

NELFA ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

Approved by the AGM in Madrid on 11th of March 2023



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1) INTRODUCTION

In March 2022, NELFA turned ten years old. An important anniversary for the Network and the review is quite reassuring. Within the last decade, rainbow families in Europe took some giant (legal) steps forward – despite of all the setback in recent times. In 2012, we began with a range of enthusiastic national organizations to form a European community. In the meantime, NELFA represents 44 members in 33 countries and the next application just reached us shortly before the deadline of the Annual Report. The movement is growing. It is louder and more self-evident, proud and from time to time in the middle of the societal discourse. And this is at the same time a heavy burden. We are expected to be a stakeholder, an important voice, not only an outcry of a little minority. 2022 is for sure one of the most successful years of our Network. We have called for a better recognition of rainbow families in cross-border situations and received – with our steady influence – at least a legislative EU proposal to be discussed. In the backing, two major CJEU decisions on free movement rights for children with two mothers (Baby Sara and Baby Sofia). In addition, two landmark judgments at the ECtHR in Strasbourg on civil unions (Fedotova and Others v. Russia) and the recognition of children born through surrogacy (D.B. and Others v. Switzerland). And not to forget the national breakthroughs – for example in Andorra, Slovenia and Switzerland (marriage equality), Croatia (same-sex joint adoption), Austria (same-sex adoption for foreigners), Liechtenstein (step-child adoption), Sweden (recognition of parenthood established abroad) and Finland (trans parenthood). However, the situation is peculiar. The movement seems to be stronger than ever – and if you look at powerful campaigns like in Hungary it is even reality. But other national rainbow family organisations struggle with their

internal directional disputes, their lack of political profile or their lack of supporters. And - not to forget: the NELFA Board. A group of volunteers – crushed between professional and familial tasks, quite disoriented, sometimes demotivated and to be honest, often tired and left alone. Ten years after our incorporation under Belgian law, NELFA needs a restart with fresh ideas, clear goals and new supporters in the membership. This is finally not only a description in an Annual Report, this is a call for help... (written by Board member Björn Sieverding).



2) NELFA ADMINISTRATION

NELFA currently represents [44 associations](#), of which 34 are full members and 10 are supporting members. Unfortunately, a range of associations didn't pay their fees in the last years. From time to time, membership exists because NELFA hesitates to cut off the ties (...).

Current [Board members](#) are:

- * **President:** Eleni Maravelia, FLG (Spain)
- * **Vice-President:** Dominique Boren, APGL (France)
- * **Treasurer:** Christoph R. Alms, LSVD (Germany)
- * **Secretary:** Daniel Martinovic, Dugine obitelji (Croatia)

Further Board members without positions: Jesús Santos Homobono, Galehi (Spain); Joanna Śmiecińska, Fundacja Tęczowe Rodziny (Poland); Björn Sieverding, LSVD (Germany);

Margherita Leonelli, Famiglie Arcobaleno (Italy); Christina Zammit La Rosa, MGRM (Malta); Christian Gladel, Meer Dan Gewenst (The Netherlands); Kristian Jakobsen, FRI Oslo (Norway)

Jesús Santos Homobono, Christina Zammit La Rosa and Margherita Leonelli declared to step down. The Board thanks all of them wholeheartedly for their work and wishes all the best!

Board meetings were held online on these dates:

26/03/2022 (AGM), 02/05/2022, 13/06/2022, 07/10/2022, 01/11/2022, 06/12/2022, 09/01/2023, 24/01/2023, 07/02/2023

Minutes of the board meetings are available as documents on google drive.

Most of the **administrative tasks** were undertaken by the Board's Executive team, with the assistance of board members (especially Björn Sieverding) regarding public relations and communication. Board communication was handled via a WhatsApp group, with the app „pcloud“ for data storage. Zoom and Google Meet were used for Board meetings, while „google groups“ was used as a mailing list.

Social media - Facebook: 3.047 followers, Twitter: 1.496 followers

The Erasmus+ project “Rainbow Families 2020 – Together For a Better Future” was finished in 2022 and successfully reported to the relevant bodies. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of participants was smaller than envisioned when writing the project. Still, the evaluations from the participants and the general feedback were positive, and NELFA didn't incur any extra fees or costs due to the project changes. The project „Rainbow Shield“ with NELFA's Bulgarian member organisation „Deystvie“ was finalised successfully. The result is a toolkit for legal practitioners which was published in summer 2022.



3) NELFA ACTIVITIES IN 2022

Data originally compiled by Björn Sieverding

STRASBOURG, 30 November 2021:

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and its Task Force on LGBTIQ* issues held an online exchange of views with experts on legal and administrative challenges faced by rainbow families. Three legal experts, [Alina Tryfonidou](#), [Robert Wintemute](#) and [Lydia Bracken](#), as well as NELFA Board members Dominique Boren and Daniel Martinovic, participated in the discussions. Read [more](#).

BRUSSELS, 26 February 2022:

NELFA stands with the people in the Ukraine! We hope that this nightmare will end as soon as possible. We want peace and insist on the respect for human rights. This war is an infernality! Read our [press release](#). If you want to help, you can find more information at ILGA-Europe's [webpage](#). Or you donate directly to [Kyiv Pride](#).

