



NELFA's Annual Report 2016–March 2017

Approved by the AGM, Naples, 25 March 2017

Table of Contents

1. Foreword.....	2
2. Administration	3
2.1. Board.....	3
2.2. Board meetings.....	3
2.3. Membership.....	4
2.4. Finances	4
2.5. Change of name	4
3. Communication.....	4
3.1. Mailing lists	4
3.2. Facebook	5
3.3. Website	6
3.4. Twitter.....	6
3.5. Press releases.....	6
3.6. Newsletter.....	7
3.7. Other Communication.....	8
3.8. Outreach	8
4. Advocacy and Lobbying	8
4.1. European Meeting of LGBTI Families.....	8
4.2. International Family Equality Day (IFED)	8
4.3. Events attended by Board members on behalf of NELFA.....	8
4.4. Eurochild Conference (Brussels, 5-7 July 2016)	11
5. Capacity building.....	11
6. Co-operation with external partners.....	12
6.1. COFACE.....	12
6.2. European Union	12
6.3. Council of Europe.....	12
6.5. Others	12
7. Publications.....	13



1. Foreword

Since its foundation in 2009 and the legal incorporation in 2012, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA) has been growing year after year. Our movement is gaining further strength and momentum, even if the political climate changes in many countries and the (far-right) populism is getting stronger. Since our last AGM in Barcelona, in March 2016, rainbow families all around the world have faced some painful setbacks. But: not only! Gradually, there is solid and reassuring progress, at least in the European Union - through quality juridical decisions, positive survey results and an increasing political backing. In the last twelve months, NELFA worked tirelessly to improve the living conditions of children and their lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex or queer parents. This report points out our efforts for more legal recognition, protection, equal treatment and acceptance – with pride, courage, optimism and contagious joy.

We had a couple of highlights of our work and progress in 2016:

- the 5th International Family Equality Day, IFED 2016 (motto: ‘Families Without Borders’), which was celebrated in 74 cities in 36 countries. For the first time, Ecuador, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and Venezuela joined IFED
- The AllOfUs-event (‘Mobilising for Rainbow Families’) in the European Parliament with testimonials of NELFA Board members and a corresponding declaration, signed by four political parties (S&D, ALDE, The Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL)
- NELFA’s participation in the Eurochild Conference in Brussels (“Children’s Rights Matter”), represented by 16-year-old Darragh Tibbs from Northern Ireland
- NELFA’s workshop ‘Against the backlash: Building joint strategies for LGBTIQ* families activism’ during the ILGA-Europe Conference in Nicosia/Cyprus
- NELFA’s new participatory status with the Council of Europe and the opportunity to provide rainbow family experiences and examples of good practice at the roundtable session of the European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points Network
- NELFA’s successful Erasmus+ application (project: ‘Adequate and equal legal protection for rainbow families’) and the ability for Board members and several volunteers to take part in professional training courses and job-shadowings
- NELFA’s International Conference “Rainbow Families in Europe. Same love, different status” in Naples/Italy, organised in particular by NELFA Board member Giuseppina La Delfa, with the help of Famiglie Arcobaleno.

The report below contains an overview of the activities conducted by NELFA between the AGM in Barcelona (March 2016) and the AGM to be held in Naples (25 March 2017).



2. Administration

2.1. Board

The current Board consists of the following 15 persons (from 10 different countries):

- **President:** Maria von Känel, Dachverband Regenbogenfamilien (Switzerland)
- **Vice-President:** Luís Amorim, ILGA Portugal (Portugal)
- **Secretary:** Rita Marascalchi, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy)
- **Treasurer:** Dominique Boren, APGL (France)

- **Board Members:**

Jordi Anton, FLG (Spain); Caroline Ausserer, TransInterQueer e.V. (Germany); Angelo Berbotto, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy); Nikolaos Chamtzoudis, OLKE (Greece); Kathryn Clarke, Rainbow Families Brighton&Hove (United Kingdom); Lisa Green, LSVD/ILSE (Germany); Juha-Pekka Hippi, Sateenkaariperheet (Finland); Giuseppina La Delfa, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy); Krisztian Rozsa, Foundation for Rainbow Families (Hungary); Anne Rudolph, Independent (Germany) and Björn Sieverding, LSVD (Germany)

Liz Corder from Rainbow Families Brighton&Hove (UK), resigned in May 2016. In addition, Luís Amorim, Angelo Berbotto, Lisa Green, Rita Marascalchi, Krisztian Rozsa, Kathryn Clarke and Anne Rudolph have announced to step down in Naples (March 2017).

