



## NELFA's Annual Report 2017-March 2018

[approved by the AGM, Lisbon, 17 March 2018]

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## 1. Foreword

Last year, NELFA turned five years old. Unfortunately, there was not much to celebrate after our last Annual General Meeting in Naples. Even we had a very successful conference before the AGM, we lost a lot of energy and enthusiasm through internal disputes, discords, to be honest. The Executive Board was deselected, our President resigned. In the following months, we had to pick up the pieces. Moreover, we had to realise that our financial situation is extremely strained because of high expenses in the past and the loss of some full member organisations – in Greece, Ireland, Iceland and Hungary. On the other hand, we were very lucky to have four new and very dedicated Board members and we found a new team spirit – with the tailwind of the supporting membership in COFACE and some other positive developments for the rainbow families movement, like marriage equality in Germany and Malta. Our NELFA meeting in Barcelona in summer 2017 and the election of a new Executive Board was a good starting point for a fruitful joint work. It should be stressed in conclusion, that our Network remains in a transition period with open questions concerning our future tasks and strategic approach. However, we were able to achieve a lot within the last year. NELFA exists and is still the unified voice for rainbow families in Europe. Let's go ahead with our efforts for more legal recognition, protection, equal treatment and acceptance!

See below a couple of highlights of our work and progress in 2017 and early 2018:

- NELFA's supporting membership in COFACE Families Europe – with a first cooperation for the NELFA workshop on freedom of movement in Warsaw
- NELFA's participation in the Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe in Poland with a successful presentation, a debate on surrogacy and many encounters with activists
- NELFA's participation at a 'Conference on Private and family life for LGBTI people' in Copenhagen, co-organised by the Danish authorities and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE
- NELFA's successful Erasmus+ project "Adequate and equal legal protection for rainbow families" with 22 participants and the successful application for the current Erasmus+ project "Chances and challenges for rainbow families"
- NELFA's keynote speeches in Vilnius/Lithuania, Berlin/Germany and at the Men Having Babies Conference in Brussels (presentation of NELFA's ARTguidelines)
- The 6<sup>th</sup> International Family Equality Day 2017 (motto: 'Love makes a family') was celebrated in more than 100 cities in 44 countries. Argentina, Luxembourg, Belize, Brazil, China, Ireland, the Philippines and Thailand joined IFED
- NELFA as partner in the International Conference "We should speak out: LGBTI & Family rights" in Lisbon/Portugal, organised by ILGA-Portugal, in particular by Executive Director Marta Ramos – together with NELFA, ENP and AMPLOS.



The report below contains an overview of the activities conducted by NELFA between the AGM in Naples (March 2017) and the AGM to be held in Lisbon (17 March 2018).

## 2. Administration

### 2.1. Board

The current Board consists of the following ten persons (from six different countries):

- **President:** Dominique Boren, APGL (France)
- **Vice-President:** Giuseppina La Delfa, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy)
- **Treasurer:** Giovanni Fantoni, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy)
- **Secretary:** Björn Sieverding, LSVD (Germany)
  
- **Board Members:**

Jordi Anton, FLG (Spain); Caroline Ausserer, TransInterQueer e.V. (Germany); Juha-Pekka Hippi, Sateenkaariperheet (Finland); Esteban Jiménez, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy), Eleni Maravelia, FLG (Spain), Jesús Santos, Galehi (Spain)

Jordi Anton, Caroline Ausserer and Juha-Pekka Hippi have announced to step down in Lisbon (March 2018). NELFA thanks them wholeheartedly for their tremendous work in the last years and wishes all the best for their families and future professional tasks!

We have some new candidates for the Board:

Marcos Jornet (Son Nuestros Hijos, Spain), Daniel Martinovic (Dugine obitelji, Croatia), Anu Kantola (Sateenkaariperheet, Finland), Veneta Limberova (Bulgaria) and Susana Cárdenaz (Galehi, Spain).

