

...IT LAWS IT'S ALL WORTHLESS"

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBVERSIVE FRONT



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SUBVERSIVE FRONT - Association for a critical approach to gender and sexuality

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To our constituents

In its 5th year since its establishment, we are proud to document the gradual growth of our organization in terms of developing and strengthening our capacities in the 5 key programme areas we work in:

1. Advocacy for LGBTI
2. Research and policies on LGBTI
3. Training and education on gender and sexuality
4. Services of legal and psychosocial support and counselling for LGBTI, and
5. Fundraising for LGBTI projects and initiatives

Some of the key achievements we made the past year were related to:

1. Establishing a human rights violations documentation system for the LGBTI people in Macedonia that produces evidence as basis of conducting advocacy efforts for LGBTI equality
2. Enabling building and strengthening the dialogue with the key stakeholders including the state institutions, political parties and media
3. Generating and disseminating data and knowledge on various topics related to the rights, status and the needs of the LGBTI people in Macedonia, which, after the change of the political context in Macedonia, encountered numerous opportunities for utilization
4. Increasing visibility of the organization and its core work and results through the networks and platform built and enabled by the Civica Mobiltas facility,
5. Strengthening the organizational capacities in terms of office space, personnel, equipment as well as the provision of free services of legal and psychosocial support and counselling.

This year's report, in addition to the content related to the key activities, the main projects, and the organization, contains also the Annual LGBTI Report for Macedonia for 2017. This detailed report showcases the developments and trends relevant to the human rights violations of the LGBTI people in Macedonia throughout the course of 2017, grouped under several key areas such as: bias-motivated violence, crime and speech, equality and non-discrimination - legislation and enforcement, freedom of assembly, association and expression, and so on. With all said above, I hope you can learn more about the status and the rights of the LGBTI people in the country, and maybe show interest in engaging, organizing and mobilizing with us in the wider campaign for LGBTI equality.

With best wishes,



Antonio Mihajlov 15.01.2018

Annual LGBTI Report for Macedonia in 2017

Summary of key developments, including political context and trends

The change of government in June 2017 brought about a more favourable political climate as well as positively influenced the increased political will to support and advance LGBTI rights through intensified dialogue and close cooperation between the government and non-governmental bodies.

This key development was reflected in the presence of government representatives to events and activities organized by LGBTI CSOs, including the IDAHOT conference, Skopje Pride Weekend events which were formally opened by the Minister of Culture, as well as the 5th birthday celebration of the LGBTI Support Centre which was opened by the Prime Minister where he openly stated his support for advancing LGBTI rights in Macedonia.

In more concrete ways, this increased political will was reflected in the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to regulate legal gender recognition by adopting a new, more inclusive Law for Protection and Prevention against Discrimination (foreseen to be adopted by March 2018) which would explicitly cover SOGI as discrimination grounds, as well as in the 25 September 2017 Decision by the Administrative Court to grant legal gender change to a trans person - first of its kind, and facilitated by the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association and S-Front. In addition, the government dialogue with the LGBTI CSOs has been increased as the meetings with the ministries are held in consultation with LGBTI CSO representatives.

Furthermore, the political will on behalf of the new government was further demonstrated by holding the constituent session of the inter-parliamentary group on improving the rights of LGBTI people in the Macedonian Parliament for the first time in history. The inter-party parliamentary group which is composed by LGBTI-friendly parties and independent MPs has the mission to advocate for the advancement of LGBTI rights through Parliamentary mechanisms so as to build a more inclusive society free of discrimination on the basis of SOGI.

Finally, on 10 October 2017, Subversive Front filed an unprecedented asylum request on behalf of a Moroccan LGBTI person on the basis of persecution on the ground of sexual orientation. The relevant asylum protection authority assigned the case in accordance with the standard procedure which lasts 6 months that would increase the possibility of positive decision in favour of the claimant. In most cases, the asylum protection authorities assign the asylum-seeking cases under the urgent week-long procedure which usually results with a negative decision to the asylum applications. However, just before the end

of December 2017, the asylum protection authority rejected the asylum-seeking request on the grounds of insufficient evidence of persecution of the claimant on the basis of sexual orientation.

Bias motivated violence, hate speech, hate crimes

- In March 2017, the European Parliament adopted its annual enlargement report for Macedonia. The EP reiterated its condemnation of hate speech against discriminated groups and expressed its concern over the persistent intolerance, discrimination and attacks against LGBTI people.
- The 2016 European Commission report on Macedonia noted with concern that the 2012 attacks on the LGBTI Support Centre still have not been investigated and resolved.
- There is no systematic data collection in place on the reporting, investigation and prosecution of hate speech and hate crime.
- From December 2016 till August 2017, there have been 72 complaints filed to the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office on hate speech based on SOGI by Subversive Front. The Public Prosecutor's Office have come back to us that they are only pursuing 4 of those cases in delayed response irrespective of the long surpassed legal deadlines.
- MP Muhamed Zekiri, member of the Central Committee of SDUM, after the public statement by MP Branko Manoilovski in favour of same-sex marriage (see more under "Freedom of expression") on his Facebook profile expressed his religious views that the homosexuals are "the people of Lot" - reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, are to be condemned for their practices, and at the same time dissociating himself from his public and political role as a member of a social-democratic party. The SDUM spokesperson shortly after Zekiri's hateful comments, stated that the party (SDUM) does not hold the same views as MP Zekiri, while at the same time freely supporting his right to freedom of expression.
- In November 2017, three men aged 20-25 verbally and physically attacked the victim on his way back home after a night out in the Old bazaar district. The attack happened near the shopping centre Chairchanka in the Skopje municipality of Chair, a neighborhood with dominantly Muslim Albanian population. The perpetrators were saying offensive words to him, after recognizing him from a photo of his from the Prishtina Pride on 10 October 2017. This case of bias-motivated violence had not been reported to the police.
- In December 2017, the President of Macedonia signed a decree on approving the law on ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

