



# ERATO

News from the  
International Lesbian &  
Gay Cultural Network

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## Stockholm

December, 2006



### ILGCN (*International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network*) Information Secretariat

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*Response to Police Arrest of Gay Activists, Cancellation of ILGCN Conference Stage:*

## EXILE, UNDERGROUND EVENTS for BELARUS 2007

*Minsk/Stockholm* – Plans are underway to organize rainbow events underground in Belarus and in “exile” during the next year – following the cancellation of the November 11th Minsk stage of the 2006 ILGCN (*International Lesbian & Gay Cultural Network*) world rainbow cultural conference because of the arrest of 7 lesbian and gay Belarus activists.

“We had appealed to the international community to join us in Minsk to help break our isolation and make a difference – and we believe that this human contact is more important than ever before,” says **Slava Bortnik** of **LGBT Amnesty Belarus**, one of the arrested.

The ILGCN had earlier arranged other “**Belarus in Exile**” events in **Stockholm** and **London** when Belarus authorities denied visas to foreigners and after earlier events in the Belarus capital were marred by police violence and where venues were shut down and participants thrown into the streets. (*Continued on page 2*)



*Swedish, Belarus colleagues in Minsk*

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*Rainbow Parade in Poland a Triumphant Success over Homophobes:*

## POZNAN CONFERENCE PART of EQUALITY WEEK

*Poznan* – The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the ILGCN World Rainbow Culture Conference 2006 in this western Polish city was a successful part of a highly impressive week-long cultural, social and political festival including discussions, debates, performances and exhibitions – culminating with a triumphant rainbow parade as police removed homophobes and neo Nazis trying to occupy the final meters of “Freedom Square.”



Waiving rainbow flags from the podium and speakers at the microphone denouncing homophobia earned loud cheers from the parade participants who had refused to abort the march forcing the police to take action – a sharp contrast to last year’s homophobic, violent attacks and police lethargy and arrests of LGBT participants.

### *Rainbow Culture, Humanist LGBT Support, New Secretariat*

The conference included reports on ILGCN activities in Poland by Warsaw-based cultural ambassador, **Lukasz Palucki** and information work carried out by the ILGCN secretariat in Stockholm. **Rolf Solheim** reported on Humanist work in his native Norway and world humanist support for LGBT rights. (*Continued on page 3*)

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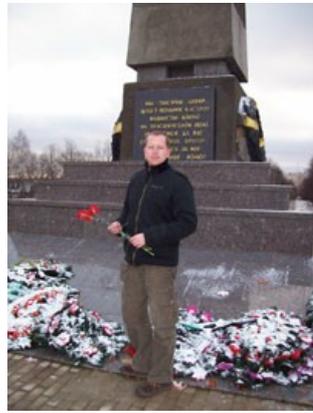
## Gay Turkish Editor in Ankara Faces 3 Years in Jail



The editor of **Kaos**, Turkey's only magazine for LGBT people, 29-year-old **Umusal Güner**, has been indicted under a vague statute banning "obscene" material. The leading gay activist faces three years in jail. Meanwhile, **Ismail Alacaoglu** of **Kaos** has been appointed as ILGCN co-ordinator.

## EXILE, UNDERGROUND EVENTS PLANNED for BELARUS...

(from page 1) The **Poznan** stage of the 2006 ILGCN conference – taking place on November 18 -- supported efforts on behalf of Belarus in the coming year, and the new **ILGCN Eastern Europe Secretariat** in **Warsaw** is to give special attention to Belarus.



*Rainbow flowers at WWII Concentration Camp monument*

### *Exile Events in Warsaw, Riga, Vilnius?*

“We are asking our ILGCN colleagues to help arrange “exile” events in neighboring **Poland, Latvia and Lithuania** – and plan at the same time to arrange some kind of international underground rainbow event to take place in Belarus,” says **Bill Schiller**, secretary general of the **ILGCN Information Secretariat** in Stockholm.

“It was crucial to meet face to face with these gay activists who had been detained and interrogated – noting that instead of becoming discouraged and giving up, they take this harassment and threats from the special police as part of daily life in this last dictatorship of Eastern Europe – determined to remain on the rainbow barricades.”

“I’m proud also that the **Swedish Institute** supported my visit to Minsk – underlining that the official Swedish body responsible for international exchange gives both Belarus and rainbow rights there high priority,” Schiller concludes

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### Labrys’ Publication in Bishkek, ‘Normal’ Publishers in Stockholm

## Sappho in Paradise Award to Kyrgyzstan, Sweden

*London/Stockholm* – This year’s literary award from the ILGCN and London’s **Paradise Press** is shared by **Labrys** -- a pioneering publication in the former Soviet republic of **Kyrgyzstan** -- and the courageous Stockholm-based lesbian-owned **Normal** publishers -- giving special emphasis to rainbow novels, literature, documentaries, biographies and photography.