### 2.2. Board meetings

The Board met 13 times within the past 12 months (like 2016/2017):

- 25 March 2017 (AGM Naples)
- 05 April 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 03 May 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 17 June 2017 (Board meeting Barcelona)
- 10 July 2017 (IMO meeting)
- 06 September 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 04 October 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 08 November 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 12 December 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 10 January 2018 (Skype meeting)
- 06 February 2018 (Skype meeting)



- 08 March 2018 (Skype meeting)
- 17 March 2018 (AGM Lisbon)

Besides the face-to-face Board meeting in Barcelona in June 2017 (incl. the election of the current Executive Board) we had only a few possibilities to meet each other – with at least three Board members: at the ILGA Conference in Warsaw (November 2017) and the Erasmus+ job-shadowing shortly before the AGM in Lisbon (March 2018).

Technical problems make the Skype meetings difficult. The Board tested an alternative (IMO) in July 2017, but without success – because of disturbing background noise.

### 2.3. Membership

Concerning the membership, NELFA experienced a time of upheaval in the last year(s). We must state the loss of six full members: “Marriage Equality” and “GLEN” in Ireland were closed down for different reasons. OLKE in Greece, Rainbow Families in Brighton & Hove left us as well as the Hungarian Foundation for Rainbow Families and Intersex Iceland. They were not able to pay their membership fees in the last two years or did not want to renew their financial contributions. Some of them are no longer available.

The Russian LGBT Network *is* available and still believes in NELFA, but did not pay the fees in 2016 and 2017 either. One of the reason is the horrible situation in Chechnya. The Russian LGBT Network has helped to evacuate over 40 individuals from there, saving them from reported torture, persecution and even death. NELFA is very impressed by this work and the Board decided in January 2018 to consider the unpaid fees as donation for the Russian LGBT Network. This will be an exception. However, we accept these extraordinary circumstances. The Russian LGBT Network remains full NELFA member.

On the other hand, NELFA fulfilled its aim (see our approved Action Plan 2017/2018) to expand its network to countries who were not involved so far, in particular in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In November 2017, after ILGA-Europe’s Annual Conference in Warsaw, NELFA contacted almost 40 activists of 26 organisations via Email (including an open letter with the invitation to join forces). We received a wide range of answers – with friendly refusals (Budapest Pride), careful invitations (Accept LGBT Cyprus, LGBT Estonia, Rosa Letzebuerg [Luxembourg], Dentons/Proud in Czech Republic, LGL Lithuania, KPH Poland) and very positive replies from several organisations. In detail:

1. **Tęczowe Rodziny i Przyjaciele (TRiP)** – Rainbow Families and Friends in Poznan, Poland, became supporting member of NELFA in January 2018. Two active volunteers take part in our current Erasmus+ project (Lisbon, Berlin)
2. **Dugine obitelji** – Rainbow Families Croatia, became full member in January 2018. Two active volunteers take part in our current Erasmus+ project (Lisbon, Berlin). Coordinator Daniel Martinovic already applied for the upcoming Board
3. **Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA)**, became supporting member of NELFA in January 2018, two volunteers are also involved in our current Erasmus+ project



4. **Deystvie Bulgaria** applied for a full membership in NELFA. Veneta Limberova is also for the forthcoming Board and will attend an Erasmus+ course in Berlin
5. **Tolerado**, a Rainbow Families Group in Gdansk, Poland, will apply for a supporting membership, an active volunteer (Anna Strzalkowska) will come to the Berlin course, too
6. **Pink Cross Switzerland** wants to apply for a full membership in NELFA

In early March 2018, NELFA had 24 full and 5 supporting member organisations, covering 18 European countries. In addition to the organisations mentioned above, we are very pleased with the new full membership of **Transgender Europe**. The aim is to strengthen our existing cooperation (NELFA is also member of TGEU). We want to raise awareness of trans families issues and the huge lack of rights for trans people in general.

#### 2.4. Finances

Without prejudging the Financial Report 2017, NELFA's budget is very tight. It still derives from membership fees and donations, Board members bear a large part of the costs on their own. Specific resources like the OSIFE grant for the International Family Equality Day or NELFA's Erasmus+ projects do not give us a large financial scope.

We have to state that NELFA even spent too much money in the past. We really need a devoted effort to have substantially more financial possibilities in the near future. This is, for sure, a call for help to our member organisations and allies to find ways out of the current financial limbo: fundraising ideas, individual fees, long-year support etc.

