

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



GLAS would like to thank first and foremost the local LGBTI community for standing up for their rights and friends more than ever before. We would like also to thank all the international and local partnering organizations, businesses, authorities, media, activists and everyone, who contributed with their time and energy during 2017.

GLAS's annual report was coordinated and edited by Simeon Vasilev and Dimitar Pizhev

The report covers activities between January 1st and December 31st 2017.

- **The Business Platform Work It OUT by the GLAS Foundation**
- GLAS Foundation is the first organization in Bulgaria to bring the business case for LGBT equality and diversity to Bulgarian companies. The launch of the platform Work It OUT was officially given on April 26th at the National gallery Square 500 with business breakfast in partnership with Microsoft. Guest presenters at the event were Marianne Roling – General Manager Small Medium Solutions & Partners, Central and Easter Europe, Microsoft, David Pollard – Executive Director of Workplace Pride Foundation and Simeon Vasilev, Executive Director & Co-Founder of GLAS foundation. Work It Out serves as a platform for Bulgaria-based domestic and international companies that want to make their workplaces more LGBT inclusive and embrace the benefits of diversity. The purpose of the platform is to promote a positive business and economic case for equality of opportunity for every employee in Bulgaria. It is not a formal organization, but rather a community of companies all sharing the goals for acceptance and inclusion of LGBTI people.

So far the platform has 18 local and international companies, including Microsoft, EY, British Council, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, SAP and others. Work It OUT hosted a number of events in 2017 to introduce and promote innovative approaches to LGBT inclusion in the workplace.



The platform was also presented at the annual HR conference, organized by the media outlets 'Capital' and 'Karieri'. At the invitation of Work It OUT a special guest at the forum was Fleur Botwick, D&I director of EY for the EMEA region. During the conference data from an unrepresentative study were presented to more than 100 employers in different business areas.

The GLAS Foundation in partnership with EY published also a manual on integrating LGBTI employees in the workplace. It is the first document of its kind in Bulgaria and can be downloaded free of charge online. It introduces employers into the practical steps they can take to make the work environment more inclusive for LGBTI employees and create a more tolerant and productive corporate culture for all employees.



- **Come Forward: Empowering And Supporting Victims Of Anti-LGBTI Hate Crimes**
- In 2017 GLAS Bulgaria, in a consortium encompassing 22 partners from 11 different European countries, began implementing the project “Come Forward: Empowering and Supporting Victims of Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes”, co-financed by the European Commission. The issue of anti-LGBT hate crime has increasingly been recognized by international organizations, as well as many governments across Europe, but, despite this, trans-border efforts to tackle this phenomenon are yet to be cohesively developed. The project, which started in January 2017 and will last for 24 months, focuses on the issue of anti-LGBT hate crime through a mix of different objectives, such as increasing the number of dedicated front line reporting centers by building capacity of civil society and official partners on local and national levels, improving the access to specialized support by building capacity of victim support service providers, sharing good practices, strengthening cross-border and multi-agency partnerships, and raising awareness and empowering victims. The project is developed within the framework of the programme Rights, Equality and Citizenship 2014-2020. Main coordinators are the University of Brescia (Italy) and Lambda Warsaw (Poland).



- **In support of PrEP**
- The GLAS Foundation, the online media HUGE and the Center for Sexual Health started a campaign to raise awareness among Bulgarian men, who have sex with men. The goal of the initiative, launched in November, is both informational and organizational – to stimulate the gay community itself to demand access to the revolutionary blue pill, which effectively and safely protects against HIV infection. The video that launched the campaign is dedicated to how PrEP works and is created by the Philippine Love Yourself Initiative, which kindly provided it for the needs of the Bulgarian campaign.
- The activists from GLAS Foundation, Deystvie and Bilitis Foundation negotiated in 2017 with the Ministry of Public Healthcare to change the current legal framework, which places unnecessary obstacles to the adequate healthcare service of people living with HIV/AIDS in Bulgaria. The three organizations insist on transitioning to a regular prescribing and receiving antiretroviral drugs for a period of 3 months for people living with HIV, who have achieved lasting optimal suppression and have maintained it over a period of one year.