2.2. Board meetings

The Board met 13 times within the past 12 months:

- 12 March 2016 (AGM Barcelona)
- 04 April 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 02 May 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 06 June 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 03 October 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 07 November 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 07 December 2016 (Skype meeting)
- 11 January 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 01 February 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 09 February 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 01 March 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 12 March 2017 (Skype meeting)
- 25 March 2017 (AGM Naples)

There were several smaller meetings with at least three Board members in Brussels (Apr and June 2016), Nicosia (Oct 2016), Barcelona (Dec 2016) and Copenhagen (Feb 2017).



2.3. Membership

By the end of February 2017, the association had 29 full member organisations, covering 19 European countries, and 3 supporting members. (Note: the member status of “Familyship” [Germany] was refused during the AGM in Barcelona because of their business activities, but the exclusion has not been executed, yet.

In 2016, NELFA welcomed two new full members:

Son Nuestros Hijos (Spain) and LGBT Denmark (Denmark).

2.4. Finances

At present, NELFA has more money than usual, due to high funds (EU Erasmus+ [30,815 EUR] and OSIFE (Open Society Initiative For Europe) [25,000 USD]). However, the prevailing part of the money is intended to specific projects. Normally, NELFA’s budget derives from membership fees and donations, Board members bear a large part of the costs (i.e. flight tickets) on their own.

NELFA sincerely thanks the following individuals who contributed to its work as individual supporting members in 2016: Luís Amorim, Marion Gret, Dominique and Jérôme Gourod Boren, Juha Jämsä and Jarl Mattson.

2.5. Change of name

NELFA has taken initial steps to include families of queer people in its community by adding a “Q” to its name and changing it into “Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations”. The asterisk reinforces NELFA’s openness to all family constellations beyond LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer).

NELFA bylaws have been duly amended in January 2017.

3. Communication

3.1. Mailing lists

NELFA used its membership network and mailing lists to share and disseminate information, with special focus on relevant European developments, as well as to express support and mobilise resources on a number of issues, including:

- The urgent request for testimonials in connection with a UN Panel Discussion on "Stories for a UN Parent: Equality for all Children" in Geneva (March 2016)



- The announcement of the recent re-design of the IFED website (March 2016)
- The sharing of an empowering video from a local event of “Rainbow Families Brighton&Hove” and the request to send similar clips (March 2016)
- The dissemination of information about the IFED-IDAHOT cooperation in 2017 and the contributions of a Russian initiative for IFED (March/April 2016)
- The sharing of news and scientific material (i.e. of the Dutch member “Meer Dan Gewenst”) (April 2016) and a call to react from Lithuania (April 2016)
- Further IFED news: for example the start of the social campaign (May 2016)
- The request of Russian allies for rainbow family activities in Europe (May 2016)
- The (successful) application of the Erasmus+ project “Adequate and equal legal protection for rainbow families and the necessary follow-ups [in order to provide information about training courses etc.] (May, September and November 2016)
- The (successful) application for NELFA’s participatory status with the Council of Europe in Strasbourg as International NGO (May 2016)
- The reminder for contributions to the IFED Annual Report (July 2016)
- The request from ILGA-Europe about LGBT-prisoners in Belgium (July 2016)
- The exchange of advice in order to respond the handling of the Finnish immigration authority with a Russian rainbow family (August 2016)
- The call for contributions to IFED-IDAHOT 2017 (September 2016)
- The call to sign an open letter against the practice of genital mutilations of intersex children (September 2016)
- The exchange for legal advice in relation to the status of children of lesbian mums in the Netherlands (September 2016)
- The invitation to give contributions for the next Open Society Foundations Meeting in Barcelona [survey on family equality in Europe] (September 2016)
- The dissemination of information about the AGM in Naples (November 2016)
- The announcement of NELFA’s participation in the 2nd INTIMATE Conference ‘Queering Parenting’ [March 2017] in Coimbra, Portugal (November 2016)
- The dissemination of information about NELFA’s participation in the ILGA-Conference in Bangkok and new IFED groups from Asia (December 2016)
- The sending of NELFA’s press releases (March 2016 to March 2017) ...