- the Istanbul Convention. This is particularly important for women belonging to the LGBTI community in Macedonia.

Freedom of assembly, association and expression

- In January 2017, Milenko Nedelkovski, host of a controversial talk show and a leading VMRO DPMNE party supporter, posted the names and personal addresses of prominent critics of Macedonia's government. The data was published along with a photo of Andon Kjoseto, known for assassinating people who were called traitors to the cause of Macedonian freedom from Ottoman rule. The list contained journalists, public figures, a law professor, and a human rights activist.
- In October 2017, at a pre-election campaign rally during the local elections in Macedonia, the former mayor of the Karpos municipality and candidate for mayor Stevco Jakimovski used homophobic hate speech in which he used offensive and degrading rhetoric towards his opponent. Due to his inciting of hatred towards a marginalized group, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia and Coalition Margins have filed a criminal complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office against Jakimovski on the basis of spreading hatred, strife or intolerance on a national, racial, religious and other discriminatory basis in accordance with the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia. The disputed speech of the mayoral candidate preceded extensive propaganda against people with different sexual orientation observed in printed materials throughout the municipality with abusive and disturbing content towards the LGBTI community.
- According to the announcement on September 11, 2017, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services officially execute two extraordinary program supervisions on the program of Television Nova DOOEL Skopje, regarding compliance with the principles for performing an activity from Article 61 of Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services. The first surveillance refers to the program broadcast on August 10, 2017, where it was concluded that with several statements, in the show "Open Studio" with the daily programmed being titled "For or against gay marriages", TV Nova broke the principles for performing broadcasting activity with regard to the equality of the rights and freedoms of people on all grounds and with regard to the principle of objective and impartial presentation of events.

Equality and non-discrimination, including legislation and enforcement

- The resolution of the European Parliament adopted in March 2017 called for alignment of national anti-discrimination legislation with the EU acquis.
- In the 2016 European Commission report on Macedonia, the EC noted that as regards LGBTI persons, prejudice and stereotyping is present in society, media and online. Considerable efforts are still needed to counter intolerance towards LGBTI people. Also, The national authorities should considerably intensify efforts to raise awareness of and respect for diversity in society.
- The new Law on Protection and Prevention against Discrimination, set to be presented and adopted in the Parliament by March 2018, will now include the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as protected grounds of discrimination. The new Law will not include in its text marriage as an exclusion of discrimination, as marriage is defined in the Family Law. The new Law also proposes professionalization of the State Commission for Protection against Discrimination. The new Law will also enable the CSOs to undertake actio popularis (lawsuit of public interest) in cases where discrimination has been committed against a bigger number of people or a group of people, so that approval of each one of the persons discriminated against will not be required. During a meeting with the Venice Commission, Subversive Front representatives noted that while the issue of including SOGI as a basis for discrimination was pointed out as a positive improvement from the previous law, however it was suggested that a provision which would include sex characteristics should also be incorporated so as to legally protect the rights of intersex persons.
- The constituent session of the inter-parliamentary group on improving the rights of LGBTI people was held in the Macedonian Parliament for the first time in history. The group consists of 13 members of the existing parliamentary composition of various parties, including the Social-Democrats (SDSM), Liberal-Democrats (LDP), the Greens (DOM), the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and two independent MPs. The mission of the inter-party parliamentary group is to advocate for the improvement of the rights of the LGBTI people in accordance with Parliamentary mechanisms so as to build a society in which sexual orientation and gender identity will not present an obstacle to safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms.

Recognised unions for same sex couples

- In July 2017, MP Branko Manoilovski from the ruling coalition partner - DUI (Democratic Union for Integration) at a session of the Parliamentary Commission for Political System and Relations between the Communities, addressed the need for homosexuals to be legally able to get married. It was the first time an MP from this political party representing mainly the electorate from the Albanian ethnic minority to publicly and vocally support the LGBTI rights, more specifically, the right to marriage. The statement was met with a significant quantity of hate speech on social media, with an avid interest among the journalists, and with an immediate reaction by MP Muhamed Zekiri from the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDUM) - coalition partner of DUI in the new government (see more under Bias-motivated speech).

