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NELFA PRESS RELEASE:

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

The 6th International Family Equality Day (IFED) was commemorated in 44 countries and over 100 towns worldwide. This means – once again - a record turnout. Under this year's motto “LOVE MAKES A FAMILY” eight new countries joined the IFED-family: Argentina, Luxembourg, Belize, Brazil, China, Ireland, the Philippines and Thailand.

#IFED2017 got together with the International Day against Homo-, Trans- and Biphobia (IDAHOT), which this year had chosen the topic “Families” and invited advocates for LGBTIQ* equality, their friends and allies to take action from May 7 until May 17 all over the world to celebrate and support family diversity.

In Europe, the Rainbow Cities Network started to show an exhibition on families in 14 European cities (for example in Ljubljana: <https://www.ljubljana.si/en/news/international-photo-exhibition-of-the-rainbow-cities-network/>), as well as in Mexico City and Sao Paolo. In Moscow, a Family Equality Festival took place and in Asia, the first Asia-Pacific Rainbow Families Forum was held in Hong Kong. Both events will be repeated next year.

The first IFED was launched in 2012 as a sign of solidarity and pride to promote equality for all families. The Council of Europe recognises IFED as an important tool to combat homo- and transphobia and to promote a tolerant and cohesive society. In its compendium of good practices of 2016, it highlights IFED as an opportunity to create visibility for LGBT communities, thereby raising awareness of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Some experiences: **Maivon Wahid, a Rainbow Dad from Fiji, says**, *“IFED made me realise and somewhat benchmark where Fiji visibly stands, in line with other Asian countries. For us talking about Rainbow families may happen - but is not what we here in Fiji are 'fighting' for. Social stigma, acceptance, the deep rooted religious beliefs are our battles and this workshop made me realise that there's so much work still to be done, especially when our Prime Minister comes out with public homophobic rants.”*

Derricia Jael from Belize explains: *“For us here in Belize, many of the LGBT community members want to have children and want to have an opportunity to be able to exercise their right to be a family. The difficult part is, however, to introduce children into a union that legally does not exist within our country. Our decision to participate in this year's IFED celebration was a way for us to publicly show that within a society which would rather accept us as single parents rather than rainbow families, we will exercise our rights and we are willing to start the journey to changing policies which restrict us.”*

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Caroline Ausserer, NELFA's liaison person to IFED in Germany, says, *“Rainbow families are a tool for social change. The playfulness of IFED celebrations brought together a whole range of diverse families and created an inspiring and promising atmosphere which empowers us to continue our daily struggles against discriminations against LGBTIQ* families. Together we can change negative attitudes towards LGBTIQ* families in society and politics and pave the way towards true equality.”*

IFED founder, Maria von Känel from Switzerland adds, *“Giving visibility to family diversity is sometimes the first step to achieve social, political and legal acceptance. For some families, this is a huge challenge but also a form of empowerment to learn 'we are not alone and we support each other'! The celebrations of IFED are also a sign of solidarity and support for all families, who suffer from discrimination and whose voices are not heard.”*

Here you will find further information:

IFED Website: <http://www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org>

GET INSPIRED: <http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/wordpress/highlights/>

GET INVOLVED: <http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/wordpress/get-involved/>

BEST PRACTICE: <http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/wordpress/annual-reports/>

IFED Facebook Creative Network: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/500398236747224/>

IFED International Mailing List: E-Mail queries to info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

Hashtag: #IFED2017

About NELFA: NELFA is the European platform of LGBTIQ* families associations, bringing together LGBTIQ* parents and parents-to-be from all over Europe. NELFA currently represents 32 organisations in 19 European countries with more than 26,500 members. NELFA is a member of ILGA-Europe and Transgender Europe. Website: <http://www.nelfa.org>

Download our new leaflet:

<http://nelfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/NelfaLeafletUpdate2017-02.pdf>

Download our recent NELFA Newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2ntlSY5>

Yours cordially,

Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations,
on behalf of the International Family Equality Day (IFED) Network

Further contacts:

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