NELFA decided in June 2017 to establish an internal Financial Group and we would like to invite volunteers to collect and exchange new ideas – as a starting point.

Good news: The Erasmus+ project in 2016/2017 ended with a financial plus of 920 € for NELFA. The current project will - hopefully - be similarly successful.

Last but not least, the Board sincerely thanks the following members who contributed to the payment of the new supporting membership of NELFA in COFACE Families Europe:

1. Apgl, France, 100 €
2. Famiglie Arcobaleno, Italy, 100 €
3. LSVD, Germany, 100 €
4. Son Nuestros Hijos, Spain, 100 €
5. Sateenkaariperheet, Finland, 100 €

LSVD Germany already announced to pay the full membership fee for COFACE in 2018! MANY THANKS!

A big "Thank You" also goes to Luís Amorim for his individual support for NELFA in 2017.



## 2.5. Administration

After the AGM in Naples, NELFA had to change many administration rights. The new Executive Board (elected in Barcelona) was officially registered in the so-called “Moniteur Belge” in September 2017. President Dominique Boren became legal representative in the ECAS system (Erasmus+) in December 2017. Temporarily, Secretary Björn Sieverding had taken the responsibility (with a Board memorandum in June 2017).

After a long period of twisting and turning, Treasurer Giovanni Fantoni has now all rights to deal with NELFA’s bank account (CRELAN in Brussels). At the moment, the work with CRELAN is without objection. Therefore, a considered change of the bank has no priority.

NELFA’s website and Email provider is still the Swiss company “Hostpoint”. Giovanni Fantoni holds the main administration rights. Björn Sieverding manages inter alia the addresses [info@nelfa.org](mailto:info@nelfa.org) and [media@nelfa.org](mailto:media@nelfa.org) and is in possession of the passwords (also for the old and upcoming website). The Board’s Email account is also managed by Björn Sieverding ([Board\\_NELFA@yahoo.com](mailto:Board_NELFA@yahoo.com)). Unfortunately, it is still unclear who has the administration rights for the NELFA Committee Email-address (yahoo as well).

For the internal work (exchange of docs, polls), the NELFA Board uses the online platform “Bitrix 24” instead of “Basecamp” and the NELFA archive is now organised in the system of “pcloud” and not “Dropbox” (both accounts were created by Giovanni Fantoni).

All these administration tasks were very time-consuming in the last year. One day, NELFA should have an office with (paid) staff to take over this kind of paperwork...

## 3. Communication

### 3.1. Mailing lists

Although we lost a vast number of contacts due to the radical change of the Executive Board of NELFA in Naples, the network is still existing and active in sharing and disseminating information, with special focus on relevant European developments. We express support and mobilise resources on a number of issues, including:

- Application on behalf of seven NGOs (including NELFA) for leave to intervene in Charron & Merle-Montet v. France (ban on donor insemination for lesbian couples; unmarried different-sex couples are eligible) (March/April 2017)
- Final work on a new guide (Kumquat): “Using family as a frame in social justice activism: A guide for activists and funders in Europe” (April-June 2017).
- Information exchange for a German lesbian couple who searches for a spermdonor and recommended banks in Europe (April 2017)
- Advice for a lesbian couple from Malta who wants to start an international adoption – they asked NELFA for further support (April 2017)



