



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth



Observatory for
Sociopolitical Developments
in Europe



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CONFERENCE BOOKLET

Intersectionality and LGBTI Policies in Europe: Lived Realities of Lesbian* Women and the Recognition of Rainbow Families

International Conference

Berlin, 18 and 19 November 2020



Intersectionality and LGBTI Policies in Europe: Lived Realities of Lesbian Women and the Recognition of Rainbow Families

Within the framework of the German Presidencies of the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe in 2020, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth together with the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe is hosting this international conference on LGBTI policies in Europe.

Despite universal human rights standards, acceptance of the rights and needs of LGBTI persons varies considerably among the member states of the European Union and those of the Council of Europe. In particular, lesbian* women are discriminated against for various intersectionally overlapping reasons. They often face stigmatisation as women and on account of their sexual orientation. Other types of discrimination based on disability, religious views, origin, age or social status exacerbate their personal or social situation further.

In addition, LGBTI persons are still facing many legal and social obstacles when starting a family. Across the member states of the European Union, rainbow families are regularly confronted with restrictions to their freedom of movement due to differing legal regulations. With regard to lesbian* couples, co-motherhood is rarely sufficiently defined in the national laws of the member states. Furthermore, regulations on adoption covering the situation of rainbow families differ or are absent across the member states of the European Union.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is committed to upholding the rights of LGBTI persons. As part of the German Presidencies of the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe, the Ministry's objective is to promote equality of LGBTI persons and the recognition of rainbow families. Therefore, this conference raises awareness for the intersectional – overlapping and mutually reinforcing – aspects of discrimination lesbian* women experience in their daily lives as well as the specific needs of rainbow families.

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Programme Day I

18 November 2020

12:45 **Welcome remarks**

Caren Marks | Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

12:55 **Video message**

Michael Roth | Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office

13:00 **Introduction**

Yasmine Blair | Conference moderator

13:10 **Spotlight It's Burning But Dykes Are in Charge, Breathe.**

Joëlle Sambu Nzeba | Co-Chair of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

13:30 **Panel 1 Intersectionality and Lesbian* Visibility**

Panel moderation: Dr. Emilia Zenzile Roig

- **Marion Lüttig** | Board member of LesbenRing e.V.
- **Joëlle Sambu Nzeba** | Co-Chair of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community
- **Peggy Piesche** | Senior Policy Advisor on Intersectionality, Diversity and Decoloniality at the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb)
- **Dr. Karin Schönplug** | Researcher at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna
- **Reingard Wagner** | Board member of Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V.

14:35 **Keynote The Challenge of Lesbian* Visibility**

Dr. Christine M. Klapeer | Georg-August-University of Göttingen

14:50 **Short break**

Programme Day I

18 November 2020

15:10 **Panel 2 Advancing Lesbian* Visibility in Research**

Panel moderation: Pia Mann

- **Dr. Stefanie Boulila** | Senior Lecturer, Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts
- **Silvia Casalino** | Co-Executive Director at the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community
- **Magdalena Siegel** | Researcher at the University of Vienna
- **Patrycja Pogodzinska** | Legal Expert and Project Manager, Research & Data Unit, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

16:10 **Short break**

16:30 **Spotlight Queer Asylum – The Recognition of Black Lesbian* Asylum Claims in Germany**

Dr. Mengia Tschalaer | Co-founder and Convenor of the Queer European Asylum

Network

16:50 **Panel 3 Rainbow Families – Challenges and Steps Ahead: Towards the Full Recognition of Rainbow Families Across the European Union?**

Panel moderation: Prof. Alina Tryfonidou

- **Marc Angel** | Co-President of the European Parliament LGBTI Intergroup
- **Eleni Maravelia** | President of the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations
- **Björn Sieverding** | Board member of the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations
- **Eleni Tsetsekou** | Head of the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit (SOGI-Unit)
- **Maria Vilar Badia** | Legislative Officer, Unit A1 Civil Justice, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)

17:50 **Closing remarks**

18:00 **End of conference day 1**

Programme Day II

19 November 2020

9:25 **Welcome to second conference day**

Yasmine Blair | Conference moderator

09:30 **Joint press conference on the EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy**

Helena Dalli | European Union Commissioner for Equality
Franziska Giffey | German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

10:00 **Panel 4 High Level Discussion on Intersectionality and LGBTI: The New EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy**

Panel moderation: Manuela Kay

- **Marija Pejčinović Burić** | Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- **Helena Dalli** | European Union Commissioner for Equality
- **Franziska Giffey** | German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

11:00 **Coffee break**

11:30 **Panel 5 Strengthening the Voice of Civil Society in EU LGBTI Policy-Making**

Panel moderation: Rachael Moore

- **Andrea Ayala** | Board member of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community
- **Katrin Hugendubel** | Advocacy Director at ILGA-Europe
- **Richard Köhler** | Senior Policy Officer at Transgender Europe
- **Irena Moozová** | Director for Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)
- **Terry Reintke** | Co-President of the European Parliament LGBTI Intergroup