POZNAN, 25-27 March 2022:

NELFA was in Poznan! Finally, our Board had again the possibility to organise a face-to-face weekend – after more than two years! We had an important [seminar](#) on “Rainbow Families Across Europe” and our **Annual General Meeting**. Due to the pandemic, not everyone was able to join us in person. And afterwards, we had some more corona cases. You can see the new Board [here](#). In addition, we published the new AGM documents on our [website](#). Several NELFA Board members and allies were invited by our Polish member organisation FTR ([Fundacja Tęczowe Rodziny](#)) to take part in a job-shadowing. It was funded by the EU as part of our Erasmus+ project "Rainbow Families 2020 - Together for a Better Future". Many thanks go to NELFA Board member Daniel Martinovic for the management ([Dugine obitelji](#))!

BRUSSELS, 19 April 2022:

[COFACE Families Europe](#) presented a new webinar in its “Breakfast Bytes” series. This time, NELFA was invited to provide information on the “Cross-border recognition of familial ties within the EU”. It contained the current status of rainbow families, their problems in exercising their free movement rights and the recent efforts to elaborate a Certificate on Parenthood. You can read more [details](#) or just dive into the [full presentation](#).

GENEVA, 01 May 2022:

The [International Family Equality Day](#) was celebrated all over the world! This year, different events took place in 71 countries and 237 towns. IFED was entitled “Family Equality is Everybody’s Business”. Many NELFA members had their own IFED meetings, picnics and family festivals (hashtag [#IFED2022](#)). On 1th of May, NELFA co-organised a cosy rainbow families meeting with “[Queerkids](#)” in Leipzig, the first one in the German city in ten years (60 participants). IFED's motto 2023: "Power Up Families".

SOFIA, 03 June 2022:

[Deystvie](#) (NELFA member), [Bilitis](#) (Rainbow Hub), [Foundation GLAS](#) (all from Bulgaria), [Asociatia Accept](#) in Romania (supporting member) and NELFA finalised the EU funded REC-project “Rainbow Shield”. The goal was to expand the scope of legal practitioners prepared to deal with LGBTIQ* cases and enhance their expertise in doing so. The “toolkit on legal programs” from November 2021 is now available. You can find it [here](#).

AMSTERDAM, 14-15 June 2022:

COFACE Families Europe held its Annual General Assembly in Van der Valk Hotel in the Dutch capital. On the first day, there was an [expert meeting](#) on family friendly workplaces (motto: "good practices, better workplaces"), presented by Pro Parents Netherlands. NELFA Board member Christian Gladel ([Meer Dan Gewenst](#)) took part.

BRUSSELS, 14 June 2022:

The JURI Committee of the European Parliament organised a [public hearing](#) on the recognition of parenthood in EU Member States. The aim was to examine the state of play on cross-border recognition and to present the next steps to be taken at European level to safeguard the rights of children and families in such situations. NELFA Board member Björn Sieverding ([LSVD](#)) held a little lecture. You can find the presentation [here](#).

AMSTERDAM, 16 June 2022:

NELFA Board member Christian Gladel took part at a panel discussion, organised by our Dutch member organisation [Meer Dan Gewenst](#). It was entitled: "More than two parents - rainbow families in law". In the Netherlands, a state commission had elaborated a [report on multi-parenting in 2016](#) and eight political parties promised to implement the proposals. However, to this day, there is no law. One of the responsible politicians, Ulysse Ellian, said, it was a marathon and we were still at the beginning...

MADRID, 09 July 2022:

EU Commissioner Dalli visited Madrid Pride and [Galehi – Asociación de Familias LGTBI](#). NELFA Board member Jesús Santos Homobono met up with her to discuss free movement rights for rainbow families. Recent news says that the proposal on “recognition of parenthood between EU Member States” will be presented at the end of the year!



BELGRADE, 17 September 2022:

Europride was celebrated in Serbia's capital, after a disturbing political back and forth concerning a possible cancellation of the parade due to "security reasons". NELFA members took part at Europride, above all [ERA](#), the LGBTI Equal Rights Association. We send our support and solidarity to the whole community in Serbia and the Balkans, who have demonstrated such courage and resilience. Read a [statement](#) by ILGA-Europe.

MADRID, 02 October 2022:

The Spanish rainbow family community is quite large and comes together regularly on different occasions, for example for the [Jornadas de Familias](#) in their 12th edition. A round table on the topic was a happy reunion of many NELFA activists, like President Eleni Maravelia, former President Katy Pallás (both [FLG](#), Barcelona), Board member Jesús Santos Homobono ([Galehi](#), Madrid) and Marc Brell ([Galesh](#), Valencia). You can read more [here](#).

SOFIA, 19-23 October 2022:

NELFA was in Sofia - at the Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe! It was a very good opportunity to meet face-to-face again and to discuss different rainbow families topics. NELFA held a workshop on parenthood recognition in the EU with around 30 participants from many different countries. Read [more](#). Former NELFA Board member Veneta Limberova from [Deystvie](#) explained the "[Baby Sara](#)" case and presented a corresponding, heart-warming film. At the conference in Bulgaria's capital, EU Commissioners Dalli and Reynders announced the legislative proposal on mutual recognition of parenthood.