- Sharing information of the Russian LGBT Network about the current status of persecution and torture against gay men in Chechnya (April 2017)
- Sharing the petition at the European Parliament of Board member Eleni Maravelia concerning the rights of rainbow families (April/May 2017)
- Assistance for a German-Danish lesbian couple who wants to start a family, exchange with Rainbow Family Centre Berlin, lawyer Alexander Schuster and NELFA's full member organisation LGBT Denmark (May 2017)
- Dissemination of NELFA's ARTguidelines including surrogacy to researcher Daniela Danna from Italy (May 2017)
- Offer of a cooperation with Mr. Gay England who wanted to promote rainbow families (concerning adoption and fostering – but no answer... (June 2017)
- Help for the European Network for Parents of LGBTIQ+ Persons (ENP) concerning the management of memberships and bylaws (July 2017)
- Sharing information about a video testimony project for LGBTIQ equality of the European commission and possible supporter (July 2017)
- Information about NELFA and a possible full or supporting membership for the organisation "swissgaydads" which supports surrogacy (August 2017)
- NELFA signed a common appeal concerning the access to medically assisted procreation for lesbian couples and single women in France (September 2017)
- NELFA President Dominique Boren signed a common statement of associations to reject the "hate-bus" and anti-LGBTIQ\* propaganda (October 2017)
- Exchange with Leandro Barreto and François Souryi concerning their fight against British and French bureaucracy, call for help (October 2017)
- Email exchange with Emilio Puccio from the EP Intergroup on Children's Rights concerning a possible cooperation (no reply yet) (October 2017)
- Dissemination of information about a national family meeting of apgl in Bussang/Vosges in May 2018 to German and Swiss members (October 2017...)
- Advice for LSVD in Germany in the Barreto/Souryi case (October 2017)
- NELFA joined the social media campaign of COFACE concerning the work-life-balance of families in the European Union (October 2017)
- Request of Q Foundation and Agnieszka Wiciak to become member of NELFA
- Dissemination of the workshop presentation on "Freedom of movement" to the participants and also to EP Intergroup (Sophie in't Veen), Cavaria/Belgium, Alexander Schuster, ILGA-Europe and COFACE (November 2017)
- Exchange with NELFA's full member Sateenkaariperheet (Juha Jämsä) and dissemination of a survey "Rainbow families in Finland" (November 2017)
- Advice and material for a student of Paris-Sorbonne concerning NELFA's work on freedom of movement and possible documents (December 2017)
- Further support for German rainbow families concerning the apgl weekend in Bussang/Vosges in May (January 2018)
- Exchange with LSVD concerning juridical advice for a gay dad (living in Berlin) who experiences homophobic harassment in Argentina (January 2018)
- Information for a LSVD project in the Land of Brandenburg (Germany) concerning NELFA and upcoming families meetings (January 2018)



- Exchange with Lorraine Hayles (on Aeroe Island) who organises a big Rainbow Families Festival in August plus info dissemination, contact to LGBT Denmark (February 2018)
- Exchange with French journalist Philippe Peyre concerning ART laws in some European countries for an article on medical assisted procreation for lesbians (February 2018)
- Help for GALEHI to find European families for an exchange (February 2018)
- Help for a rainbow family from Valencia (GALESH) to find a German-speaking AuPair from summer 2018 and a first contact to a family from Vienna (February 2018)
- Sending out of NELFA press releases to members and allies (March 2017-2018)

### 3.2. Facebook

NELFA's Facebook activity is quite regular. The number of "likes" increased from 1,449 (March 2016) to 1,837 (March 2017) and to 2,029 (16 March 2018). NELFA published [from 26 March 2017 to 16 February 2018] 352 posts. The most successful shared news were: in terms of range: 1. Olympic diver Tom Daley and his husband announce to be parents in a couple of months (> 4.600) [14 February 2018], 2. NELFA has a new Executive Board (3,471) [19 June 2017], 2. Belgian gay couple must give back their adopted son (3,264), 4. Marriage Equality in Bermuda (3,081). In terms of interventions: 1. NELFA has a new Executive Board (968 clicks, 119 comments), 2. Belgian gay couple must give back their adopted son (693 clicks, 202 comments), 3. Pride events with NELFA Board (569 clicks, 102 comments).

Secretary (and only remaining active member of the media team) Björn Sieverding, keeps the Facebook page updated. He has also the administration rights (until now together with Caroline Ausserer). NELFA's former vice-president Luís Amorim is posting regularly. The other eight registered FB editors were inactive within the last year.

### 3.3. Website

NELFA's website [www.nelfa.org](http://www.nelfa.org) is regularly updated (press releases, documents), but it's still the old version, with a revision of the content in December 2017 (Board info etc.). Graphic designer Francesca Silvestri worked along the year on the relaunch, but she recently surrendered the administration rights and won't contribute for NELFA in the future. Björn Sieverding remains the only person with access to the relaunch page. Hopefully, we will be soon able to publish the new NELFA website.