12:30 **Lunch break**

Programme Day II

19 November 2020

13:45 **Spotlight FRA LGBTI Survey & Lesbian* Visibility**

Michael O'Flaherty | Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

14:00 **Panel 6 Empowering the Lesbian* Movement – a Capacity Building Perspective**

Panel moderation: Mina Tolu

- **Ise Bosch** | Founder and CEO of Dreilinden gGmbH
- **Zuzana Dorazilová** | Deputy Head of Unit D1 Non-discrimination and Roma Coordination, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)
- **Ailbhe Smyth** | LGBTIQ Activist and Campaigner
- **Dragana Todorovic** | Co-Executive Director at the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

15:00 **Closing remarks**

15:15 **End of conference day 2**

Speaker Biographies

in alphabetical order

Marc Angel

Member of the European Parliament in the Group of Socialists and Democrats and Co-President of the LGBTI Intergroup in the European Parliament

Marc Angel was born and raised in Luxembourg. He holds a diploma in translation from the University in Vienna (Mag. Phil Diplomübersetzer). He has been an MEP since 2019. From 2004 to 2019, he was a Member of the Luxembourg National Parliament, where he chaired the Foreign and European Affairs Committee. He is the co-founder of the LGBTI NGO “Rosa Lëtzebuerg” and co-founder of the NGO “Stop Aids Now” in Luxembourg. He is also UNAIDS Champion for the 90-90-90 treatment strategy, where he focused on treatment access for key and vulnerable populations.

Andrea M. Ayala

Board member of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

Andrea M. Ayala (she/they) has been a Salvadoran human rights defender since 2009 and has worked in multilateral spaces since 2014, addressing different issues related to LGBTIQ populations globally. She specialises in advocacy and lobbying in spaces such as the United Nations and regional human rights systems in the Americas. She is a lawyer with a specialisation in Human Rights Litigation in the Universal System of Human Rights and Inter-American System from the American University, Washington College of Law, and also has a Higher Diploma in Sexual Diversity awarded by CLACSO Latin America and the Argentinian LGBT Federation. Currently, she lives as a refugee in Europe and has started advocating this issue and rights for the lesbian, bisexual and non-binary refugee population.

Ise Bosch

Founder and CEO of Dreilinden gGmbH

Ise Bosch has 25 years of funding experience in the fields of human rights, women and sexual minorities. Through Dreilinden gGmbH, she invests and makes grants in the field of international LGBTIQ and gender human rights. In 2018, Ise received the “Deutscher Stifterpreis”, one of Europe’s most prestigious philanthropic awards, from the German Association of Foundations. Her 2007 book “Besser Spenden!” is still the only German

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language advisory publication on strategic giving from a donor's perspective. "Transformative Philanthropy - Giving with Trust" (with Justus Eisfeld and Claudia Bollwinkel) was published in 2018.

Dr. Stefanie Boulila

Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Dr. Stefanie Boulila is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and a member of the Swiss Young Academy. She is co-investigator on the SNSF-funded "Capacity Building for Rainbow Families in Switzerland and Beyond", a participatory research project about the lived experiences of LGBTQ parents in the Swiss Alps. Her work on lesbian lives, intersectionality and racism has been published by the European Journal of Women's Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies and Leisure Studies and in edited collections including Lesbian Geographies: Gender, Place and Power (Ashgate/Routledge, 2015). In 2019, she published her monograph Race in Post-racial Europe: An Intersectional Analysis (Rowman & Littlefield International).

Silvia Casalino

Co-Executive Director at the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

Silvia Casalino has a Master's degree in Space Engineering from Politecnico di Milano. From 2001 to 2018, she worked for the French Space Agency (<https://cnes.fr/en>) in Paris. In parallel, Silvia has worked as a political and cultural activist for the last 20 years. In 2011, she directed her first documentary film, "No Gravity", starring some of the greatest women astronauts and the philosopher Donna Haraway, which aired on German television broadcaster ZDF. Silvia Casalino teaches Management at the Sorbonne and Institut Catholique de Paris Universities. In 2017, she co-created the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community. After 3 years of chairmanship, she is currently EL*C Executive Co-Director.

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Helena Dalli

Helena Dalli is the first EU Commissioner for Equality since December 2019. Her role is to deliver on the Union of Equality chapter within the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen by strengthening Europe's commitment to equality and inclusion in all of its senses.

Prior to taking her role as Commissioner, Dalli held various political roles in Malta including Member of Parliament (1996 to 2019), Minister for European Affairs and Equality (2017 to 2019), and Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (2013 to 2017). She was also opposition Shadow Minister for public administration, equality, public broadcasting and national investments (1998 to 2013) and Junior Minister for Women's Rights in the Office of Prime Minister (1996 to 1998). Dalli holds a PhD in Political Sociology from the University of Nottingham, and lectured in Economic and Political Sociology, Public Policy, and Sociology of Law at the University of Malta.