3.2. Facebook

NELFA’s current Facebook activity is quite regular. The number of “likes” increased from 1,449 (March 2016) to 1,807 (16 Feb 2017) [1,837 (24 March)]. NELFA published (in the above-mentioned period) 561 posts (378 links, 123 pics, 24 videos and 8 unspecified posts).

The biggest part of our fans come from Spain, Italy and Germany (followed by people from Portugal, France, Finland, Belgium, UK, Greece and the USA). The Facebook statistics found that 56 % are female supporters and 41 % are male supporters, usually between 25 and 54 years old. Especially, Board members Björn Sieverding, Maria von Känel and Caroline Ausserer keep the page regularly updated. So far, Luís Amorim is the responsible administrator. Some more FB editors make sporadic contributions: Rita Marascalchi, Jelle Martens, Katy Pallas Pico, Jesús Santos Homobono, Chatty Ecoffey, Fabrizio Paoletti, Angelo Berbotto and Juha Jämsä.



3.3. Website

The (formally hacked and then meagerly re-installed) NELFA website www.nelfa.org will be relaunched (very soon) with the tremendous support and expertise of graphic designer Francesca Silvestri. The media team was and is responsible for further contributions. In the following months, the website should be revamped; the contents are to be extended.

The IFED website is also in process of being improved both in its structure and design to make it more professional and flexible, allowing for inputs by national coordinators. Different items from the cooperation with IDAHOT are integrated, such as a list with films about LGBTIQ* and families.

3.4. Twitter

NELFA is also present on twitter (@NELFA_LGBT). At the moment (24 March 2017), we have 295 followers and we are following 127 twitter users. Within the last year, NELFA posted 124 tweets and retweeted 114 messages (until Feb 2017). The main editor is Maria von Känel. We tweet in particular when participating at events and gained several new followers e.g. after the ILGA-Europe conference.

3.5. Press releases

The NELFA media team published in total 32 press releases within the last year. Each document was (usually) sent out to our members and a wide range of LGBTIQ* medias and supporters. A specific mailing list was created in April/May 2016. The press releases were also published on our website, Facebook page and in the NELFA newsletters:

- **12 March 2016:** The Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA) elects a new Board at its Annual General Meeting in Barcelona
- **16 March 2016:** NELFA: 'Rainbow Families need more recognition and compliance to prevent discrimination!' - A response to the recent FRA report 'Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people'
- **01 April 2016:** Celebrate with us the INTERNATIONAL FAMILY EQUALITY DAY 2016 | #IFED16
- **05 April 2016:** Victory for rainbow families: The Naples, Italy, Court of Appeal orders full recognition of two second-parent adoptions
- **08 April 2016:** Response to papal document: "Joy of love" for all forms of family
- **01 May 2016:** Bringing visibility to family diversity 1 May 2016 – The International Family Equality Day (IFED) is celebrated in 36 countries
- **12 May 2016:** Italy: NELFA welcomes the new civil unions law, but criticizes lack of adoption provisions
- **13 May 2016:** Portugal: NELFA feels delighted with the extension of medically assisted reproduction to all women
- **18 May 2016:** European Parliament affirms importance of equal parental leave for same-sex parents



