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INFO PACK

RAINBOW CITIES NETWORK



A Global Network for LGBTIQ
Equality

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General Information

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Since discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people often takes place in their direct surroundings, municipal and regional authorities have an important and specific task in combating discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people. Combating discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people is rarely explicitly dealt with by most local administrations. These Rainbow Cities are the exception to this; they consider it their responsibility to protect and support their LGBTIQ+ citizens.

The exchange of good practices, interventions, and initiatives between these cities is an important way to increase the impact of local approaches and to spend budgets effectively.

The Rainbow Cities Network is a network in motion. Political shifts in the local government can mean an increased attention for LGBTIQ+ citizens, but it can also have the opposite effect. New members join, while other members decide to prioritize differently. The Network remains an interactive, inspiring place to discuss, exchange, and work together on increasing social inclusion and equality for all.

The aims of the Network:

- Exchange experiences and lessons learned on LGBTIQ+ issues in local policies;
- Collaborate on specific themes, in projects or otherwise;
- Exchange of local good practices and initiatives with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Keep up to date with international developments in LGBTIQ+ policy;
- Link up with (developments in) international networks and organizations.

Cities are represented by a staff member of the administration, so not by politicians or NGO's. By organizing the Network this way, the members aim for sustainability and commitment at the working level of policy making and implementation. The Mayor, or Deputy Mayor, of a member city, needs to guarantee political backing by signing a Memorandum of Understanding, committing to the goals and activities of the Network.

On the occasion of the annual meetings, the cities deliver a so-called one-pager, in which the focus and progress of their local LGBTIQ+ policies and initiatives are summarized. These "one-pagers" are the basis for reflection and exchange on certain themes.

In 2024 the Rainbow Cities Network has 55 members from 21 countries: Aarhus, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bergen, Berlin, Bern, Bordeaux, Bregenz, Bremen, Bruges, Brussels Capital Region, Cologne, Copenhagen, Cork, Esch-sur-Alzette, Frankfurt am Main, Geneva, Genk, Ghent, Gießen, Hamburg, Hanover, Haselt, Heidelberg, Helsinki, Kortrijk, Kotor, Lausanne, Leuven, Lille, Linz, Ljubljana, Mainz, Mannheim, Mechelen, Mexico City, Montpelilier, Montréal, Munich, New Taipei City, Nuremberg, Oldenburg, Oostende, Oslo, Paris, Podgorica, Reykjavik, Roeselare, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Sao Paulo, Taipei, Vienna, Wiesbaden, and Zürich.



+ General Information

The Rainbow Cities Network meets once a year, each time hosted by another member city.

The cities communicate via a closed email list, to which only member cities are invited.

A dedicated website, with information on the member cities and the Network, our address is: www.rainbowcities.com

The Network is organized as a nonprofit association. Joining cities become a member of this association and are obliged to pay a membership fee, based on the number of inhabitants (please refer to our "By-laws" document to see more detailed information regarding this point).



By- laws

The following points were agreed upon/ among member cities

1. Signature on the Memorandum of Understanding:

Political support of the city government is crucial for participation in the Rainbow Cities Network. The document is preferably signed by the Mayor of the City, but it can also be, by delegation, a relevant Councilor, Head of Department, etc.

2. Official name:

“Rainbow Cities Network”,

but member cities are free to use the prefix “International” informally.

3. Preconditions for membership

In order for the Rainbow Cities Network to remain an active and effective network, aspiring cities must meet the following preconditions:

- Executing and enhancing an active LGBTIQ+ policy or mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ issues within the general local policies;
- A staff member of the municipal administration in charge of LGBTIQ+ issues;
- Designating the above-mentioned staff member (maximum 2) as representatives of the city to actively contribute to the exchange within the Network;
- This representative will participate in the annual meeting;
- Contributing to the exchange within the Network by annually drawing up an overview of their policies concerning LGBTIQ+ policies in the provided template;
- Describing one, maximum two, good practice(s) in a second one-pager (1 A4), following the provided template.

These preconditions are important aspects of the membership of the Rainbow Cities network and an addition to the Memorandum of Understanding.

4.Member Fees

1. The general fee depends on the size of the city by inhabitants.

Small cities up to 300.000 1200 euro

Medium cities with 300.001 – 750.000 2400 euro

Big cities over 750.001 3840 euro

2. The first fees have to be paid immediately after joining the Network.

3. Cities can pay a voluntary fee up to a total of 5000 euros to support other member cities who are unable to cover the annual fee.

5.Solidarity Reduction

1. Cities that cannot afford the estimated fee can apply for a solidarity reduction.

2. To apply for the solidarity reduction, the cities must use the standard application form, which can be obtained from the coordination or treasury board member.

