



in-person &
online from
AUSTRIA

June 16th 2023

THE 9th INTERNATIONAL EAST MEETS WEST CONFERENCE

PAVING A NEW WAY

📍 **Venue:** [The UNIQA Tower, Untere Donaustrasse 21, Vienna, Austria \(map\)](#)

The Theme

In the **10 years of our existence**, East meets West witnessed a **lot of gradual changes** in the European LGBTIQ environment, especially in the CEE region, our focus sphere. Was there in the beginning a strong political influence of the 'EU Way of life', put down in anti-discrimination legislation that insured a safe living environment for minorities such as the LGBTIQ community, **this came to a halt**. Incompetence and especially foolhardiness poisoned this positive evolution. It slowed down the started innovations such as the marriage for all. But what saddened us most is that initially nameless groups of homophobic bigots became louder and more aggressive, supported by opportunistic politicians and extremist religious groups. **How do we react to such negative evolution?** The strategies we follow will have less or even no impact anymore when confronted with ruffians who use physical force to shut us up.

For East meets West the time is right for a 'constructive postponement' as we think that the hazards of a mere continuation of our work far outweigh the risk of a short delay in our actions. The French have a saying for such tactical move – **Reculer Pour Mieux Sauter** – which means in a contemporary way, **to take a breather, reflect on a new strategy and come back more powerful and tactically better equipped in the new environment**, to continue successfully the next phase in ensuring a safe life for each member of our very diverse LGBTIQ community. Such new tools and approaches exist and will be shared on the Conference. We will also give ample space to the **many successes our community achieved** in the midst of a negative general atmosphere.

East meets West wants in the **10th year** of existence tackle in its **International Conference**, together with its wide community of partners, the challenging question of **what is the best way to go forward** with our LGBTIQ community.

In Austria, from Austria

We are back this year in Austria, our home country. As you are used from us in our previous CEE events, we will feature **again an LGBTIQ reality check** and bring you an updated and more correct picture of the **daily LGBTIQ reality in Austria**. In 2023 we will of course keep our high professional standard and focus on delivering real value to both our audiences, those in-person and those joining online. We will make streaming available to audiences across the whole world. We nevertheless recommend you join us in person in a **real space for people to meet again**.

By hosting our conference in Austria, and streaming the event to the whole world, we want to give a special attention to the Austrian LGBTIQ situation. By doing so, we also aim to **create business opportunities for local LGBTIQ owned and operated businesses**.

The Program

The Conference language is **English** / The schedule is in **CET** (Central European Time Zone)

9:30 – 10:00

Getting in the Conference Mood and Early Networking Time

If you are present in person on June 16th, you can enjoy your morning coffee, appreciate the panoramic view of the city from the Conference auditorium and of course network with the other participants. If you plan to join us online, you get your laptop, tablet or smartphone on stand-by and find a comfortable place to sit.

10:00 START

Message of the Co-Founders

Pavel and Ludo welcome all participants to their 9th International East meets West Conference and introduce in their unparalleled way the theme of the Conference: "Paving a New Way" together with looking back at their 10th year of existence.

- *Pavel Šubrt and Ludo A.F. Swinnen, Co-founders of East meets West, Austria*

Official Opening

Welcoming the participants of the 9th International East meets West Conference.

- *René Knapp, Member of the Management Board, UNIQA Insurance Group AG, Austria*

PANEL TALK

10:15 – 11:15

We Break with a Tradition and Look for New Ways

Instead of Ludo's classic "The Look from the East and the Look from the West" we break here the traditional 'Look' on our regions, and we turn this into making a deeper dive in our basic premise that the LGBTIQ communities are increasingly under pressure from a violent and loud anti-LGBTIQ opposition. Jointly we try to find the best possible strategies to deal with this new thread to our communities.

- *Magda Stęga, Impact Driven Transgender Advocate, Poland*
- *Javier Leonor, Global Pride Lead at Accenture, Netherlands*
- *Denis Oleinik, Community Services Manager at LGBTQ+ Group ComingOUT, Russia*
- *Răzvan Ion, CEO at DerAffe.io the publisher of GAY45.eu, Austria*
- **Moderated by** *Ludo A.F. Swinnen, Co-founder of East meets West, Austria*

Energy Break

PANEL TALK

11:45 – 12:30

An East meets West Reality Check on Austria

This year, East meets West is back in its home-country, Austria where it all started. Also here we have seen changes as Vienna is the traditional key link between East & West. It is interesting to see how our guest country deals with their LGBTIQ community. East meets West is happy to give the leading local LGBTIQ organisations the opportunity to offer you a unique reality check on the LGBTIQ status in their country, the existing situation and their big hopes for the future.

