

Rainbow Cities Network

Annual Report

2019-2020



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# 1. Introduction

*The annual report you are about to read is a landmark in the history of Rainbow Cities Network. Not only because it is our first formal report as a network, but it also provides a summary of the activities of our association in 2019-2020. Overall, it embodies our efforts to be accountable to our member cities.*

*This year marked the consolidation of RCN as an association. None of the results shared in the next pages could have been achieved without the leadership of the board and collaboration of the active members.*

*To each of these people, I offer this report as a token of gratitude and inspiration to continue working together towards the accomplishment of our shared goals.*

*Manuel Rosas Vázquez  
Coordinator of the Rainbow Cities Network*

## 2. Results

### 2.1. The board

In November 2018 at the RCN annual meeting in Barcelona, the members voted to found the RCN legally as an independent organization. At this time, the board of the newly born organization was composed of the member cities of Brussels Capital Region (general board member), Hanover (chair of the board), Mannheim (secretary), Paris (general board member), and Rotterdam (treasury). Due to internal affairs in the city of Paris, the appointed person stepped down in October 2019. This event led to the election of Geneva as the fifth general board member at the annual meeting 2019 in Esch-sur-Alzette.

### 2.2. Tasks and responsibilities

During its first meeting, the board decided on a list of tasks for the first term. Initially, these were:

1. Registration of the association in the Dutch register
2. Setting up a bank account
3. Creation of a financial plan for the association
4. Issuing of invoices for membership fees and collection of the same
5. Conclusion of a contract with a cooperation partner to set up a network coordination
6. Filling the coordinator position, including the advertisement, application, interviews, and orientation

### 2.3. The association

The registration of the association took place in June 2019 with countless support from the city of Amsterdam. Anouk Erkelens (Rotterdam) and Arnold van der Broek (Amsterdam) were present during the process. At this point, the board would like to expressly thank the city of Amsterdam, not only for the entry in the register of the association but also for the great support of the network in previous years. Without this commitment, there would not be an RCN today!

### 2.4. New members in 2019

With the foundation of the association, the membership process could finally restart and attending cities of Aarhus, Reykjavik and Bern joined the network.

### 2.5. The coordination

In August 2019, Juliane Steeger and Anouk Erkelens set up a bank account in Rotterdam, which could finally be used from October 2019. At the same time, the first cautious financial plan was drawn up, which provided for a coordinating position as a senior advisor with a total of 75% working time. The first invoices for membership fees were also sent at the end of 2019.

Cooperation to set up network coordination was more complicated than expected, due to legal issues. As a young association run by four different countries, we didn't dare to act as an employer. That is why we were looking for an institution that, in cooperation, would coordinate for us and provide us with the workforce.

Initially, Andersraum e.V., an organization in Hannover, showed interest in filling that position. Its offer was accepted by the members in 2018. Unfortunately, for tax reasons, the organization Andersraum had to withdraw the offer in the spring of 2019. During the summer of 2019, after many conversations, the network signed a cooperation agreement with the *Queeres Netzwerk Niedersachsen e.V.* (Queer Network Lower Saxony), a national association for LGBTIQ issues in Germany. The cooperation formally started on December 1, 2019.

The coordinator position could now be filled. For this purpose, the board wrote a job advertisement and a task profile and published them at the end of July 2019. In September 2019, the interviews took place in the QNN office in Hannover. Manuel Rosas Vázquez then started working for the network on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Manuel introduced himself to the annual conference in Esch-sur-Alzette in October 2019. Here, too, the board was closely involved in the preparation and implementation of the meeting.

## 3. Changes to the network in a nutshell

In many ways, 2020 was a transformative year for our organization. At the beginning of the year, the coordinator drafted a change plan to speed up necessary operational changes to make us more future-proof and efficient.

### 3.1. Feeling more inspired

The coordinator's first actions were concentrated in reviewing the information available about the network. He first worked on the so-called "Common Grounds" and made some changes to the style and wording and changed the name to By-laws, considering that the last name better reflects the nature of the document, this proposal was accepted by the board.

He received the one-pagers (best practices) collected until the beginning of the year. He continued collecting the one-pagers and published them on the Rainbow Cities Network's official website.

The coordinator compiled and edited the information package for interested cities. This document provides a complete overview of how to join the network and includes the prerequisites, first steps, By-laws, and memorandum of understanding.

He also contacted all the cities that in the previous years expressed their interest in joining the network. Cities were contacted between February and March.

