



AGAINST ALL ODDS
WE CLAIM
THE FUTURE

ERA

Annual Conference
Skopje, Macedonia
3-6 October 2018

OUTLINE

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#ERACon2018
#WeClaimtheFuture
#LGBTISkopje

1. Background

[ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey](#) is an umbrella regional association operating in nine [\(9\) countries](#) with a membership of 58 LGBTI organizations. It was founded in September 2015 with the objectives to a) strengthen capacities of LGBTI organizations in the region, b) lobby and advocate nationally, regionally and internationally for LGBTI rights and c) strengthen the visibility of the movement across the region and beyond.

ERA's Annual General Assembly and Annual Regional Conference is the biggest LGBTI event organized in the region since 2015. The conference is a lobby, advocacy, capacity building and visibility event which brings together more than 200 participants from across the region, Europe and beyond. LGBTI activists, state officials (governments, Parliaments, equality bodies etc.), donors, researchers, journalists, diplomatic community, representatives of international organizations and members of the local community attend the event.

Skopje 2018

The ERA Annual Conference 2018 will be held in Skopje on 3-6 October. The event is being planned and implemented in close partnership with ERA's member organizations in Macedonia. Engagement and involvement of important state institutions has already been established. The Conference will be held in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Inter-Party Working Group of the Macedonian Parliament for LGBTI Rights.

Through its fundraising efforts ERA has secured financial support for a significant portion of the budget. Current supporters are the European Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Macedonia and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia.

Conference Objectives

Main objectives of this Annual Conference are to:

1. Increase political will and engagement of governments of Macedonia and the region on LGBTI rights;
2. Increase dialogue and cooperation between state institutions and other stakeholders of the region with LGBTI organizations and activists;
3. Strengthen capacities of LGBTI activists as well as regional dialogue and cooperation of LGBTI organisations;
4. Contribute to an increased and improved visibility and position of LGBTI people in Macedonia;

The General Assembly

3 October 2018

The Annual General Assembly, will take place on October 3rd. It is the most important annual event of the association where the most important issues and topics are discussed and decided for. The General Assembly is a venue of true political and democratic engagement and participation of activists from 9 countries of the ERA region. The assembly is attended also by members of the Advisory Board which is made of approximately 20 individuals from across the world who provide very valuable inputs and help to the association.

The Regional Ministerial Meeting and Stakeholder's Dialogue Meetings

4 October 2018

Cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Inter-Party Working Group of the Macedonian Parliament for LGBTI Rights has been established for the purposes of this conference.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will co-host the opening ceremony on October 3rd.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will host the one-day regional ministerial meeting.

The Inter-Party Group of the Macedonian Parliament for LGBTI Rights will co-host a panel at the conference on the role of parliaments in advancing LGBTI rights.

In close cooperation with the Organizing Committee of the Conference it has been agreed that main objectives of the one-day Government conference are to:

1. Secure and improve engagement of state institutions – both in Macedonia and other countries of the region on:
 - a. **Access to education**; by increasing engagement of Ministry of Education and Science of Macedonia on the LGBTI topic with regards to equality and safety in the school environment, revision of homophobic and transphobic school books and curricula, addressing violence and bullying etc.;
 - b. **Legal Gender Recognition**, by engaging with and increasing the engagement of the Ministry of Health of Macedonia on the subject and making use of the current international support and practices on the issue;
 - c. **Regional cooperation** by pushing for an Increased engagement and role of the Republic of Macedonia (cooperation with Regional Intergovernmental Platform, Council of Europe, Membership in the European LGBTI Focal Points Network etc.) which are also optimal platforms for policy reform and government initiatives;
2. Improve dialogue and cooperation of state institutions with LGBTI organizations;
3. Address issues faced by the LGBTI communities across the region particularly:

- a. Access to Justice (protection from violence and discrimination) improved legal services;
- b. Access to crucial services (education, health, economic empowerment);
- c. Improved public perceptions towards LGBTI people;

Two Days Open Space Technology Regional Conference

5-6 October

The rest of the conference focuses on strengthening the capacities of LGBTI activists in the Western Balkans and Turkey region as well as on the coordination and dialogue of more than 150 participants from civil society, state authorities, academia, media, diplomatic community, donors and members of the local community.

