



Press Release
21 May 2014

NELFA CALLS ON FINNISH GOVERNMENT TO FULFILL ITS PROMISE TO ADVANCE THE RIGHTS OF RAINBOW FAMILIES

It has come to the attention of the Network of European LGBT Families Associations (NELFA) that the Finnish Government is planning to leave out legal provisions protecting the children of rainbow families from their parenting bill, which is likely to be presented to the Finnish Parliament in June 2014.

This is not in line with Finland's recent public commitment to actively promote the rights of sexual and gender minorities. It is recalled that on 14 May 2014, Finland – represented by Minister of Justice Anna-Maja Henriksson – committed to this goal at the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) Forum in Malta, where Ministers from Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, and Sweden, signed the 'Call for a comprehensive policy approach at European Union level and across the European Union on LGBT issues', addressed to the European Commission.

Maria von Känel, NELFA's President said: *"The parenting bill is the most important new piece of legislation in Finland for the protection of children of rainbow families. Finnish rainbow families had been led to believe that the government would have their best interests at heart, but they feel betrayed, only days after their Minister of Justice made a public commitment at the IDAHO Forum in Malta to protect LGBT people from all forms of discrimination"*.

Juha Jämsä, Director of the Finnish Rainbow Families Association (Sateenkaariperheet – Regnbågsfamiljer), a member of NELFA, added: *"Rainbow families in Finland are extremely disappointed with the government's inexplicable U-turn on this matter. The government's position is totally out of step with recent caselaw from the European Court of Human Rights. We call strongly on the Finnish government to re-introduce the protection of children of rainbow families in the parenting bill"*.

A peaceful demonstration against the Finnish government's parenting bill as currently drafted will be held on Monday, 2 June 2014, at 17.00 in front of the Ministry of Justice in Helsinki. Several Human Rights and LGBT Rights organisations will join the protest. NELFA fully supports this action.

To learn more about Rainbow Families in Finland: www.sateenkaariperheet.fi

About NELFA:

NELFA is the European platform of LGBT families associations, bringing together LGBT parents and parents-to-be from all over Europe. NELFA currently represents 23 organisations in 15 European countries with more than 10.000 members. NELFA is a member of ILGA-Europe.

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Our new Leaflet: www.nelfa.org/index.php/nelfa-aisbl-leaflet

www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org

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