The three organizations also participated actively in the H=H campaign. The initiative aimed to raise awareness of the latest methods in the prevention and treatment of HIV and to make changes to the procedure for obtaining medicines by HIV patients. The organizations participated in meetings with representatives of medical institutions and the Ministry of Healthcare, with the dissemination of a petition in support of the campaign and with the organization of a workshop on HIV/AIDS and free HIV testing.



Какво е PrEP - хапчето, което предпазва от ХИВ

616 views



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616 views

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SUBSCRIBED 84

PrEP или Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis е хапче, което ефективно и безопасно защитава от ХИВ инфекция. То е одобрено от Европейската агенция по лекарствата и FDA в САЩ. Въпреки, че е на пазара от 2012 г., все още много хора не знаят за съществуването му. Редица страни по

9 1 SHARE SAVE ...

- **A support group for parents of LGBTI young people**
- A mutual assistance group for families of LGBTI young people was created by GLAS Foundation in partnership with Bilitis Resource Center Foundation. The group is intended for families with LGBTI children as well as families, who have doubts about the sexual orientation or gender identity of their relatives and want to overcome the problems in their communication with them. The group meets once a month and is moderated by a professional psychotherapist with proven experience in working with LGBT people and their families. The first meeting was held in December 2017. The participation is completely free of charge. The GLAS Foundation in partnership with Stonewall UK also published the manual 'Do You Think Your Kid is Gay?', aimed to help and inform parents of LGBTI children.



- **Initiative to collect data on homophobic and transphobic motives and incidents**
- In 2017 The GLAS Foundation in partnership with the Youth LGBT Organization 'Deystvie' continued their work on collecting information about hate crimes, induced by homophobic and transphobic motives that occurred on the territory of Bulgaria in 2017. The activities are a continuation of the project www.tolerantni.com, launched by the GLAS Foundation in 2015, which is still the only platform for collecting data on this topic in Bulgaria. In 2017 the website was updated in accordance with ILGA-Europe's recommendations and also an outdoor media campaign was started in Veliko Tarnovo and Bourgas. Additionally a Facebook ad campaign was also launched in the period August-September 2017. The outdoor campaign had several challenges. Firstly, the advertising agency in Bourgas, after viewing the artwork, mentioned that this is a potential violation of the Bulgarian laws, but they quickly changed their mind after a brief discussion. Also the outdoor campaign did not achieve the same effect as the previous one in Sofia (less reports than expected). On the other hand, the Facebook campaign received a lot of publicity and reached numbers above planned, but also attracted a large number of homophobic comments. By the end of 2007 31 reports were submitted through the online platform. The initiative is funded by ILGA-Europe.