- *Martina Bednar, Pride@SAP Lead Austria & Slovakia, Austria*
- *Conny Felice, CEO at HOSI Salzburg, Austria*
- *Markus Kuhn, Co-lead of Diplomats for Equality, Austria / Switzerland*
- **Moderated by** *Pavel Šubrt, Co-founder of East meets West, Austria*

Lunch Break

**LEARNING
SESSION**

13:30 – 14:00

Cross-country Projects: Re-using Instead of Starting from Scratch

We are happy and proud to bring on the East meets West stage a great example of an initiative, which started small but is on the right path to grow into a pan-European project. This is a touching testimonial, that bright ideas around us exist and that with the right support, their value and benefits can go exponential. We consider this initiative as one of the possible 'new ways' to retort in a powerful way to the growing negative social attitude towards our communities.

- *Eleonóra Barcziová, People & Culture Manager at Milk, Slovakia*

PANEL TALK

14:00 – 15:00

Corporates going Beyond their Borders

Our session on "Corporates going beyond their borders" will focus on how businesses can help to pave a new way with just a bit of additional effort. How to go beyond the "safe" geographies of corporate head offices and be a strong ally across our CEE region? Which new activities can create an economical value for LGBTIQ community, incl. LGBTIQ business owners? We are sure this will be a real eye-opener for all people concerned!

- *Andrea Fimian, Founder & CEO at fips consulting, Switzerland*
- *Dominic Arnall, CEO at Open for Business, United Kingdom*
- *Pawel Dygas, Member of the Management Board, UNIQA Polska, Poland*
- *Stuart Bruce Cameron, Founder & CEO of UHLALA Group, Germany*
- **Moderated by** *Tina Ličková, Senior digital researcher and product strategist, Austria*

Energy Break

LEARNING SESSION

15:30 – 16:30

Low Hanging Fruits for Entrepreneurship: Tourism

East meets West considers tourism, more than ever, a real unclaimed business goldmine, a real opportunity and this is not only for LGBTIQ entrepreneurs. To emphasize this, we go a step further and show the possible entrances to these new endeavors in the CEE region even with a deeper look - we focus on low-hanging fruits. Indeed, tourism offers great opportunities - it creates jobs, strengthens the local economy, contributes to local infrastructure development and can help to conserve the natural environment and important cultural assets and traditions, and reduce inequality and even more important, it allows the LGBTIQ community to take its rightful place in society.

- *Thomas Bömkes, Managing Director at Diversity Tourism, Germany*
- *Giuseppe Giulio, Account Executive at Gay.it, Italy*
- *Zsolt Jordi Erdei, Founder & CEO at Humen Media Group, Hungary*
- **Moderated by** *Sandra Santoro, Founder of gettingmarriedinitaly®, Italy*

AWARDS, CELEBRATION

16:30 onwards

The East meets West Awards, Closing Words and Celebration!

What started a few years ago as a new topic on our conferences, the East meets West Awards, have become much coveted signs of appreciation for the work the winners do for the LGBTIQ community. We from East meets West meet people, NGO's and businesses that are just very good in what they do for our community. We honour here for the 4th time the 3 award categories and give the winners a pat on the shoulder, an encouragement together with an original East meets West 2023 Award Trophy.

And of course, we end our 2023 Conference with a celebration. Join us!

Moderated by *Laco Hudec-Šubrt, Founder and CEO at STUDIO45 Vienna, Austria*

Our 2023 Conference Location

The **UNIQA Tower** (Untere Donaustrasse 21), Vienna, Austria ([map](#))

East meets West is fortunate to join forces with **UNIQA Insurance Group**, one of the largest insurance groups in its core markets of Austria and Central and Eastern Europe! The **UNIQA Tower** in downtown Vienna has long been more than their corporate headquarters. It regularly becomes the shining symbol of social topics.

