



ENSURING EQUALITY FOR RAINBOW FAMILIES IN EUROPE

Hotel Corinthia Palace Malta - 12 September 2025

Across Europe, rainbow families continue to face unequal treatment, legal uncertainty and, in some cases, open discrimination. While important progress has been made in affirming the right to private and family life, significant disparities remain in how such families are recognised and protected under national laws. These gaps can have serious consequences for the stability, security and dignity of both parents and children.

The conference, organised by the Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Maltese Delegation to PACE, under the auspices of the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, will provide a timely forum to address these pressing challenges.

The conference will explore ways to strengthen legal protection, ensure mutual recognition of family status across borders and promote social inclusion. Held in the context of Malta Pride, the event will aim to build momentum for concrete legislative and policy reforms - ensuring that all families, regardless of their composition, are treated with equal respect, protection and recognition across the member States of the Council of Europe.



The event will take place from 9:30am to 5pm, with a break for lunch and informal networking from 1pm to 2:30pm. Please note that the conference will be livestreamed, and photographs will be taken during the sessions. If you prefer not to appear in photographs, kindly inform the organisers in advance.

Opening

- ▶ Hon. David Agius, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malta
- ▶ Hon. Naomi Cachia, Head of the Maltese delegation to PACE
- ▶ Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo, PACE General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons
- ▶ Dr Helena Dalli, Former EU Commissioner for Equality
- ▶ Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Maltese Government

Session 1: The legal landscape for rainbow families in Europe

Moderator: Hon. Naomi Cachia, Head of the Maltese delegation to PACE

- ▶ Dr Roberta Muscat, Lawyer, Registry of the European Court of Human Rights
- ▶ Ms Evgenia Giakoumopoulou, Head of the SOGIESC Unit, Council of Europe
- ▶ Dr Alina Tryfonidou, Assistant Professor in EU law and family law, University of Cyprus
- ▶ Mr Alexander Schuster, Lawyer, Italy
- ▶ Dr Desiree Attard, Lawyer, Malta

Session 2: Privacy and family life – protecting the rights of rainbow families

Moderator: Mr Aaron Giardina, Assistant Director, SOGIGESC Unit, Maltese Human Rights Directorate

- ▶ Ms Kate Osborne, Member of the PACE Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons, United Kingdom
- ▶ Ms Catherine Clavin, Co-President of Association des parents et futurs parents gays et lesbiens (APGL), France
- ▶ Ms Denitsa Lyubenova, Head of the Legal Programme, Youth LGBT Organisation Deystvie, Bulgaria
- ▶ Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett, Family Therapist and Social Worker, Malta
- ▶ Ms Angelica Polmonari, Chair of the Women's Committee of ILGA World; Co-Secretary of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community; President of Arcigay Modena "Matthew Shepard", Italy

Session 3: Promoting inclusion for rainbow families – the role of parliamentarians

Moderator: Ms Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo, PACE General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons

- ▶ Hon. Graziella Attard Previ, Shadow Minister for Equality, Civil Liberties, and Children's Rights, Malta
- ▶ Ms Lucia Plaváková, Member of the PACE Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons, Slovakia
- ▶ Ms Mirosława Makuchowska, Executive Director, Campaign Against Homophobia, Poland
- ▶ Mr Daniel Martinović, President of the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA), Dugine obitelji, Croatia