### 3.4. Twitter

NELFA is also present on twitter (@NELFA\_LGBT). At the moment (16 March 2018), we have 457 (295 in 2017) followers and we are following 161 (127) twitter users. Within the last year, NELFA posted 35 (124) tweets and retweeted 214 (114) messages (until Feb 2017). The editor is Björn Sieverding, Caroline Ausserer tweeted until July 2017.

### 3.5. Press releases

The NELFA media team published in total 14 (32 in 2016/17) press releases within the last year. Each document was (usually) sent out to our members and a wide range of LGBTIQ\* medias and supporters. They were also published on our website, Facebook page, twitter and in the newsletters. Two PR's were released in several languages:



**26 March 2017:**

Tolerance is not enough. Equality and respect are the political goals! – NELFA’s international conference successful in getting strong support for rainbow families

**07 April 2017:**

Upcoming: 10 days of action to celebrate family diversity worldwide - Celebrate with us the rainbow families of the world from 7 May (IFED) to 17 May (IDAHOT)

**05 May 2017:**

“Love makes a family”

Join the celebrations worldwide of the 6th International Family Equality Day

**29 May 2017:**

Progress at Risk: "Europe needs more political courage to protect LGBTIQ\* families!" - NELFA welcomes ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map 2017

**30 May 2017:**

Celebrations of Rainbow Families in 44 countries - The International Family Equality Day (IFED) as important step for social, political and legal acceptance

**22 June 2017 (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish versions)**

Team spirit and fresh ideas for the European Network of rainbow families! - NELFA recently elected a new Executive Board at a meeting in Barcelona

**01 July 2017 (English, French, German, Italian versions):**

Marriage equality in Germany - A historic day for thousands of rainbow families! - NELFA is full of joy after the decision in the German Bundestag

**04 September 2017:**

A new partnership for the benefit of ALL families!

- NELFA is now supporting member of COFACE Families Europe

**22 September 2017:**

Surrogacy? The debate must be open, honest and critical! – NELFA attends the “Brussels conference on Parenting options for European gay men”

**27 September 2017:**

A judgement behind the times! - The Federal Court of Justice (Bundesgerichtshof) in Germany accepts the discrimination of trans\* families

**23 October 2017:**

A marriage is a marriage - and should be recognised as such! – NELFA claims on freedom of movement after a gay couple was told by the French government to divorce

**07 December 2017:**

Marriage equality in Austria by the beginning of 2019!

– NELFA is very pleased with the recent ruling of the Constitutional Court in Vienna

**15 January 2018:**

Rainbow Families in Eastern Europe and the Balkans: It’s time to join forces! - NELFA welcomes new member organisations from Croatia and Poland

**01 March 2018:**

Automatic co-parent recognition in Finland: A milestone for the well-being of children in rainbow families! – NELFA welcomes the decision to recognise both women in same-sex relationships as mothers from the moment their child is born



Special thanks go to Board member Eleni Maravelia and her wife Kate for the proofreading of the press releases and the newsletter texts! Another thank you for similar help goes to Joe Hayer (Metro/UK).

### 3.6. Newsletter

Since 2016, NELFA already published eight newsletters. The last ones were:

- NELFA Newsletter June 2017: <http://bit.ly/2Gpxmmf>
- NELFA Newsletter September 2017: <http://bit.ly/2j3ioYr>
- NELFA Newsletter December 2017: <http://bit.ly/2jgZNJc>
- NELFA Newsletter March 2017: <http://bit.ly/2Fcn5c5>

The number of subscribers increased steadily from 140 to currently 186. The open rate lays between 28 and 36 percent, the click rate only between three and six percent. Our members stated (survey June 2017) that they get their NELFA information from the newsletter. However, we have a discussion how to optimise the product. One aim is to make it shorter, but then we should send out the newsletter every month. It is a question of capacity. The first try will be at the end of March...

### 3.7. Outreach

NELFA had different opportunities to communicate with other LGBTIQ\* experts during conferences, meetings and other events. See more below, Point 4.