Located at the Danube canal and first opened in 2005, the UNIQA Tower was the first new office building in Austria to be awarded the **EU Green Building label**. The facade of the Tower always offers a surprise, just wait for the sunset to come! The UNIQA Tower is also a radiant ambassador of values. René Knapp, Member of the Board, on the motivation behind the project: *"We are convinced that you have to show your composure, especially in times of great challenges and uncertainties. The value tower should be a shining symbol of our corporate culture and remind the people of Vienna night after night how important it is to work together for an open society and tolerance."*



Why to Join us in Vienna

Vienna, the capital of Austria, offers a blend of imperial traditions, music, and endearing charm. A city that inspires with the old and the new alike, and always has a cosy place available in a coffee house or wine tavern. Vienna also has an active LGBTIQ community and is considered Austria's queer capital. Vienna is also a popular destination for international LGBTIQ travellers from around the world.

June 1st to
June 16th

Queer Vienna City Walks

On the occasion of the 2023 Vienna Pride, the guides from QWIEN, The Center for Queer History will lead you through queer Vienna on a different route every day from June 1st to 16th. How much do you know about the queer history of Vienna? Its personalities, their fates, living conditions and how they paved the way for our community today? Tours include insights on State Opera and the fate of two inseparable friends, a prominent Colonel who made a career in the military of the Danube Monarch, the pink sheep of the Habsburgs and much more. See tours & book under: [Queer City Walks 2023](#).

QWIEN
Zentrum für queere Geschichte



Saturday
June 17th

The 2023 Vienna Pride March (Regenbogenparade)

The Vienna Pride 2023 will take place from the 1st to the 18th June. The highlight is the **Pride Parade on 17th June**, where more than 250,000 people are expected to celebrate together. Another highlight will be the Pride Run Vienna on 3rd of June, when hundreds of participants will once again set an example for acceptance, running and in wheelchairs. These events will again be accompanied by numerous other events that will take place both virtually and on site. [More info](#).



Our Significant Others* Program

Is your "Significant Other" **with you in Vienna on June 16th**? We all know how it goes when you attend a Conference, not only as a speaker. You will use the opportunity to actively network and meet people. All quite ok for you, but your Significant Other might perhaps feel bored, even neglected and miss the possibility to enjoy the city with imperial traditions.

We from East meet West are aware of that so we have a great limited offer, namely a **special Discovery Day** for your Significant Other. A person close to Ludo and Pavel, with a great talent for performances and city discoveries, will turn the stay of your Significant Other in Vienna into a sweet memory again. And of course, at the end of the day, your Significant other will be able to **join the Award ceremony and celebrate with us**.

* Significant other = your spouse, partner, new love, your child etc. The number of participants is limited. Please register your significant other to join our special program:

Join the program

Registration

Registration is required to attend the 2023 International East meets West Conference in Vienna. But we made it again very easy. By clicking (or tapping) on the magic **REGISTER** button below you select the way you want to participate - either in person in Vienna or ONLINE. As we are not insensitive to the effect of the ongoing geopolitical challenges on everyone's work, we are happy to offer all of you, the participation to the **2023 Conference again for free!**

We are this year back home, in Vienna. We leave you the possibility to support financially our work and the crucial work of the selected Austrian NGOs.

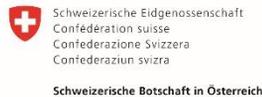
[Register NOW!](#)

Supporting Partners

Organising the 9th International East meets West Conference in Vienna would not be possible without the kind support of the following partners:



— Community Partnerships —



— EGLCC Founding Partners —



About East meets West

Founded in 2013 in Vienna, Austria, East meets West is a network of LGBTIQ professionals from Western & (primarily) Eastern Europe. East meets West facilitates the exchange of ideas, the sharing of best practices and generates mutual inspiration to improve the social acceptance of LGBTIQ people in the different countries. The East meets West brand has two pillars. East meets West Social has a catalyst function in the LGBTIQ organizational ecosystem by connecting NGOs, diplomatic representatives, officials, corporate players, entrepreneurs and variety of other inspiring personalities. East meets West Business is the facilitator of awareness on LGBTIQ businesses and that LGBTIQ people can be successful entrepreneurs and become role models inside and outside the LGBTIQ community. East meets West is also the founding member of the EGLCC, The European LGBTIQ Chamber of Commerce.



Pavel Šubrt & Ludo Swinnen
Co-founders

- www.eastmeetswest.eu
- events@eastmeetswest.eu
- fb.com/emwbusiness
- instagram.com/emwbusiness
- linkedin.com/company/emwbusiness
- [#emwbusiness](https://twitter.com/emwbusiness)