Zuzana Dorazilová

Deputy Head of Unit D1 Non-discrimination and Roma Coordination, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

Zuzana Dorazilová is a Deputy Head of Unit responsible for non-discrimination and Roma integration at the European Commission. She joined the European Commission in 2005 to work on several EU funding programmes in the area of fight against crime and later was responsible for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights. Before joining the European Commission, she worked in a law firm in Prague. Ms Dorazilová graduated in Law and Political Science at the Palacký University and completed a postgraduate LLM degree in Human Rights at the Central European University in Budapest.

Franziska Giffey

German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Franziska Giffey has been Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since March 2018. Prior to this, she was Mayor of the Berlin district of Neukölln. From 2010 to 2015 she worked in the District Administration of Neukölln, Berlin, in the

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role of Councillor for Education, Culture and Sports. Before this, she worked as Representative for European Affairs for the same district. In addition to a Diploma of Public Administration, Franziska Giffey has also obtained an M.A. in European Administrative Management.

Katrin Hugendubel

Advocacy Director at ILGA-Europe

Katrin Hugendubel is Advocacy Director at ILGA-Europe, an independent, international non-governmental umbrella organisation bringing together over 600 organisations from 54 countries in Europe and Central Asia. Katrin is in charge of the overall coordination of the policy, advocacy and strategic litigation work of ILGA-Europe towards EU institutions, governments across the region, the Council of Europe, OSCE, and UN level. Katrin holds a Master's degree in Political Science and English Language and Literature from the University of Freiburg, Germany. Since 2002, Katrin has worked as political advisor and assistant to a Member of the European Parliament, as well as with several NGO networks at EU level and in Uganda.

Manuela Kay

Journalist, writer, publisher, moderator

Berlin-born and -based journalist for LGBT issues since 1986. CEO at Special Media SDL publishing house, publisher of queer city magazine Siegessäule and lesbian magazine L-MAG. Film curator, festival organiser, moderator, author of books as well as contributor to various books.

Dr. Christine M. Klapeer

Georg-August-University of Göttingen

Christine M. Klapeer (she/her) is a political scientist with an emphasis on queer, postcolonial and feminist political theory, transnational LGBTIQ* policies and intersectional perspectives on heteronormativity and queer citizenship. She is currently a senior lecturer in Gender Studies at the Georg-August-University of Göttingen, a co-

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convenor of the German Political Science Association's (DVPW) section "Gender and Politics" and author of the book "Perverse Bürgerinnen. Staatsbürgerschaft und lesbische Existenz" (2014). Her latest research projects focus on the negotiation of LGBTIQ* rights in the field of development policies as well as on intersections of posthumanism, eco-queer utopianism and feminist critiques of the self-possessive individual.

Richard Köhler

Senior Policy Officer at Transgender Europe

Richard oversees TGEU's policy and advocacy work at the European level and has been a trans activist for more than a decade. Starting with TGEU as a member of the steering committee, he has continuously initiated change to develop the structure and policy of TGEU, drawing from his wide experience in international project management and NGO consultancy. Richard has a background in international business administration, specialising in NGOs in Russian-speaking countries.

Marion Lüttig

Board member of LesbenRing eV.

Marion Lüttig has been a queer feminist lesbian activist since the mid-1990s in Germany and has been involved in Green Politics since then, most recently as a board member for the LSVD (lesbian & gay association) Baden-Württemberg from 2013 to 2018, where she fought for lesbian visibility and rainbow family issues on a voluntary basis. Since 2017, she has been working at the rainbow family centre in Munich, has been a board member of LesbenRing since 2019 and is a Green Party city councillor in the Bavarian capital city of Munich.

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Pia Mann

Social worker and trainer at Schwulenberatung Berlin and voluntary organiser for DISCOVER FOOTBALL

Pia Mann works as a voluntary organizer for DISCOVER FOOTBALL, an NGO that uses football as a tool to promote womxn's empowerment and LGBTIQ rights. In her professional life, she is a social worker and trainer for LGBTIQ sensitisation at Schwulenberatung Berlin. She holds a Master's degree in North American Studies, Political Science and Latin American Studies. In 2019, she was a co-organiser of the international conference "Sport Disrupted: Sexuality Matters", which highlighted the interactions between sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) and sports.

Eleni Maravelia

President of the Network of European LGBTIQ Families Associations (NELFA)

Eleni Marvella is a Greek living in Spain with her British wife and two daughters. She works as an e-commerce manager and volunteer on the board of NELFA and FLG (LGBT Families Catalonia). She got involved with the rights of LGBTIQ families after she experienced first-hand the inequalities parents and their children face in the EU and Europe just because they identify as LGBTIQ.

Caren Marks

Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Since 2002, Caren Marks has been an elected member of the German Bundestag. She has been engaged with topics such as family policy, LGBTIQ rights as well as child and youth policy throughout her entire political career. From 2009 to 2013, she was the Spokesperson of the Working Group on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag. In 2013, she was appointed Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Caren Marks graduated from the Leibniz University

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Hannover in Lower Saxony, where she also worked as a research assistant after completing her studies and before she became politically engaged.

