

Search this site:

Login

NEWS

LIBRARY

PARTNERS

OPPORTUNITIES

SERVICES

ABOUT US

## Language editions

- Dobar dan
- Hello
- **Добар ден**

## News from SEE

- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Kosovo
- Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Weekly Report

## Library

- Dossiers
- Interviews
- Opinion and Analyses
- Multimedia and Resources

## Network

- Latest Partners
- News from Partners
- Partners in Focus

## Move

- Events
- Campaigns
- Funding Opportunities
- Training and Education
- Calls for Participation
- Jobs & Volunteering

## Services

- Partners oriented

## Settings

- Consultancy services

## 13th EuroGames Open Today in Rotterdam

Thu, 21/07/2011 - 12:47pm



The **13th EuroGames**, the sports games of the European LGBTQ community, will open officially today, July 21, 2011, in Rotterdam. The EuroGames, organized by the **European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF)**, will gather over 6,000 competitors in 21 sports, from all European countries. The EuroGames 2011 are held under the motto „Show Your Colour“ and will be accompanied with the cultural programme under the auspices of the „Colour Festival“, with lots of arts and entertainment events, parties and concerts by A-list performers of the international gay-pop-scene. For the first time, LGBTQ sportsmen and sportswomen from all countries of former Yugoslavia will compete in the EuroGames. *Report by Željko Blaće in Rotterdam*

## Why LGBTQ sports?

Competitive sports as we know them since the revival of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, remain one of the most conservative segments of society. However, over the past fifty or so years, it was a field for creation and development of movements for emancipation and rights of black and female athletes. Lamentably, we can still view sports as LGBTQ-phobic segment of society, almost all over the world.

As of recently, a number of sports federations and organisations have developed support for top LGBTQ athletes, mostly after they have reached the top results in their respective sports and near the end of their competitive careers. The road to recognition was long and possible, as confirmed by exceptions like tennis players Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova, Natalie Mauresmo, divers Greg Louganis and Matthew Mitcham, and most recently rugby player Gareth Thomas and Swedish football player Anton Hysén.

All the while, young recreational athletes (outside the highly commercial sports scene) remained exposed to frequent demonstration of prejudice by fans, media, sponsors, even the other athletes. The things are moving ahead, even in our region of Southeast Europe, and we are making progress as we speak!

## Gaining Institutional Foothold and Expansion

The pioneering role in the development of the global LGBTQ sports movement, in the 1980s, was played by Dr. Dr. Tom Waddell (he competed in the 1968 Olympics decathlon, died in 1987) who organized sports enthusiasts to hold the first Gay Olympic Games (later renamed GayGames after the lawsuit by U.S. Olympic Committee). Aiming to empower the LGBTQ community and achievement of best personal results for the involved athletes, the movement spread globally and the GayGames grew into a regular global event for LGBTQ athletes. The GayGames grew constantly, from 1,350 participants in San Francisco (1982 and 1986), Vancouver (1990), New York (1994), to Amsterdam (1998) and Sydney (2002) – the last had actually more athletes participating than the Summer Olympics two years earlier, and numbers dwindled slightly for the next two GayGames in Chicago (2006) and Cologne (2010).

To coordinate such major events and to ensure continuity and ties with historical heritage, the **Federation of Gay Games (FGG)** was created, as a non-profit association. Its primary focus lies on the GayGames, and the Federation holds the license and controls the implementation of a set of standards by host cities. Its membership consists of sports associations active at the level of major urban areas, cities or states, and other associations, like the **IGLA**.

Inspired by the North American examples, the European LGBTQ athletes created, in 1989, the European Gay and Lesbian Sports Federation (EGLSF) and, soon afterwards, organized the EuroGames, an annual continental multi-sport event (1992 and 1993 in the Hague, 1995 in Frankfurt, 1996 in Berlin, growing all the time to over 5,000 competitors in Barcelona 2008 Games). The European LGBTQ sports scene was further enriched by a number of smaller and greater weekend tournaments, held almost every weekend in one or the other of major cities in Europe.