ZAGREB, 31 October 2022:

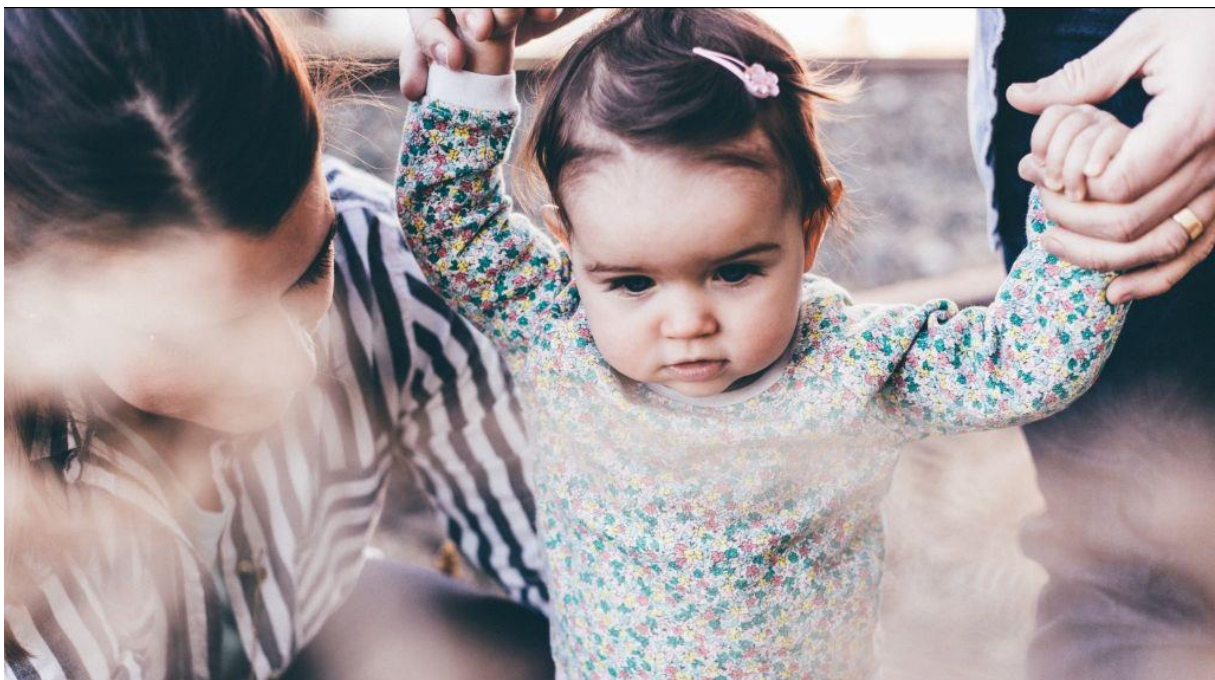
NELFA has finalised its fourth Erasmus+ project "Rainbow Families 2020 - Together for a Better Future", managed by Board member Daniel Martinovic ([Dugine obitelji](#), Croatia). It was dedicated to the empowerment of NELFA, to strengthen its educational activities for the well-being of rainbow families in a (possibly) non-welcoming environment. The project included training courses in Zagreb and Copenhagen with our main partner organisation "[In Dialogue](#)" (i.e. on leadership and guidance skills) and a job shadowing in Poznan. In total, we organised 15 mobilities, granted by the EU with 22.585 €.

BRUSSELS, 09 November 2022:

The [European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#) celebrated its 25th anniversary. With 157 MEP's it is actually the largest of all 27 Intergroups within the Parliament. The work consists in monitoring the work of the EU, the situation of LGBTIQ* people in EU Member States and beyond; and liaising with civil society groups to relay their concerns at the European level. NELFA says THANK YOU to all MEPs who stand for rainbow families!! Board member Dominique Boren was invited to the event and took [some pictures](#)!

BRUSSELS, 07 December 2022:

The EU Commission finally published its [legislative proposal](#) on parenthood recognition. It focuses on the best interests and the rights of the child. It will provide legal clarity for all types of families, who find themselves in a cross-border situation within the EU. One of the key aspects is that the parenthood established in a Member State should be recognised in all the other Member States, without any special procedure. NELFA is very pleased with the proposal. Board members Eleni Maravelia and Björn Sieverding were part of the Commission's expert group (as observers) . Find a [joint press release](#) with ILGA-Europe, another [statement](#) of the EP's Intergroups on [LGBTI Rights](#) und [Children's Rights](#) and an accompanying [article](#), written by Joanna Gill (Thomson Reuters Foundation).



BRUSSELS, 13 December 2022:

NELFA and the LGBTIQ* platform [All Out](#) finally closed their joint [campaign on free movement for rainbow families](#) in the EU. It was asking for a legislative proposal on mutual recognition of familial ties within the EU. We acknowledge that this has happened (see above). NELFA President Eleni Maravelia thanked the Commissioner and staff concerned for their work in a [letter](#) and sent the 44,853 supporting signatures to Brussels.



BRUSSELS, 16 January 2023:

NELFA has started a new series of webinars in 2023. The first one dealt with the new legislative proposal on parenthood in the EU (see above). The possible changes might have a major impact on rainbow families and the well-being of children in cross-border situations. But... what does this proposal provide exactly? In the webinar, two experts gave answers: Maria Vilar-Badia (Legislative Officer at DG JUST in the EU Commission, Brussels) and Prof. Alina Tryfonidou (Neapolis University of Pafos and University of Reading/UK). Here is the link to the [recorded event](#)! We plan already webinars about the situation of rainbow families in the Balkan region and another one on multi-parenting. More info soon!