## 4. Advocacy and Lobbying

### 4.1. European Meeting of Rainbow Families

After the European Meetings of LGBTIQ\* Families in France (2010), Spain (2012), Germany (2014) and Portugal (2015), there was – unfortunately - no new meeting organised in 2016 and 2017. Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy) considered a European Meeting in 2018, but had to withdraw the offer because of financial and internal doubts. NELFA still encourages full members to organise a next European Meeting. Our survey in June 2017 showed that there is a great interest. It is a key value of NELFA. In 2018, we will have two little European Rainbow Families Meetings. One will be organised by our French member apgl in Bussang/Vosges (with invitations to German and Swiss families). Another one will be organised by NELFA and LSVD in Berlin (28/29 April 2018) – mainly with participants of an Erasmus+ course and further families from Germany and Poland. A new opportunity to contribute in the future is the Rainbow Family Festival in Denmark (Aeroe Island, 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018). NELFA is invited to collaborate with organiser Lorraine Hayles. The conditions are not clear at the moment.



## 4.2. International Family Equality Day (IFED)

The 6th International Family Equality Day (IFED) in 2017 was commemorated in 44 countries and over 100 towns worldwide. Under the motto "LOVE MAKES A FAMILY" eight new countries joined the IFED-family: Argentina, Luxembourg, Belize, Brazil, China, Ireland, the Philippines and Thailand. IFED got together with the International Day against Homo-, Trans- and Biphobia (IDAHOT), which had chosen the topic "families" and invited advocates for LGBTIQ\* equality, their friends and allies to take action from May 7 until May 17 to celebrate and support family diversity. The Rainbow Cities Network started to show an exhibition on families in 14 European cities (i.e. in Ljubljana), as well as in Mexico City and Sao Paulo. In Moscow, a Family Equality Festival took place and in Asia, the first Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum was held in Hong Kong. IFED coordinator Maria von Känel managed – still in the name of NELFA - the funding from OSIFE (25,000 USD) and decided to take care of the Awareness Day in the future. She created a new IFED network which will be established as new NGO in Geneva/Switzerland. NELFA was asked to be mentioned as "participant association" in the IFED Annual Report 2017 and as IFED "supporter" on the new website. The Board accepted this in September 2017. However, the further work for IFED has to be discussed. Some NELFA members already expressed their strong concerns and irritation about the "new network". Maria von Känel said in November 2017: "Nothing will change. Every organisation can take part and contribute to IFED". The best way to be involved would be to subscribe the new IFED newsletter. The next International Family Equality Day will be celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2018. The motto is "Children's Rights Matter".

## 4.3. Events attended by Board members on behalf of NELFA

Board members attended a wide range of events on behalf of NELFA.

### **April 2017:**

- NELFA Board member Caroline Ausserer participated (as keynote speaker) at the "Atgender Spring Conference" in Vilnius/Lithuania (Atgender: The European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation)
- NELFA volunteers Maria von Känel, Lisa Green, Lena Hermann-Green and Board member Björn Sieverding took part in a job-shadowing at the Rainbow Family Centre in Berlin – including a keynote speech at a LSVD symposium

### **May 2017:**

- NELFA was represented (former Board member Luís Amorim) at the conference "Families on the Move" in Brussels, organised by COFACE Families Europe
- NELFA Board member Caroline Ausserer participated at the Action Day of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency in Berlin. NELFA took the opportunity to celebrate IDAHOT and the final Day of IFED 2017
- NELFA Board member Caroline Ausserer was present at the special event on "Family is...? - a Global Portrait" in Berlin, organised by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum

### **June 2017:**

- Seven NELFA volunteers from Greece, Germany, Italy, Russia and Switzerland took part in another Erasmus+ training event in Copenhagen/Denmark



- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding joined the action day of Amnesty International in Brussels (Uccle) against the human rights condition in Chechnya
- NELFA Board member Caroline Ausserer and IFED Coordinator Maria von Känel participated in an Erasmus+ job-shadowing programme at Stonewall/UK
- NELFA President Dominique Boren and other French LGBTIQ\* activists met with Sophie in't Veld, Vice-President of the EP Intergroup on LGBT rights
- NELFA Board Member Jesús Santos Homobono participated in the International Human Rights and LGBTIQ\* Conference "Madrid Summit"
- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding took part in ILGA-Europe's Annual (fundraising) 'Equality Gala' in Brussels (to strengthen the network)