Rights and equal treatment of trans and intersex persons

- In the 2016 European Commission report on Macedonia, the EC noted that there is no proper gender confirmation treatment available, and that transgender people can access only limited health services.
- No proper gender confirmative treatment is available. However, in June 2017, the first gender confirmative surgery was successfully conducted in Macedonia. The news was widely covered by Macedonian media, however the wide coverage and sensational way of reporting enabled for discriminatory and hateful comments to enter mainstream social media. Also in the month of June, six charges were reported to the authorities related to hate speech. The operation was carried out as part of a medical symposium in a private clinic. The same is not available in the state clinics, and the Health Insurance Fund has not approved any resources for the coverage of this operation in foreign countries in any case.
- In July 2017, the Ministry of Labor and Social Police presented the initiative of the Ministry on legalizing gender recognition which would allow the trans people to be able to request legal change of the sex marker and the unique citizen's number (which also denotes their gender - sex in Macedonian). The initiative as presented in the proposal of the Ministry, was to be presented at a session of the Government of the country by the end of November 2017, by which date, a working group with the LGBTI CSOs and the other stakeholders will be created and assigned with tasks for completion.
- After holding a public hearing on 22.09.2017, the Administrative Court of the Republic of Macedonia on 25.09.2017 adopted and published a Decision that determines sex change. This is a first Decision where with full

jurisprudence the Administrative Court decided on data modification of the data in the birth registry according to the factual sex change of a transgender person. A considerable contribution for the success of the procedure was made by Association for critical approach to gender and sexuality - Subversive Front Skopje, MYLA's long term collaborator.

- In a qualitative research project conducted by Subversive Front, transgender participants expressed concerns about employment and experiences of discrimination when applying for a job. Concerning the physical and sexual health, the participants also discussed about the needs for services outside of Skopje, experiences of violence, discrimination and financial barriers in accessing the services among the Roma community members, lack of information in local language, lack of services for trans-related healthcare and need for improving the information dissemination strategies.

Public awareness and attitudes

- In the 2016 European Commission report on Macedonia, the EC praised the positive cooperation between civil society and police in one municipality, to celebrate Human Rights Day and LGBTI persons, set a positive example. The training of law enforcement bodies, prosecutors, judges, health workers and teaching staff remains important.
- In a qualitative research conducted by Subversive Front, a comprehensive assessment of the self-identified needs of the LGBT community in Macedonia was provided in relation to health, education, economic opportunity, housing and service provision. Additionally, questions related to the community cohesion, participation in the community and activism efforts were included. The findings showed that, in relation to the perceptions about society, culture and government, participants expressed dissatisfaction, lack of political will, hostile environment and pessimism about the social progress, as well as the need for improving the relations between the NGO sector and the state institutions. As avenues to combat the negative portrayals of the LGBT community, the participants expressed the need for conducting TV and media debates on LGBT-related topics, developing humanitarian and volunteer activities not related to SOGI, improving social mixing activities and implementing family support groups.

A supportive and enabling environment for civil society

- In January 2017, the citizens' alliance Stop Operation Soros was launched in the capital of Macedonia. The initiative called for a 'de-Sorosisation' of Macedonian civil society. The initiative called on "free-minded citizens" to

join the group in the “fight against one-mindedness in the civil sector, which is devised and led by George Soros.” The movement claimed that it would focus on uncovering ‘subversive’ activities by Soros-funded NGOs, as these NGOs had apparently monopolized civil society in Macedonia and used their position to suppress dissenting views. The founding of this initiative was very likely echoing and inspired by the rhetoric in numerous speeches made by former prime minister and leader of VMRO-DPMNE party Nikola Gruevski where he accused foreign powers and Soros-backed organizations in meddling in Macedonian politics. The initiative did not necessarily provide a genuine representation of how Macedonian society felt about NGOs, but it did get a lot of attention. NGOs dealing with LGBTI-related issues were not specifically targeted or negatively affected with the launching of this initiative.

- In March 2017, a conference was held on the improvement of protection against discrimination, with a specific focus on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). The conference was attended by all Macedonian LGBTI NGOs, as well as the Ombudsman, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, local governments of Stip, Strumica, and Kumanovo, and UN agencies. Two conclusions were reached. First, SOGI should be included as grounds of discrimination to the Law for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination. Second, local protection mechanism against discrimination should be strengthened.
- In June 2017, Skopje Pride Weekend was officially opened by the Macedonian Minister of Culture. It marked the first time that a minister attended Pride events. The weekend of cultural events, seminars, and performances passed without incident and with record numbers of attendees from both Skopje and beyond.
- Furthermore, on 31 October 2017, the LGBTI Support Center, branch of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, celebrated its fifth anniversary in Skopje. The ceremony was opened by the Prime Minister where he openly stated his support for advancing LGBTI rights in Macedonia.

Annual Assembly

Fourth Annual Assembly for S-Front, 17.03.2017

In the fourth annual assembly, held on 17.03.2017, the following decisions were made:

1. The decision for Nikolaj Mitreski to be a member of the Executive Board of S-Front and with that the termination of the mandate for the current member of the Executive Board, Aleksandra Bogdanovska;
2. Daniel Mitkovski and Ilina Mojsovska are reelected as members of the Executive Board;
3. Adoption of the annual narrative and financial report for 2016.

