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Annalena Pott with her Master Thesis: „**Pride or Prejudice? Exploring the construction of homosexuality in post-Euromaidan Ukraine**” at the University of Oxford

**Abstract:**

The thesis examines the ways in which the LGBT community constructs homosexual identities against the backdrop of political homophobia in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. In recent years, the growing salience of LGBT rights in the Europeanisation process has led to frictions in countries that are shaped by high rates of homophobia. While scholarly attention has focused on the political construction of homosexuality and the global contestation of LGBT rights, little attention has been placed on the construction of LGBT identities by LGBT movements in Eastern Europe. The limited literature on LGBT communities has focused on the early stages of Europeanisation and has neglected the interplay of discourses between political homophobia and rhetoric of LGBT communities. By taking into account the rhetorical conceptualisation of homosexual identities in LGBT movements, it is suggested to move away from a state-centred approach in the construction of homosexuality and instead, towards agency-focused research. The unique research angle of this thesis facilitates a first step in this direction. Using an inductive content analysis, this research finds that the discourse of political homophobia enables members of the LGBT community to appropriate rhetoric and renegotiate their identities. Discursively, the rhetoric of the LGBT community allows its members to construct themselves as active participants in an ongoing democratisation process in Ukraine, and thereby contributes to an active deconstruction of persisting political homophobic processes.

**Annalena Pott** studied Russian and East European Studies (MSc) at the University of Oxford.