Rachael Moore

Director of the Rainbow House Brussels

Rachael Moore is a British-born LGBT activist who lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. With a background in youth empowerment, LGBT rights and advocacy, Rachael is no stranger to discrimination in both social and professional settings. Her experience at European level of politics has given her a greater insight into how vital intersectionality is when re-shaping our society. Currently she is the Director of the Rainbow House Brussels, the federation of French- and Dutch-speaking LGBT associations in the Brussels Capital Region. She is the first black woman to take up this role.

Irena Moozová

Director for Equality and Union Citizenship, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

Irena Moozová is a Director at the European Commission for Equality and Union Citizenship in its department for Justice (DG JUST). She is a Czech national and joined the Commission in 2006 as Head of EU Representation in Prague. Between May 2010 and April 2017, she headed the unit in charge of supporting the Commission Representations, in the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM). Ms Moozová graduated from the Faculty of Law at Charles University in Prague and has completed postgraduate studies at the Diplomatic Academy in Madrid.

Michael O’Flaherty

Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Michael O’Flaherty is Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. Previously, Michael O’Flaherty was Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland, Galway. He has served as Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Member of

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the UN Human Rights Committee and head of a number of UN Human Rights Field Operations.

Marija Pejčinović Burić

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Marija Pejčinović Burić is the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the pre-eminent pan-European international organisation in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Prior to being elected to her current position, Ms Pejčinović Burić was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, having served previously, on two occasions, as State Secretary for EU Affairs. She also served as a Member of the Croatian Parliament.

Peggy Piesche

Literary and Cultural Studies scholar whose work is centred in Black European Studies, Senior Policy Advisor on intersectionality, diversity and decoloniality at the Federal Agency for Civic Education, bpb

Born and raised in the GDR, Piesche studied in East and West Germany and Russia. She taught at the University of Utrecht, Netherlands, and held visiting positions for German, Women's and Africana Studies in the USA. She has published about racialised and Black Images (imagery), colonial history and collective memories. She is co-founder of the interdisciplinary research project BEST - "Black Europe: History of a Forgotten Continent". She is also an activist with ADEFRA (Black Women in Germany) and board member of ASWAD.

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Dr. Patrycja Pogodzinska

Project Manager - Legal Research, Research & Data Unit, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Patrycja Pogodzinska is a legal expert and project manager in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' Research and Data Unit. She manages the ongoing project "Business and human rights: access to remedy improvements". Her other areas of expertise with respect to the FRA's work include: European human rights law, non-discrimination, LGBTI rights, citizens' rights and freedom of movement, discrimination on the grounds of nationality, consumer rights. Before joining FRA in 2016, she worked for several years as a lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. She is a qualified lawyer (attorney) and holds a PhD in International Law; she is author of numerous publications in the area of international law and human rights, in particular relating to LGBTI persons' rights.

Terry Reintke

Co-President of the European Parliament LGBTI Intergroup

Terry Reintke is vice-president of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, the group's coordinator for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and shadow rapporteur on the rule of law in Poland. She is co-president of the LGBTI Intergroup and founder of the EU-UK Friendship Group.

Dr. Emilia Zenzile Roig

Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ)

Emilia Roig is the Founder and Director of the Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ), an organization advancing justice, equality and a life free of systemic oppression for all. She has taught courses on Intersectionality Theory, Postcolonial Studies, Critical Race Theory and International and European Law. She holds a PhD in Political Science, a Master of Public Policy and an MBA. She is a jury member of the German Non-Fiction Book Prize 2020, and of the Edition F 25 Women Award 2019. In 2019, the European Commission appointed her as an external expert.

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Michael Roth

Minister of State for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office

Since 1998 he has been a directly elected Member of the German Bundestag; from 2010 to 2013, he served as Spokesperson on Europe of the SPD parliamentary group; from 2009 to February 2014 he was Secretary-General of the SPD in the State of Hesse, since 2017 he has been a Member of the SPD Executive Committee. Since 2014 he has served as Commissioner for Franco-German Cooperation, member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for European Politics and member of the board of the Franco-German Institute in Ludwigsburg, Chairman of the supervisory board of the Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation.

Joëlle Sambi Nzeba

Co-Chair of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian Community (EL*C)

Joëlle Sambi (she/her) is an Afrofeminist lesbian activist, Co-chair of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian Community. She is a Belgian-Congolese writer, poet and filmmaker. Her artistic work is closely linked to her activism and she questions through them the notions of belonging, police brutalities, classism and LGBT rights especially for ethnic minorities. She is working on the publication of her next novel as well as a collection of poetry. And she continues the realization of her first documentary "Pinkshasa Diaspora", a political poem about the lives of LGBT people of Congolese origin living in the diaspora.