Activities

Conference "LGBTI rights, EU accession processes and political parties in the Republic of Macedonia"

May 17th - the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) is a day of serious conversations and celebration of diversity, stated the Dutch Ambassador Wouter Plomp on today's conference dedicated to the situation with LGBTI rights in Macedonia, and the country's progress toward EU-integration.

- In Holland we have many debates on the LGBTI community, the fight against discrimination, as well as a specific article in the law which refers to this. The EU has adopted directions for these specific issues, which are a foundation for democracy. We often amend laws and practices which are in favor of the country's citizens. Legal changes are



important for all citizens, because they promote and improve their rights, which are basic and universal human rights, such as the right to life, the right to safety, the right to protection in the law, the right to family. They are crucial to the EU, and they must occur in Macedonia as well. LGBTI people must become more visible, more present in mainstream media and debates, and politicians should talk about these issues both within their parties and in public, Plomp said.

The activist and chairman of "Subversive Front", Antonio Mihajlov stated that despite the fact that the WHO removed homosexuality from the list of diseases, pathologization is still widespread when it comes to trans people.

- Trans people are still included in the medical classification, under the term "gender dysphoria". Fortunately, Macedonia decriminalized homosexuality. There have been some laws within the last 10 years: some contain sexual orientation as a protected ground, but gender identity does not exist in our legislation, as well as the practice of amending laws. Macedonia is at the bottom of the European countries list. In 2017, many issues remain unresolved, Mihajlov said, adding that the European Commission noted these issues in Macedonia's Progress Report.

He stated that six hate crimes have been registered, five of which have not been resolved yet, while the remaining one has been classified simply as violence, instead of a hate crime.

- We still have no Pride event, activists have not stepped forward publicly, no responsibility is taken by the politicians and the community. There is a need of greater visibility of problems and needs. Protection against discrimination is a priority, as well as sex education, which is necessary to combat discrimination and homophobia, Mihajlov stated.



He asked the party representatives in attendance and the new government to implement the following five points in order to improve the situation of the LGBTI community.

1. Improvement and strengthening of the legal framework in order for the protection against discrimination to cover everyone, including LGBTI people;
2. Introduction of comprehensive sex education within formal education programmes;
3. Reform of the Commission for protection against discrimination, by increasing its independence and competence;
4. Resolution of the submitted reports of hate crimes and hate speech on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI);
5. Increase of public awareness of the needs and problems of the LGBTI people by, among other things, support in the organization of a Pride parade.

On the conference, the Vice-president of the SDSM, Damjan Manchevski, stated that this is a symbolic day and welcomed the fact that the political parties speak of these issues. However, he emphasized that within the political parties themselves, consensus is rare.

- What are we going to do? All that we promised earlier. We publicly state that one of the priorities is to establish an entirely new system to eliminate all forms of discrimination, reform of the Commission with new members which shall be dedicated to working on these rights, and amendments of the Law on prevention and protection against discrimination. We will hold trainings for judges in order for them to be able to recognize discrimination within court procedures. We are witnessing hate violence. Everyone should enjoy their human rights, regardless of their sexual orientation. We publicly recognize that

this category of people has been one of the most discriminated groups of citizens in the recent years, Manchevski said.

He accentuated that the state, instead of hate speech, shall promote tolerance toward everyone who is different, and that the LGBTI community can consider the new government a partner.



At the end of the Conference, the “Ally of the Year” award was given to Ivon Velichkovski, leader of the Liberal party.

- This is not a recognition for me, but for a team of people who believe in freedom for everyone. In the future campaigns there should not be a question for what we, the political parties, are standing for when it comes to LGBTIQI rights, all of them, the rights should be already implemented. Persist in your faith and determination, and we will persist in what we advocate for, Velichkovski stated upon receiving the award.

“Make sport everyone’s game” - 17 May - IDAHOBIT in Skopje celebrated

On the occasion of 17 May - International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia - IDAHOBIT 2017 Subversive Front



in collaboration with [Stonewall federation](#) of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands Embassy in Skopje organised a friendly football match where players were LGBTI and non-LGBTI people in order to empower the participation of LGBTI people in the sports arenas.

The competition was held in the sports hall “Jane Sandanski” - Skopje on 21 May 2017. The event was attended by representatives of the British Embassy including Ambassador Mr. Charles Garrett, Dutch Embassy including Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Andri van Mens, the Swedish Embassy including Deputy Head of Mission Anton Irekvist, representatives of non-governmental organizations and individuals from the LGBTI community. Support was by expressed dozens of fans from the stands.



The Rainbow Laces were given to players as part of the campaign “Make Sport Everyone’s Game” implemented by the Stonewall federation in the UK, to reduce homophobia in sports. At the end of the contest participants from the British Embassy brought a cake in the colors of the rainbow.