BRUSSELS, 01 February 2023:

NELFA wants to start an intensive dialogue with the governments in the Netherlands and Germany to push for legal multi-parenting options. Board members Christian Gladel (Meer Dan Gewenst) and Björn Sieverding (LSVD), just sent a letter to the Federal Ministry of Justice in Berlin, in which they ask for a closer exchange. The new coalition in Germany promised to create a framework for multi-parenting within the legislature. In the Netherlands, there is an ongoing debate since 2016. In Europe, there is so far no law on legal multi-parenting (in UK, up to four persons can share parental rights). However, there are good examples in Canada and the USA. (photo: theglobeandmail.com, article in 2016)

4) NELFA RAINBOW FAMILY NEWS

JANUARY 2022

TEL AVIV, 04 January 2022: Israel's Health Minister Horowitz announced that same-sex couples, single men and transgender people will be able parent children through surrogacy, an option that was previously banned for them. Read [more](#).

BERLIN, 05 January 2022: Germany appointed Sven Lehmann (Greens) as the Federal Government Commissioner for the Acceptance of Sexual and Gender Diversity. He will be in charge of creating policies that promote inclusivity and diversity. Read [more](#).

VIENNA, 10 January 2022: A new decision of the Constitutional Court in Austria (Verfassungsgerichtshof) clarifies that unmarried couples are allowed to adopt children jointly – as married (same-sex) couples and those in a civil union do! Read [more](#).

BRUSSELS, 11 January 2022: The [EU Law Analysis Blog](#) issued an article on rainbow families and the right to freedom of movement, respectively the “Baby Sara” case ([V.M.A. v Stolichna obsthina, rayon ‘Pancharevo’ case](#)). It's written by Chiara De Capitani. Read [more](#).

STRASBOURG, 13 January 2022: The Council of Europa Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, published an important statement : “The decision of the Hungarian government to conduct a national referendum regarding children’s access to information concerning sexual orientation and gender identity issues (...) is deeply regrettable as it furthers the instrumentalisation of the human rights of LGBTI people”. Read [more](#).

MÜNSTER, 17 January 2022: The Fiscal Court just decided that a gay couple can't deduct costs (13.000 Euro travel expenses, advive services and medical examinations) for their surrogacy journey. The judge pointed out that surrogacy is forbidden. Read [more](#).

HAMBURG, 25 January 2022: In a historic campaign, 125 German LGBTIQ* people/families within the Catholic Church just had their Coming Out. The public TV (ARD) broadcasted a documentary, entitled “Wie Gott uns schuf” in the primetime. The church in Germany considers changing their dealing with divorce, celibacy, homosexuality. See [more](#).

FEBRUARY 2022

PARIS, 03 February 2022: A Court in Paris just decided on parental responsibility for four persons – a lesbian and a gay couple. Another step forward for LGBTIQ* multi-parenting! However, it's not legal parenthood for the people concerned. We still wait for such a law in Europe. However, congratulations to the lawyer Caroline Mécarry! Read [more](#).

LILLE, 04 February 2022: Under the French EU presidency, the Ministers of Justice came together in a [meeting](#) and discussed inter alia the cross-border recognition of parenthood. The EU Commission actually plans a legislative proposal (to be expected in autumn) to ensure children’s (free movement) rights and their filiation in all Member States. Germany i.e. backs the efforts. Read [more](#). An [article](#) with NELFA quotes reflects the current situation.

TOULOUSE, 09 February 2022: The Court of Appeal recognises the right for a transgender person, a man who has become a woman, who has conceived a child with his male reproductive system, to be named as the mother in the child's birth certificate. This is a great success for NELFA's allies in France, in particular lawyer Clélia Richard. Read [more](#).

COPENHAGEN, 10 February 2022: Good news from the Parliament in Denmark!! Home insemination is planned be covered under the Children's act (even it was cancelled later in the year...) and trans* parents will be mentioned in their right gender on birth certificates. Read more in this [article](#) of NELFA's member [LGBT komiteen](#)!!

MOSCOW, 15 February 2022: Our NELFA member, the [Russian LGBT Network](#) is at risk. It has constantly been targeted with threats, provocations and defamation campaigns. In November of 2021, the Russian LGBT Network was labeled as 'foreign agent' and Russian authorities have started legal action to permanently liquidate [Charitable Foundation Sphere](#), organisation operating all the programs of the Movement, which would leave the Network largely without the ability to carry out its work. The platform All Out startet a support campaign. You can read more and sign [here](#).

RIGA, 14 February 2022: 26 applications by same-sex couples have been filed in several administrative courts, requesting to recognise their legal relationships. They turned to the courts after a [Supreme Court decision](#) on a provisional rule under which same-sex couples will be able to register their relationships. Read [more](#).

WARSAW, 16 February 2022: In Poland, children in rainbow families are often not recognised. However, more and more jugments are promising: The Supreme Administration Court just decided to recognise a child that was born after a surrogacy arrangement in Canada. One of the girl's dads is Polish – so she is now a Polish citizen, too. Read [more](#).