- **31 May 2016:** NELFA congratulates Catalan Rainbow Families Association for their 15th anniversary
- **2 June 2016:** Resounding support to the rights of Rainbow Families – NELFA welcomes the recent #AllofUs-event in the European Parliament
- **17 June 2016:** Swiss Parliament votes in favour of stepchild adoption
- **23 June 2016:** NELFA welcomes decision by Italy's Supreme Court of Cassation to uphold the right to 'step-child adoption' by same-sex couples
- **28 June 2016:** A better society for ALL families - our common mission!
- **29 June 2016:** NELFA welcomes decision by Czech Constitutional Court to struck down ban on adoption for individuals in same-sex partnerships
- **20 June 2016:** Creating equality throughout Europe (Eurochild 2016)
- **07 July 2016:** NELFA represented at Eurochild Conference 2016, because "Children's Rights Matter"!
- **14 July 2016:** Broad support for MAP in Europe – including for lesbian women
- **03 September 2016:** International Family Equality Day 2017: 'Love makes a family' – The new motto for the world largest celebration of family diversity
- **09 September 2016:** The Council of Europe grants NELFA participatory status
- **21 September 2016:** International Family Equality Day 2016: The report is out!
- **08 October 2016:** Italian Supreme Court: 'full recognition of two mothers'
- **14 October 2016:** NELFA concerned with lack of European agreement to recognise rights of children born through gestational surrogacy
- **03 November 2016:** More equality in Spain: Parents of children born through gestational surrogacy now have the right to parental benefits!
- **18 November 2016:** Children in rainbow families need more governmental support – an important challenge, a wide variety of options!
- **08 December 2016:** Children's welfare comes first! – The Netherlands remains a pioneer in the field of LGBTIQ* rights with new legislative proposal
- **18 December 2016:** The freedom of movement is a fundamental right for rainbow families too – The European Parliament recently adopted a corresponding report
- **18 January 2017:** Educational work for the new President of the European Parliament! – The newly-elected Antonio Tajani (EPP Group, Italy) urgently needs some extra tutoring in family diversity and non-discrimination
- **27 January 2017:** NELFA meets UN-SOGI expert at the first historic public consultation on civil society: together, side by side for the best interest of the child.
- **03 February 2017:** Full recognition to foreign same-sex marriage in Italy!
- **23 February 2017:** NELFA turns five and celebrates with an international conference at its Annual General Meeting
- **03 March 2017:** Italy. First recognition of two gay fathers! – A landmark judgement by the Court of Appeal of Trento

3.6. Newsletter

The AGM in Barcelona in 2016 decided to create a new NELFA Newsletter. Björn Sieverding took the lead and every three months a newsletter is published:

- NELFA Newsletter June 2016: <http://bit.ly/1Ww0HQs>



- NELFA Newsletter September 2016: <http://bit.ly/2cMq1Tk>
- NELFA Newsletter December 2016: <http://bit.ly/2fGzMDs>
- NELFA Newsletter March 2016: <http://bit.ly/2ntlSY5>

The number of subscribers increased steadily from 140 to 145 to 167. Currently, we count 172 subscribers and we expect a moderate rise of demand in the upcoming months. The media team is working on a strategy how to disseminate it the best way.

3.7. Other Communication

Through its email and Facebook contacts, NELFA responded to some few requests for information and guidance by individual and groups, including on issues related to...

- social research on topics of relevance to rainbow families;
- publicising events and initiatives by member associations;
- information about networking and funding opportunities by non-members

3.8. 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. FLG (Spain) had examined to possibility, but decided against it. We would like to encourage full members to take into account to organise one in 2018.

4.2. International Family Equality Day (IFED)

In 2016, IFED was celebrated in 36 countries (2015: 32) and 74 cities (2015: 67) worldwide. The motto was "Families Without Borders" and six more countries joined the IFED family: Ecuador, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and Venezuela. In May 2017, both the International Family Equality Day (IFED, May 7) and the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT, May 17) invite advocates for LGBTIQ* equality, their friends and allies to take action in support of diverse and safe families. The motto of IFED 2017 is "Love Makes A Family". In 2016, NELFA received funding from OSIFE amounting of 25,000 USD, for the IFED coordination and other IFED expenses.

4.3. Events attended by Board members on behalf of NELFA

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



March 2016

- NELFA (Board Member Anne Rudolph) was represented at the anniversary celebration of the Rainbow Family Centre in Berlin

April 2016

- NELFA's Board met for a strategy meeting with ILGA-Europe in Brussels - Caroline Ausserer, Dominique Boren, Maria von Känel and Björn Sieverding, Anne Rudolph (via Skype)
- NELFA (Board Members Anne Rudolph and Caroline Ausserer), in cooperation with the Rainbow Families Centre in Berlin (Constanze Körner), held an event for parents of binational rainbow families at the Rainbow Families Centre.

May 2016:

- NELFA's President, Maria von Känel, visited the RFSL Congress 2016 in Malmö, Sweden
- NELFA's Board member Luís Amorim and Björn Sieverding and its Belgian member Homoparentalités joined forces at the OUT VILLAGE in Brussels
- The fourth International Ministerial IDAHO 2016 FORUM, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia, on, held on 10 May in Copenhagen, was attended by NELFA's President, Maria Von Känel
- NELFA's Board member Giuseppina La Delfa joined the conference "Famiglie, omosessualità, genitorialità" in Naples organised by "Famiglie Arcobaleno"
- NELFA's President, Maria Von Känel, participated in an international meeting of education ministers in Paris. UNESCO published its new report "Out in the Open"