Dr. Karin Schöpflug

Researcher at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna

Karin Schöpflug works as an economist at Vienna's Institute for Higher Studies. She has been teaching Economics, Gender and Transdisciplinary Studies at Universities in Austria, the US and New Zealand. Her research focus is on the socio-economic exclusion of queer and marginalized people. She has also been connecting feminist economics with utopian approaches; she published her dissertation as "Feminism, Economics, and Utopia. Time travelling through paradigms" (Routledge 2008). Recently she has been working on the

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gendered, raced and classed effects of the pandemic as connected to coloniality and ecological crises.

Magdalena Siegel

Researcher and doctoral candidate at the Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna

Magdalena Siegel holds a degree in Psychology. She is currently working as a psychological researcher and doctoral candidate at the University of Vienna, Austria. Her focal areas of research include structural and individual determinants of LGBT+ health (both individuals and families), meta science, and research synthesis (quantitative and qualitative). She is co-author of the study “The state of lesbian organizing and the lived realities of lesbians in the EU and the accession countries”.

Björn Sieverding

Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations, NELFA

Björn Sieverding is a board member of NELFA, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations. Since 2016, he has taken part in international conferences, held workshops and key speeches about rainbow families all over Europe. Björn managed three Erasmus+ projects for LGBTIQ* activists. He is also responsible for NELFA’s communication (including website, newsletter, and press releases). From 2019 to 2020, Björn was elected Vice President for NELFA. In his professional life, he is working for the public radio in Germany (MDR). Björn is married and has two foster children.

Ailbhe Smyth

LGBTIQ Activist and Campaigner

Ailbhe Smyth is a lesbian / LGBTIQ and feminist activist and is the former head of Women’s Studies at University College Dublin. Ailbhe played a key role in the victorious same-sex marriage constitutional campaign in 2015 and was Co-Director of the referendum campaign which removed the constitutional ban on abortion in 2018. She chaired the National Lesbian and Gay Federation (publisher of GCN Gay Community

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News) for many years, and has been involved in countless LGBT campaigns and organisations. She was listed in Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2019.

Dragana Todorovic

Co-Executive Director at the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

Dragana Todorovic is a lesbian and feminist activist from Serbia. For over 20 years, she has been involved in different types of work and activities related to human rights and gender equality, with a focus on LGBTI rights, and more specifically on rights of lesbians*. During the past several years, Dragana's work has mostly been focusing on issues related to networking, development and advocacy, both in her work for EL*C – EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community and ERA – LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey.

Mina Tolu

LGBTIQ Activist and Campaigner

Mina Tolu (They/Them) is an LGBTQI activist from Malta, with 10 years of experience in campaigning and communications on human rights and environmental issues. This includes designing and implementing online and social media campaigns for IGLYO, Transgender Europe, and We Are – an LGBTQI youth organisation in Malta. Mina has just completed a Master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. They are currently working as a consultant on trans and non-binary inclusive storylines for European productions, and are a member of the LGBTQI Consultative Council to the Government of Malta.

Prof. Alina Tryfonidou

Professor of Law at the University of Reading, United Kingdom

Alina Tryfonidou is Professor of Law at the University of Reading (UK). She holds an LLB, LLM, and PhD from King's College London and is an Associate of King's College (AKC). She is a non-practising member of the Cyprus Bar, a Fellow of the Centre of European Law

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at King's College London, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Her research interests focus on EU free movement law and LGBT+ rights.

Dr. Mengia Tschalaer

Adjunct Associate Professor, City University of New York; Honorary Research Fellow, University of Bristol; Co-founder and Convenor of the Queer European Asylum Network

Mengia Tschalaer (PhD) is an adjunct Associate Professor at City University of New York and an Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies at University of Bristol, UK. As the co-founder of the Queer European Asylum Network, she is currently working on a EU-funded project that examines the experiences of LGBTQI+ people with Muslim background within Germany's asylum system. She has widely published in academic journals on gender, sexuality, socio-legal resistance, asylum, and Islam in the context of India and Germany and she is the author of several newspaper articles on queer asylum in Germany.

Eleni Tsetsekou

Head of the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit (SOGI Unit)

Eleni Tsetsekou is a lawyer and specialist on minority issues and vulnerable groups. She is the Head of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit of the Council of Europe, whose mission is to fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in Europe. She previously served in the Council of Europe Committee of Expert on Roma and Travelers, responsible for the promotion of integration policies and inclusion policies in member states of the Council of Europe. Roma women and girls were a particular focus of this work.

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Maria Vilar Badia

Legislative Officer, Unit A1 Civil Justice, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)

Maria is a legislative officer in the Unit of Civil Justice in the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers in the European Commission. Before her current position, Maria worked on antitrust matters and merger control in the Directorate-General for Competition in the European Commission. Before joining the European Commission, Maria worked in a law firm in Brussels dealing with international trade and WTO matters. Maria obtained her law degree at the University of Barcelona and an LL.M. in European Legal Studies at the University of Exeter (UK).

Reingard Wagner

Moderator and adult educationist, conducts workshops and courses with focus on feminist and LGBTIQ subjects, Board Member Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V.