City	Status
Haifa	No reply
Lisbon	Pending minor administrative procedure
Kotor	Became a member
Montreal	Still evaluating membership
Sitges	Still evaluation membership
Vitoria-Gasteiz	No reply
Zaragoza	No reply
Lausanne	The city is still evaluating membership
Cork	Member
Dortmund	No reply
Utrecht	No reply

The coordinator established contact with the Latin American Rainbow Cities to build bridges and communication. He was invited to attend to their annual meeting, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was canceled.

The coordinator took over administrative tasks of the network, including the annual membership fee. He sent reminders to cities that had not covered the fees for 2019. The coordinator also issued all invoices for 2020 fees at the beginning of April, so all cities could fulfill their responsibility promptly.

The coordinator identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the organization. He presented these to the board and created a roadmap to improve the performance of RCN as well as some recommendations.

For new members joining our network, we now offer a membership certificate stating the benefits and obligations of joining the RCN.

### 3.2. More visibility

The coordinator came up with a social media plan and created the network's profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. He shares relevant information about the network to all the contacts who follow the official social media.

In terms of engaging the RCN publicly, the network was portrayed in the *"NETWORKMAG"*, a gay leadership magazine edited and published in Switzerland. A three-page interview highlighted the work of the network and how to become a member.

The coordinator wrote an article about the work of the network that was published in *URBANET*. *URBANET* fosters international dialogue on development activities worldwide and shares expertise in the areas of municipal and local governance, sustainable urban development, and decentralization. *URBANET* is supported and implemented by GIZ's Sector Project "Urbanization,

Municipal, and Urban Development” on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The RCN participated at the Council of Europe at the congress of local and regional authorities in the current affairs committee in an enriching debate, “*THE SITUATION OF LGBTI+ PERSONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES*”. The outcome of this meeting was that the Council of Europe approved a motion of sending an investigation mission to Poland concerning the so-called LGBTI-free zones.

The RCN will be included in an upcoming book from the author of “*Gayme Changer*”, Jens Schadendorf. The book explores how our long-excluded LGBT+ community is changing the economy rapidly and for the better, both economically and socially. Even against resistance, it is worthwhile to let gays, lesbians & co. in companies become dynamic GaYme changers – with strong leaders, role models and allies, with innovative measures and cooperation. We will be included in the public sector section. The title and release date will be announced to the network once available.

The newsletter “Rainbow Cities in Action” is the newsletter of the network that helps to keep the members and friends informed about relevant topics and events occurring in our member cities.

In 2020, 53% of our members contributed to the innovative IDAHOBIT photo exhibition.

### 3.3. Cooperation with other networks

The Rainbow Cities Network strives for maximum impact, so it can reach all groups in society and move the middle for real change for our LGBTI community. This cannot be done without looking for allies and other networks that aim for that tangible transformation.

Therefore, the network started networking and participated at the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in the forum “The path to Resilient Towns and Regions”, there the coordinator was able to establish contact with the mayors of Gdansk in Poland and Vitoria-Gasteiz in Spain.

The RCN is working with the *MAG (Jeunes LGBT)* from Paris and *OutRight Action* in the preparation of a global conference that will enable LGBTI youth to take part in a dialogue that will forward the creation of an international LGBTI youth community, enabling them to speak with a unified voice in order to influence the global agenda. This event will take place in the summer of 2021.

The network participated at the *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)* at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11) meeting. The goal of the event was to foster cooperation between various stakeholders: UN agencies, city networks, private and public organizations, NGOs, academia, and civil society.

During his visit to Geneva the coordinator was also able to meet with the *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*, *Office of the Independent Expert on SOGI*, Catherine de Preux to find common grounds for cooperation.

Additionally, the coordinator had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Director of the *International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)*, André du Plessis to exchange details of the work that RCN is conducting and ask for guidance in building regional bodies, considering that more and more cities beyond European borders are interested in joining our network.



## 3.4. New members in 2020

Viewing 2019 and 2020 from the current COVID-19 crisis almost seems like looking at an unlikely reality. In only a matter of months, the dynamics of the world changed drastically. Still, the work of the network remains relevant. Populism and a shift to the political right are still on the rise, but there is hope. Despite the adverse scenario, the network grew by 22% with the six new cities that joined our network in 2020: Kotor in Montenegro, Frankfurt am Main in Germany, Cork in Ireland, Heidelberg in Germany, Linz in Austria, and Taipei in Taiwan. The list is organized chronologically with respect to the moment of joining the network.

