

EPBN ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2023 - 2024



EPBN Vision

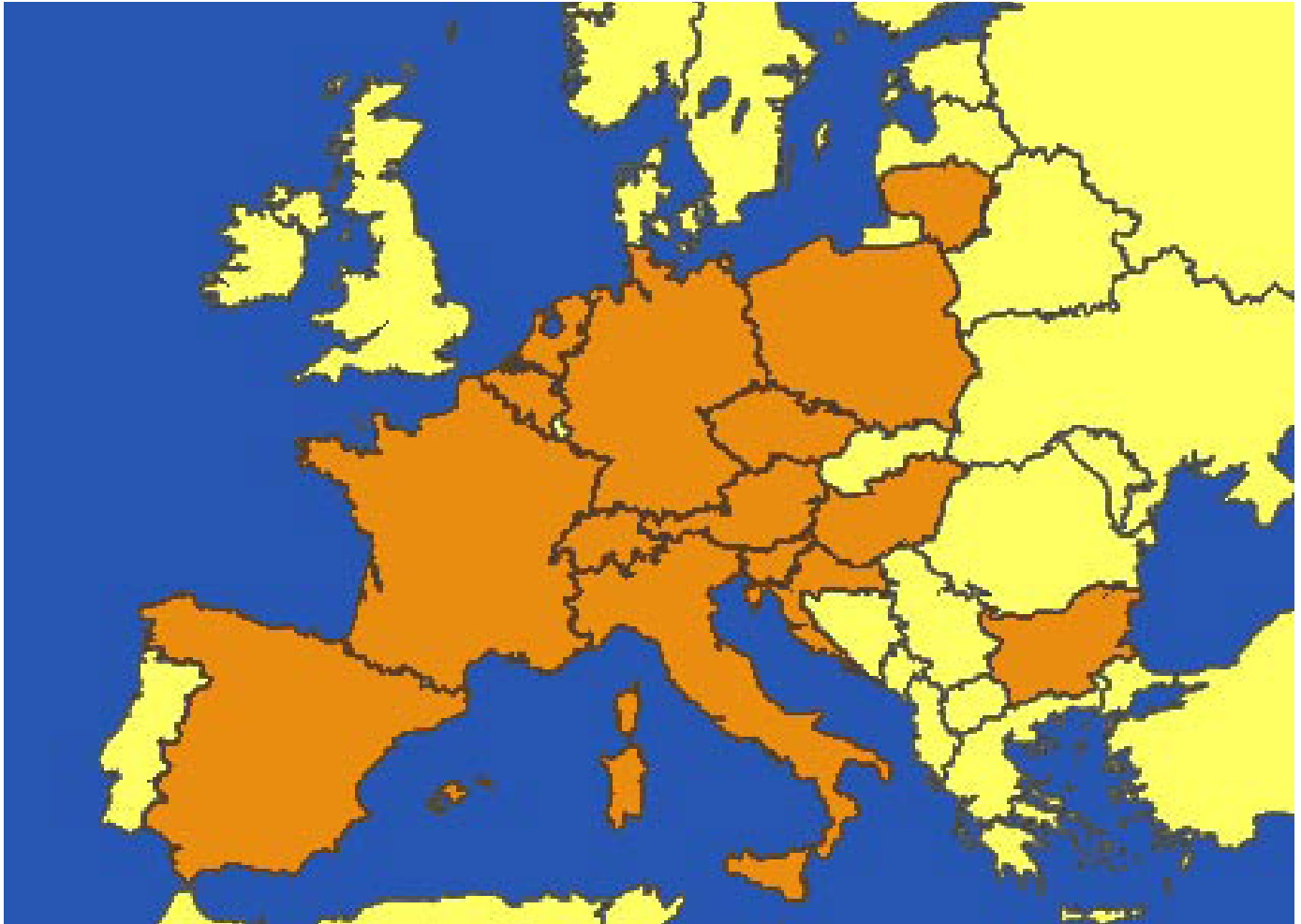
**Combating and preventing discrimination
of LGBTIQ+ people at work and
promoting LGBTIQ+ equality
at the workplace**