- **Sofia Pride 2017**

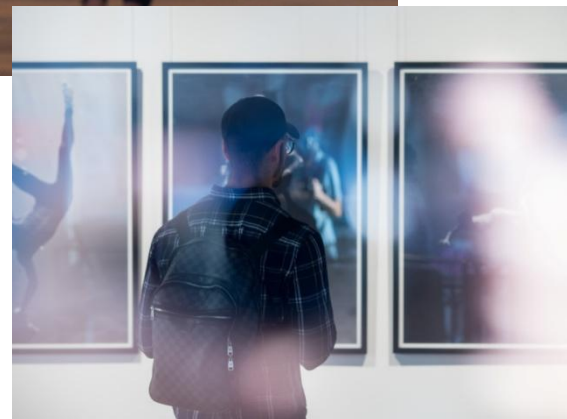
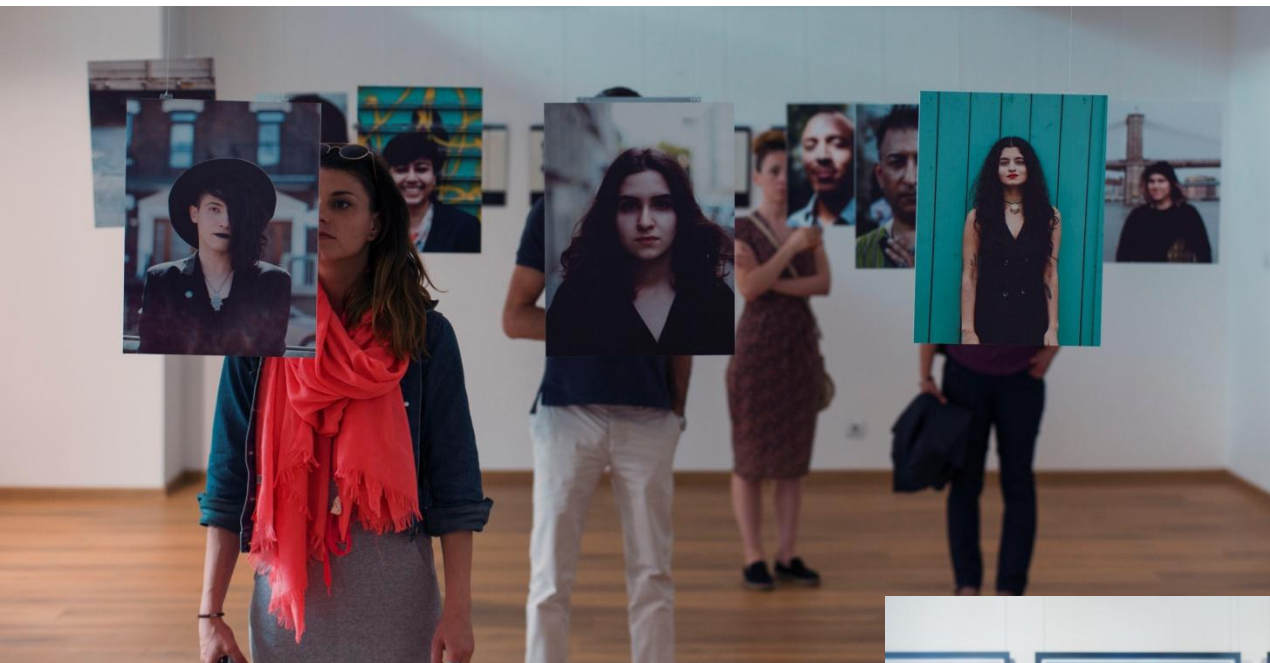
- On June 10, the yearly march for LGBTI visibility and equality Sofia Pride colored the Bulgarian capital for the tenth consecutive time. Under the motto 'To Chase Away The Prejudices', over 3000 colorful people went out into the streets.

- Sofia Pride, in whose organizational committee takes part the GLAS Foundation, is still the largest annual human rights event in Bulgaria. Support for the initiative was given by 20 diplomatic representations in the country. Ten of them sent their representatives to participate in the parade in person. Emma Hopkins, the Ambassador of Great Britain to Bulgaria, also joined the march. In addition, in 2017 for the first time the initiative was supported by the business. Over 20 companies hung the rainbow flag in their offices, and some of them created special-edition products for Sofia Pride. Among the official guests was also the Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam Eric van der Burg.

- **Sofia Pride Art Week 2017**

- Prior to Sofia Pride 2017 the GLAS Foundation organized and curated the sixth edition of Sofia Pride Art Week – the art festival preceding the big event. The initiative offered a rich program of Bulgarian and international LGBTI-themed art. Performances, stage productions, exhibitions and book presentations provided new perspectives on human rights and equality for non-heterosexual citizens in Bulgaria and in the world.