ROME, 24 February 2022: The Italian Constitutional Court has strengthened the rights of families through adoption. Legal ties should be recognised beyond the simple child-parent relationship, i.e. for siblings. Read [more](#).

KYIV, 26 February 2022: NELFA stands with the people in the Ukraine! We hope that this nightmare will end as soon as possible. We want peace and insist on the respect for human rights. This war is an infernality! Read our [press release](#). If you want to help, you can find more information at ILGA-Europe's [webpage](#). Or donate directly to [Kyiv Pride](#).

MARCH 2022

COPENHAGEN, 03 March 2022: Again a very good Folketing decision for rainbow families in Denmark! Parental leave will be possible not only for the legal parents but also for their partners (up to four people)!! Read more in the [article](#) written by [LGBT komiteen](#).

BRUSSELS, 10 March 2022: In February, [ILGA-Europe](#) published its [Annual Review 2022](#). It shows the (legal) developments in the European countries concerning LGBTIQ* rights. NELFA has elaborated a little [presentation](#) to see the changes for rainbow families (in 2021).

BRUSSELS, 12 March 2022: Today, NELFA turned ten years old! Our Network was incorporated under Belgian law as an international non-profit association (aisbl) on 12th of March 2012. In the past, we have always worked for a better recognition, protection, equal

treatment and acceptance of rainbow families in Europe. We experienced setbacks, but also celebrated successes. And we will continue! Stay tuned!

BUDAPEST, 17 March 2022: The Hungarian courts decided that the fine against Lyra Konyv for selling a rainbow families book (Lawrence Shimel) was illegal! The government appealed and that was rejected, too! Read [more](#).

PRISTINA, 18 March 2022: The Parliament of Kosovo rejected the draft Civil Code due to its inclusion of the possibility to regulate same-sex partnership, even though it would have been regulated with a specific law. ILGA Europe condemned in particular the discriminatory speech and misinformation used by many MPs and called on political parties to adequately tackle such discrimination. Read [more](#).

BRAUNSCHWEIG, 22 March 2022: A church musician lost his job because he wanted to start an altruistic surrogacy journey. He stopped his efforts, but the job decision couldn't be changed. Read [more](#). No understanding for rainbow families also in **Liechtenstein** some days ago. The archbishop in Vaduz declared marriage equality (as discussed in the Principality) as "devilish attack". Read [more](#).

AMSTERDAM, 22 March 2022: One of NELFA's first members is "Meer Dan Gewenst" in the Netherlands. And now, the foundation turned 25 years and released a little video to share some memories. See [more](#).

APRIL 2022

BUDAPEST, 12 April 2022: The referendum on LGBTIQ* issues in Hungary was categorically invalid on 3rd of April, as it did not reach the minimum threshold of 50% for either answer to any of its four questions. However, the Fidesz-led government is now suing NGOs who campaigned against the referendum. 16 organisations received fines. Read a [press release](#), issued by the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBTI Rights.

MAY 2022

GENEVA, 01 May 2022: The [International Family Equality Day](#) was celebrated all over the world! This year, different events took place in 71 countries and 237 towns. IFED was entitled "Family Equality is Everybody's Business". Many NELFA members had their own IFED meetings, picnics and family festivals. You can find those i.e. via the hashtag [#IFED2022](#). And soon, you will get more information on IFED's [website](#).

LONG BEACH, 02-06 May 2022: [ILGA World](#) held its [Conference](#) in California with at least nine pre-conferences and one of the was dedicated to "family diversity" and the celebration of #IFED2022, the International Family Equality Day. One of the organisers was NELFA's full member organisation [Sateenkaariperheet ry](#) from Helsinki in Finland.

VILNIUS, 05 May 2022: Lithuania will soon have the chance to decide on a law on gender-neutral partnerships. With this in mind, the Members of the [European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#) addressed a letter to the government, Parliament and leaders of the parliamentary groups with a message of support. You can read the document [here](#).

VADUZ, 08 May 2022: The Parliament of the Principality (Landtag) in Liechtenstein just allowed step-child adoption for same-sex couples! The law will come into force from 1st of

July 2022. At the same time, the MP's voted against the current prohibition of joint adoption and access to ART. Read [more](#).

BRUSSELS, 10 May 2022: Our friends from [Families Europe](#) just launched a joint campaign with Men Engage Eastern Europe & Central Asia to mark the upcoming International Day of Families 2022 (15th of May). No matter the make-up of a family, a family is a team! Read [more](#).

FRANKFURT/MAIN, 14 May 2022: The European branch of FLI (Family Law Institute) organised its fourth Annual Meeting with LGBTIQ* Family lawyers and experts from all over Europe and beyond. They discussed again recent cases, developments and struggles. It was the last event organised by wonderful Director Diana Adams. The incoming FLI Director is Gabriela Luensmann (LSVD, Germany) and there will be a new membership committee (Alexander Schuster, Italy; Anna Mazurczak, Poland and Denitsa Lyubenova, Bulgaria).

LEIPZIG, 15 May 2022: NELFA and the local rainbow families' group "[Queerkids](#)" celebrated the International Day of Families with a cosy meeting. It was the first event for rainbow families in the city in ten years. Around 60 LGBTIQ* parents with children came together to discuss their situations and to enjoy the sun with their peers. It was also NELFA's contribution to the International Family Equality Day #IFED2022.