“Thank you for your great news and we very much appreciate your honouring our achievements. We would be delighted to nominate Labrys representatives for a ILGCN cultural ambassador and a co-ordinator,” says **Anna Kirey** of Labrys.



The award is named after the ancient Greek poetess, Sappho. *The 1st Sappho in Paradise* – announced at the ILGCN world conference on homo culture in Berlin in 2003-- went to the pioneering, lesbian & gay **Mea Culpa Library** in **Tallinn** – the 1st of its kind in Estonia. The 2004 award went jointly to the courageous and pioneering **Gays the Word Bookshop** in London and the Danish-Latvian-owned **Atena Publishing House** in Riga and the 2005 award went to the **Library Project of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)**.

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## Nordic ‘Rainbow Humanist’ to Dutch Professor

*Stockholm* -- The **Nordic Rainbow Humanists** have awarded Utrecht Professor **Rob Tielman** this year's "Rainbow Humanist" award for his year's-long and outstanding international work for LGBT rights within and outside of the humanist movement both in his native Netherlands and around the world.

Earlier recipients have been **George Broadhead** of the London-based, international **GALHA (Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association)**, **Carl-Johan Kleberg** (former chairman of the **Swedish Humanists**) and **Kim Fiele**, pioneering Norwegian LGBT rights activist.

The **Nordic Rainbow Humanists** with members in both the Nordic region and the 'Nordic cousins' in the eastern Baltic states, is one of the main supporters of the **ILGCN Information Secretariat** in the Swedish capital.



*Rob Tielman addresses a Humanist conference in India*

**New ILGCN East European Secretariat Created:**

**POZNAN CONFERENCE at EQUALITY WEEK....**

*(from page 1)* “We are very pleased to have approved the idea of a new **ILGCN Secretariat for Eastern Europe** in Warsaw – to give special emphasis on the situations in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and elsewhere in the region,” says **Bill Schiller** of the Information Secretariat.

The conference also confirmed the sites of next year’s conference stages – in **Mauritius and Vilnius, for Iranians in exile (Toronto) and Algerians in exile (Paris/Marseille)**. The conference approved new cultural ambassadors and co-ordinators from **Lithuania, Italy, Mauritius and Iran**. *(see web)*

Because the 2<sup>nd</sup> ILGCN conference stage to be held in Minsk November 3-5 was cancelled after KGB arrests of the organizers, the Poznan conference approved plans to hold **ILGCN “Belarus in Exile”** events in 2007 in **Poland, Lithuania and Latvia**. (The Poznan stage replaced the stage scheduled for **Jerusalem** which was postponed because of the war.)

***ILGCN Support for Europride & Outgames, Grizzly Bear Award to Poznan***

Conference participants also approved support for ILGCN activities in Poland when **Stockholm and Warsaw** share **Europride 2008** events and continuing efforts to help the **2<sup>nd</sup> Outgames** -- blending human rights, culture and sports in **Copenhagen in 2009** -- focus on the crucial rainbow battles on Eastern European barricades.

Conference **“Rainbow Warrior”** awards were handed out to Poles providing special help to the conference and LGBT identity in Poland, and the organizers of the **Poznan “Equality Week”** received the **ILGCN “Grizzly Bear” 2006** for carrying out the successful festival in the face of threats and shadows of last year’s violence.

Also during the week, the ILGCN Warsaw ambassador and the Information Secretariat protested over the Polish President’s statements on BBC news that gay culture “threatened to make heterosexual culture disappear” as ridiculous and homophobic.

***Moscow 2006 Stage Terminated by Bloody Violence***

The first stage of the 2006 ILGCN world rainbow culture conference took place in **Moscow** in May -- including a special ‘Nordic Lights’ presentation supported by the **Nordic Council’s culture fund** and the **Norwegian Embassy**. However, the three days of events ended with a bloody, violent, and tear-gas filled battle on Red Square with both homophobes and police attacking LGBT activists trying to place flowers at a memorial -- since the Pride parade was banned by the mayor and condemned by all religious leaders in the city.

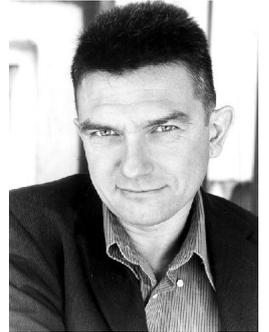
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**2006 Grizzly Bear Award to Poznan Activists**

**Poznan** – The **ILGCN 2006 Grizzly Bear** for outstanding work in ferocious homophobic conditions has gone to the organizers of the **Poznan Equality Week** – combining the forces of the feminist movement, environmentalists, anarchists, human rights groups and the LGBT community.