#### **July 2017:**

- NELFA President Dominique Boren and Secretary Björn Sieverding met up with Annemie Drieskens and Liz Gosme from COFACE for a strategic cooperation
- NELFA Board members took part in Pride events (i.e. Juha-Pekka Hippi in Helsinki, Jesús Santos in Madrid, Esteban Jimenez and Giovanni Fantoni in Genova and Vice-President Giuseppina la Delfa in Montreal/Canada)

#### **September 2017:**

- NELFA Treasurer Giovanni Fantoni and Board member Caroline Ausserer attended a three-day training of ILGA-Europe in Brussels. The paid course was entitled "Communicating and framing for social change".
- NELFA Board member Jesús Santos accompanied his son Gabriel (15) to a rainbow families meeting of Galehi and FELGTB in Madrid to share their experiences
- NELFA was present at the "Brussels conference on Parenting options for European gay men", organised by the US-NGO "Men Having Babies". Vice-President Giuseppina La Delfa held a guest speech on ART, including surrogacy

#### **October 2017:**

- NELFA Board member Björn Sieverding ran the Brussels Half Marathon for LGBTIQ\* and rainbow families rights for #TeamILGAEurope
- NELFA Board member Björn Sieverding was present at a kick-off seminar for the next Erasmus+ project in Brussels, hosted by the national agency AEF-Europe

#### **November 2017:**

- NELFA President Dominique Boren, Secretary Björn Sieverding and Board member Juha-Pekka Hippi took part in the Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe in Warsaw, held a workshop on "freedom of movement" with around 30 attendees
- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding attended a farewell meeting at ILGA-Europe's office in Brussels for the former Intergroup co-chair Ulrike Lunacek

#### **December 2017:**

- NELFA President Dominique Boren and Secretary Björn Sieverding participated in a meeting with the national Erasmus+ agency in Brussels (Rainbowhouse)
- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding took part in a training course of "In Dialogue" in Gouda/The Netherlands, in the framework of the new Erasmus+ project

#### **January 2018:**

- Two NELFA volunteers from ILGA-Portugal and ILSE Germany attended an Erasmus+ course in Copenhagen (Inspiring facilitation, training and teaching)



- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding met up with Katrin Hugendubel and Jules Teoh (ILGA-Europe) for a (strategic) working lunch in Brussels
- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding participated in a meeting with the new Vice-President of the EP Intergroup on LGBTI Rights, Terry Reintke

**February 2018:**

- NELFA President Dominique Boren and Secretary Björn Sieverding participated at the GA and celebration of full member “Homoparentalités” in Brussels
- Five NELFA volunteers from ILGA-Portugal and Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy) took part in another training course of “In Dialogue” in Copenhagen (Narrative Coaching and Guidance)
- NELFA Secretary Björn Sieverding took part in a working lunch with employees of the Council of the EU in Brussels (and former NELFA Vice-President Luís Amorim) to discuss a NELFA key speech for an event concerning IDAHOT (17/05/2018)

**March 2018:**

- NELFA Board member Jesús Santos and his son Gabriel attended a conference of the Council of Europe in Copenhagen, topic: rights for rainbow families
- A NELFA volunteer from Italy participated in a training course “Consulting and development of teams and groups” in Copenhagen for our Erasmus+ project
- NELFA President Dominique Boren, Vice-President Giuseppina La Delfa, Secretary Björn Sieverding and five volunteers from new NELFA members in Eastern Europe took part in a job-shadowing in Lisbon, hosted by ILGA-Portugal

## 5. Capacity building – Erasmus+

As already mentioned, NELFA received funding for a second Erasmus+ project in June 2017 – entitled “Chances and challenges for rainbow families”. Board members and active volunteers take part in 16 training courses of the consultancy corporation “In Dialogue”, seated in Gouda/The Netherlands and Copenhagen/Denmark. The aim is at strengthening NELFA, especially towards its educational activities. The participants train themselves in leadership skills, teaching and consulting skills, as well as guidance skills. The majority of these mobilities are already completed: “Conflict management” with one participant in Gouda, “Inspiring facilitation, teaching and training” with two participants in Copenhagen, “Narrative coaching and guidance” with five participants in Copenhagen and “Consulting and development of teams and groups” with one participant in Copenhagen. An additional training will be offered in Berlin – with seven participants.