June 2016:

- NELFA's Vice-President Luís Amorim and Board members Björn Sieverding and Giuseppina la Delfa participated in the #AllofUs-event in the European Parliament. Amorim and La Delfa presented their personal family stories to underline that fundamental rights have to be respected
- NELFA (Board members Luís Amorim and Björn Sieverding) took part in a meeting with several intersex activists in Brussels, organised by ILGA-Europe
- NELFA took part in several Prides all over Europe, eg. the Baltic Pride March #BP16 (Maria von Känel), Berlin Pride
- NELFA's President took part in the Fundamental Rights Forum ("Rights, Respect, Reality: the Europe of Values in Today's World") in Vienna
- NELFA participated at the ILGA-Europe Equality Gala with Board Vice-President Luís Amorim in Brussels

July 2016:

- NELFA visited the Rainbow Family Centre (and coordinator Constanze Körner) in Berlin with President Maria von Känel and Board member Caroline Ausserer

August 2016:

- NELFA's Board member Björn Sieverding visited the RainbowHouse in Brussels and had a fruitful exchange with coordinator Frank Schoenmakers

September 2016:

- NELFA's Board member Björn Sieverding took part in the official Kick off meeting for the current Erasmus+ grant period in Brussels



- NELFA's German member LSVD (ILSE group Baden-Württemberg) organised a Rainbow Family Seminar with about 145 participants, where NELFA Board member Lisa Green took part

October 2016:

- NELFA Board member Björn Sieverding participated in the Families And Societies Final Conference in Brussels, coordinated by the Stockholm University
- NELFA's President Maria von Känel and Board member Caroline Ausserer participated at the pre-conference on "Family Values" in Nicosia/Cyprus
- NELFA attended the ILGA-Europe conference in Nicosia/Cyprus with several Board members (Maria von Känel, Caroline Ausserer, Juha-Pekka Hippi, Dominique Boren and Anne Rudolph) and held the workshop "Against the backlash: Building joint strategies for LGBTIQ* families activism", as well as an open caucus about the IFED cooperation with IDAHOT

November 2016:

- NELFA's President Maria von Känel took part in a forum for LGBTIQ* activists in Moscow, organised by the full member organisation Russian LGBT Network
- NELFA's Board member Giuseppina la Delfa participated at the conference "Ресурсы ЛГБТКия Москва" in Moscow and shared her personal story
- NELFA took part in the roundtable session at the Council of Europe, where the European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points Network examined the situation of children in rainbow families, and NELFA's President gave an opening speech
- NELFA took part in the "Rainbow Philanthropy conference on sexual and gender self determination of children and youth in alternative care in the Global South and East". Board member Caroline Ausserer led the workshop "It's what is normal for me - About LGBTIQ* children from a family perspective"
- NELFA Board member Dominique Boren attended a seminar of the PES group (Party of European Socialists) in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Its motto: "I am what I am: promoting the rights LGBTI in the EU"

December 2016:

- NELFA's President attended the ILGA World Conference in Bangkok
- NELFA Board members Jordi Anton, Giuseppina La Delfa and Dominique Boren met members of partner organisations (Son Nuestros Hijos and Homoparentalités) in Barcelona to discuss a planned policy paper concerning "surrogacy"/ART

January 2017:

- NELFA (President Maria von Känel) was invited to participate at the consultation with civil society activists at the United Nations in Geneva with Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn, the new U.N. Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

February 2017:

- NELFA Board members Dominique Boren, Björn Sieverding, Caroline Ausserer, Giuseppina La Delfa and NELFA volunteer Constanze Körner took part in the Erasmus training course "Consulting and development of teams and groups" in Copenhagen and visited a family workshop during the Danish Winterpride event
- NELFA participated with President Maria von Känel and Board member Caroline Ausserer at the "Lesbian Lives" Conference in Brighton in February, holding a workshop



- NELFA Board member Björn Sieverding was invited to a meeting with Ann Brusseel (a Belgian liberal politician) and two staff members in the Flemish Parliament in Brussels, they talked about recent challenges of rainbow families
- **March 2017:**
- NELFA's Board member Anne Rudolph took part in the 2nd INTIMATE Conference 'Queering Parenting' in Coimbra, Portugal
- NELFA Board Members Maria von Känel, Caroline Ausserer and Björn Sieverding participated in a strategic meeting with ILGA-Europe in Brussels
- NELFA volunteers from Finland (Marita Karvinen, Paula Myöhänen, Sanna Nevala and Marjukka Irni) attended the Erasmus training course "Teaching and training for LGBT" from our partner "In Dialogue" in Copenhagen