3. Aims of solidarity reduction:

a. The minimum fee is 500 € per address.

b. The sitting board of the RCN decides on the reduction of fees. They have to decide within eight weeks after request on behalf of the following grounds.

a)The actual Big Mac Index of the country the city comes from

b)The actual budgetary situation of the city

c)The amount of money the city is actually paying for LGBTIQ+ issues

d)The financial situation of the Rainbow Cities Network

6.Working language:

The Rainbow Cities Network´s official language is English.

If members cannot communicate in English, this is a disadvantage for exchange via the mailing list and during the annual meetings. However, they are welcome to send a relevant administration staff member to the annual meeting but they have to provide translation on their own initiative and costs. The maximum number of participants on behalf of a city remains two (including translators).

7.Participation at the annual meetings:

·Every member city shall attend the annual meeting with a minimum of one person and a maximum of two persons, but each city may have only one vote.

·Representatives of the member cities to the Network are local administration staff members only; no politicians of NGO's can represent the city.

·Guest cities can attend a meeting once, before eventual adhesion and after explicit permission of the Network members. They will have no right to vote.

·Other guests (experts, ad hoc speakers) can be invited for certain parts of the meeting when their presence is of added value. They will have no right to vote.

·Observers from institutions/ministries/national governments—who finance the network, for example—can be invited as guests, but only when their presence adds value.

·“Observers” (non-members who observe and not participate in the discussion) will never be part of the meeting.

8. Cities applying for the network – membership of the Network

A. Procedure for interested cities and confirmation of membership:

1.The official application consists of:

- a.The signed Memorandum of Understanding
- b.A one-pager on the specifics of the local LGBTIQ+ policy
- c.A one-pager of the good practices from the current or previous year of application.

2.The applying city sends it to the Network via the coordinator, after which the member cities can give feedback.

- a.Member cities have three weeks to respond to the application to the coordinator (to limit the number of emails: avoid replying to all or via the mailing list);
- b.In case of positive feedback of the (simple) majority, the coordinator will confirm membership to both the new city and the Network. The coordinator will add the contact person(s) to the mailing list and the list of contacts and send the new member all relevant documents, including the logo and the user guidelines;
- c.In case of an objection or additional questions, the decision on the membership of that particular city will be adjourned and discussed at the following annual meeting. An objection needs to be grounded and the applying city will be invited to clarify any questions of the member cities. The decision will be then taken via the established voting procedure.

B. Procedure regarding 'inactive' cities

The Rainbow Cities Network is an active and interactive network; it can only exist by the participation of all members. However, due to political developments, budget restraints, or prioritizing, some member cities can cease to actively take part in the Network. Because the Network wants to prevent just any city being able to call itself Rainbow City, even if they were a member once, the RCN defined the following characteristics of an 'inactive' city:

- not sending the 2 one-pagers annually
- no participation in the annual meeting without an explicit and valid justification
- not responding to important topics and voting procedures via the mailing list
- not covering the annual fee without an acceptable excuse

Falling in any one of the aforementioned characteristics will put a member city to a so-called 'sleeping status' if they have valid reasons for becoming inactive temporarily. Not complying with more than one of the aforementioned characteristics will, after one reminder by the coordinator, lead to the membership termination.

If cities do not respond at all to any communication, even not to an explicit reminder by the coordinator, they will be removed as a member of the RCN. Herewith, they will lose all membership rights and benefits; the name of the city will be removed from the public list of members and the contact person(s) will be removed from the internal mailing list. The city will need to go through the official membership application procedure again; if, they want to re-join the network. Moreover, the city will neither be allowed to use the RCN logo nor are they allowed to claim membership of the RCN in any form of communication.

C. Representatives of member cities in the Network

Every member city will provide a second contact person to the coordinator, to be added to the mailing list. In case of illness or absence of the first representative, the member city will always have a second person responsible for communication with the Network. This will also prevent a city from being wrongly classified as 'inactive' for losing communication with the other members and the coordinator.

In case of long-term absence, it is the responsibility of the city to transfer the contact and tasks with regard to the RCN to a colleague. This way the city can still oblige to the membership preconditions.

9. Visibility of the network

The network should have the following instruments for communication and information:

- A website for the network -www.rainbowcities.com

On the website will be:

- A list of the member cities including logos of municipal LGBTIQ+ departments or the City logo
- The annual One-Pagers (one on policy overview and one on current good practice)
- Information from the annual meetings (no detailed minutes, but a general report can be shared)
- The quarterly newsletter

- A quarterly newsletter(*only if enough funding is established*)

- Logo: all (new) members will receive the standard logo's from the coordinator, together with the user guidelines. For alternative sizes and formats, please contact the coordinator.

- The internal mailing list will remain exclusively for member cities only.

- The network will use social network tools to share and endorse activities from its member's cities. As well as, to share information relevant to the LGBTIQ+ community.

10. Defining the roles:

The Board

1.The Board is appointed by the Annual Meeting: this provides their mandate to represent the network.