Workshop held: Encouraging and empowering support: issues and needs of trans and intersex people in macedonia - mobilizing communities and allies

On 27 and 28 July, the association for a critical approach to gender and sexuality *Subversive Front* from Skopje, Macedonia, was the host of the workshop “Encouraging and empowering support: issues and needs of trans and intersex people in Macedonia - mobilizing communities and allies”. The workshop was organized in partnership with *ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Organisation*, and *XY Spectrum*, both based in Belgrade, Serbia. The workshop was a gathering place of members of the LGBTI community, particularly trans* identifying people, their parents, legal experts, social workers, mental health-care service providers, as well as LGBTI activists from the country. Its 2-day programme was created so as to respond to the needs of increased knowledge and understanding of the life experiences trans* and intersex people in Macedonia are faced with on a daily basis, and to map the areas in which the participants can improve their work in providing better support to trans* and intersex people. Over 20 people took active part in the discussions and lectures during the workshop and were able to share their experiences and stories, as well as their ideas and opinions. In addition, the trans* identifying people were able to share their personal stories and challenges with the psychologists, lawyers and LGBTI activists during the networking time allotted for the end of the sessions each day.





The particular topics the participants were keen to know more of were the variety of identities within the trans* and intersex groups and their clear definition, the legal framework which can be used for regulation of the exercise of certain rights of these people such as the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination, the right to life, the right to bodily integrity and autonomy, the right to self-determination, the right to freedom from violence, the right to freedom of movement and so on. In addition, the medical aspects in relation to the lived experiences of the trans* and intersex people also raised significant interest among the participants, such as the types of medical interventions often requested by the trans* people, and the variety of medical diagnoses that unfortunately still medicalize intersex people. Furthermore, ideas and stories of community empowerment of trans* and intersex people were shared and discussed, too. Last but not least, clear and accurate instructions were given in relation to the terminology used for covering the abovementioned aspects of the trans* and intersex people.

The workshop programme was developed and implemented by the trainers Kristian Randjelovic, executive director of XY Spectrum, and Isidora Isakov - capacity building manager at ERA, both of them possessing significant experience in the topics covered at the workshop. The workshop was organized with the financial support of Civica Mobilitas - a civil society support facility of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), implemented by NIRAS from Denmark, Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) and the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU).

LBT football match with FemSlem

From 17 to 19 November in Skopje, a football match was held between the members of FemSlem from Belgrade and members of Subversive Front from Skopje and their friends. During these three days there were two activities held. On November 18, at the Boris Trajkovski Hall, a football match was held between the following teams: FemSlem from Belgrade and Cakana from Skopje. The competition went well, with lots of friendship and fun. Besides the players, there were also public at the stands.



On the occasion of TDoR (Trans Day of Remembrance), a gathering took place in the Subversive front office with the guests from Belgrade. We discussed the

problems that trans people have and how we could help them. Also, several personal stories from the participants were shared.

“National LGBTI Conference ”Rainbow Dialogues - Needs, Challenges and Priorities”

On the 7th of December, at Skopje [City Hall Centre](#) the [National LGBTI Conference “Rainbow Dialogues - Needs, Challenges and Priorities”](#) was successfully held. The conference served to convene some of the key stakeholders in advocating for LGBTI equality in the Republic of Macedonia such as representatives of the relevant ministries, Members of Parliament, representatives of the political parties, representatives of the independent human rights institutions in the country, media representatives, as well as representatives from the civic sector advocating for LGBTI equality. The event was organised by the Association for a critical approach to gender and sexuality [SUBVERSIVE FRONT](#) from Skopje, in partnership with the [Sarajevo Open Centre](#) from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Conference theme was consisted of three blocks:

1. **Panel discussion** “From conversation to transformation - LGBTI rights in the new political context in the Republic of Macedonia“
2. **Presentation of research findings** of the Needs Assessment of the LGBT Community in Macedonia, and
3. **Announcement of the upcoming report of the regional research** of Political Participation of LGBTI People in the Western Balkans.



More than 60 participants from different background actively contributed to the discussions created within the scope of the conference, which were related to the topics of the panel discussion, the presentation of the research findings, and the announcement of the upcoming report of the regional research study. The speakers at the panel discussion were **Ivana Tufegdzik** - Member of the [Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia](#), **Gjulten Mustafova** - State Counsellor of non-discrimination and human rights at the [Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia](#), **Irena Cvetkovikj** - Executive Director of the [Coalition “Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized](#)

[Communities](#)”(SHRMC), and Jasna Orovčanec Arangjelovikj - Project Coordinator at the [Macedonian Young Lawyers Association](#) (MYLA).

In the second part of the program of the [National LGBTI Conference "Rainbow Dialogues - Needs, Challenges and Priorities"](#), two research studies were presented, that were done by Subversive Front in 2017. The Research and Policies Programme Coordinator at Subversive Front **Viktorija Bondikjova** presented the [Research report on the Needs Assessment of the LGBT Community Members in Macedonia](#). At the conference, the Advocacy Programme Coordinator at Subversive Front, **Aleksandra Dimovska**, announced the upcoming report of the regional research study on the political participation of LGBTI people in the Western Balkans.