The format of the conference is [Open Space Technology](#), which was tried for the first time at ERA's 2017 Annual Conference in Podgorica and was rated with huge success by all the participants. The format allows for each participant to have the opportunity to propose a workshop or session which then participants have to vote for as a preference. At the end, the most preferred workshops and topics make it to the agenda – which is a big number – by allowing people to self-organize and gather on topics they find of relevance and which they can contribute to. In addition, several main panels are held collectively where main issues of the regional movement are brought forward and discussed. This is also a space where special guests join. Story-telling is used during these main panels too which serve to inspire people and orient the smaller discussions taking place during the workshops.

AGENDA

2 October – ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS

All day	Arrival of Participants <i>(ERA members who are attending the General Assembly)</i>
14:00 – 17:30	ERA Steering Board Meeting Venue: LGBTI Support Centre Address: Naum Naumovski Borche 83, Skopje 1000
19:00 – 21:00	Dinner Venue: Aleksandar Palace Hotel Room: Congress Hall 4

3 October – ERA GENERAL ASSEMBLY and CONFERENCE OPENING CEREMONY

10:00-18:30	ERA General Assembly
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(Agenda is sent separately to ERA members by the Steering Board – participation is open to ERA members only. Registration for observers is closed).

Venue: Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia

Room: Boris Trajksovski Hall

Address: [11th October St. 10, Skopje 1000](#)

19:00-21:00

Conference Reception

Co-Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Macedonia

Venue: MP's Club, Skopje

Address: [Blv. Mitropolit Teodosij Gologanov 45](#)

Keynote Speakers:

H.E Mila Carovska, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Republic of Macedonia

- H.E Thomas Gerberich, Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany in Macedonia

- H.E Wouter Plomp, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Macedonia

- Biljana Ginova, ERA Steering Board Co-Chair *(they)*

4 October – REGIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING and STAKEHOLDER'S DIALOGUE MEETINGS

09:00 – 11:00

Regional Ministerial Meeting

Hosted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Macedonia

(note: this event is closed and will be attended only by government representatives and two civil society representatives:

- Biljana Ginova, ERA Steering Board *(they)*

- Dragana Todorovic, ERA *(she)*

Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace

Room: Mezzanine Hall 3+5

Address: [Bul. 8-mi Septemvri br.15 1000 Skopje](#)

09:00 – 11:00

Strategic Preparatory meeting

In parallel to the Regional Ministerial Meeting all participants of the conference will hold a start-up preparatory meeting where the Conference's content and main priorities will be discussed. This session will be designed in the form of a warm-up (participants getting to know each other) and discuss the main issues ahead of the conference.

Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitators:

- Irena Cvetkovic, Coalition Margins, Macedonia
- Amarildo Fecanji, ERA (*he*)

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:00

Keynote Speeches:

- Marija Vuletić, ERA Steering Board Co-Chair (*she*)
- Mila Carovska, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Macedonia
- Klaus Jetz, LSVD/HES (*he*)

12:00 – 13:30

Stakeholders' Dialogue Meeting - Panel 1

Non-discrimination in the Western Balkans and Turkey;

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Jovana Jovanovska Kanurkova, LGBTI Support Center Skopje (*she*)

Speakers:

- Marco Mantovanelli, World Bank
- Gjulten Mustanova, Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs
- Pavle Bogoevski, Member of Parliament, Republic of Macedonia
- Antonio Mihajlov, Subversive Front Macedonia
- Antonina Vykhest, Council of Europe

13:30 – 14:30

Lunch

Room: Congress Hall 3

14:30 – 15:30

Stakeholder's Dialogue Meeting – Panel 2

“Trans and non-binary rights in the Western Balkans and Turkey”