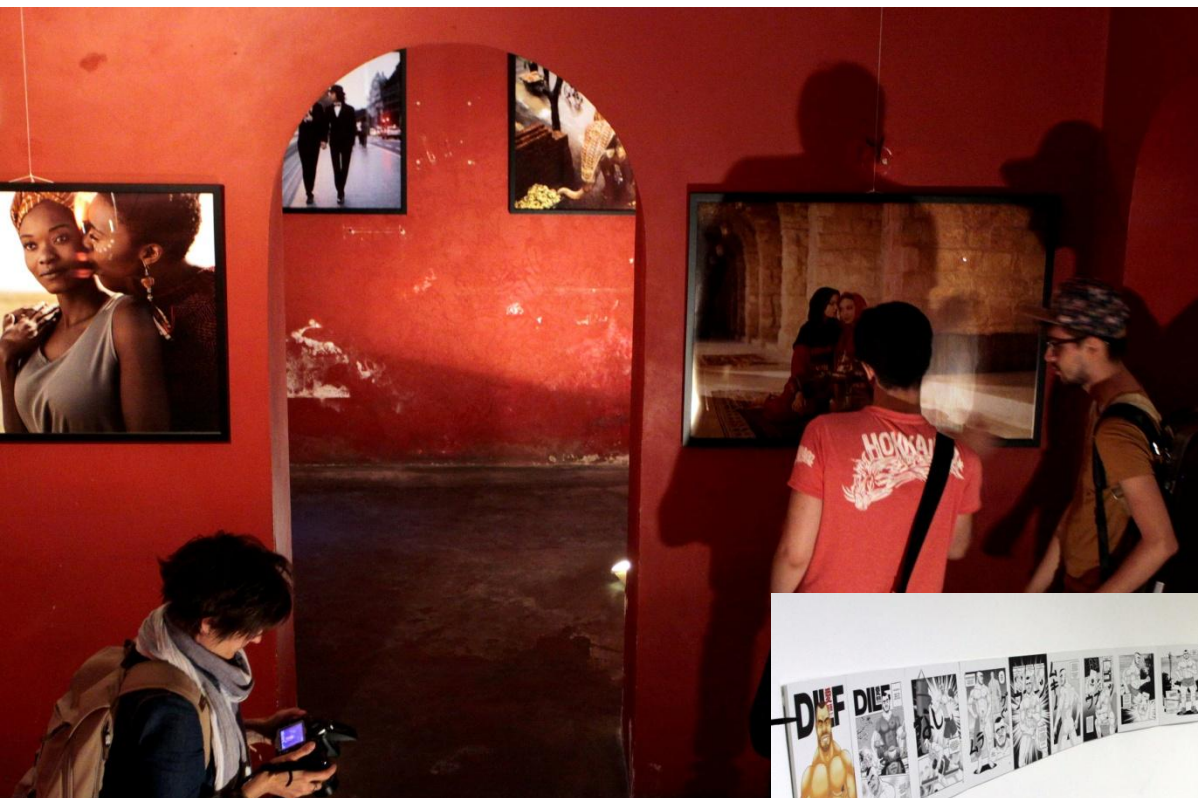
The start of Sofia Pride Art Week 2017 was given on June 5, at the Red House Center for Culture and Debate in Sofia with the performance Gender (Fluid) – a series of performative actions with seven objects, which explores the topic of gender and gender roles through improvisation. Behind the production of the show is the collective The Strawberry Finns which comprises the artists Angelica Nightingale and Konstantin Kuchev.



- **Sofia Pride Art Week 2017**

- The main event in the program of the art festival before Sofia Pride were two international exhibitions. The first one was by the artists Chris Mikaleff from Malta, who presented his series of photographs, shot underwater.

- The second exhibition brought together works by 44 artists from 27 countries. It was called The Gallery Project and was started in the summer of 2016 as an open invitation for LGBTI artists from around the world to create their own online galleries at www.transnational-queer-underground.net. At the time of the opening of the exhibition in 2017 in Sofia more than 50 artists had submitted their work onto the platform, which remained open for new artists to participate and share their art.





- **Meet & Greet Events**
- Throughout 2017 GLAS Foundation organized series of networking events to which were invited people from the community, stakeholders, opinion leaders, LGBT activists and business partners. The aim of the events was to present the main activities and projects of the Foundation, to introduce the team and networking.