Regional Conference “Access to Justice for LGBT People in Western Balkans and Turkey” successfully held



On 8 December, the [Stonewall](#) organisation from the UK in partnership with Subversive Front and the [LGBTI Support Center](#) at the [Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia](#) organized the regional conference “Access to Justice for LGBT People from Western Balkans and Turkey”. During the three-day event, two

trainings were held - one for the prosecutors, and one for the police officers in Macedonia, where their colleagues from the UK shared their knowledge and experience. On the second day was the international conference organized where police officers, prosecutors, employees at few of the ministries, activists from the LGBTI organizations from Macedonia and few countries of the region took part. The [Macedonian Minister of Interior Affairs - Mr. Oliver Spasovski](#) also participated where he emphasized that continuous trainings for professionals who are in a direct contact with the victims, are taking place inside the ministry. He also noted that the cooperation with the civil society organisations has also been strengthened.

Subversive Front was represented by Antonio Mihajlov who had the honour to open the conference, and to moderate one of the conference sessions, as well as Aleksandra Dimovska, who held a speech on the current regional research study she is conducting related to political participation of LGBTI people in the Western Balkans.

The third day was used for a final evaluation of the conference by the partner organisations and Stonewall. Both the good practices and the areas for improvement were emphasized, and ideas for future cooperation and the ways how to strengthen the regional cooperation were given.



This conference, which is financially supported by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is the second concrete activity of Stonewall conducted in cooperation with Subversive Front. The first jointly organized activity was the sport match observing IDAHOBIT - 17 May that took place on 23 May 2017 within the scope of the Stonewall campaign “[Make sport everyone’s game](#)”.

Projects

Political participation of LGBTI in the Western Balkans



The overall aim of this research paper is to present the opportunities for increasing the political participation of LGBTI communities in the Western Balkan countries and how this will affect the establishment of social equity.

Most of the research relies mostly on qualitative research methods, through the implementation of semi-structured interviews with interlocutors - representatives of political parties, LGBTI activists and representatives from the civil sector, representatives of several institutions, as well as experts from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo , Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Croatia.

Additional key areas that are expected to be included in the research paper include an overview of legislation regarding LGBTI rights in individual countries, as well as an analysis of the political participation of LGBTI communities in the region regarding the link between party politics and civil society organizations.

Finally, after a thorough analysis of the available materials on the political participation of LGBTI in the Western Balkans, in order to address the shortcomings observed on this topic, a series of recommendations will be presented for policy makers, the NGO sector and other relevant stakeholders in national and regional context, in order to establish an important and sustainable culture of respect for fundamental human rights.

This research project was carried out by the Subversive Front from Macedonia, in partnership with the Victor Institute from the United States and Labris of Serbia.

Duration: March 2017 - March 2018

Utilizing EU integration processes for advancing LGBT rights in Western Balkans

The overall program objective is to promote respect for and recognition of the human rights of LGBT persons in the Western Balkans, using the EU accession process as a focal point for targeted, evidence-based advocacy.



Key Actors: This project will be implemented by Sarajevo Open Centre, based in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the mentoring of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) - Europe. The participating organizations are Subversive Front (Macedonia), the Centre for Equality and Liberty (Kosovo), Labris (Serbia), and the CURE Foundation (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Activists from Croatian organizations will provide mentoring in the areas of human rights violation documentation and in formulating country-based activities based on their experience with EU accession processes.

Goals and Objectives: This project aims to efficiently utilize the process of EU accession to improve LGBT human rights in the Western Balkans by means of accomplishing three main objectives:

1. Strengthen the capacities of LGBT rights organizations;
2. Increase the use of evidence-based advocacy in organizations' work; and
3. Advocate for LGBT rights on European and national levels.

Project Activities: In order to accomplish the objectives set forth, we envision two types of activities: those in which all organizations will participate, and country-based activities related to EU enlargement. In addition to activities within these two categories, ILGA Europe will implement an advocacy action towards the EU on behalf of Western Balkan countries.

1. Capacity building, documentation training, and info-sharing meetings
2. Contributing to an online resource

Result 1: Quality of organizations' initiatives and internal procedures improves.

3. Document LGBT human rights violations
4. Provide & promote free legal counselling for the local LGBT community

Result 2: Increased scope of documentation and legal aid services.

5. Write yearly contributions to the EU progress report
6. Country-based or individual activities
7. ILGA Advocacy Action

Result 3: EU and national stakeholders are better equipped to use their resources to improve the state of LGBT human rights in the target countries

Program Date: 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2017

The project is financially supported by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor with a budget of 332,000.00 USD

Subversive Front, Skopje, Macedonia

This project aims to address the need for recognition and explicit legal protection of cases of SOGI-based discrimination and hate crime/speech among the relevant stakeholders, such as the state authorities competent for crime prevention and protection, prevention and protection against discrimination, and legislators, as well as to raise awareness on SOGI-based discrimination and hate crime/speech.

The specific objectives of this project are:

1. To create analysis of the Macedonian anti-discrimination legislation considering SOGI and its alignment with EU acquis, and other international human rights standards
2. To draft amendments to Macedonian Criminal Code and Misdemeanor Act for Hate Speech/Hate Crime regulation on the grounds of SOGI
3. To advocate about SOGI-based anti-discrimination and SOGI-based hate crime/speech

Project Activities

2016:

Analysis of the Macedonian legislation on anti-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and its harmonization with the EU legislation and international human rights standards.