SOFIA, 16 May 2022: This is a major court decision in Bulgaria! The Municipality of Sofia must issue a birth certificate stating two mothers. It is the implementation of the "Baby Sara" case, that was ruled on 14th of December 2021 at the European Court of Justice in Luxemburg. You can find [more information](#) at NELFA's member organisation [Deystvie](#).

BRUSSELS, 17 May 2022: On [#IDAHOBIT2022](#), Members of the European Parliament discussed LGBTIQ* rights and free movement for rainbow families in the EU. Many thanks for your permanent support, [Terry Reintke](#), [Marc ANGEL](#) and [Roberta Metsola](#)!! See [more](#). The United Nations published a "Free & Equal" [campaign](#) with a video. In Vienna, our Austrian member organisation [FAmOS](#) gave a seminar on rainbow families for pedagogues.

STRASBOURG, 18 May 2022: The European Court of Human Rights issued its judgment in the case of [Valdís Fjölnisdóttir and Others v. Iceland](#). It was about a (former) lesbian couple and their child born through surrogacy in California. The Court found that it was not a breach of family life that the authorities didn't recognise legal parenthood for both of the mothers. The child was then fostered by both of them. Read article [one](#) and [two](#) concerning the case.

PRAGUE, 21 May 2022: Our friends from [Prague Pride](#) just issued a nice [video](#) of a singing female couple, including the message to support the marriage equality campaign in the Czech Republic with more than 156.000 signatures. You can get insights on this [website](#). President Zeman vows to block same-sex marriages. Read [more](#).

EDINBURGH, 23 May 2022: The Church of Scotland has voted to allow clergy to conduct same-sex marriages for the first time. Members of the General Assembly in Edinburgh voted to change church law following years of campaigning. It means same-sex couples will be able to marry in church in services conducted by ministers. Read [more](#).

VILNIUS, 26 May 2022: A civil union bill, aimed at regulating relations of same-sex partners, has passed the first vote in the Lithuanian parliament. It will now move to committees before returning for a second plenary vote in June. Seventy MPs voted in favour of the civil union bill, 49 were against and six abstained. Read [more](#).

ZAGREB, 26 May 2022: According to NELFA's member [Dugine obitelji](#), the Croatian High Administrative Court delivered a precedent ruling that all life partners may be evaluated for adoption suitability and must not be discriminated against on sexual orientation grounds. The court dismissed the relevant ministry's argument that same-sex couples should not be assessed for adoption for the sake of "protecting the child's interest". Read [more](#).

RIGA, 31 May 2022: The Administrative District Court has issued a first judgment ruling that found "the existence of a public legal relationship" in a same-sex couple, namely, that there is a family relationship between applicants within the meaning of Article 110 of the Constitution. As [previously explained by the Supreme Court](#), the state has a positive obligation to provide a family of same-sex couples with the possibility to legally strengthen their family relationships and to be recognized as a family by the state.

JUNE 2022

BRUSSELS, 07 June 2022: On the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the CJEU [#ComanJudgement](#), [ILGA-Europe](#) and NELFA's member [Háttér Society](#) filed a complaint to the EU Commission because of Hungary's non-compliance with the judgment. Read [more](#). Additionally, the EP's [Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#) has issued an [open letter](#).

AMSTERDAM, 16 June 2022: Remco Yizahk Cooremans is President of NELFA's Dutch member organisation [Meer Dan Gewenst](#). In the current European Podcast he explains i.e. the problems of multi-parenting families (from 18 min. onwards). Read [more](#).

STOCKHOLM, 22 June 2022: Rainbow families will be recognised from 1st of August when the child was born abroad. So far, only the person who gave birth is recognised directly. For the best interests of the child the existing legal familial ties won't disappear just by crossing a border!! Thank you, [RFSL](#) for your commitment! Read [more](#) (in Swedish).

COLOGNE, 26 June 2022: Some countries discuss legal multi-parenting options and (queer) communities of responsibility. In Germany, the new coalition is elaborating such an instrument. NELFA's member [Fachstelle Regenbogenfamilien NRW](#), respectively its umbrella organisation [Queeres Netzwerk NRW](#), published a position paper. Read [more](#).

LUXEMBOURG, 27 June 2022: The European Court of Justice decided in the case of "[Baby Sofia](#)" (C-2/2021). The girl was stateless because the countries of origin of her mothers (Ireland and Poland) didn't recognise the Spanish birth certificate. According to the judgment, Poland is obliged to issue a passport and a PESEL number (health insurance) for the child. The case is similar to the one of "[Baby Sara](#)". NELFA is very pleased with the recent [decision](#)! We accompanied the couple for a while and thank lawyer Anna Mazurczak!

BUDAPEST, 30 June 2022: A court just decided that a little [documentary](#) about a rainbow family is not a threat against children and that it was okay to broadcast it during the afternoon in TV (RTL). Congratulations to our friends in Budapest from [Háttér Társaság](#) and the corresponding initiative "[acsaladazcsalad](#)"!

JULY 2022

BERN, 01 July 2022: In September, voters approved the "Marriage for All" initiative by a nearly two-thirds majority, making Switzerland one of the last countries in Western Europe

to legalise same-sex marriage. Now, the first couples were able to say “I do”! For example, Alois Carnier and Peter Leu in Schaffhausen (in the picture). The German broadcaster Deutsche Welle provided a nice video on their website. You can find it [here](#).