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Linn Julian Koletnik, TransAkcija (*they*)

Speakers:

- Lila Milik, Transforma, Macedonia
- Slavco Dimitrov, Coalition Margins, Macedonia
- Asmira Topal, TransAid, Croatia

15:30-17:00

Stakeholders' Dialogue Meeting – Panel 3

“LGBTI Youth in Education in the Western Balkans and Turkey”

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Dona Kosturanova – Youth Educational Forum

Speakers:

- Jovana Ananievska, HERA (*she*)
- Irena Cvetkovic, Coalition Margins

- Gordana Blazevska Spriridonova (school psychologists)
- Petar Atanasovski, Ministry of Education and Science;
- Juljana Nikolova, Member of Parliament, Member of LGBTI Inter-Parliamentary Group, Republic of Macedonia

17:00 - 17:30

Conclusions and final remarks

Room: Congress Hall 4

Government Representative: Gjulten Mustanova

CSO Representative: Dragana Todorović, ERA (*she*)

19:00 – 21:00

Dinner

Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace

Room: Congress Hall 3

5 October - ERA Annual Conference – Open Space Technology (Day 1)

08:00 – 09:00

Registration of Participants

Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace

Address: [Blv. 8-mi Septemvri br.15 1000 Skopje](#)

09:00 – 10:15

First Plenary - Trans and Non-Binary realities in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Biljana Ginova, ERA Steering Board (*they*)

Speakers:

- Janset Kalan, ERA Steering Board, Turkey (*she*)
- Rita Nowak, Green Party, Germany
- Lila Milik, Transforma, Macedonia

10:15 – 10:30

Coffee Break / Networking

10:30 – 12:30

Pitch-in Session and Setting up Conference Agenda

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Aleksandra Vidanović (*she*)

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch

Room: Congress Hall 3

14:00 – 17:00

OST Sessions

- Congress Hall 4 – Mezzanine Hall 2 – Mezzanine 3

17:00 – 18:15

Second Plenary: “Inclusion (and exclusion) in the LGBTI movement”

Room: Congress Hall 4

Facilitator: Nenad Micov, Stronger Together (*he*)

Speakers:

- Andrej Senih, HERA Macedonia (*he*)

- Serkan İlaslaner, Red Umbrella Turkey (*they*)
- Hilmi Jashari, Ombudsman of Kosovo

18:15 – 18:30 Closing remarks from representatives of OST sessions

19:30 – 21:00 **Dinner**
Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace
Room: Restaurant “A La Carte”

6 October – ERA Annual Conference – Open Space Technology (Day 2)

08:00 – 09:00 **Registration of Participants**
Venue: Aleksandar Palace Hotel
Address: Blv. 8-mi Septemvri br.15 1000 Skopje

09:00 – 10:30 **Third Plenary - Growing up LGBTI**
Room: Congress Hall 4
Facilitator: Antonio Mihajlov – Subversive Front Macedonia
Speakers:

- Livia Zotrija, Aliance against Discrimination LGBT, Albania (*she*)
- Kristian Randjelovic, XY Spectrum, Serbia
- Lina Kostarova, Center for Psycho-Social and Crises Action, Macedonia
- Frank Morawietz Franco-German-Youth Office

10:30 – 10:45 **Coffee Break**

10:45 – 13:00 **OST Sessions**
Congress Hall 4 – Mezzanine Hall 2 – Mezzanine Hall 3

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch**
Room: Restaurant A La Carte

14:30 – 16:00 **Fourth Plenary: Role of Parliaments in advancement of LGBTI rights**
Room: Congress Hall 4
Facilitator: Elena Petrovska, HERA (*she*)
Speakers:

- Julie Ward, Member of the European Parliament (*she*)
- Nataša Sukic, Member of Parliament, Levica Party, Slovenia
- Gordana Comic, Member of Parliament, Democratic Party Serbia (TBC)
- Maja Morachanin, Member of Parliament, Republic of Macedonia