Members

AG PRO (Austria)
Queer Businesswomen (Austria)
Cavaria (Belgium)
Glas Foundation (Bulgaria)
Common Zone (Croatia)
Pride Business Forum (Czechia)
L' Autre Cercle (France)
Völklinger Kreis (Germany)
Wirtschaftsweiber (Germany)

We are Open (Hungary)
EDGE (Italy)
Lithuanian Gay League (Lithuania)
Znaki Równości (Poland)
Legebitra (Slovenia)
REDI (Spain)
Network (Switzerland)
WyberNet (Switzerland)
Workplace Pride (The Netherlands)



Board members

Chairman: Matthias Weber
Vice-Chair: Steffi Grimm
Vice-Chair: Emina Hermann
Vice-Chair: Miche Graf
Treasurer: Kai Bethke
General Secretary: Czeslaw Walek



Chairman's introduction

Dear Members,

I am delighted to present to you the **annual report of EPBN** for the year 2023. This year marked a significant milestone in our journey, characterised by remarkable progress and a forward-looking approach.

Following the foundational phase and groundwork laid in previous years, EPBN experienced substantial growth and development in 2023.

- Our efforts in **expanding our membership base** to include nations where we were previously unrepresented
- the **deepening networking** among our members
- enhanced **engagement with political organisations and the EU** and notably
- the successful **placement of our collaborative EU project** for funding by the European Commission

These stand as testament to the effectiveness of our voluntary work.

We as current board members extend our heartfelt gratitude to all supporters whose contributions have enabled this progress.

Personally, I am immensely proud and gratified to witness how EPBN has become so impactful through the broad support and activity it has garnered.

Looking ahead to the next two years, we anticipate a new term for the board period 2024-2026. It is imperative to maintain a healthy balance of stability and sustainability within the board while also embracing the opportunity to integrate new dedicated colleagues. This will ensure the continuation of ongoing initiatives and the infusion of fresh perspectives.

Our focus extends beyond just board members; we also seek to involve project leaders and activists who are eager to contribute to various facets of our projects.

As we embark on this new phase, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission and values. Together, let us build upon our achievements, navigate challenges, and seize opportunities for further growth and impact.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to EPBN.

Matthias Weber

President of EPBN



Highlights from the Year

A) EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

- **Annual members meeting**

The Annual member's meeting took place in Vienna, Austria on 28th of September 2023 on the 25th anniversary of AG PRO, our Austrian member. During the formal part of the meeting, members adopted activity and financial reports presented by the Board. During the strategic part of the meeting, members discussed the future of EPBN and what activities we will implement together to fulfil our mission.

As has become a small tradition, we attended the celebrations of AGPRO's birthday and actively participated in a diversity conference at the Austrian Parliament.

- **Webinars**

We have continued our EPBN public webinar series with the webinar showcasing the Polish best practice of an inclusive job fair held in February 2024. The Polish EPBN member Znaki równości presented their activity of organising an inclusive job fair in Poland. After a short presentation the audience had a chance to discuss the transferability of such a practice in other countries and possible points for cooperation.

The 5th Webinar focused on Artificial Intelligence and LGBTIQ+ and was hosted by EDGE, Italian member of EPBN on April 15th, 2024. 114 people registered for this webinar, which is the highest number of registrations so far. EDGE and its former president Mario di Carlo explored the impact of AI on discrimination and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people and the implications of the AI Act that the European Parliament recently passed.

- **Monthly members meeting**

During strategic discussion at Annual Members Meeting members agreed to continue with periodical virtual members meetings where we will discuss a concrete topic of cooperation. The first meeting took place on December 18th where Mario di Carlo and Lucia Urcioli updated all members on the EU Institutional visit that EPBN conducted in November and its results. On March 18th, 2024, we held another virtual members meeting. The content was introduction of new members, information about upcoming Annual Members meeting and discussion about needs assessment that is going to be conducted by EPBN among its members.



