

NELFA ACTION PLAN 2024-2026

Approved at the AGM in Ljubljana on 23rd of March 2024

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VISION

LGBTIQ* parents and their children as well as LGBTIQ* people who wish to start a family can live freely in Europe enjoying the same rights and protection as every other parent, child or parent-to-be.

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As of March 2024, there are still 18 countries in Europe that do not recognise same-sex partnerships or civil unions. In 28 countries, marriage equality is still not possible, with 17 of them even having constitutional restrictions. Additionally, in 27 European countries, children currently cannot be legally linked to both same-sex parents, for example, through adoption or automatic recognition. **NELFA will continue to advocate for improving the discriminatory situation and ensuring that all LGBTIQ* families can enjoy same equal rights as all other families in every country in Europe based on the most advanced legislation more rights than they currently do.**

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This includes equal access to assisted reproductive techniques, foster parenting, **freedom of movement and residency -within the European Union, adjust anti hate speech legislation to include LGBTIQ* families and their children, —**and adequate opportunities for legal protection and recognition for trans* parents or multi-parenting models – in the best interest of the child.

NELFA is set to establish working on clearly formulating its positions and disseminating them accordingly. Guidelines already exist on topics such as ~~ART (Assisted Reproductive Techniques)~~ and Adoption/Fostering. We aim to develop more guidelines and adapt existing ones as needed.

We want to support all children and (prospective) LGBTIQ* parents equally, standing by them in public discourses, taking a stance, and advocating for them whenever necessary.

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ACTIVATION

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NELFA is ~~an umbrella organisation~~, representing 48 LGBTIQ*, respectively rainbow families associations and/or groups in 34 European countries with more than 25.000 members.

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This entails a significant responsibility for a relatively small Board of the Network. **We need dedicated members and helping hands** for this. **We aim to be there for each other and support one another, for example, in (inter)national initiatives, studies, and projects** – by sharing news, best practice examples, research results, personal stories and challenges.

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This means maintaining good communication and engaging in dialogue with each other. Being there when solidarity or further assistance is needed. This is the task of the Board, but also the responsibility of member organisations to strengthen cohesion.

We need to feel part of a bigger family, full of support and empowerment. This particularly concerns countries where ~~little has been done for~~ rainbow families ~~don't have full recognition and protection~~ so far and where public opinion is often still hostile, suspicious, or ignorant. **We place a special focus on helping there – by breaking down prejudices, building groups and capacities, and through joint initiatives and educational programs (~~for example for example~~ Erasmus+ ~~or other EU instruments+~~ etc.) and reaching out to allies or friendly organisations sharing the same goals as equality and an anti-discrimination agenda.**

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——We also aim to seize opportunities in the future to meet and exchange face to face, not only virtually.

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CONSOLIDATION

NELFA was created in May 2009 and established as international NGO in 2012 under Belgian law (aisbl). We have gained respect (at European level) as a reliable and expert partner, but **we still struggle to meet the growing demands, only with considerable efforts from fewer individuals.**

NELFA lacks professional structures, financial resources, and clearly defined job descriptions. We will strive to make progress in these areas – towards an organisation that becomes more targeted, efficient, and agile. **This also means strong collaboration with other networks and organisations**, sometimes even the realisation that we cannot go it alone, but rather with help of allies. This includes - inter alia - ILGA-Europe, COFACE Families Europe, the EP's Intergroups on LGBTI Rights and Childrens Rights, the Council of Europe and FLI.

We should also consolidate more forces in science, for example, by collecting studies, synthesising results, and bringing together international experts. And we should look out for new alliances – possibly with schools, teachers, other parents, and children's rights activists. Core funding remains a dilemma. The production of fundraising tools and documents and their submission to potential donors should be tackled and implemented as soon as possible.



CONCLUSION

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NELFA aims to continue its successful work for rainbow families.

However, the past years have also shown that the Network is quite fragile and despite growing membership numbers, it often falters – be it due to the lack of a stable ~~professional, staff paid team~~ with a clear agenda in a fixed location, bureaucratic challenges, or the difficulty for Board Members to not overextend their resources while still advancing NELFA successfully.

In this sense, the Action Plan serves as a framework, a guide, but not a work program that must be implemented come hell or high water. It is indeed a call to the community to get involved and not to rely solely on the shoulders of the few active ones.

ONLY TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG!

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