

Contribution by PES Group member Michael Häupl, Mayor of Vienna

Vienna – your rainbow city:

In 1998, the City of Vienna founded the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Unit for Same-Sex and Transgender Lifestyles (Wiener Antidiskriminierungsstelle für gleichgeschlechtliche und transgender Lebensweisen – WAST). This body has always actively worked towards "official diversity" ("Amtliche Buntmachung") at municipal, administrative and social policy level. It continues to be the only such body in the whole of Austria.

The government and administration of the City of Vienna have taken several measures to improve the lives of LGBTIQ people, by changing and adapting provincial laws and by means of awareness-raising activities. Examples include the annual WAST specialist conferences, the annual series of events entitled "Queer Talks" ("Queere Stadtgespräche"), and the focus on raising awareness. Vienna stands out for its openness towards and acceptance of LGBTIQ people and boasts a distinctive and vibrant LGBTIQ community. The City of Vienna works with numerous NGOs and associations and supports selected ones with funding, while the WAST "Queer Small Project Pot" ("Queerer Kleinprojektetopf") provides accessible project support every year for particularly innovative projects.

Since 1999, the City of Vienna has taken part officially in the Vienna Rainbow Parade with its own WAST float.

WAST counselling:

Counselling is one of the WAST's main tasks. A total of 773 counselling sessions were provided between 2010 and 2015 to people from all walks of life and in all kinds of working environments.

Education provided by the City of Vienna:

As part of their training, City of Vienna trainees and students at the city's nursing schools are made aware of LGBTIQ issues and (anti-)discrimination. In addition, the WAST puts on numerous lectures in schools and other institutions.

Specialist conferences:

Several specialist conferences have been held in recent years, which provide a substantial and thorough examination of specific topics relating to LGBTIQ people and their everyday reality. Subjects have included education and schools, ageing and care, LGBTIQ history, anti-discrimination work, and bullying.

Queer Talks:

Each year there are several talks on a specific topic with invited experts. The following subjects have been featured: "LGBT people in old age" (2009), "LGBT people in the world of work" (2010), "Homophobia, transphobia and violence" (2011/2012), "International human rights" (2014/2015) and "Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna" (2015). The topic for 2016 is "Violence in the public sphere".

Rainbow families:

Same-sex couples in Vienna have been able to become foster parents since as early as the 1990s. The City of Vienna is also funding the creation of a rainbow family centre with a nursery school for children from LGBTIQ families.

Legal measures taken by the City of Vienna:

In order to eliminate discrimination at legislative level, the Vienna city and provincial government has broadened provisions and passed resolutions. Immediately after the introduction of civil partnerships, which are not equivalent to marriage, all ceremony rooms for weddings were also made available for civil partnership ceremonies. Similarly, Vienna has passed anti-discrimination resolutions addressed to the federal government (for example: Resolution of 24 November 2011 on "Opening up marriage, access to medically assisted reproduction, adoption of stepchildren and unrelated children"; Resolution of 5 April 2013 on improving the legal framework for transgender people).

Challenges:

Society is always changing, so it is important to continue to raise awareness and take anti-discrimination measures in future. The City of Vienna is therefore redoubling its efforts to address new challenges – for example, by taking targeted measures to reduce discrimination in all areas of life and to increase acceptance of society's diversity.

Two particularly important subjects the WAST is currently working on are:

- LGBTIQ in the education system
 - Everyday realities for LGBTIQ people in Vienna ("Queer in Vienna" study).
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