The umbrella association Dachverband Lesben und Alter addresses older lesbian women's in living conditions, finances, care situation and assistance. Reingard Wagner's focus is on feminine poverty and lack of financial security of older Lesbians. They are especially affected by the German pension system that assumes that women have financial security through marriage. It discriminates especially against older lesbians, who could not benefit from same sex marriage. Pensions in Germany are lower compared with other EU countries, especially for women. As a consequence, it is often difficult for older lesbians to live comfortably.

SPOTLIGHT It's Burning But Dykes Are in Charge, Breathe.

18 November 2020, 13:10 – 13:25

Spotlight by Joëlle Sambu Nzeba, Co-Chair of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

We are in 2030, the world has turned upside down. We were expecting it. It's burning on all sides. The waters are on fire, the land is turning into a vast plastic tarmac, and the battle to keep our many and diverse stories alive is hard. We are in 2030, we are in 2020, everything seems lost, it's burning but the dykes are in charge so we can breathe, right?

This performance comes from a volonté of unfolding what is underlying our contemporary lesbian realities. I will be using the transformative powers of imagination, through the formulation of a magical realism scenario to address the lesbian issues we face such as the lack of funds for lesbian projects and organisations, the lack of data on lesbians and the resulting invisibility of our lives.

PANEL 1 Intersectionality and Lesbian* Visibility

18 November 2020, 13:30 – 14:30

Panel moderation: Dr. Emilia Zenzile Roig, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ)

Key questions

Is it still taboo to speak about racism, white supremacy and oppression in the lesbian community?

Intersectionality means making power and privilege within social justice movements visible: can you think of ways to challenge power within the lesbian and wider LGBTQI+ community?

What concrete measures could be put in place? What can we do individually and collectively? How can we foster radical solidarity in the movement?

Description

Intersectionality is a term that has made its way into everyday conversations about discrimination, diversity, inclusion and equity. However, the term continues to be misunderstood and diverted from its original aim, aspirations and roots, which leads to inconsistencies around the topic. What is intersectionality and how does it affect the LGBTQI movement, and more specifically the lesbian community? How are discrimination, systemic inequalities, and oppression intricately interwoven? How can white supremacy and racism be dismantled in the wider movement?

KEYNOTE The Challenge of Lesbian* Visibility

18 November 2020, 14:35 – 14:50

Keynote by Dr. Christine M. Klapeer, Georg-August-University of Göttingen

Key topics

The varied meanings of (lesbian*) visibility

The double meaning of “invisibility” (e.g. the white, heterosexual privilege of being “invisible”)

Challenges with regard to political claims for (more) “lesbian* visibility”

Description

In my presentation I aim to discuss some of the varied meanings of lesbian* visibility arguing that “more visibility” does not necessarily correlate with “more political influence”, “liberation” or a decline of anti-LGBTIQ* violence. Against this backdrop I will illustrate that a particular form of “invisibility” does not always indicate marginalisation or powerlessness but can be a sign of privilege (for instance, the “invisibilisation” of heterosexuality or whiteness as cultural norm/ality). Hence, I will outline how promoting lesbian* visibility must go beyond a mere “add [some nice, white, gender-conforming] lesbians and steer”-approach, thereby asking which bodies, lives and stories are being included when aiming to promote lesbian* visibility?

PANEL 2 Advancing Lesbian* Visibility in Research

18 November 2020, 15:10 – 16:10

Panel moderation: Pia Mann, Social worker and trainer at Schwulenberatung Berlin and voluntary organizer for DISCOVER FOOTBALL

Key questions

Which lesbian* identities become visible in research and society and which ones do not? How can an intersectional approach to research ensure that the picture of lesbians* gets more comprehensive and diverse?

Why is intersectional research important? Why is it important to include LGBTI women in the upcoming LGBTIQ Equality Strategy? What kind of research is necessary and how can the findings contribute to greater equality in the EU?

How visible are lesbians as researchers? How heteronormative are academic or research institutions and what does this mean for lesbians within the system?

Description

In their recent call to the European Commission on the need to include LGBTI women in the upcoming LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, the European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup voiced three key demands. Besides requesting an intersectional approach and adequate funding opportunities, the LGBTI Intergroup called upon European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli, "[to tackle] the important lack of data and research about LGBTI women that rein-forces their invisibility in policy making, [and to support] the collection of data and the financing of research especially on the socio-economic situation of LGBTI women as well as on their health." In this panel, four researchers from different academic or research institutions will present the key findings of their latest research in terms of lesbian (in)visibility and the social implications thereof. The panel will debate the importance of intersectional research and how it can do justice to the diversity of lesbians and their lived realities. Moreover, the situation of lesbians as research objects and as research subjects will be highlighted. The panel will also debate political demands to promote lesbian visibility in and through research and to tackle different forms of discrimination of lesbians in EU societies, in particular against the background of the coronavirus pandemic.

Further information

- European Parliament LGBTI Intergroup Bureau addresses Commission on the need to include LGBTI women in the upcoming LGBTIQ Equality Strategy: [Statement](#) from 12 October 2020.

