

EPBN - WISE Conference and Awards Concludes in Prague, Uniting Hundreds of Leaders to Protect LGBTIQ+ Workplace Inclusion in Europe

PRAGUE, Czech Republic, June 2, 2026 — The EPBN - WISE Conference & Awards Ceremony: Protect Workplace Inclusion successfully concluded in Prague, serving as a vital strategic hub for European leadership dedicated to fostering inclusive and resilient workplaces. The event provided the "recipe" required to safeguard workplace rights and turn authentic LGBTIQ+ inclusion of almost 40 million LGBTIQ+ workers into a measurable economic advantage.

New Survey Across 5 EU Countries Reveals that 63% of LGBTIQ+ Employees Experience Workplace Exclusion due to Microaggressions

A first-of-its-kind European survey presented at the Conference by Dr. Silvia Spinelli revealed that 3 out of 5 LGBTIQ+ workers (63%) feel their workplace is not inclusive due to microaggressions they have experienced. The study, titled "European Survey Research on Microaggressions, Language and Overall Wellbeing in the Workplace for LGBTIQ+ People," highlights how subtle, often unintentional forms of discrimination continue to compromise the psychological safety and professional experiences of millions across the European continent. The research was conducted by Associazione EDGE on behalf of the European Pride Business Network (EPBN) within the EPBN - WISE (Workplace Inclusion for a Sustainable Europe) project. Analyzing a sample of 3,100 respondents across Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, and Italy. These results provide the missing link between corporate policy and the daily reality of the LGBTIQ+ workforce.

The summit represented a massive, unified stand against rising social polarization, drawing a sold-out house of change-makers. The event was presented by EPBN and the Pride Business Forum (Czech Republic).

- The event welcomed over **550 registered participants**.
- Attendees included **professionals from the Czech Republic** and **delegates traveling from 24 different European countries**.
- More than **130 leading companies and organisations** were represented at the conference.

Key Speakers & Thought Leaders shared a message of hope and challenges

The conference featured a powerful lineup of institutional authorities, business visionaries, and advocacy leaders. Key speakers who shared their insights and commitments included:

- **Institutional Experts: Hadja Lahbib** (European Commissioner for Equality), **Irena Moozová** (Deputy Director General DG JUST, European Commission), **Miltos Pavlou** (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and and **Aaron Giardina** (Government of Malta and Chair of ADI-SOGIESC, Council of Europe).
- **Ambassadors for Equality: Jean-Marc Berthon** (French Ambassador for LGBT+ rights) and **Jorge Noval** (Ambassador at large for the Rights of LGBTI+ People, Spain).

- **Business & Advocacy Leaders: Martine Roy** (Co-Chair of the LGBT Purge Fund), **Vincent Lecerf** (EVP for HR and Transformation at Orange Group), **Luca Condosta** (ABB), **Alexandre Maymat** (Société Générale) and **Maxime Legrand** (President of CEC- European Managers).
- **EPBN Leadership: Matthias Weber** (EPBN Chairman) and **Christophe Margaine** (EPBN Vice-chair and EPBN - WISE Project Manager).

"When we look at the reality that over 60% of our LGBTIQ+ colleagues still experience daily exclusion, it breaks my heart, but it also steals our collective resolve," says Matthias Weber, Chairman of EPBN. "Workplace inclusion is not just a moral imperative; it is the strategic bedrock of Europe's economic resilience. True inclusion isn't about checkboxes. It's about creating a safe harbor where people can thrive without fear, which ultimately drives the innovation our entire Union desperately needs. I am profoundly moved by the momentum we are building together. We started with a vision, and today I am immensely proud to welcome REDI Portugal as our 28th member organization, expanding the EPBN family to span 24 European countries. We are no longer just a network. We are a united front turning the promise of equality into a lived, daily standard for tens of millions."

Celebrating the Frontlines: The Awardees

Concluding two years of intensive cross-border work, with a first step in May 2025 in Warsaw, this second EPBN - WISE annual event culminated with an evening Awards Ceremony to honor those leading the change for equality. The ceremony proudly recognized **14 Inclusive Firms, 25 Mentees, and 28 European Role Models.**

The 14 Awarded Inclusive Firms: ABB, Sky, Orange, Société Générale, Legrand, MSD, Vodafone, IKEA, Deutsche Bank, Erste Group, Cuatrecasas, ÖBB, Airbus, and BBVA.

