

# PRESS RELEASE

## RAINBOW



### **International launch of a pan-European educational project**

**Brussels, November 14, 2012**

**Bronks Theater**

Varkensmarkt 15-17

1000 Brussels

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is prohibited by Article 13 of the EC Treaty and the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, the current social situation for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender (LGBT) persons in the European Union remains difficult. The comprehensive study on "Homophobia and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the EU member states" (2008, part I-2009, part II) shows the extent of the problem, which, at local level LGBT associations are well aware of. This is why the applicant built a partnership for researching into stereotypes in school and wants to support the creation of an educational tool for compulsory schooling, because only prevention and promotion since early age can make a difference in such a cultural context. The idea to do a transnational research involving Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Bulgaria (as well as UK for the context analysis and policies part) stems from the fact that these countries are very different for what concerns the state of the art with respect to LGBT human rights and education to LGBT issues in schools. We know the construction of gender begins early, and teachers must be helped in understanding how to help children and youth in fighting the asymmetries of social stereotypes as education is a means of achieving justice and equality in gender relations. It's unusual to see products in television where the sexual diversity is part of the plot, while there are films made for children which promote respect of homosexuality, or less rigid roles in sports, art or else. The project connects EU gay and lesbian associations, schools, media professionals promoting the rights of children and young people to their sexual identity and who educate out of homophobia, in order to study stereotypes and challenge them with educational tools.

The **main objectives** of the project are the development of:

- the knowledge of policies and theories related to gender stereotypes and homophobia/transphobia in education at European level, with an update of relevant legislation and policies;
- the development of a comparative knowledge of the stereotypes related to gender roles and LGBT issues in all levels of schooling, amongst the adults responsible for education and, indirectly, of students;
- a comparative knowledge of current experiences/projects taking place in schools of partner countries related to the promotion of the right to sexual identity, the education out of homophobia/transphobia and homophobic/transphobic bullying;
- the exchange of good practices and experiences between countries related to the above initiatives, with the idea of mainstreaming them in each partner country and involving school staff;

- a knowledge of audiovisual existing products related to the subject of study;
- the creation of an educational toolkit, composed of an audiovisual part and a paper (guide) part, to be disseminated and possibly used in schools for educating to the respect of gender identity and sexual orientation;
- the creation of a playful toolkit to be used for education to respect gender identity and educating out of homophobia/transphobia in informal educational settings with over 16 years olds, such as LGBT and non LGBT associations;
- the involvement of a broad network of actors (in particular school staff, media professionals, associations) in considering the issue of stereotypes and homophobia/transphobia and in taking concrete actions to deal with them in school;
- the dissemination of project results and outputs to the widest possible audience at European level and through powerful and instant means, such as the image, at film festivals and through the web;
- the accessibility to teachers from all European countries of educational toolkits in various European languages to be used in their school curriculum to deal with the delicate issue of gender identity, sexual orientation and homophobia/transphobia, since an early stage, because it is since very early that children develop stereotypes and prejudices, also due to the silence on these issues, the stereotypes and difficulties of the adults, family and school in the first place.

The most important outcomes of this project, namely **the educational toolkit, the playful toolkit** and the overall **research** will be presented in extension during this international launch in Brussels.

(provisional) **Program of the Launch at Bronks Theater – 14/11/2012**

13.30: **Reception of the participants**

14.00: **Presentation**

- Welcome by mr. Sylvain Peeters, president of "deMens.nu" (Union of Secular Humanists)
- Statement by mr. Michael Cashman, Member of the European Parliament from United Kingdom
- General presentation of the "Rainbow" project by Marco Mori, president of Arcigay, Milano and Rebecca Zanuso, researcher from Synergia, Milano
- Screening of 4 short movies (1 per age category) with some explanation

15.35: **Coffee break**

15.50: **Presentation**

- Presentation of the study guide by Elise Van Beurden, education officer of Jekino, Brussels
- Presentation of the playful toolkit by Luisa Bordiga from Arcilesbica Zami (Italy) and Marco Mori from CIG/Arcigay
- Screening of the two winning films from the short film contest against homophobia
- Debate and Q & A with the participants, moderated by Margreet Van Muijlwijk

17.00: **Final statement**

**Reception**

The RAINBOW project is a joint initiative of



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COORDINATIE



CIG – Centro di Iniziativa Gay (Arcigay Milano), Italië

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