



Parliamentary Assembly  
Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**AS/Ega/Platform (2025) 01**

25 July 2025

**Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination**

**Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe**



PARLIAMENTARY PLATFORM  
FOR LGBTI RIGHTS

## Conference

### Ensuring equality for rainbow families in Europe

**12 September 2025, Malta**

Date: 12 September 2025

Venue: Hotel [Corinthia Palace Malta](#), De Paule Avenue, San Anton, BZN9023, Malta

Time: from 9.30 am to 5 pm

Interpretation will be provided in French and English.

## Background

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), through its Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe and its coordinator, the General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons, plays a key role in raising awareness and promoting the rights and equality of LGBTI persons. The recognition and protection of rainbow families has been part of that work, founded on the right to privacy and family life set out in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and developed in the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, affirming that sexual orientation and gender identity cannot be grounds for discrimination in family life. However, across Europe, legal recognition of same-sex couples and their families remains inconsistent, leaving many individuals and children vulnerable to legal uncertainty and discrimination.

PACE has consistently advocated for legal and policy reforms to close these gaps. [Resolution 2239](#) (2018) on "Private and family life: achieving equality regardless of sexual orientation" urges member States to ensure full recognition of same-sex couples and their families, particularly in relation to parental rights, adoption and freedom of movement within Europe. Furthermore, the Assembly has underscored the importance of mutual recognition of civil status documents, ensuring that families are not fragmented or denied rights when crossing borders. Additionally, [Resolution 2543](#) (2024) on "Freedom of expression and assembly of LGBTI people in Europe" calls for the recognition of the right to marriage for same-sex couples.

The Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe has supported these efforts by fostering dialogue and sharing best practices among parliamentarians. The Platform has highlighted the importance of ensuring that all families, regardless of their composition, enjoy equal rights and protection under national and European legal frameworks.

Despite the progress, many challenges persist. Some member States still lack legal frameworks recognising same-sex partnerships and marriages or parenthood, while others have introduced restrictive policies that undermine the rights of rainbow families. Discriminatory legal gaps often force these families to navigate complex legal battles, jeopardising their stability and well-being. Addressing these issues is essential to upholding human rights and the values of equality and non-discrimination that PACE stands for.

Against this backdrop, this conference, co-organised with the Maltese delegation to PACE under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, aims to assess the current state of legal protections for rainbow families in Europe. Taking place in San Anton, close to Valletta during Malta Pride, it will bring together parliamentarians, legal experts, civil society representatives, representatives of rainbow families and human rights defenders to explore avenues for strengthening protection and ensuring that all families are treated with dignity and equality across Europe.

## Theme of the conference

The conference "*Ensuring equality for rainbow families in Europe*" will focus on addressing the challenges faced by rainbow families in Europe, particularly in safeguarding their privacy and ensuring equality in family life. While primarily involving parliamentarians, the conference will draw on the expertise of other key stakeholders, including legal experts, civil society organisations and LGBTI activists, to foster a collaborative dialogue on how to advance the rights of rainbow families. Key points for discussion include:

- Privacy rights for rainbow families: the importance of ensuring that rainbow families are afforded the same protection of privacy as all families, especially regarding legal recognition, parental rights and social and family life.
- Legal recognition and protection: examining the challenges rainbow families face in terms of legal recognition, including the ability to marry, adopt, exercise parental rights and access social services and benefits.

- Social and cultural barriers: exploring the social factors that contribute to the marginalisation of rainbow families and the importance of fostering inclusion for the benefit of all.

The conference will aim to generate solutions to promote equal rights, privacy and recognition for rainbow families across Europe, ensuring they enjoy the same legal protection as other families.