- **Institutional visit to Brussels**

Upon an initiative of EDGE, EPBN together with EGLCC organised an institutional visit to the EU with the goal to present EPBN to EU officials and to seek opportunities for collaboration in order to fulfil the vision of our organisations. The visit took place on November 29th 2023. The group included Lucia Urciuoli, Mario Di Carlo, Tommaso Scalzi from EDGE Italy, Angelo Caltagirone and Andreas Künzler from Network Switzerland, Christophe Margaine and Olivier Li from L'Autre Cercle and Czeslaw Walek representing Pride Business Forum. The group met with co-chair of LGBTIQ intergroup of EU Parliament Mr. Marc Angel; Vice President of the European Commission Věra Jourová, Members of European Parliament Irene Tinagli, Stéphane Bijoux or Fabio Massimo Castaldo. The trip highlighted avenues for cooperation on the EU level with EU institutions in the area of LGBTIQ workplace equality, such as participating in creating the new LGBTIQ Equality Strategy or criteria for ESG reporting.

- **Empowering Pride: Building a Network for LGBTIQ Workplace Equality in Europe**

The idea of common activities realized by EPBN members in different European countries resonated among EPBN members since the foundation of the Network. The depth of experience, knowledge and skills that EPBN members bring to the table calls of leveraging and utilizing. That is why EPBN asked its members if they would be willing to create a consortium that will submit a project proposal for financing to EU. Five member organisations (L'autre circle, EDGE, Pride Business Forum, VK and AG Pro) reacted positively and put together a consortium that worked on creation of project proposal in May and June 2023. A common project proposal requesting financing to EU Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme was submitted. The total amount requested is 617 539 EUR, with EPBN requesting 57 436 EUR. **In December 2023 the project proposal was selected for EU support and it will start to be implemented from 1 April 2024.**

The project aims to address the persistent inequality faced by LGBTIQ individuals in employment across Europe. The project's primary goal is to promote, through impactful initiatives, workplace equality, and to establish a strong network of civil society organisations (CSOs), employers, and LGBTIQ professionals in Europe. This project serves as an incubator for practical actions that will directly improve the lives of LGBTIQ employees across Europe.



This project is unique as it gathers a consortium of 5 European CSOs, sharing the same values and having the same goals. It will benefit not only consortium members, but all members of European Pride Business Network present and future, who will be able to transfer the knowledge and experience in their countries and continue developing these activities on EU level for the better good of LGBTIQ employees.

The project will focus on three target groups:

1. For **LGBTIQ+ professionals**, the project aims to create transnational programs that empower individuals to be their authentic selves in the workplace and serve as role models for others.
2. For **employers**, the project will develop tools to mobilize and inspire them to engage in LGBTIQ workplace equality initiatives.
3. For **CSOs**, the project seeks to enhance transnational cooperation and knowledge-sharing.

Through the project, we aim to achieve several concrete results:

- 40 national LGBTIQ workplace equality role models in 8 EU countries, inspiring others and mobilizing employers for LGBTIQ workplace equality.
- Empowering and mentoring 20 LGBTIQ young professionals in 5 EU countries, nurturing the next generation of role models.
- Inspiring 20 multinational companies to adopt LGBTIQ equality standards across their branches.
- Training 10 trainers in effective implementation of LGBTIQ sensitivity training.
- 25 companies in Europe are using a toolkit to initiate LGBTIQ workplace equality.
- Collection of unique data on microaggression against LGBTIQ individuals to combat workplace discrimination effectively.



B) COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

• **Website**

In 2022 www.epbn.eu website was created that provides basic information about the network and its members and governance of the Network. The website has also News section, where EPBN publishes information about their upcoming events etc.

Over the past seven months, our social media engagement has fluctuated. In February, we saw a notable increase in reactions, with 123 recorded, signalling heightened interest. Despite a slight decline in comments and reposts compared to previous months, our total follower count continued to rise steadily, reaching 730 on LinkedIn and 155 on Instagram. Comparing the last three months, we've experienced encouraging growth, with our LinkedIn followers increasing from 635 in December to 730 in February. Our Instagram saw a slower rise from 149 followers in December to 155 in February.

• **Topics of post:**

Introduction to New Members:

- Post introducing Workplace Pride as a new member and their commitment to fostering inclusive workplaces.
- Announcement of GLAS Foundation joining the EPBN and their initiative, Work It OUT, promoting LGBTI+ inclusion in Bulgarian workplaces.
- Introduction of WeAreOpen, a dedicated non-profit organization advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) services in Hungary and beyond.