MILAN, 02 July 2022: LGBTIQ* activists still fight for more rights of rainbow families. Most recently, at Pride, the mayor of Milan, Sala, announced that the city has reactivated the recognition of children with same-sex parents. Read [more](#). In June, NELFA member Famiglie Arcobaleno and Rete Lenford had issued a new, comprehensive law proposal (on marriage equality, ART, adoption et cetera). Read [more](#).

VIENNA, 06 July 2022: The Constitutional Court in Austria backed the rights of foreign same-sex couples. They are allowed to adopt a child – regardless of the legal provisions in their home countries. In this case, it was about a Czech-Slovakian gay couple who started an adoption procedure in Vienna.

LJUBLJANA, 08 July 2022: A top court in Slovenia ruled that bans on same-sex couples getting married and adopting children are unconstitutional in the country and ordered its Parliament to amend the law within six months to guarantee they can. Read [more](#).

VALETTA, 12 July 2022: Five years ago, Malta’s Parliament voted for “marriage equality”. NELFA’s member organisation “[The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society](#)” just shared a newspaper article on this anniversary. Former NELFA Board member Elaine Micallef Avalone told her story to “Times of Malta”. You can find it [here](#).

BRUSSELS, 12 July 2022: The [EP’s Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#) is one of NELFA’s main partners in achieving more equality for rainbow families within the EU. This time, the bureau hosted Commissioner Helena Dalli to discuss the upcoming proposals (to be expected on 9th of November 2022). It’s in particular about the mutual recognition of parenthood.

BRUSSELS, 18 July 2022: [ILGA-Europe](#) just published an article about the mutual recognition on parenthood within the EU. It reflects on the [reasoned order](#) in the case of an Irish-Polish lesbian couple whose daughter “Sofia” was not recognised. The article shows that Member States must issue a national ID, however they do not need to issue birth certificates stating two mothers. Unfortunately, children remain at risk to be deprived of free movement rights if – for example – their names appear differently in the documents. Read [more](#).

ATHENS, 19 July 2022: The European Intersex Network [OII](#) just shared important news from Greece. The Parliament voted in favour of the “Medically Assisted Reproduction Reforms Act”. The law bans medical interventions (including hormonal treatments and surgeries) that aim to partially or totally change the sex characteristics of intersex minors under the age of 15, without their free and informed consent. Read [more](#).

ANDORRA LA VELLA, 21 July 2022: The Parliament just passed a law that allows trans people to change their name and gender marker on official documents and that eliminates any distinction between married heterosexual couples or same-sex civil partnerships. However, the law remarks that canonical marriage is only open to heterosexual couples and change of official documents is not fully based on self-determination. Read [more](#).

AUGUST 2022

KYIV, 02 August 2022: The president of Ukraine, Zelenskyy, said he supports a civil partnership law for same-sex couples. [Kyiv Pride](#) backed a marriage equality petition that

was submitted in July with more than 28.000 signatures. Zelensky in [his response to the petition](#) notes his support for marriage equality, but acknowledges the Ukrainian constitution cannot be amended while the country is under martial law. He nevertheless directed his government to submit a report on whether same-sex couples can enter into civil partnerships through the country's existing legal framework or a bill.

VIENNA, 10 August 2022: In many countries, assisted insemination enables lesbian mothers to be recognised as parents. This is also possible in Austria since a couple of years. However, home insemination was not covered. This has now changed by a new decision of the Constitutional Court. Our member [FAmOS](#) celebrates and just shared [further information](#).

BERN, 31 August 2022: A couple of weeks after the introduction of marriage equality in Switzerland, rainbow families still face discrimination – when it comes to medical assisted insemination. The treatment is subsidized for different-sex, but not for same-sex couples. Read [more](#). NELFA member [Dachverband Regenbogenfamilien](#) calls on the health insurances to reimburse the costs. You can find further information in this [press release](#).

SEPTEMBER 2022

VALETTA, 10 September 2022: Malta is one of the countries in the EU that has a full range of rainbow families rights – and great support by former President, Marie-Louise Colleiro Preca, who initiated "[The Malta Foundation of the Wellbeing of Society](#)" – meanwhile a full NELFA member. Together with [MGRM](#) (our second Maltese member), they form a Rainbow Families Network which just celebrated Pride. See [more](#).

BERLIN, 12 September 2022: In Germany, co-motherhood is still a complicated issue. There is no direct recognition, (married) lesbian couples still must undergo a stepchild adoption procedure. However, many German courts have already recommended to change the current provisions and asked the Supreme Court for a decision. In the meantime, a first couple went directly to Karlsruhe with a constitutional complaint. Read [more](#).

BARI, 12 September 2022: The Civil Court faced the case of two separated mothers, one of whom asked for the cancellation of the other's name as the child's mother from the official registers of the Municipality. But the child, according to the Court, has the right to two mothes, even after seperation. Read [more](#) (in Italian).

TIRANA, 15 September 2022: The online platform "[Shota](#)" just reported on a rainbow family in Albania and their permanent struggles. Alba Ahmetaj and Edlira Mara raise two little girls together, but they can't get married and are not both recognised as legal mothers. They are fighting for more rights at court. Read the full [article](#) (in Albanian).