SPOTLIGHT Queer Asylum: The Recognition of Black Lesbian* Asylum Claims in Germany

18 November 2020, 16:30 – 16:45

Spotlight by Dr. Mengia Tschalaer, Co-founder and Convenor of the Queer European Asylum Network

Key questions

What are the challenges lesbians racialised as Black face when seeking asylum in Germany?

How can we ensure that gender-related persecution is recognised in relation to sexual orientation in lesbian asylum claims?

Description

In Southern Germany, evidence shows that about 95% of asylum cases lodged by lesbian-identifying women – mostly from Sub-Saharan African countries – get rejected after the first interview. While the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) does not collect data specifically on LGBTQI+ asylum claims, estimates gathered by the lesbian organisation LeTRa in Munich suggest that lesbian asylum seekers face specific challenges when seeking refugee protection in Germany. This particularly applies to a particular vulnerable cohort within Germany's asylum system; lesbian women racialised as Black.

Black lesbian women are often not believed to be homosexual, particularly if they were/are married with children. Moreover, they struggle to present evidence for prosecution because they tend to lack proof of gender-based and sexual violence. Indeed, Black lesbians' asylum stories that are shaped by human rights violations such as forced marriages, domestic violence, marital rape, sexual violence, forced pregnancies and forced abortions are rarely directly connected to their sexual orientation, which often results in an asylum rejection. Finally, accounts of gender-based violence tend to be deemed as not credible because concrete evidence is amiss and detailed accounts of violence are often absent due to trauma. In short, the experiences of Black lesbians remain by and large unrecognized within Germany's asylum system, contributing to the above-mentioned high rejection rate.

Further information

- www.queerasylum.org and www.queereuropeanasylum.org
- [Policy Briefing: The Recognition of Black Lesbian Asylum Claims in Germany \(June 2020\)](#)
- Tschalaer, M. 2020. [Victimhood and Femininity in Black Lesbian Asylum Cases in Germany](#). Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2020.1772735.
- Tschalaer, M. 2019. [Black lesbians denied asylum in Germany](#). openDemocracy. 14. August 2019.

PANEL 3 Rainbow Families – Challenges and Steps Ahead

18 November 2020, 16:50 – 17:50

Panel moderation: Prof. Alina Tryfonidou, Professor of Law at the University of Reading, United Kingdom

Key questions

What are the practical difficulties that rainbow families face when they move between EU member states because they are not recognised under all national legal systems?

What is the current position of the EU regarding the obligations that EU law imposes on member states in situations involving rainbow families that move within the EU?

What can, and what should, be done in order to resolve the problems faced by rainbow families when they move between EU member states?

Description

The lack of EU competence in the field of family law means that each EU member state is free to determine whether it will grant legal recognition to same-sex couples in its territory and whether same-sex couples are allowed to become – and be recognised as – the joint legal parents of a child. The ensuing legal patchwork governing the status of rainbow families (i.e. families comprised of a same-sex couple with or without child(ren) in EU member states means that when such families move within the EU, they often pass between states of recognition and non-recognition. This has a host of negative legal, practical, and psychological consequences for those families which will be described by some of the speakers in this panel. The speakers in this panel will also consider the EU's current position regarding the obligations that EU law imposes on member states in situations involving rainbow families, as well as what solutions the EU can provide in situations where rainbow families are faced with non-recognition of their familial ties when they exercise their EU free movement rights.

Further Information

- [ILGA Europe](#) page and resources on 'Families'
- [NELFA](#) page (with plenty of resources relating to rainbow families)
- The European Parliament's [LGBTI Intergroup](#) resource list
- Petition No [0513/2016](#) by Eleni Maravelia (Greek) on the non-recognition of LGBT families in the European Union
- A. Tryfonidou, 'EU Free Movement Law and the Children of Rainbow Families: Children of a Lesser God?' (2019) 38 Yearbook of European Law 220 doi.org/10.1093/yel/yez001

PANEL 4 High Level Discussion: EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

19 November 2020, 10:00 – 11:00

Description

On 12 November 2020, the European Commission adopted the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. The strategy aims to strengthen the rights of LGBTIQ people, encourage cooperation between the various institutions, including better networking with the Council of Europe and the member states, and enhance the exchange of best practices.

We are seizing the opportunity of this conference to kick off this exchange by bringing together **Marija Pejčinović Burić**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Helena Dalli**, European Union Commissioner for Equality, and **Franziska Giffey**, German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

In a discussion round moderated by Manuela Kay they will answer questions on the new European Union LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, its embeddedness in the larger human rights context, as well as its political impact from the perspective of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and Germany as the member state currently combining the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Further information

- [European Commission LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)
- Factsheet: [“Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025”](#)

PANEL 5 Civil Society in EU LGBTI Policy-Making

19 November 2020, 11:30 – 12:30

Panel moderation: Rachael Moore, Director of the Rainbow House Brussels

Key questions

How can policymakers ensure that the voice of civil society is included in the policy making this process and what can civil society do to make this process happen? How accessible are current frameworks and mediums of dialogue? Where do we need to focus our efforts in civil society and with policymakers? How is intersectionality shaping alliances or conflicts between movements and organizations?