Preparation of amendments to the Macedonian Criminal Code and the Law on Misdemeanors for hate crimes / hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Advocacy activities related to the fight for anti-discrimination and hate crime / hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

2017:

To identify and address gaps between the effects of current LGBTI advocacy activities and the desired conditions and needs of members of the LGBTI community;

To make amendments to 2 existing laws concerning the protection of the rights of trans persons;

To develop a policy proposal for a better and more inclusive legal framework for antidiscrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;

To advocate LGBTI rights and equality to competent state institutions, political parties and lawmakers, the media and the general public;

Duration of the project: 01.01.2016-31.12.2017

Capacity building of Youth workers in the area of Community LGBTI Youth Work

The main idea of the project is to prepare and implement high-quality long-term education course through 4 trainings with the aim to support the



Erasmus+

professional and personal development of youth work practitioners and activists in the area of developmental community youth work for LGBTI persons. This project addresses missing gap in LGBTI movement by providing long-term training course in developmental community youth work for LGBTI youth work practitioners and activists so they can implement high-quality developmental youth work programmes and empower local LGBTI communities in their countries, creating a better-organized group(s) with constructive activities and involvement of bigger number of community members.

The objectives of the project are:

1. To build capacities of youth work practitioners and activists for planning, implementing and evaluating developmental youth work programmes with LGBTI people in their communities;
2. To support exchange of good practices examples and experience in community work with LGBTI young people in the Western Balkans;

3. To create, promote and deliver booklet of practices and methodologies in developmental community youth work with LGBTI youth in the Western Balkans to wider youth work public.

Project coordinating organization: LGB Youth support group “COME OUT” from Novi Sad, Serbia.

The partners for this project are: Subversive Front - Macedonia, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights - Macedonia, Cure - BiH, CSGD - Kosovo, Queer Montenegro - Montenegro, Dejstvie - Bulgaria, Transparent - Croatia, TOC - BiH.

Civica Mobilitas



On May 17, 2016, the Association for critical approach to gender and sexuality Subversive Front Skopje was awarded an institutional grant by the program for support of civil societies, Civica mobilitas.

This two-year institutional grant in an amount totaling 32.460 EUR aims to support the process of institutional development and organizational strengthening of S-Front by implementing a series of activities:

1. Strategic development of the organization
2. Activities and events that address the political, cultural, economic and social aspects related to the status of the LGBT people
3. Advocacy activities with political parties, state institutions and the media
4. Advocacy activities with the LGBT activists from Macedonia and the region of Southeast Europe
5. Information and education on LGBT rights, problems and needs

The program to support civil societies, Civica mobilitas is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), represented by the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia, which is implemented by NIRAS Denmark, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) and the Swedish Institute for Public Administration (SIPU).

Capacity Development

January 2017:

- Meeting with an inspector for violent crime in the Interior Ministry Skopje;
- Workshop for monitoring UN recommendations on human rights mechanisms organized by the UN Office for Human Rights in cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator in Macedonia;
- Meeting with the Board of EPOA in Sofia;

February 2017:

- Conference "Advanced trainings for working with sex and gender minorities and their families in the social protection system";

Mart 2017:

- Sub-regional dialogue within the project "Being LGBTI in Eastern Europe" organized by UNDP in Belgrade;

April 2017:

- Conference "Innovative advocacy for LGBTI rights from different parts of the world" in Washington, USA;
- Training "Organizing the LGBTI community and advocacy training" in Belgrade, Serbia;
- Participation at Student Station 2017 in Public Room, Skopje, Macedonia;

May 2017:

- Workshop "Capacity building on networks" in Veles, Macedonia organized by the Coalition All for fair trials;

June 2017:

- Attending Thessaloniki Pride 18-19 June;
- Attending Oslo Pride 30-01 July;

August 2017:

- Attending Stockholm Pride and events organized by the Civil Rights Defenders in Stockholm 02-06 August;

September 2017:

- Attending Belgrade Pride and activities organized by the Civil Rights Defenders in Belgrade 14-18 September;
- Participation at the Annual Assembly of ERA in Podgorica, 20 September;
- Attending Podgorica Pride on 23 September;

October 2017:

- Training "Art for Advocacy" in Ohrid, R. Macedonia;
- Participation at the regional conference on the status of LGBTI people in the region titled "Support, protection and visibility" held in Sarajevo, BiH;

- Third networking meeting for the grantees of the Civica Mobilitas program, in Ohrid, R. Macedonia;
- Attending the first Prishtina Pride in Kosovo, 10 October;
- Participation in the Public Debate "Amendments to the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination" with the representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

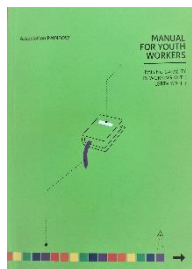
November 2017:

- Participating at a LGBTI conference in Brno, Czech Republic;
- Study visit to ILGA Europe and the European Commission in Brussels, on which it was discussed the promotion of LGBTI rights in the context of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans;

December 2017:

- Participation in the public hearing of the Standing Inquiry Committee on the Rights and Freedoms of the Citizen at the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia on the occasion of December 10;
- Participation in the training within the project "Capacity building of youth workers in the field of youth work with LGBTI people" in Podgorica on December 16-23;
- Consultation meeting with Sanja Frkovic-Gelevska from the EU Delegation in Skopje on improving the status of LGBTI persons in Macedonia;

Publications



[Manual for youth workers “Raising capacity in working with LGBT youth”](#)

Under the coordination of our partner organisation from Shabac, Serbia - [Association “Rainbow”](#), in partnership with the organisations “Independent - Zenica“ from Bosnia and Herzegovina, „Bonsai“ from Croatia, and „LGBT Forum Progres“ from Montenegro, and within the scope of the project “Capacity building of youth workers in providing services to LGBT youth”, we have published the “Manual for youth workers in working with LGBT+ youth”, which can be downloaded [here](#).