16:00 – 18:00 **OST Sessions**

Congress Hall 4 – Mezzanine Hall 2 – Mezzanine Hall 3

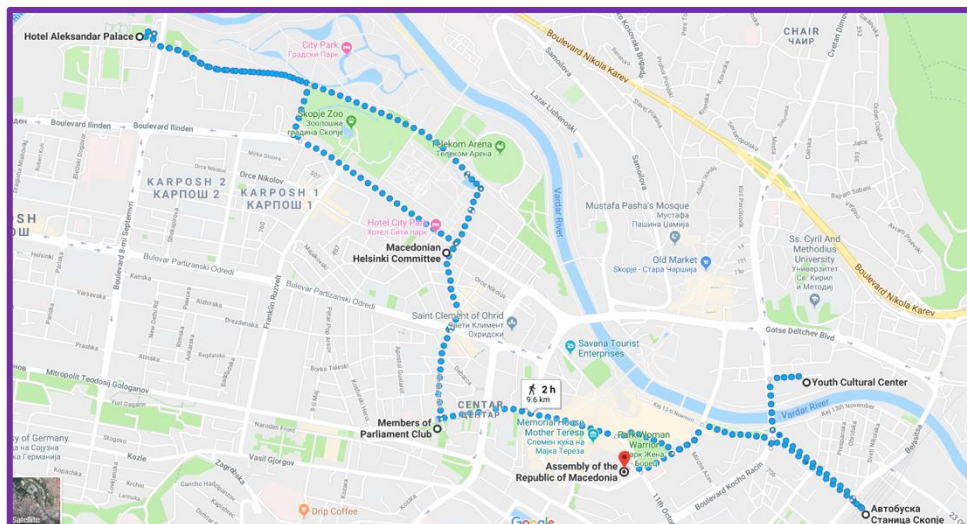
- 18:00 – 19:00 **Final Plenary – Ending remarks, presentations, speeches and feedback from working groups;**
Room: Congress Hall 4
Facilitator: Aleksandra Vidanović (*she*)
- 19:00 **End of Conference**
- 19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner**
Venue: Hotel Aleksandar Palace
Room: Restaurant A la Carte
- 21:00 **White Night Skopje**
Please check Welcome Note and logistical information for venues to visit during your stay in Skopje

LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

VENUES

1. Hotel Aleksandar Palace - Prohor Pcinjski <http://www.aleksandarpalace.com.mk/> +389 2 309 2392
2. Macedonian Helsinki Committee (LGBTI Support Centre) - Naum Naumovski Borche 83 <http://lgbti.mk/> +389 2 311 9073
3. Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia - 11th October St. 10 <http://www.sobranie.mk/home-en.nspj>
4. Members of Parliament Club - Mitropolit Teodosij Gologanov 45
5. MKC Youth Cultural Center - Kej Dimitar Vlahov 15 <http://www.mkc.mk/> +389 2 311 5225
6. Skopje Bus Station – Nikola Karev 20 <http://mktransport.mk/en/stations/station/skopje> +389 2 246 6313

Link to google map here <https://goo.gl/maps/xo81mWA1Ckm> These are the venues of all conference events



TRAVEL & REIMBURSEMENT

For all participants whose travel costs are being covered by ERA, and who are arriving and leaving Skopje by plane, pick up has been arranged with local taxi company. Someone will be waiting for you at the arrivals lounge.

Please be informed that we are not arranging pick up and return to airport for participants whose travel costs are not covered by us.

For all other participants coming to Skopje by public transport or private vehicles whose travel costs are covered by ERA please keep in mind the following information:

- ERA will cover costs of public transport (bus, train etc.);
- ERA will cover cost of travel by personal vehicle to Skopje and return (reimbursement of costs by car is 0.10 EUR per kilometer ViaMichelin- Toll costs are not included in this amount);
- ERA will NOT cover other forms of travel arrangements such as taxi, rent a car, trips made in first class etc.

