widespread homophobia and transphobia, the laws have not been turned into active policies and positive practices.



ERA
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

October 6-8, 2016
PRISTINA
KOSOVO

WHY LAWS ARE NOT ENOUGH?

"TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUALITY OF LGBTI PERSONS IN WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY"



The Conference aimed to challenge the existing gap by promoting the idea of a regional inter-governmental platform, producing concrete recommendations for all specific issues, share challenges and best practices among activists and professionals, encourage networking and partnerships, strengthen capacities and positively influence the government of the host country, Kosovo, to step up its efforts in order to further protect and advance the rights of LGBTI people.

We from East meets West are very proud of what the ERA team achieved so far and we travelled to the capital of Kosovo, Pristina, to give our best support and together with USAID Albania we held a workshop on building closer ties with business communities. We aimed to give inspiration for improving the status of local LGBTI communities.

ERA's next annual conference will take place autumn 2017 in Montenegro.



Useful links

ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey

<http://www.lgbti-era.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/lgbtiera>

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

Open Mind Spectrum Albania started the implementation of a new project which aims to bring the topic of equality for LGBTI people into the public political agenda prior to the 2017 elections. Open Mind Spectrum Albania ([OMSA](http://omsa.org.mk)) and the Victory Institute will collaborate on this project and all activities, and actions will be branded under the same theme, the "Vote for Equality" campaign. The project will include a research on LGBTI political participation in Albania and how these relationships helped to advance the progress toward equality. This information will be presented during public debates and will also be used in three leadership summits to take place in three main cities. This important project will help increase political participation of the LGBTI population and achieve the goal of bringing the topic of equality for LGBTI people on the public political agenda of the June 2017 elections. For additional information on this project and the many other initiatives that were or will be taken in Albania, please contact OMSA.



Hungary

OPEN Conference, the very first diversity conference for business leaders in Central & Eastern Europe, was sold out with more than 200 guests from more than 10 countries and 3 continents. [OPEN Conference](http://openconference.org) featured international diversity thought leaders, local and regional CEOs and Managing Directors of global brands, HR, Diversity, Marketing and PR Directors and regional leaders from a wide variety of industries, as well as the leaders of NGOs, and Employee Resource Groups. [WeAreOpen](http://weareopen.org), the organizer of the OPEN Conference, aspires to be a platform for companies and organizations that want to make their workplaces more inclusive and embrace the benefits of diversity.



Macedonia

The association for a critical approach to gender and sexuality, the [SUBVERSIVE FRONT](http://subversivefront.org.mk) from Skopje, organized the First National LGBTI Conference in Macedonia. Representatives from 6 political parties, from the Secretariat for European Affairs, from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, from the Ombudsman's office as well as other civil society actors discussed the advancement of the LGBTI rights and status in Macedonia through increased political participation of LGBTI as well as through increased cooperation with the civil society organizations.

Antonio Mihajlov, the president of SUBVERSIVE FRONT, held a meeting with Mr. Ivo Vajgl, Member of the European Parliament, Special Rapporteur of the European Parliament for Macedonia and discussed issues regarding the position of the LGBTI persons in Macedonia and how the European Parliament could help in improving the status and the rights of these people in the country.



The SUBVERSIVE FRONT also conducted the first campaign on political inclusion of LGBTI in Macedonia aiming at the inclusion of LGBTI equality in the public political agenda of the political parties. Prior to this campaign, they conducted an analysis of the political programs of the political parties and reached the conclusion that the problems of the LGBTI people are only to a very small extent included in the political agenda.





Austria

- On September 29th, the Austrian Queer Business Women (**QBW**) arranged a networking event called "QBW on TOP" at a rooftop bar in the middle of Vienna. The event launch was a great opportunity for lesbian women to engage in networking and mutual empowerment. Another interesting QBW event took place on November 29th to the lesbian community of Vienna a real novelty, the QBW Brunch. While listening to readings of lesbian literature and enjoying a brunch, the women had the chance getting to know each other at the informal event.

- On October 13th, the LGBT Business Forum took place for already the fourth time as an initiative of IBM, QBW and [agpro](#). Welcomed by Ewald Nowotny, Governor of the Austrian National Bank, in the splendid halls of the Austrian National Bank in Vienna, attended by CEOs and HR executives and business leaders, the Forum also induced a very interesting multi-perspective workshop on finding solution approaches on the most burning topics of LGBTI Inclusion.



- Every two years agpro, with the support of Shire, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the City of Vienna and the Federation of Industrialists and the Vienna Chamber of Commerce, awards a science-related research prize. The 10th agpro research prize was presented on November 23rd and the work of 8 winners awarded. With this prize, agpro aims to encourage students, but also established scientists, to deal with homosexuality and the situation of homosexuals. Read more at <http://agpro.at/forschungspreis/>.



- The City of Vienna has been doing for many years great work in beating discrimination and supporting Human Rights. This also goes for the LGBTI community making Vienna a city where everybody is welcome and can enjoy life to the fullest. [WASt](#), the Vienna city anti-discrimination point, organizes a multitude of activities during the year. A great event took place in the impressive Vienna city hall with a title 'Queer in Vienna'. Next to more theoretical exposes and a number of workshops, WASt also presented there the results of a large survey on the living situation of the Vienna LGBTI community, which revealed that 30% from more than 3.000 interviewed reported a form of discrimination in the last 12 months. Read the full report [here](#) [in German only].