[Needs Assessment of LGBT Community Members in Macedonia](#)

The goal of this qualitative research was to provide a comprehensive assessment of the self-identified needs of the LGBT community in Macedonia in relation to health, education, economic opportunity, housing and service provision. Additionally, questions related to the community cohesion, participation in the community and activism efforts were included. The research study was conducted by Kristefer Stojanovski, MPH, doctoral student in health behavior and health education at the University of Michigan, USA, Viktorija Bondikjova - Research and policies programme coordinator at Subversive Front, and Diarra Brooks, student of psychology studies at the University of Michigan, USA. The research report can be downloaded here: [Without laws, it’s all worthless, Research report, S-Front 2017](#).

S-Front in the media

This year S-Front had higher visibility in the media. Articles about the two National Conferences, IDAHO 2017 and the conference “Access to Justice” were published in the following media: Kanal 5, Sitel, Vecher, TV21, TV Nova, MKD.mk, MakFaks, PlusInfo, Emagazin, Fokus, Reporter, Lokalno, 24 Vesti, Libertas, Meta, Slobodna Evropa, MIA, A1ON.mk, TV Telma, Queer.mk, Anadolu Agency Shqip, Informa, and many others. Antonio Mihajlov participated in several TV debates in the following TV stations: Kanal 5, 24 Vesti, TV 21.



Antonio Mihajlov - guest at TV 24



Antonio Mihajlov at the National conference “Rainbow Dialogues - Needs, Challenges and Priorities”



Antonio Mihajlov and Dushko Minovski in “Only the truth” at the daily news on TV channel Kanal 5.

Financial Report

INCOME STATEMENT (31.12.2017)

REVENUE

1 Interest income and foreign exchange gains	151,00 ден.
2 Revenue from membership fees, gifts, donations and income from other sources	3.061.434,00 ден.
3 Own revenues	44.008,00 ден.
4 Excess revenue from the previous year	369.233,00 ден.

Total revenues: 3.474.826,00 ден.

EXPENSES

1 Material spent	153.633,00 ден.
2 Energy consumption	26.311,00 ден.
3 Other services	231.833,00 ден.
4 Transport services	96.744,00 ден.
5 Expenses for advertising, propaganda and entertainment	30.718,00 ден.
6 Rents	143.976,00 ден.
7 Other material expenses	3.300,00 ден.
<i>Total material costs, services and depreciation</i>	686.515,00 ден.
8 Fee for payment operations	25.866,00 ден.
9 Other expenses	979.938,00 ден.
<i>Total other expenses</i>	1.005.804,00 ден.
10 Help, donations and other fees	9.203,00 ден.
<i>Total capital and other costs</i>	9.203,00 ден.
11 Paid salaries	1.025.446,00 ден.
12 Paid compensation	44.569,00 ден.
<i>Total payments, donations and other charges</i>	1.070.015,00 ден.

Total expenses: 2.771.537,00 ден.

REALIZED EXCESS INCOME (PROFIT BEFORE TAX) 703.289,00 ден.

BALANCE SHEET (31.12.2017)

ASSETS

1 Bank account	691.733,00 ден.
2 Claim for more paid taxes and contributions	11.556,00 ден.
<i>Cash, short-term receivables and active fiscal accounts</i>	703.289,00 ден.

Total assets:

703.289,00 ден.

LIABILITIES

1 Part of the excess revenue transferred to next year	703.289,00 ден.
<i>Total accrued expenses</i>	703.289,00 ден.

Total liabilities:

703.289,00 ден.

Contact information

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S-Front on social media



www.facebook.com/SubversiveFront



www.twitter.com/SubversiveFront

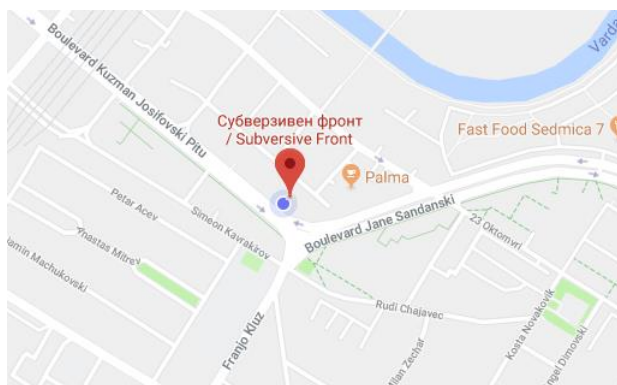


www.instagram.com/subversive.front



www.flickr.com/subversivefront

Map



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