

White Paper Presentation Conference Conclusion

(Turin, 29 April 2011)

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Foreword

The Conference aimed at presenting and illustrating the rationale and purposes of the White Paper as the main outcome of the European project named AHEAD. In addition to this, it also enabled all participants to share opinions and experiences on the future perspectives offered by the local administrations to the development of LGBT policies at a local level in Europe.

The Conference was also the occasion to present a study named “LGBT local policies: Italy and the Piedmont case”, a research by CIRSDe analysing a series of LGBT-focused actions carried out by several Italian Local Administrations in partnership with associations.

A specific session of the Conference was devoted to the presentation of the local actions conducted by the Cities of Barcelona, Cologne and Turin.

The final Round Table gathered together representatives of Local Administrations and LGBT Local Associations from the partner Cities participating in the AHEAD project in order to debate around key topics related to LGBT oriented public policy making.

At the end of the Conference several representatives of some European cities (Barcelona, Cologne, Turin, Geneva, Paris, Ghent, Amsterdam, Utrecht) met around a common table in order to explore the feasibility of building a network of European local Public Administrations committed to overcome discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Contents

White Paper:

It is the first European-scale research collecting experiences and best practices implemented by EU local bodies bound to become a true practical tool. The presentation illustrated the key role of local bodies in fighting discrimination against LGBT people by highlighting the main purpose of the White Paper, i.e., strengthening the commitment of local bodies by offering points of reference for developing effective best practices. In this regard, the possible areas of intervention have been discussed in details. Furthermore, the intervention of the discussant opened the door to a debate over the critical factors that may emerge in the implementation of LGBT-oriented policies: some of the issues concerned intersectionality, stress on criminal sanctions as a response to discrimination, enhancement of differences, the sense of democracy as a sign of sympathy vis-à-vis the marginalized categories.

Local LGBT policies:

The CIRSDe research highlighted the importance to foster at the same time horizontal *mainstreaming* (cooperation amongst all sectors in a single public administration body,

associations, and citizens) and vertical *mainstreaming* (cooperation amongst different levels of local and regional public administration, national and European institutions).

The reporting and the following debate helped underline the strengths and weaknesses of the various strategies adopted with a view to organizing and legitimating *partnerships* between public administrations and LGBT associations by comparing *bottom up* and *top down* approaches chosen by the former.

Local actions:

The experiences put forward at local level emphasized both the consolidation and development of activities carried out in widespread domains (training), and pilot projects for new issues (families, leisure time, elderly people, municipal police).

Round table:

The Round table allowed the representatives of Public Administration and associations to discuss three key issues:

- The connection between national policies and local-regional public administration policies;
- The relation between local and regional public administrations and their interlocutors (LGBT associations, stakeholders, etc.);
- The alliances for the recognition of rights based on a sense of common belonging (e.g., LGBT community) or on common objectives shared by diverse subjects (e.g. the right to citizenship for women, migrants, LGBT people, etc.)

European city network:

Networking has been one of the key words throughout the process; therefore the Conference was an occasion for the representatives of some Municipalities to meet and identify a strategy for collaboration.

Perspectives

Disseminating the White Paper at local, national, and European level, both on paper and *on-line*.

Sharing all available materials on the experiences of the partners at local level.

Encouraging European municipalities to commit themselves in replicating and improving the best practices described in the White Paper, by tailoring them to local realities, through an action of dissemination and sharing.

Defining different modalities to design an LGBT-oriented service within local administrations, taking into account both strengths and criticalities of all possible options.

Developing *partnerships* with LGBT associations by considering their relations with the various administrations in terms of mutual independence rather than hierarchy.

Laying the foundations for a collaboration among European municipalities through an informal network of contacts; weighing up the possibility to rely on existing networks, not only to share best practices but also to implement concrete actions.