## 3.5. Where is RCN heading

Our work in 2019 materialized the current structure of the network. Part of that structure is to have a renewed image. This is why the board along with the coordinator approved the redesign of the website to portray the image that the network wants to project better. This tool will allow us to link easier between the members and have all useful material one click away, on top of showcasing the great work of each city and our joint activities.

In the second half of 2020, the RCN applied for funding to the European Union, under the program Europe for citizens. If selected, the network will have the financial means to be able to enact the first LGBTI policy guidelines. The results will be announced in March 2021.

For the year to come, 2021, we aim to consolidate the one-pagers (best practices), engage in more joint activities like the IDAHOBIT photo exhibition, and welcome more member cities.

We have started conversations with ECCAR (European Coalition of Cities Against Racism) to explore collaboration related to intersectionality.

The board experienced some changes too. The chairperson Juliane Steeger took maternity leave for three months. Isa Hölldobler and Grace Proch, both also from the city of Hannover, took over her responsibilities on the board during this period but she came back in October.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual meeting planned for 2020 in Bergen, Norway has been adjourned to November 2021 and the meeting in Rotterdam, the Netherlands to November 2022. The 2020 annual meeting will be held remotely in video conference format.

The board will continue meeting every two weeks with the coordinator to continue writing the story of the network.

After the new board is elected at the annual meeting, the coordinator will present the plan for 2021.

# 4. Finances

## 4.1. Income and expenses

In this section, we give you an overview of our income and expenses. The overview is from **July 2019 until June 2020**, the first fiscal year according to the Dutch law.

### 4.1.1. Income

The income of the network is directly linked to the membership fees that the member cities cover annually.

- On 01-07-2019 the network had 27 members.
- On 01-07-2020 the network had 30 members.

**According to the By-laws, the membership fees are calculated based on the size of the city's population.**

- Small cities up to 300.000 inhabitants 1000 €
- Medium cities with 300.001 – 750.000 inhabitants 2000 €
- Big cities over 750.001 inhabitants 3200 €

### 4.1.2. Membership fees 2019

The membership fees for 2019 were covered by 24 out of 27 members.

**Table 1. Income in 2019**

Income paid from July 2019 - June 2020				
Concept	Nominal Expected Income	Income Fees	Solidarity Income	Total income
Member annual fees	58.200,00 €	48.600,00 €	3.800,00 €	
Total				<b>52.400,00 €</b>

Source: self-made, amount in euros.

As it was the first year of the association, some cities were able to give a solidarity contribution on top of their regular fee.

- Esch-sur-Alzette paid 2000 EUR extra
- Hamburg paid 1800 EUR extra

In total, we received 3800 EUR extra. We would like to thank these two cities for their commitment and solidarity to the network.

At the closure of the fiscal year 2019 (June 2020) Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Barcelona Still had not paid their fee. Barcelona went through a change of government and it is still working to cover the fee for 2019.

For 2019, Mexico City and Sao Paulo informally asked for the solidarity reduction to pay a 500 EUR and 1000 EUR fee, respectively. None of them covered the annual fee of 2019. The board

accepted Mexico City’s explanation for not covering the annual fee in 2019. Mexico City didn’t receive the invoice on time and they couldn’t spend the money reserved for the RCN as Mexico City closed their public coffers in December 2019, making it impossible to pay in 2020.

The cities that did not pay the fee for 2019 on July 1, 2020 were Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Barcelona. As explained before, we are already in contact with Barcelona about paying the fees. This means that we received 48.600 EUR in total instead of the expected 58.200 EUR. The network did not receive the fee of 3.200 euros from each of the three cities mentioned above.

#### 4.1.3. Membership fees 2020

For 2020, Mexico City applied for a solidarity reduction. The board agreed to grant the reduction fee to Mexico City. Sao Paulo requested the solidarity reduction form, but the board has not received the formal request yet.

For 2020, Mexico City paid the minimum fee of 500 EUR as stated in the By-laws (previously named Common Grounds), but due to the international transfer costs, we received only 485,00 EUR.

At the close of this first fiscal year June 30, 2020, cities that did not cover the annual fee were Barcelona, Esch-sur-Alzette, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Oslo, Paris, Reykjavik, and Sao Paulo.

**Table 2. Income in 2020.**

Income paid from April 2020 - June 2020					
Concept	Nominal Expected Income	Expected Income after Solidarity Fee	Income Fees	Solidarity Income	Total income
Member annual fees	63.400,00 €	58.500.00 €	43.085,00 €	- €	
Total					<b>43.085,00 €</b>

Source: self-made, amount in euros.