Please be kindly reminded that you are responsible for your own travel insurance.

For further reference please find in attachment ERA's travel reimbursement policy.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

From the ERA team:

- Amarildo Fecanji +381637429731 (WhatsApp and Viber too)
- Jelena Pilipovic +381 603052098 (WhatsApp and Viber too)

From the Conference Organizing Committee:

Elena Petrovska	+398 75 207 187
Ljubomir Faizov	+398 71 210 563
Jana Kocevaska	+398 75 299 877

GETTING AROUND Skopje

Whenever you need a ride somewhere, please ask the hotel reception or someone from our staff to call a taxi for you. Please specify that you're asking for this company:

TAXI GLOBAL (+389 2 151 80) <http://www.taxiglobal.mk/>

TRANSLATION

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the conferences main hall, where all plenaries will take place and most OST sessions (Congress Hall) in English, Albanian, BCMS, Macedonian and Turkish languages.

COMMUNICATION

For all your social media posts, statuses, pictures on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. please use the following hashtags: #ERACon2018 #WeClaimtheFuture and #LGBTISKopje

For security reasons please make sure you ask permission of others before posting their pictures or names on your social media.

LOCAL CURRENCY

Local currency is the Macedonian Denar. Exchange rate is approximately: 1 EUR = 60 DEN

FOOD/DRINKS/PARTY

Bars:

Radio Bar
Breakfast Club
Kaldrma

Restaurants:

Pelister
Galerija 7
Turist Grill
Gurmet
Antica
Vegan365Kitchen

Clubs:

Epicentar Summer Club
Kapan An
for the full map please visit: <https://goo.gl/QTkdDg>

[EVENING] EVENTS happening in Skopje during conference

[photo exhibition] Del LaGrace Volcano CORPUS QUEER: BODIES OF RESISTANCE 1980-2018 @ Museum of Contemporary Arts <https://www.facebook.com/events/140678030125347/>
(01-04 Oct.) KULTUVATOR vol.4 - film/popup shops/street art {free entrance} <https://www.facebook.com/events/273963546552448/>
(04 Oct.) KULTUVATOR w. Crazy P Soundsystem (live) {500 MKD entrance} <https://www.facebook.com/events/1038136916396548/>
(06 Oct.) PMG Recordings Festival 8 Sonična Mladost (Sonic Youth) {free entrance} <https://www.facebook.com/events/239794673373601/244923812860687/>

SKOPJE PRIDE

With the Skopje Pride was planned to take place on October 7th, the Skopje Pride Committee decided to postpone the event due to the upcoming referendum concerning the country's name. Please maintain contact with organizations and activists in Macedonia to learn more about Pride dates and other events.

ORGANISERS AND SUPPORTERS

The ERA Annual Conference is being organized by ERA, in partnership with LGBTI Support Centre, Macedonian Helsinki Committee, Coalition Margins, Subversive Front and H.E.R.A



The ERA Annual Conference is financially supported by the European Commission, Federal Foreign Office of Germany and Hirschfeld –Eddy-Foundation and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Macedonia and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Macedonia



The project is co-financed by the European Union



Auswärtiges Amt



Kingdom of the Netherlands



HIRSCHFELD-EDDY-STIFTUNG



МТСП
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ЗА ТРУД
И СОЦИЈАЛНА ПОЛИТИКА

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The content of this report is the sole responsibility of ERA and its partners and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

ANNEX 1: Code of Conduct for ERA Events

Thank you for becoming part of our event. We believe that all events are more successful if and when they are conducted through open debates and always with mutual respect and working toward more open and just societies. To make sure that our events are a safe space for each and every one of us we kindly invite you to read and give your consent to the below code of conduct. We kindly ask you also to give us your feedback in case you think this code of conduct should be further improved and reflect the values and standards that we aim to share as a network.

