



## 荷蘭對同志處境的觀察報告

### Social issues: Rainbow realities

18 July 2013, by Christine Fischer

As one friend puts it, whether he hangs his rainbow shirt inside or outside the closet depends on where he unpacks his suitcase.

For instance, Russian president Vladimir Putin has recently passed a law that calls for the arrest of anyone, including tourists, who are openly gay or supportive of gay rights. Out and proud isn't possible in Russia right now.

By contrast, many in the LGBT community see the Netherlands as progressive in comparison. It certainly is seen as a forerunner, having introduced a law legalising same-sex marriage in 2001.

However, in spite of its progressiveness, there are still problems of discrimination against LGBT communities in the Netherlands.

#### **FRA's latest LGBT survey**

Another friend states, "While I'm generally out of the closet, it's also not the first impression that I want to make. I just don't want, if people Google my name, that a bunch of LGBT stuff pops up. You just don't know how a potential employer might react."

FRA's (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) latest LGBT survey findings make such cautiousness understandable. The LGBT survey collected the responses of more than 93,000 LGBT people across the EU and Croatia.

Reviewing the survey with an eye on the Netherlands shows that LGBT issues still exist, in spite of Dutch progressive laws and initiatives:

- > 30% felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- > 13% felt discriminated against when looking for a job and / or at work because of being LGBT.
- > 20% felt discriminated against in areas other than employment because of being LGBT.

Even more disheartening, the statistics reflect issues for those of school age:

- > 88% had heard negative comments or seen negative conduct because someone was perceived to be LGBT during their schooling before the age of 18.
- > 63 per cent had "always" or "often" hidden or disguised being LGBT during their schooling before the age of 18.

#### **Caught on film**

TV documentaries (in Dutch) also lend credence to the findings that not all experiences are rainbows and sparkles. Nederlandse Publieke Omroep's (Dutch Public Broadcasting) Gay op TV collects and correlates LGBT relevant broadcasts.

One documentary, Homopesten, featured some of the very real discrimination LGBT couples face here. The footage bears witness to how frightening these threats and acts of violence are.



The broadcast includes resources for following LGBT media, Gay Krant, as well as resources for reporting discrimination, National Gay Discrimination Hotline (Landelijk Meldpunt Homodiscriminatie). Even in a progressive country like the Netherlands, lines of support are necessary.

### **Rainbow's pots of gold**

Not wishing to simply rain on the parade and then leave, there are many organisations that exist to help promote LGBT Pride and support the LGBT community in the Netherlands. This should be noted and celebrated.

#### **> ProGay & Amsterdam Gay Pride**

ProGay organises the Amsterdam Gay Pride and many other LGBT events throughout the year. Amsterdam Gay Pride 2013, running from July 27- August 4, is iconic in its celebration of LGBT life.

This year's agenda is filled with everything from floats on the canals to dance events, BBQs, art exhibits, picnics, film, theatre and so on.

It has become one of the Netherlands' major summer cultural events and is enjoyed by many communities. A full agenda of activities (both ticketed and free) can be found here.

#### **> COC Netherlands**

Amsterdam certainly is the hub of LGBT activities, but support and community events can be found throughout the Netherlands.

One important organisation to note is COC Netherlands with branches in the following locations: Amsterdam, Deventer, Eindhoven, Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe, Haaglanden, Kennemerland, Leiden, Limburg, Midden-Gelderland, Midden-Nederland...Nijmegen, Noord-Holland Noord, Noordoost Brabant, Breda, Rotterdam, Tilburg, Twente / Achterhoek, West-Brabant-West and Tholen, Zeeland and Zwolle.

This organisation has been advocating the rights of LGBTs since 1946. They strive for the decriminalisation of sexual orientation and gender identity, and advocate for equal rights, emancipation and social acceptance of LGBTs in the Netherlands and internationally.

### **Academic resources**

IHLIA (Internationaal Homo / Lesbisch Informatiecentrum en Archief) is an international library, archive, information and documentation centre about homosexuality and sexual diversity.

IHLIA "stores, displays and makes material available for lessons, dissertations, articles, research, books and radio or TV programmes about homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender and transsexuality.

The collection is intended for the use of teachers, researchers, students, schoolchildren, journalists, authors and private individuals." They have locations in Amsterdam and Leeuwarden.

### **Faith-based support & Pink celebrations**



Secret Garden was established in 1994 to provide support for LGBTs with Muslim backgrounds. It offers social / societal, legal and psychological assistance and guidance, with specialised support for LGBT asylum seekers.

There are also Christian-based initiatives such as the Evangelische Roze Vieringen Amsterdam (Evangelical Pink Celebrations Amsterdam) or Internationale Roze Kerk (IRK) International LGBT Church, The Hague.

Both hold services for LGBT communities and their friends and family. Additional links can be found for other faith-based initiatives on their websites.

### **Immigration issues**

The Love Exiles Foundation was set up in 2004 with a vision of fair treatment for all families. It recognises that many same-sex couples choose to immigrate to a country, such as the Netherlands, that recognises their relationship legally.

To this end, the foundation supports LGBT couples in exile or considering exile to be together, and works for equal rights. The webpage collects stories as well as announces actions and events.

### **Facebook groups**

There are numerous Facebook groups that promote LGBT activities. Some that focus on social events include, but are not limited to:

#### › **PinkClinic**

PinkClinic consists of open-minded, gay-minded, party-minded and “fashion pink”-minded participants.

#### › **Black Gay Holland**

Black Gay Holland Events encourages those in the Black LGBT community to love and care for each other and meet up to share knowledge and empowerment.

#### › **Queer aan Zee**

Queer aan Zee provides a social space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in The Hague and surrounding areas.

For those who celebrate or support LGBT activities, may the following quote give inspiration: *"Soon the day will come when science will win victory over error, justice a victory over injustice, and human love a victory over human hatred and ignorance."* Magnus Hirschfeld.

- See more at:

<http://www.iamexpat.nl/read-and-discuss/expat-page/articles/social-issues-lgbt-netherlands#sthash.fD8soLtz.dpuf>- See more at:

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