## 4.2. Expenses

### 4.2.1. Bank account

We opened a bank account in August 2019. Since we have a business account, we must cover the account management fee. The first 10 months were free, but we started paying account management from May 2020 onwards. The cost is 11.00 EUR per month. Some cities needed a letter confirming that the bank account was linked to the RCN before being able to cover their annual fee. Such a letter had a cost of 48.40 EUR.

### 4.2.2. Board costs

Some members of the board traveled to Hanover and Rotterdam for the coordinator’s interview and the opening of the account, respectively. This includes the coordinator travel costs to the annual meeting in 2019.

### 4.2.3. Personnel and cooperation costs

Starting 01-01-2020, the Rainbow Cities Network hired a coordinator who is employed by the Queeres Niedersachsen Netzwerk (QNN). Therefore, the network signed a contract with the QNN to organize the employment of the coordinator.

Starting the contract, we paid 5,000 EUR for all kinds of practical costs (IT, furniture, telephone). The payment was made in January 2020. Additionally, we agreed to pay 55,500 EUR per year in four deferred installments of 13,875 EUR (January, April, July, and October). The 55,500 EUR is divided in:

- Overhead 5,000 EUR (standard amount)
- Personnel costs 47,500 EUR, this includes the payment of all taxes in Germany
- Travel costs 3,000 EUR

In June 2020, the board decided to extend the hours of the coordinator to work fulltime due to the amount of work in building the new website and applying to Europe for Citizens additionally to his normal workload. We paid 7,917 EUR to extend his hours from 32 hours per week to 40 hours per week for the second half of 2020.

#### 4.2.4. Website and mailing list

- We use an E-compass mailing list which costs to network 130.00 EUR per year.
- The current website domain and maintenance costs 438.62 EUR per year.
- The board decided that we needed a new website to show the world what the network has to offer. We launched an open call for web designers across all member cities. We received several applications and after a selection process, we had three candidates that the board asked for a design proposal. The board decided in the end to work with Gyor Moore, a website designer from Rotterdam. We made the first payment for the new website at the end of June 2020, 4,500 EUR. The total cost of the website is 9,000 EUR, the next payment will be made once the website is finished.

**Table 3. Income and Expenses.**

<b>Expenditure July 2019-June 2020</b>		
<b>Concept</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Danny travel costs expenses	158,80 €	
Juliane travel costs expenses	463,50 €	
QNN agreement		
Cooperation and working infrastructure 2019	5.000,00 €	
First transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Website domain annual fee	438,62 €	
Bank confirmation letter	48,40 €	
Mailing list service	130,00 €	
New website design	4.500,00 €	
Second transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Transfer cost (Mexico)	12,00 €	
Third transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Complementary wage increase for the next six months (Coordinator wage)	7.917,00 €	
Bank account management monthly fee (3)	33,00 €	
<b>Total</b>		<b>60.326,32 €</b>

Source: self-made, amount in euros.

**Table 4. Overview of total income and expenses**

Concept	Expenses	Income
Membership fees 2019		52.400,00 €
Membership fees 2020		43.085,00 €
<b>Total</b>		<b>95.485,00 €</b>
Danny travel costs expenses	158,80 €	
Juliane travel costs expenses	463,50 €	
Cooperation and working Infrastructure 2019	5.000,00 €	
First transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Website annual fee	438,62 €	
Bank confirmation letter	48,40 €	
Mailing list service	130,00 €	
New website design	4.500,00 €	
Second transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Transfer cost (Mexico)	12,00 €	
Third transfer (QNN agreement)	13.875,00 €	
Complementary wage increase for the next six months (Coordinator wage)	7.917,00 €	
Bank account management monthly fee (3)	33,00 €	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.326,32 €</b>	

Source: self-made, amount in euros.

## 5. Balance

Assets		Liabilities	
Funds	95.485,00 €	General reserve	35.158,68€
		Reserves	60.326,32 €
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.485,00 €</b>		<b>95.485,00 €</b>

Source: self-made, amount in euros.

**Approved by the Board**

**On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**



**Juliane Steeger**  
**Chair of the Board**



**Anouk Erkelens**  
**Treasury**



**Sören Landmann**  
**Secretary**



**Danny Jacqmot**  
**General Board**  
**Member**



**Guillaume Mandicourt**  
**General Board**  
**Member**