The motivation reads: ”... *for combining all progressive human rights, social and political groups together – and in defiance of last year’s homophobic threats and violence on the streets of Poznan – triumphantly blending culture and politics into a powerful weapon for tomorrow’s battles... for inviting foreign colleagues to the barricades surpassing national and psychological barriers ... and for to converingt dreams into realities.*”

The **Grizzly** has gone earlier to the 1<sup>st</sup> **Moscow Pride** and the 1<sup>st</sup> **IDAHO** conference in 2005, to **Queer Zagreb** and the Center for Civil & Human Rights in Skopje, to the **Jerusalem Open House** uniting Israeli and Palestinian lesbians and gays, and to the organizers of the 1<sup>st</sup> **Belgrade Pride** – attacked violently by neo nazis and other homophobes, to the **Belarus Lambda League** in that Eastern European dictatorship, the **“Circle”** group in the far northern Russian city of **Murmansk, Nash Mir** in the Ukraine and to **Greece** – where death threats and bombings have tried to silence the play, **Lesbian Blues**, -- to the **Belarus LGBT Amnesty Group** and the **Poland’s Campaign Against Homophobia**.



*New Italian ILGCN Ambassador, actor/ poet Carlo Beltrami of Milan*



The **Grizzly** is a brother to the **Polar Bear of Tupilak** (Nordic rainbow cultural workers) -- honoring outstanding achievement in homo film production and distribution and was born at the Berlin International Film Festival -- the home of the gay **Teddy** bear and gold and silver bears.

### **2006 ILGCN Award Honors Nordic/Baltic Co-operation:**

## **Arco Nordica to Sweden's Pol-Balt Network**

*Stockholm* – The special ILGCN award for Nordic rainbow co-operation has gone to the **Swedish Pol-Balt Network** uniting groups in **Sweden** with colleagues on the Eastern side of the Baltic Sea, and was handed over at a European conference in the Stockholm premises of the **Swedish Gay Student organization** – one of the network members. The motivation reads:

“... for pioneering efforts uniting many groups in this Scandinavian nation – big and small, political, social and cultural – into an active network linking colleagues at home and with those on the barricades in **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania** and **Poland**. ... for taking this initiative at a crucial time when new waves of violent homophobia and political and religious hostility threaten the rainbow struggles in these nations.... and for promoting awareness, solidarity and action -- both abroad and at home – giving also Swedes the chance to share the courage and strength of Eastern colleagues.... demonstrating that the colors of the rainbow become more brilliant when they are stretched over national borders and across the waters of the Baltic Sea.”



The **Arco Nordica** is awarded in collaboration with the **Nordic Rainbow Council** (*former Nordic Homo Council*) and **Tupilak** (*Nordic rainbow cultural workers*).

Earlier '**Arco Nordica**' awards have gone to the **Tribade Festival** in Helsinki, the **Rainbow Festival** in Malmö, **SLM** colleagues in Gothenberg and Tallinn, **Barents** colleagues in northern Sweden and Norway working with Finns and Russians, Stockholm's **Women's Choir** and the Stockholm's **Gay Choir**, the **1st Queer Festival-Umeå**, Sweden, the **1st Vaasa Pride**, Finland & **Mea Culpa**, Estonia, the **Viking Bears** of Sweden and **Lahia Bears** of Vaasa, Finland and **Gay Camps** in Sweden and Latvia.

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## **ILGCN World Cultural Conferences 2007**



**Mauritius & Vilnius -- May**  
**“Iran in Exile” (Toronto) -- June**  
**“Algeria in Exile” (Paris/Marseille) – October**

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### **ILGCN Annual Awards:** (*Proposals welcomed at all Secretariats*)

**Rainbow Iceberg** -- (*outstanding international work*)      **Clio's Silver Cup** (*LGBT history*)

**Orfeo Iris** (*research in Nazi & neo nazi persecution of homosexuals*)

**Grizzly Bear** (*work in ferocious homophobic situations*)

**Orfeo Musica** (*international musical co-operation*)      **Arco Nordica** (*Nordic co-operation*)

**Sappho in Paradise** (*libraries, publishing*)      **Orfeo Imago** (*graphic art & photography*)



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## **ILGCN Secretariats**

**Information:** Stockholm [www.ilgcn.tupilak.se](http://www.ilgcn.tupilak.se)

**Women:** Tallinn [krissu.@meaculpa.ee](mailto:krissu.@meaculpa.ee)

**Eastern Europe:** Warsaw [santi@santi.net.pl](mailto:santi@santi.net.pl)

**History:** Minneapolis [trett007@umn.edu](mailto:trett007@umn.edu)

**Literature:** London [istewart@alumni.stu.ca](mailto:istewart@alumni.stu.ca)

Nordic Rainbow Council

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