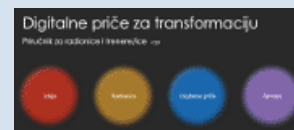
## Follow owpsee



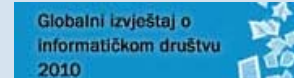
## Tag Cloud

[more tags](#)

## Digital stories



## Take Back the Tech





Rotterdam will host over 6000 LGBTQ athletes for the EuroGames 2011

#### Recent Developments

Disagreements over the relatively narrow and limited area of action of FGG led to the creation, in 2005, of a new global organisation – the [Gay and Lesbian Sports Association](#). GLISA was established in Canada, as a non-profit organisation with diverse membership of a network of association, looser structure, regional representation and continental games. The conceptual differences between FGG and GLISA led to the creation of competing global games, so in 2006, we had the GayGames Chicago (the FGG license) and the WorldOutgames in Montreal (under the GLISA license).

Besides sports, the WorldOutgames focus strongly on cultural programmes and global LGBTQ problems and issues and human rights situation, which are all addressed in a major conference that is held parallel to the games.

Although the situation may seem tense and indicates a crisis, both organisations take active participation in the development of LGBTQ sports. After the Copenhagen WorldOutgamesa 2009 and Cologne GayGamesa 2010, negotiations were opened on the organisation of one event that would unite the two concepts that would be held in 2018. Until then, we will have at least the WorldOutgames 2013 in Antwerp, and the 2014 GayGames in Cleveland.

#### Development in SEE Region?

Although Southeast Europe is widely considered as a hotbed for sports, as a consequence of the wars and dominantly conservative politics, the development of all LGBTQ activities, including sports, lag well behind the European Union. Slovenia and Croatia joined in and have taken active participation in the last several years. However, at this year's games in Rotterdam (July 20-24) and next year in Budapest, increasing number of competitors are expected from the former Yugoslav countries.

There are a number of funds that offer scholarships and subsidies that can help with the costs of participation in the EuroGames, as well as the support by organisations like the qSPORT ([www.qSPORT.info](http://www.qSPORT.info)) and other partner organisations in the region and abroad.

#### What is LGBTQ sport?

This recent phenomenon grew from the wider efforts for emancipation of the LGBTQ community that started in the late 1970s and has continued, in different contexts, regions and times, to this day. The sports aspects of the movement emerged as a part of the activist efforts to empower the community and from the need to gather individuals who wanted to practice sports and recreation in an atmosphere of full affirmation (including the sexual orientation and gender identification aspects). At that, the focus is not only on the absolute sports achievement and result, but also on how to achieve the personal best without the pressure of norms of top-level sport competition.

All of the above shows that LGBTQ sports and participation in sports events can be motivated by different needs (activist, social, competitive) and practiced at all levels, from recreation to highest competitive level. Such a wide range of participants is divided, in competitions, into age or strength groups, depending on the actual sports discipline.

*The qSPORT sports and recreation association works as a non-profit association for development of LGBTQ sports in Croatia and Southeast Europe. It takes active participation in key international associations (EGLSF, FGG and GLISA) and activities in the area of development of LGBTQ sports.*

[Netherlands](#) [South East Europe](#) [Activism](#) [International cooperation](#) [News](#) [Sexuality](#)  
[Youth](#)

[Login](#) to post comments [Dobar dan](#) [Добар ден](#)

#### Kampanja Info

- [Priests Promoting Violence Need to be Sanctioned](#)
- [Campaign for Equality of Rural Women](#)
- [Clean Parliaments Campaign](#)

#### Travelling the Balkans

- [BH Association of Adrenaline Tourism](#) [more](#)

#### VITA Europe

- [Commemoration of the Roma and Sinti Genocide Remembrance Day](#)
- [Commemoration of the Roma and Sinti Genocide Remembrance Day](#)
- [Commemoration of the Roma and Sinti Genocide](#)

- [Petition for Pride Parade in Belgrade](#)
- [Money Has a Name Campaign](#)

[more](#)

- [Remembrance Day](#)
- [The key is prevention](#)
- [Diesel kills the rainforest](#)

[more](#)

**OneWorld thematic channels and collaborative projects include:**



Except where otherwise noted (please read our [Privacy Policy](#)), content on this site is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License

[Page top](#) | [Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Contacts](#)