We value your participation, safety and well-being and we hope this code of conduct helps in that direction.

We are all equal

Our work is based on the principles of equality. This means freedom of expression and self-determination for every participants' sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics etc. We should all keep in mind and respect each-others identities, needs and well-being. We should not act in a way that is disrespectful, ignorant and/or in denial of other people's identity and personality. When meeting and talking to others, we should never assume their identity, and we should ask how they self-identify and what kind of information they wish to share with others.

Our events are safe spaces for all

The events we organize should be safe spaces for all. All of us should contribute to an environment in which everyone feels safe and free to express their views and opinions. Nobody should impose attitudes, identities and lifestyle to others. Hate speech, insulting, silencing, personal attacks and other forms of violent communication are not acceptable. Address the issue, not the person.

Privacy is important

We should all respect and protect each-others' privacy and confidentiality and not reveal personal information of others. In case you wish to take photographs or videos at the event, always ask for the other person's consent.

Active and respectful communication is encouraged

We strongly encourage active participation and open communication. In case of disagreement, we should all treat each other with respect. Give undivided attention to the person who has the floor to speak. Share airtime. If you feel like you should interrupt, take a note and address the issue later. You can always choose not to speak if you do not feel like having something to say at that moment.

Time and place matter

Try to respect previously established working hours, procedures and agreements and act conscientiously. Being on time and keeping in mind how an event works makes it easier for everyone to focus on what is important. If you need additional clarifications, try to address them during breaks. Feel free to make practical suggestions as well. Treat the location of the event as if it were your home, because you should feel at home.

Rule of law and transparency

ERA respects rule of law in a country it hosts an event by complying with law, regulations and international agreement. We are completely transparent and our data is made available through traditional and new media.

Have a good time

It is okay to have a good time. When we make a safe space, when we are mutually supportive and treat everyone equally and with respect - we come together as a community and make the best out of it. Relax and do not hesitate to be yourself.

Report a problem

In case you are facing any form of ill-treatment or notice cases of ill-treatment of others during any of our events please do inform a member of ERA staff or Steering Board at your earliest convenience. You may a) ask to speak in private to ERA staff member, b) ask to speak in private to ERA Steering board member c) write an e-mail d) write an anonymous e-mail or letter.

ANNEX 2: Conference Security Protocol

Things you should know in order to feel safe during your stay in Skopje, Macedonia

1. Is Skopje LGBTI friendly?

Unfortunately, Skopje still has a homophobic vibe. In order to secure a safe space for the participants of the conference, the local organizations are in constant communication with police stations and officials. Furthermore, the local organizations prepared an info-pack of LGBTI friendly places for entertainment so you can enjoy your free time. Avoid dark suspicious places and random taxi companies. The organizers will provide contacts from a taxi company you can use during your stay. Have in mind that number of people still have prejudice towards the LGBTI community which is something we are actively trying to change, but for the moment we advise precautionary behavior.

2. Is sex work legal in Macedonia?

Sex work is a criminal offense in accordance with the Criminal Code of Macedonia and it is punishable with a prison sentence from 3 to 5 years. Whosoever recruits, instigates, stimulates or entices another to sex work, or whosoever in any way participates in handing over a person to someone for the purpose of prostituting, can be sentenced to imprisonment of 5 to 10 years.

3. Is drug use legalized/decriminalized in Macedonia?

Drug use is still not legalized/decriminalized in Macedonia. Possession and use of drugs can be considered as either a criminal offence with a prison sentence up to 10 years, or as a minor offence with a fine up to 500 euros.

4. Can I drink alcoholic beverages in public places?

Consuming alcoholic beverages and drunken behavior in public places is a minor offence with a fine up to 400 euros.

5. What can I do if someone attacks me?

In case of an attack you should immediately alert the police and the contact persons from the local organizations for legal aid and representation.

6. Useful telephone numbers

Police – 192

Fire department - 193

First aid – 194
