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## NELFA PRESS RELEASE:

### **Rainbow Families in Eastern Europe and the Balkans: It's time to join forces! - NELFA welcomes new member organisations from Croatia and Poland**

The Network of European LGBTIQ\* Families Associations, NELFA, is steadily growing – even in times of a partly worrying homophobic backlash within the EU and beyond. For the first time, NELFA welcomes a new full member in the Balkans and a supporting member in Eastern Europe. ‘**Dugine obitelji**’ is the rainbow families organisation in Croatia and ‘**Tęczowe Rodziny i Przyjaciele**’ (TRiP) is a group of LGBTIQ\* parents and children, cooperating with the Grupa-Stonewall Association in Poznań. In both countries, the situation for rainbow families is not satisfactory, especially in Poland. There is still a lack of recognition, protection and equal treatment (i.e. no marriage equality, no adoption rights). In the recent ranking of ILGA-Europe, Croatia is in the 11th place, Poland occupies place 37.

**Daniel Martinovic, coordinator of “Dugine obitelji”, says, “Our association is committed to the protection, improvement of the rights and the position of rainbow families in Croatian society and it supports, informs, empowers and connects rainbow families through education, advocacy, media work, publishing, research, and providing direct support. Our vision is a society that respects, accepts and celebrates all families, which is clearly in line with NELFA's values and hence it makes us even happier to be a part of this European family!”**

**Joanna Śmiecińska, active member of TRiP, states, “Our group was set up about three years ago, at first with just four families on-board. We grew quickly and apart from get-togethers, picnics, book reading meetings for kids etc., we have managed to organise bigger events like anti-homophobia workshops, a town-hall meeting in Poznań and a conference in March 2017. We think that our membership in NELFA is a great opportunity to exchange ideas and to ‘join the forces’ in future activities. Hoping for a great work together!”**

**NELFA's President, Dominique Boren, adds, “In the Balkans and in Eastern Europe our movement is still a delicate little plant. Rainbow families often live in hiding to avoid stigmatisation. They face systematic hurdles and patronisation, governments claiming on family values accept at the same time the blatant discrimination of LGBTIQ\* parents and their children. We have to come out everywhere and need to insist on our rights!”**

## **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 27 organisations in 17 European countries with more than 20,000 members. NELFA is a member of ILGA-Europe, Transgender Europe and COFACE Families Europe. Website: <http://www.nelfa.org>. Leaflet: <http://bit.ly/2rJW0us>. Newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2jgZNJc>.

**Further contacts:** Dominique Boren (NELFA President): +33 630 49 66 62  
Giuseppina La Delfa (Vice-President): +39 393 39 63 733

**NELFA aisbl**

La Maison Arc-en-ciel asbl - Rue du Marché au Charbon 42 - 1000 Brussels – BELGIUM  
E-mail : [info@nelfa.org](mailto:info@nelfa.org) - Website: [www.nelfa.org](http://www.nelfa.org)