OCTOBER 2022

BERLIN, 01 October 2022: Germany celebrates five years of marriage equality. Same-sex couples can get married since October 2017, after a decision of the Parliament (Bundestag) in June 2017 and after a long battle of activists for more than 30 years. NELFA member [LSVD](#) published on this occasion a comprehensive [chronicle](#).

LJUBLJANA, 04 October 2022: The Slovenian Parliament passed an amendment allowing same-sex couples to marry and adopt after a [constitutional court ruling](#) made it the first country in Eastern Europe to do so. According to NELFA allies of [Legebitra](#), the decision has immediate effect. Read [more](#).

NOVEMBER 2022

WARSAW, 03 November 2022: The gay couple Jakub&Dawid wants to register their marriage contracted in Madeira/Portugal in their home country. The case has reached the Administrative Court in Warsaw. In the first hearing, it stated that there is NO clear ban on same-sex marriage in Poland. However, other laws still make it impossible to recognise domestic and foreign weddings. Read [more](#).

STRASBOURG, 22 November 2022: Switzerland violated the rights of a child born through a surrogacy arrangement by not recognising the intended father as a parent, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has ruled. The case of [D.B. and Others v. Switzerland](#) concerned a same-sex couple who were registered partners in Switzerland and had entered into a gestational surrogacy contract in the US under which a child was born. Read [more](#).

BRUSSELS, 23 November 2022: Upon the initiative of the [Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#), the EU Parliament debated the protection of rainbow families. On this occasion, NELFA member [Deystvie](#) (incl. former Board members Veneta Limberova and Denitsa Lyubenova) and one of the two moms of the [Baby Sara case](#) (Bulgaria/Gibraltar) were invited to provide their input on what must change in the EU to ensure protection of all families.

DECEMBER 2022

BRUSSELS, 01 December 2023: The PETI Committee of the EU Parliament discussed hate crime and discrimination against LGBTIQ* people, including problems of rainbow families in cross-border situations. Interveners made clear that the EU should finally guarantee fundamental rights of children and their LGBTIQ* parents. Adéla Horáková (Czech Republic) and Lucia Plaváková (Slovakia) reported on the difficulties in their countries and called on a change. Commissioner Dalli promised again a legislative proposal. See the hearing [here](#).

WARSAW, 17 December 2022: A Polish same-sex couple have lost their long-running effort to have their overseas marriage recognised by Poland's legal system. They have now pledged to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Agata Kowalska and Emilia Barabasz married in Germany in 2018. When they returned to Poland, they sought to register their marriage certificate in the civil registry – but without success. Read [more](#).

TIRANA, 23 December 2022: The Administrative Court of Appeal in Albania refused to legally recognise the parental responsibilities of both Alba Ahmetaj and Edlira Mara as mothers of their twin daughters. The couple has decided to litigate their case to the European Court of Human Rights. Read more in the [article](#) below of NELFA member [ERA](#).

NICOSIA, 23 December 2022: Nikos Koumoutzis, Associate Professor at the Law School of the University of Nicosia in Cyprus wrote an interesting article about the latest surrogacy cases at the ECtHR and states that the recent decision on D.B. and Others v. Switzerland “signals a victory for rainbow families and simultaneously a defeat for national states who, from now on, face limits in their autonomy to enforce their surrogacy bans and to regulate descent based on at least some sort of resemblance to natural procreation.” Read [more](#).

DUBLIN, 16 January 2023: Ireland should be “the best place in Europe to be LGBTQI+”, stated the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth [Roderic O’Gorman TD](#) and launched the LGBT Ireland 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan. It is some sort of road map for how it is possible to create a country where all people can live full, safe and

authentic lives. Congratulations to our NELFA member [LGBT Ireland](#) for this huge step forward! You can read the strategy [here](#).

STRASBOURG, 17 January 2023: The European Court of Human Rights decided in the case “[Fedotova and Others v. Russia](#)”. The Grand Chamber ruled by 14 to 3 that Russia must create a “legal framework” for same-sex couples. The principle of the judgment will apply to 16 countries that are still member states of the Council of Europe (Russia is not...): Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine. NELFA was involved in a third party intervention – and is very pleased with the decision! Read the [judgment](#), a [press release](#) of the EP’s Intergroup on LGBTI Rights and a [statement](#) of the Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović.

BERLIN, 17 January 2023: Germany’s Parliament has it’s first (official) gay couple. The conservative politicians Sepp Müller (CDU) and Wolfgang Stefinger (CSU) have announced that they love each other and have a relationship. Quote: “Sometimes, colleagues become friends. In our case, friendship became love. We are happy #loveislove”. Read [more](#).

STRASBOURG, 23 January 2023: The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Lithuania’s decision to restrict the publication of a fairy tale collection by author Neringa Macaté (who already died in 2020) was discriminatory as it showed the preference of authorities for opposite-sex marriage over same-sex unions. It’s a success for free speech and LGBTIQ* (family) rights! Read an [article](#) and a [press release](#) by ILGA-Europe.

This summary of news can't be complete. If we have missed some important news, please let us know and write to: info@nelfa.org. You can also find additional input on our website which is regularly updated: <http://nelfa.org/> and visit our [newsletter page](#). A relevant source is the [output](#) page (with NELFA presentations) and [input](#) page (incl. reports and research).