The 28 European Role Models:

- **Leader LGBTIQ+ Role Models:** Inès Duckit (Legrand), Gabriele Schneider (International Corporate Activities SA), Joanna Pastor (Accenture), Loïc Choquet (Apex Group), Pierpaolo Astolfi (Propelis), Roberto D'Incau (Lang & Partners), Stefan Mönkediek (HRK Lunis AG), Angelo Caltagirone (Traductor Caltagirone GmbH), and Tatjana Quast (Federal Criminal Police Office).
- **Outstanding LGBTIQ+ Professional Role Models:** Aleš Bernášek (Vodafone), Anna Geiger (IC Group of Companies), Antonio Stoichkov (Accenture), Delphine Racher Raulin (AXA), Erhan Erol (Novartis), Ken Goigner (Fachmittelschule Burggasse), Monika Malinowska-Błaszczak (Orange), Marian Kramarik (T-Mobile), Nikki Symmons (Philip Morris International), and Todor Totev (Progress Software).
- **Ally Role Models:** Anna Karas (Linklaters), Annamaria De Franco (Sandoz GmbH), Beatriz Torres (LVMH), Esther De Gaspar (Hewlett Packard Enterprise), Gerlinde Offenmüller (Novartis), Laura Mather (Société Générale), Lionel Souque (Rewe Group), Pavlína Kalousová (Asahi Europe and International), and Raquel Flórez (Freshfields).

The 25 EPBN - WISE Mentoring Program Mentees:

Abby Baheerathan, Anders Fuss, Anna Geiger, Antoine Bouilloux-Lafont, Daniel Weiss, Elena Neumann, Florian Niederseer, Jinkun Liu, Jules Bardelli, Konstantin Dunnzloff, Lorenzo Berrini, Manon Olchowicz, Markéta Matějová, Massimo Livrieri, Matteo Di Maio, Martin Wagner, Lukáš Hradil, Nora Wenig, Quang Luong, Roberto Occhiuzzi, Samuele

Appignanesi, Matúš Pravda, Swastika Bhattacharya, Thomas Steinbock, and Torben Tuinmann.

EPBN Elects New Board of Directors

Looking to the future of sustainable workplace equality, the EPBN convened its Annual Members meeting a day after the Conference and Awards ceremony to vote in its new leadership. The newly elected board members who will guide the organization's pan-European initiatives and expansion are:

- **Matthias Weber** (Chairman, Germany)
- **Christophe Margaine** (Vice-chair and Treasurer, France)
- **Silvia Spinelli** (Vice-chair, Italy)
- **Monika Antanaityte** (Lithuania)
- **Luca Condosta** (Italy)
- **Lukas Burian** (Austria)

“Following our inaugural gathering in Warsaw on May 9, 2025, this second annual EPBN - WISE event in Prague serves as powerful proof of the impact a united Europe can achieve. EPBN's true strength lies in its ability to unite 28 member organizations across 24 countries to deliver tangible action. With over 130 companies and institutions represented here in Prague, we have sent a definitive signal to the business world and the public: supporting workplace inclusion is supporting democracy. Diversity and inclusion are not the problem; they are the solution. Europe will not back down. Let's continue this vital, collective European work, and we look forward to seeing you all in May 2027 for our third event,” says Christophe Margaine, EPBN - WISE Project manager.

About Project EPBN - WISE

The EPBN - WISE (Workplace Inclusion for Sustainable Europe) project, co-funded by the European Commission's **Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme**, concludes two years of intensive cross-border work. The initiative was led by five national associations: **L'Autre Cercle** (France, as global coordinator), **EDGE** (Italy), **Berufsverband VK** (Germany), **Pride Biz** (Austria), and **Pride Business Forum** (Czech Republic). To explore the full program and learn more about the speakers shaping the future of inclusion, visit [EPBN website](#).

Thank you for helping protect workplace inclusion in Europe

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Media contact:

Filip Milde

filip@epbn.eu

+420777350640

www.epbn.eu | www.linktr.ee/epbn

About the European Pride Business Network (EPBN)

Founded in 2022, the European Pride Business Network (EPBN) is a politically independent umbrella organization bringing together national and regional LGBTIQ+ professional associations from across Europe. EPBN works to advance workplace equality, foster inclusive business environments, and promote the economic empowerment of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Today, the network unites 28 member organizations across 24 European countries, forming a strong and growing alliance committed to driving sustainable change through visibility, advocacy, and collaboration.