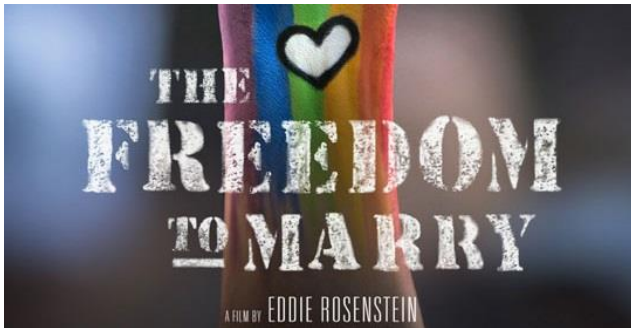
- Vienna is not only the capital of Austria, it also is home to a lot of international organizations like the [FRA](#) (Fundamental Rights Agency) of the EU. The FRA together with the [Embassy of Canada](#) organized on December 1st a panel debate on the topic of LGBTI refugees, called 'When 'coming out' drives you out'. In many countries, LGBTI people face harassment, arrest, torture and beatings. This drives some to flee their home countries and make their way to Canada or European Union Member States. Despite the fact that LGBTI people in search of international protection on grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation are often considered to belong to 'a particular social group' and can enter the asylum procedure, many hurdles remain in processing asylum claims of LGBTI persons. There are also serious obstacles once an asylum claim is successful, when it comes to the full inclusion of LGBTI persons in societies. This panel debate examined the challenges LGBTQ refugees face and presented promising practices on the inclusion of LGTBQ asylum seekers in both Canada and the EU.



Czech Republic

● Prague was the location of an interesting [ERG](#) event at IBM. The meeting came to the important conclusion, that might look evident but quite often is not. Individual ERG's from different companies drive actively relevant initiatives but they somehow did not fully realize that they represent Prague based service-oriented industries, somehow forgetting the fact that other industries and other parts of the Czech Republic might be (and are) very, very different. Looking forward to hear news from this but also other ERGs in the region.

○ Another activity certainly worth mentioning was the screening of the film '[Freedom to marry](#)' on a subject that was in Czech Republic years ago unthinkable but has been on every LGBTI agenda worldwide. The film is a thrilling documentary about the last days, when the US decided to legalize same-sex marriage, bringing immediate testimony to the perseverance and determination that is for the Czech Republic a great source of inspiration. The screening in Prague and Brno was part of the ongoing debate about institutionalizing volumes of gays and lesbians, a rainbow families and the potential introduction of marriage for all. The debate was hosted by co-founder of the association Prague Pride, Czeslaw Walek.



Kosovo

○ Kosovo hosted the Initial ERA conference for Western Balkans and Turkey. But there has been even more happening - the three organizations that support the LGBTI community in Kosovo - [CSGD](#), [QESH](#) and [CEL](#) - held a full week of events around the International Human Rights day in December and concluded with the Best Journal Writing Awards "The reality of LGBTI community in Kosovo". Also a new [Human rights campaign](#) of the three organizations was introduced.



Slovakia

● October 27th was an important day for the Slovak LGBTI community as several corporate representatives met for the first time to discuss and agree on the Slovak Diversity Charter. IBM, ATT, DELL, PWC, SwissRe, AmCham, Novartis, Amazon, Lenovo, Henkel, ING, Nadacia Pontis, Ministerstvo prace, socialnych veci a rodiny were among the first signature parties.



○ Another initiative took place on September 21st with a film screening and discussion held during the Israeli Documentary Film Festival KolNoa, which is organized by Embassy of the State of Israel in Slovakia, together with [Diversity Pro](#). [Undressing Israel: Gay Men in the Promised Land | 2012 | 46 min | written by Michael Lucas, directed by Michael Lucas and Yariv Mozer]. It generated a discussion on how it is to be gay, lesbian or transgender in the Holy land. What is the status and recognition of LGBT minorities within the society and in the workplace? The answers were quite surprising for the Slovaks.



Bosnia & Herzegovina

○ Just as previously announced, the Sarajevo Open Centre ([SOC](#)) has started its first School of LGBTI activism in September 2016. With now around twenty initial participants of the School, from Sarajevo and some other cities, this one-semester program consisting of seven theoretical and practical modules is designed for activists and those who want to become more engaged in the field of promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI persons in BiH. SOC aims at building capacity for the LGBTI movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



More useful links

In November, the European Commission's published its annual progress reports on accession states' progress towards EU Membership. The reports include important and extensive information on the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in those 7 countries.

<http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/new-eu-accession-reports-lgbti-rights-in-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-2/>

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
○ 28. Jan 2017	20th Viennese Rainbow Ball	Vienna, Austria	hosiwien.at/en/rainbowball
● 21. Feb 2017	WEConnect International	Ehningen, Germany	weconnecteurope.org/event/women-entrepreneurs-connecting-corporate-world
● 8-12. March 2017	ITB Berlin [World's Leading Travel Trade Show]	Berlin, Germany	www.itb-berlin.de/en search for LGBT Travel



THE WORLD'S
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8-12 MARCH 2017

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@eastmeetwest.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 LGBTI 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 LGBTI social function, also and mainly, a facilitator of business awareness and experiences among a professional European LGBTI Community by supporting, in a broader sense, LGBTI 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 LGBTI community.



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