4.4. Eurochild Conference (Brussels, 5-7 July 2016)

NELFA was represented at the 2016 bi-annual conference of Eurochild by Darragh Tibbs (aged 16), his two mothers and younger brother, from Northern Ireland. The theme was 'Children's Rights Matter'. It was the first time Eurochild integrated young people's voices in the running of their bi-annual conference. Darragh's participation was part of NELFA's aim to bring the voice of children raised by rainbow families into mainstream events where children's rights are discussed. Eurochild represents more than 190 organisations and individuals from 33 countries in Europe, and its main aim is to advocate for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of governments' policymaking.

5. Capacity building

As already mentioned, NELFA received funding for its project "Adequate and equal legal protection for rainbow families", within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Board members and volunteers have been granted to attend 16 training courses (in corporation with the Dutch/Danish consultancy service provider "In Dialogue") and 6 job-shadowings (with organisations like LSVD in Berlin and Stonewall in London).

The 22 "mobilities" aim at strengthening NELFA, especially towards its educational activities. The participants train themselves in leadership skills, teaching and consulting skills, as well as guidance skills. In February 2017, NELFA cooperated again with "In Dialogue" to send out a new application to the Erasmus+ Agency in Brussels. The decision on the project "Chances and challenges for rainbow families" is expected in June.

NELFA itself provided several workshops on the topic "rainbow families", i.e. during the ILGA-Europe Annual Conference in Nicosia (October 2016, see above). Board members shared their experiences on various occasions (i.e. in Brussels, Moscow, Strasbourg etc.).



6. Co-operation with external partners

6.1. COFACE

NELFA has applied for membership of COFACE-Families Europe (the Confederation of Families Organisations in the EU, a network promoting the well-being, health and security of all families). COFACE recently offered a supporting membership.

6.2. European Union

NELFA continued to work closely with the European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights and with ILGA-Europe. Furthermore, Board members provided insight into their private life as LGBTIQ* parents with children during the AllofUS-event in the European Parliament.

NELFA and 176 other organisations subscribed a common statement for the EU Bratislava Summit in September 2016. The Network supports “A new Europe for people, planet and prosperity for all”. The aim of the statement is to take action, to shape an open, accepting society for us and our children, where fundamental rights are protected and equality and inclusion guaranteed.

6.3. Council of Europe

In September 2016, NELFA has been granted participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE). Since 1952, the human rights organisation has had working relationships with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Today, the status is held by some 320 INGOs. The status increases NELFA's ability to support family diversity in all 47 member states of the CoE. Our Network has now the opportunity to contribute to emancipate civil society and reinforce the participation in decision-making processes, as well as building a society based on equality, justice and human rights.

In November 2016, NELFA was invited to the roundtable session at the Council of Europe. The European Governmental LGBTI Focal Points Network examined the situation of children in rainbow families, and President Maria von Känel had the opportunity to provide day-to-day experiences and to share examples of good practice.

6.4. Others

The European Rainbow Cities published information about the IFED 2016 Annual Report in their November newsletter. Several Rainbow Cities are actively involved in organising IFED 2017 events, together with local rainbow family associations.

NELFA shared experiences with some scientific researchers for the meanwhile completed FamiliesAndSocieties Conference, coordinated by Stockholm University. The main topic was the question, what families will look like in the future and if the existing social and



family policies are compatible with changes in family patterns. Some (positive) studies concerning rainbow families and the development of legislation were already published

7. Publications

NELFA and its partners published the recent **IFED Annual Report** in September 2016, printed 1,000 copies and posted the 80-page document on the IFED website.

Once again, the Report has been used as a practical toolkit to address lobbying strategies and as a means to strengthen the visibility of rainbow families around the world. Another aim is to form alliances with representatives from public services, institutions and politicians in order to foster the recognition of all families.

The IFED 2016 Annual Report featured contributions from activists all over the world and forewords from Charles Radcliffe, U.N. official at the OHCHR, and Tanya Plibersek, Australian Member of Parliament and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

NELFA also updated, printed its **leaflet**, which is to be found on the NELFA website.