Besides the training courses, NELFA organised a job-shadowing with ILGA-Portugal in Lisbon with 10 attendees, including active volunteers from Croatia, Poland and Albania.

It is expected that NELFA will run this project successfully (like the last project “Adequate and equal legal protection for rainbow families” in 2016/2017 – by the way: praised by the national agency in Brussels and external controllers). In January 2018, we cooperated again with “In Dialogue” to send out a third application. The decision on the project “Joining forces for the well-being of rainbow families” will be taken in May/June 2018.



NELFA Board members gave lectures and presentations on various occasions, i.e. during the ILGA-Europe Annual Conference in Warsaw (November 2017, see above).

## 6. Co-operation with external partners

### 6.1. COFACE

NELFA is now supporting member of COFACE Families Europe (the Confederation of Families Organisations in the EU, a network promoting the well-being, health and security of ALL families). We took part in a COFACE conference in Brussels (May 2017), had a first strategic meeting in July 2017 and a first good cooperation for our workshop on “freedom of movement” in Warsaw (September-November 2017). NELFA joined COFACE’s campaign for a better work-life-balance (October 2017) and invited COFACE to come to our conference in Lisbon. Paola Panzeri, Senior Policy and Advocacy officer attended the event on 16<sup>th</sup> of March. We are looking forward to upcoming projects (for example the International Families Day on 15<sup>th</sup> of May (60<sup>th</sup> anniversary COFACE). In general, NELFA will be able to present its expertise i.e. in different COFACE working groups. So far, we did not get any concrete offer to contribute. Contact person for COFACE in NELFA is Eleni Maravelia (Board member from FLG, Spain).

### 6.2. European Union

NELFA continued to work closely with the European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights. President Dominique Boren met Vice-President Sophie in’t Veld (ALDE, D66) in Paris. She provided some months later a video message for our presentation in Warsaw. In addition, we had a meeting with co-chair Terry Reintke, to discuss our further collaboration concerning rainbow families and mainly the implementation of the “freedom of movement” Directive into national laws. She sent us a video message for the conference in Lisbon on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2018. We had also a contact with the Intergroup on Children’s Rights (Nov 2017), but did not get another answer yet.

### 6.3. Council of Europe

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017, NELFA took part in the “Conference on Private and family life for LGBTI people”, co-organised by the Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the Danish Parliament and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Copenhagen (Cristiansborg Castle).

Board member Jesús Santos and his 15 year old son Gabriel were able to share their family experiences at a round table discussion on rainbow families (‘Achieving equality in private and family life regardless of sexual orientation’), together with Prof. Robert Wintermute and a delegate of the German Federal Ministry of Family, Children and Women.

Unfortunately, we couldn’t attend any meeting of the INGOs. NELFA Vice-President Giuseppina La Delfa contacted our former Secretary Rita Marascalchi to learn more about our possibilities to contribute. However, the problem of the necessary attendance in Geneva still remains. Background:



NELFA has been granted participatory status with the Council of Europe in 2016 and the international non-governmental organisations.

#### 6.4. ILGA-Europe

We still have a regular exchange with ILGA-Europe in Brussels. Two NELFA Board members took part in a training weekend in September 2017, we attended the Annual Conference in Warsaw. NELFA will be invited to a networker's meeting in Brussels this year (2018) and ILGA-Europe wants to involve NELFA in a future strategy for their rainbow families advocacy work (i.e. after the Coman court case in Strasbourg). Some suggestions were already discussed during the ongoing Lisbon weekend. NELFA will also attend the next Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe in Brussels (24-28 October 2018).

#### 7. Publications

NELFA helped to publish the recent IFED Annual Report in September 2017 (with the grant from OSIFE) and printed a range of rainbow family postcards for the ILGA-conference in Warsaw.

We recently ordered a new range of posters – but we still need to update our leaflet.