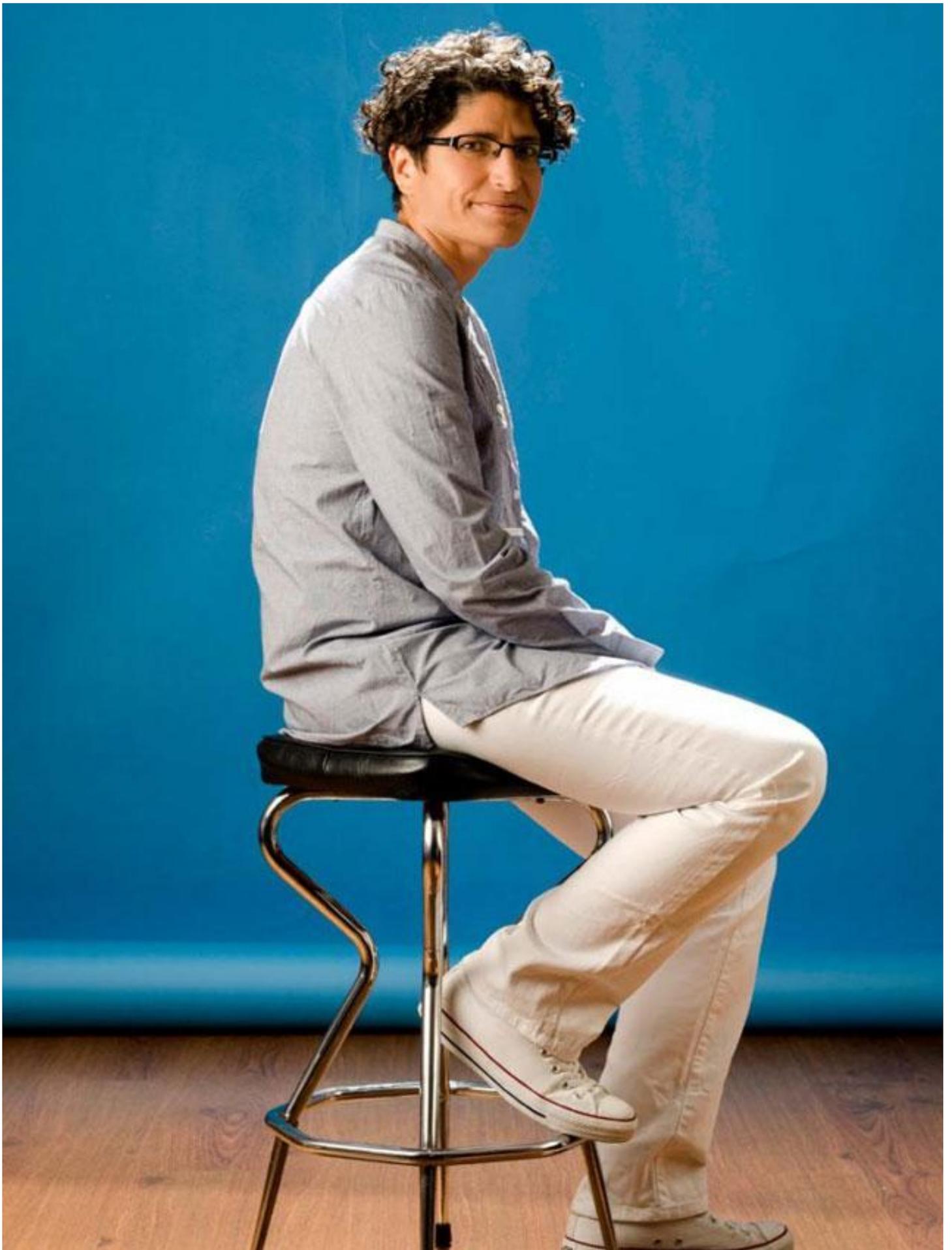


# Gabi Calleja



**Gabi Calleja may already be very well known for her**

## outspoken views, her tenacity and her unstinting activism. She is an extraordinary woman.

Gabi is featured alongside these other women in this Calendar, precisely because of her singular contribution – in this instance, to Maltese society. She is the Coordinator of MGRM, the **Malta Gay Rights Movement**.

These various attributes drive her daily to accomplish her goal. Quite simply put, she hopes that one day her efforts will signal success, and mean that this job will be finally accomplished.

Gabi has been involved in advocacy work, training, awareness raising and support to the LGBT community at a local and European level since 2003. She is relentless in her mission to achieve **equality for the LGBT community** and to combat prejudice and discrimination in society. She was instrumental in the drawing up of a proposed Gender Identity Bill for Malta and in the setting up of a Mediterranean Solidarity Network. In 2010 she was elected to the ILGA-Europe Executive Board and currently occupies the role of co-chair.

In Malta, the LGBT population is calculated to be equal in size to the population of persons with a disability. But while there are some 50 organizations dedicated to disability issues, there are only 3 organizations representing the LGBT community in Malta. These are MGRM, Drachma – a support group for religious LGBT people – and, a fledgling university group called “We Are”. Gabi believes that there is some change on the horizon of hope.

A number of developments have been behind this growing confidence in the possibility of change. The recent divorce referendum, for instance, and recent EU judgments which have been moving closer to establishing same sex civil unions as a universal right have also provided some cause for hope. Gabi maintains that the main reason behind MGRM’s growing assertiveness, however, is its links to foreign NGOs mainly through its work with ILGA-Europe. These associations with foreign LGBT organizations have broadened the movement’s outlook and professionalised its approach.

She read for her Masters in Youth and Community Studies at the University of Malta.

- She is a senior executive within the Maltese public sector.
- She was part of the working group appointed to draw up the “School Attendance Improvement” Report, a detailed review of the situation of school absenteeism in Malta published in 2005.
- Her extensive work experience includes teaching, drug prevention, training, community development, fundraising and project management.

Gabi says: “In Malta, while you can organise a pride march without violence, pushing through legal reform is hard.” In terms of things like anti-discrimination in the equal provision of goods and services and family rights for the LGBT community, Gabi also points out that Malta is comparable to a number of Eastern European countries – all of which have poor track records of LGBT human rights.

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## Relevant Information:

In a recent report by ILGA-Europe – the European branch of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association – Malta actually scores lower than countries like Bulgaria and Romania when it comes to **legal provisions for LGBT** people.

The report, which rates European countries’ laws and administrative practices according to 24 categories, places countries on a scale between minus seven – which indicates “gross violations of human rights and discrimination of LGBT people” and 17 – indicating “respect of human rights and full legal equality of LGBT people”.

Malta scores 0 – placing it on a par with Italy, slightly above Turkey and Cyprus both of which rank minus two and way below countries like Spain and the UK which received a score of 12 and 12.5 respectively.

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## Metadata

**LANGUAGE:** English, Maltese

**GENDER AREAS:** [lgbt](#)