Description

More often than not civil society plays a vital role with regards to the implementation of policies. However, when it comes to policy making, very few voices from civil society are invited, included or given the opportunity to be at the table. Therefore, strengthening the voice of civil society must remain a continuous priority. The EU wishes to make intersectionality one of its highest objectives but it remains unclear what this means for civil society and to/for policymakers. Very few EU member states explicitly mention multiple discrimination or ‘intersectional discrimination’ in their legislation. Nor is the majority of policymakers themselves representative of the society they are serving. A top-down approach to intersectionality will not work unless it is simultaneously met with a bottom-up counterpart. Civil society is imperative for policymaking and its inclusion in policy-making dynamics results in stronger anti-discrimination laws, different solutions to discrimination and substantive equality. For policymakers, the adoption of an intersectional approach will be beneficial to all aspects of the policymaking process. In a Europe for all with all. If we are to ensure that an intersectional approach is embedded, taken and transversally applied with regards to policymaking then policy makers should implement multiple and accessible dialogue mechanisms but also do this in continuous consultation with civil society as experts.

Further Information

- The Combahee River Collective (1977): [The Combahee River Collective Statement](#)
- European Union Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (2020): [Opinion on Intersectionality in Gender Equality Laws, Policies and Practices](#)
- Emanuela Lombardo & Mieke Verloo (2009) [Institutionalizing Intersectionality in the European Union?](#) International Feminist Journal of Politics, 11:4, 478-495.
- EQUINET (2020): [Why Intersectionality is relevant for a fairer Europe](#)
- Center for Intersectional Justice (2020): [Factsheet Intersectionality at a Glance in Europe](#)

SPOTLIGHT FRA LGBTI Survey & Lesbian* Visibility

19 November 2020, 13:45 – 14:00

Spotlight by Michael O’Flaherty, Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The spotlight will present selected findings from the [FRA’s LGBTI II survey](#) – which surveyed 140.000 respondents across the EU – from the perspectives of intersectionality and the experiences of respondents who self-identify as lesbian or bisexual women.

The survey results show that lesbian women suffer significant discrimination. The results provide information about the scale of that discrimination in different areas of life (in comparison with bisexual women and gay and bisexual men). The survey results reveal that women and gender-expression non-conforming respondents suffer more than other groups from harassment or physical attack. The survey results will also be explored with respect to whether respondents are likely to be open about being LGBTI at school, work or towards family members and friends.

Moreover, people may experience discrimination based on multiple grounds. For example, a lesbian woman may face discrimination both as a lesbian and as a woman, or as a member of a religious group, or on grounds of age. These results will also be explored in the presentation.

The survey also asked respondents about their family life and the legal guardianship of children in the same household; alongside questions on factors affecting the freedom of movement of same-sex couples and their families. In addition, the survey asked respondents who had relocated to another EU country if they experienced any restrictions in accessing benefits or public services that are available to different-sex couples.

PANEL 6 Empowering the Lesbian* Movement – a Capacity Building Perspective

19 November 2020, 14:00 – 15:00

Panel moderation: Mina Tolu, LGBTIQ Activist and Campaigner

Key questions

How do current funding norms and structures contribute to equality and inequality, what are the effects of this on the lesbian* movement?

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the long-term work of the lesbian* movement? How do you continue to maintain this work while catering to the immediate needs at hand?

What is needed in order to make the lesbian* movement stronger and more resilient?

Description

The lesbian* movement does important work in creating change and building communities which are inclusive and which care for lesbian, bi, trans, and queer women. This, despite being largely invisibilised and despite falling in between the cracks of funding silos. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges which lesbian* communities already faced, as pandemic measures and responses contribute to surges in domestic violence and criminalisation.

Research by Astraea and Mama Cash (2020) indicates that LBQ (Lesbian, Bi, Queer) organisations focus on different priorities than those of their funders. LBQ groups have small budgets and little access to funding - 56% of groups in this study never received multi-year funding, and only 22% have received unrestricted funding. This reality impacts on the lesbian* movement and its capacity to implement long-term strategies while reacting to immediate community needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required the lesbian* movement to respond to the basic needs of their communities, while continuing their day-to-day work. Funders can contribute to building sustainable movements equipped to achieve their visions, and this panel seeks to understand how the lesbian* movement may become stronger and build its capacity for resilience.

Further Information

- Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice & Mama Cash (2020). [Vibrant Yet Under-Resourced. The State of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Movements. Executive Summary.](#)
- Dreilinden (2020). [Philanthropy for a Rainy Day: Our COVID-19 Response.](#) Article.
- EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (2020). [The State of Lesbian Organising and the Lived Realities of Lesbians in the EU and the Accession Countries.](#) Abridged Report.