Presenting Our Members:

- Post about Kai Bethke, highlighting his role at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and his involvement with Austrian Gay Professionals.
- Announcement of Emina, her diverse roles at K-zone and involvement in various activist groups, including Zagreb Pride and Women's Room.

Webinars:

- Promotion of the 4th EPBN Webinar on the topic focused on Poland's First-Ever Inclusive Job Fairs led by Dawid Wojtyczka.
- Announcement of the 5th EPBN Webinar discussing AI and the upcoming AI Act, featuring Mario di Carlo's expertise.

EU News and Partnerships:

- Reporting on marriage equality discussions in the Czech Parliament.
- Highlighting Greece's legalization of same-sex marriage.
- Summarizing the latest EU barometer report on perceptions of discrimination and support for LGBTIQ+ rights.
- Updates on discussions with European Commission Dali regarding Diversity Charters and LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy.



EPBN Financial Report 2023

In 2023, EPBN consolidated its financial resources by widening through the access of new members. At the same time, expenditures have been limited predominantly to social media activities. The closing balance (EUR 12,448.35) exceeded slightly the opening balance (EUR12,428.35), which underlined the prudent financial management by the EPBN Board in 2023. The comprehensive development of the common EU project, which has been approved by the EU Commission in December 2023, has been borne exclusively by the consortia members in Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany and Italy, through their in-kind contributions. Through this project, EPBN will receive a financial contribution of EUR 55,311.00 for the budgets 2024 and 2025.

The audit report 2023 is attached.

Outlook 2024:

Based on the fund's allocation in connection with the EU project, EPBN will receive a cash advance of 80% of the overall allocation, i.e. EUR 44,249.00, for the overall project management and coordination, in May 2024. It is suggested that the proposed expenditure for 2024, as seen in the table below, should be vetted by the new EPBN Board, in light of the implementation plan for 2024.

In addition, it further expected that the EPBN membership will further grow, hence related income will as well increase accordingly.

EPBN Budget 2023 - 2024

	2023	2024 (incl. contribution EU project)
Income		
Balance 2022	12,428.35 €	Balance 2023 12,448.35 €
Membership Fee	2,600.00 €	Membership Fee (17 members (14 April 2024)) 3,400.00 €
		EU Project (80% cash advance 2024) 44,249.00 €
Subtotal	15,028.35 €	60,097.35 €

Expenditure		
Laywer/ Registration	250.00 €	
SoMe support	2,250.00 €	SoMe support 3,250.00 €
Financial expenditure	180.00 €	Financial Expenditure 180.00 €
		(EU) Admin personnel 1,400.00 €
		(EU) SoMe Advisor 2,700.00 €
		(EU) Travel (40% of total budget) 1,690.00 €
		(EU) Services for meetings 1,600.00 €
		(EU) Services for communication 6,300.00 €
		(EU) IT services 10,000.00 €
		(EU) Zoom per month 135.00 €
Subtotal	2,680.00 €	27,255.00 €
Total	12,448.35 €	32,842.35 €



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Auditor's report to the Annual General Assembly of EPBN
Year 2023

As elected auditors according to §11 of the associations articles, we examined the accounting records and financial Statements (balance sheet, income statement) of EPBN association (European Pride Business Network) for the financial year that started on January 1, 2023, and ended on December 31, 2023. For these financial statements, the Executive Board (Treasurer) is responsible, while our task is to check and assess them. We confirm that we meet the requirements concerning professional qualification and independence.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the task, which require that an audit is planned and performed so that material misstatements in the financial Statements are detected with reasonable assurance. We have examined all the amounts and disclosures in the financial Statements. We also assessed the application of the relevant accounting principles used, significant estimates made and the overall financial Statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

The auditors checked the, financially, most important documents, and did conclude that these were correctly booked.

In our opinion, the accounting records and financial Statements are confirmed with the Law and the Statutes and consequently, we approve the financial Statements 2023. We verified in particular that the actual use of resources corresponds to the purposes stipulated in the Articles of Association.

So we propose the discharge of the Executive Board to the General Assembly.

April 3, 2024

Christophe Margaine

Daniel Seiler



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