2.The Board is responsible for managing the Association. The board consists of a minimum of three (3) and maximum five (5) delegates from the member cities who are elected for 2 (two) years.

3.The Board is self-organized and acts jointly, it ought to consist of a Chair person, a Treasurer and a Secretary of the Board, all elected by the Board members themselves.

4.The association is represented by the Board. The Board shapes the future of the association by representing the core values of the association to create a sustainable future in regard to LGBTIQ+ Inclusion, focusing strongly on the creation of LGBTIQ+ inclusive cities.

5.The Board is responsible for the proper course of business that guarantees the good functioning of the association.

6.The Board is responsible for managing, supporting and working collaboratively with the Coordinator/Director

7.The Board is a support for the member cities; it is amenable interacting with and facilitating requests from member cities, as far as is possible.

8.The Board reports to the general assembly once a year at the annual meeting about its activities.

9.There is one annual Board meeting in person. The monthly meetings take place online.

Coordinator:

- Supports Rainbow Cities in finding links and good practices regarding LGBTIQ+ themes

- Supports Rainbow Cities in contacting potential new member cities (follow up of initial contacts)

- Provides information and relevant documents for potential and new members cities of the Network (membership procedure, By-laws, logo and user guidelines, mailing list subscription, etc.)

·Serve as liaisons between Rainbow Cities Network and international networks and structures (e.g. Council of Europe, European Commission, Focal Points Network, international LGBTIQ+ umbrella NGO's, etc.)

·Prepares the annual and prep meetings and supports the host cities in drafting the agenda and communication with the RCN members

·Moderates the (closed) mailing list

·Draws up and sends a quarterly newsletter on (mainly European) local LGBTIQ+ policy issues

·Services the website

·Send out the invoices to the members for fee payment to the RCN

·Curate the content of the RCN social networks

Host City of the annual meeting:

·Takes part in the preparatory meeting (2 months prior to the annual meeting)

·Organizes the annual meeting in advance (providing a meeting room and coffee, tea, and water for all participants for 1,5 days. No obligation to provide hotel, lunch, or dinner)

·Sends out the official invitation to the annual meeting

·Decides on one topic of the annual meeting and prepares an exchange with the local LGBTIQ+ community

·Summarizes – with the help of the coordinator- the annual meeting in a general report which can be published publicly (e.g. on the website and social networks)

Prep team:

·The prep team consists of the host of last year's annual meeting, the host of the upcoming annual meeting, the RCN coordinator, and the host of the prep team meeting

·The prep team will draft the agenda and prepare proposals for discussion or exchange, based on input from the other members.

·The prep host team will organize a meeting approximately 2 months before the annual meeting. The prep meeting takes 1,5 days

·The prep team members are responsible for the organization and costs of their own travel, accommodation, and other arrangements during the prep meeting

Members:

·Provide an overview of their local LGBTIQ+ policy in a so-called one-pager prior to the annual meeting (one page according to a template, to be distributed by the coordinator)

·Deliver details on current good practice, prior to the annual meeting (one page according to a template, to be distributed by the coordinator)

·Are responsible for the organization and costs of their own travel, accommodation, and other arrangements

·Member cities who do not attend the prep meeting can send their input for the annual meeting's agenda via email to the host city or the coordinator.

·Are encouraged to share, send, or to bring any materials, reports, etc. they would like to share

·Take an active part in the communication of the network

·Send contributions to the coordinator for the newsletter

·Are encouraged to host a prep meeting or an annual meeting

11. Annual meetings and prep meetings

A preparatory meeting will be organized approximately 2 months before the annual meeting. These prep meetings are held in a different city each year, to give a chance to cities who are not able to organize the bigger annual meetings to do show their commitment.

The annual meeting is held in a different city each year in November. Exceptions to this can be made, but only for valid reasons and with the consent of the members. The length of the meeting is 1,5 days, preferably on Thursday and Friday. Whether the meetings start on Thursday morning or afternoon is up to the host city, but it is agreed that the agenda is set up in a way that not more than 1 hotel night is required.

The 1st part will ideally be reserved be for internal discussions and decision making.

The 2nd part should be more focused on exchange and discussion about specific topics with possible relevant experts and guests.

The 3rd part offers the possibility for an exchange with local NGO's.

The prep committee will draw up the agenda, with input from all members. A call for input will be sent via the mailing list.

Each year, during the annual meeting, the host city of the annual meeting is established for the meeting two years ahead. The host city of the prep meeting is established one year ahead. Every member city can be a candidate to host a meeting, but they cannot host the prep and annual meeting in the same year. In the case of more candidates to host, there will be a draw for the final candidate, with the other cities taking consecutive places.

Exact dates and times for the annual meeting will be announced by the host city as soon as possible, at least 6 months before the meeting.

Registration deadlines for the annual meeting (confirmation of attendance) will be established and communicated by the host city, in accordance with logistical aspects..

