



Brussels, 5 March 2016

NELFA joins the LGBTI Movement in Rome's Piazza del Popolo to show support for Full Equality for Italian Rainbow Families

On 5 March 2016, the Italian LGBTI Movement joined forces at Rome's Piazza del Popolo to demand full legal equality for LGBTI parents and their children. The Network of European LGBTI Families Associations (NELFA) was invited to join and Maria von Känel, President of NELFA, addressed the gathering in Rome's Piazza del Popolo via video, sending a strong message of support to Italian rainbow families on behalf of all European rainbow families.

Full transcript of Maria von Känel's address in Italian (English translation below):

“Amiche e amici italiani, buongiorno. Sono Maria von Känel, la presidente di NELFA, la rete europea delle famiglie arcobaleno. Oggi vi parlo per dirvi che noi, le famiglie arcobaleno di tutta Europa, siamo con voi. Abbiamo sperato con voi in una legge giusta, abbiamo sofferto con voi durante questa faticosa attesa e con voi ci indigniamo per l'ingiustizia di questa legge. Sono una mamma di due meravigliosi bambini avuti con mia moglie. E sento sulla mia pelle il dolore delle famiglie arcobaleno italiane. Non è giusto che lo stato, invece di proteggere, discrimini i nostri figli. Non è giusto che le leggi siano dettate da pregiudizi e ignoranza. Durante queste settimane avete dimostrato coerenza, dignità e coraggio. Noi, le famiglie arcobaleno d'Europa vi diciamo: siamo fieri di voi. Avete costruito qualcosa di nuovo e importante assieme alle organizzazioni lgbt italiane e a tutta la gente che si è mobilitata con voi per costruire un paese più giusto. State cambiando l'Italia in meglio. Noi, le famiglie arcobaleno d'Europa vi diciamo: non fermatevi! Continuate a vivere le vostre vite e il vostro amore alla luce del sole perché chi ci conosce, ci stima. Guardate la trasformazione dell'Europa in questi dieci anni - è favoloso, è incredibile ed è una realtà. Non mollate. La storia sarà dalla vostra parte. Continuate a battervi e sappiate che non siete soli. Dalla Norvegia alla Grecia e dal Portogallo alla Polonia, noi siamo con voi e vi diciamo: siamo fieri di voi. L'Italia, che ha promosso i valori dell'Europa unita, non può permettere questi pregiudizi e queste discriminazioni sulla pelle dei più deboli. Autorità italiane svegliatevi, siete nel 2016 in Europa - fate il vostro dovere e date esempio di civiltà. Ve lo chiediamo anche noi, le famiglie arcobaleno europee. A presto!”

Full transcript of Maria von Känel's address (English translation): *“Dear Italian friends, Good morning. I am Maria von Känel, the president of NELFA, the European Network of rainbow families. Today I am addressing you to tell you that we, the rainbow families from all over Europe, are with you. We hoped with you for a just law; we have suffered with you during this long and hard time and we stand by you outraged at the unfairness of this law. I am a mother of two wonderful children I had together with my wife, and I can feel on my own skin the pain of the Italian rainbow families. It is not right for the state to discriminate against our children instead of protecting them. It is not right that laws are enacted on the basis of ignorance and prejudice. In the past weeks, you have showed consistency, dignity and courage. We, the rainbow families of Europe, say to you that we are proud of you. You have built something new and important together with Italian LGBT organizations and with all the*

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people that have joined you to build a fairer country. You are making Italy a better place. We, the rainbow families of Europe, say to you – do not stop! Keep living your lives and your love in the open, because those who get to know us, value us. Look at the changes that have happened in Europe in the last ten years – it is fantastic, it is unbelievable and it is real! Do not give up. History is on your side. Keep fighting. And please know that you are not alone. From Norway to Greece and from Portugal to Poland, we are with you and we say to you – we are proud of you. Italy, a country that has promoted the values of European unity, cannot allow this type of prejudice and discrimination against those who are most vulnerable. Italian authorities; wake up! You live in Europe in 2016 – fulfil your responsibilities and become an example of progress. We, the rainbow families of Europe, also ask you to do this. Till next time.”

Marinella Grassadonia, President of Famiglie Arcobaleno (a member of NELFA) said:

“Today we are here for our future and our goals: equal marriage, full adoption rights, automatic joint parenthood recognition at birth and full equality. We are manifesting for equal rights and against every type of discrimination. We want our country to understand that we will not stop until our children will have the same legal protection as any other child; until all kinds of love will be treated equally before the law. We will never accept the idea that in order to extend human rights, somebody needs to be left behind, especially children. Those who support human rights want them to be extended to everyone.”

Rita Marascalchi, NELFA Board Member from Italy and a mother herself, added:

“Today is an important day for Italy. All facets of the LGBT movement together with many straight allies and ordinary citizens are making it clear that they expect their country not to remain hostage of anachronistic prejudices. That they want to live in a country where all couples, all families and all children have equal dignity and equal rights. A country where there is no second-class love and where children are not discriminated against because of who their parents are or because of political opportunism.”

About NELFA: NELFA is the European platform of LGBTI families associations, bringing together LGBTI parents and parents-to-be from all over Europe. NELFA currently represents 29 organisations in 18 European countries with more than 25 500 members. NELFA is a member of ILGA-Europe and Transgender Europe. www.nelfa.org

Our new Leaflet:

http://nelfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/NelfaLeafletUpdate2016-02_www.pdf

International Family Equality Day (IFED): www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org

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