

LGTB association TALCOMSOM in Osona: LGTBI action in central Catalonia

The LGTB association TALCOMSOM was set up in 2008 at the initiative of a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people from Vic and the Osona "comarca" (district).

We have been active in the area known as central Catalonia – which is made up of small towns and villages – ever since. The situation of the LGTBI community in central Catalonia is markedly different in comparison to the Barcelona metropolitan area: it lacks focal points, meeting places, and leisure venues; manifestations of LGTBI-phobia differ; and there is a feeling that LGTBI people have less freedom in the smaller towns and villages.

At the association, we work in three general areas: conducting training workshops, providing a meeting place, and asserting our rights.

In recent years, we have regularly organised workshops on sexual orientation and gender identity in secondary schools that have requested such events.

As a meeting place, we put on sporting, cultural and leisure activities, and actively cooperate with other organisations to raise the profile of our community and forge links with wider society. Examples include working with the Cineclub de Vic to show LGTB-themed films, performances with the Castellers¹ Sagals d'Osona, and involvement in the local festival parade that takes place in the neighbourhood where our meeting place, the civic centre, is located.

We also call on public administrations to implement policies to foster equality with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity. For two years we have been developing a local action plan on sexual orientation and gender identity that will be rolled out in all of Osona's municipalities.

We actively monitor the LGTBI policies of local councils in central Catalonia, put forward proposals such as flying the rainbow flag on LGTBI Pride Day and the International Day Against Homophobia, and make proposals for action to be taken at municipal level in accordance with the measures that the Catalan Parliament's law No 11/2014 to combat LGTBI-phobia stipulates should be carried out by local authorities.

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A "castell" is a human tower consisting of a varying number of levels. The tradition of building castells has been practised in the Campo de Tarragona region for more than 200 years (references to the towers date back to the 18th century) before spreading to the Penedès region and then, in the 20th century, throughout Catalonia and Roussillon, particularly from the 1980s on. Building castells is closely associated with traditional local festivals. A "casteller" is a member of a "colla castellera", or castell-building troupe ("castell" comes from the Catalan word meaning "castle"). On 16 November 2010, UNESCO included castells on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.