



**Rainbow
Cities
Network**

Common Grounds

agreed at the Rainbow Cities annual meetings 2014/2015/2016/2018

The following points were agreed after shorter or longer discussions:

1. Signature on the Memorandum of Understanding:

Political support of the city government is crucial for participation in the Rainbow Cities Network. The document is preferably signed by the Mayor of the City, but it can also be, by delegation, a relevant Councillor, Head of Department, etc.

2. Official name:

“Rainbow Cities Network”,
but member cities are free to use the prefix “International” informally.

3. Preconditions for membership

In order for the Rainbow Cities Network to remain an active and effective network, preconditions for membership have been established:

- Executing and enhancing an active LGBTQI+ policy or mainstreaming LGBTQI+ issues within the general local policies;
- A staff member of the municipal administration in charge of LGBTQI+ issues;
- Designating the above-mentioned staff member (maximum 2) as representatives of the city to actively contribute to the exchange within the Network;
- This representative will participate at the annual meeting;
- Contributing to the exchange within the Network by annually drawing up an overview of their policies with regard to LGBTQI+ policies in the provided template;
- Describing one, maximum two, good practice(s) in a second one pager (1 A4), following the provided template.

These preconditions are important aspects of the membership of the Rainbow Cities network and an addition to the Memorandum of Understanding.

4. Member Fees

1. The general fee depends on the size of the city by inhabitants.

Small cities up to 300.000 1000 euro

Medium cities with 300.001 – 750.000 2000 euro

Big cities over 750.001 3200 euro

2. The first fees have to be paid immediately after joining the Network. From the second year on they need to be paid from January 1st to April 31st. For founding members of 2019 the first fees will be paid from January 1st 2019 to April 30st 2019. In any case of problems the city can ask for a two month extension to 30th of June 2019.

3. Cities can pay a voluntary fee up to a total of 5000 euro to support cities who are not able to pay the fee they are supposed to.

5. Solidarity Reduction

1. Cities who cannot afford the estimated fee can apply for a solidarity reduction.

2. To apply for the solidary reduction, the cities have to use the standard application form that can be obtained from the board or the coordinator

3. Aims of solidary reduction:

a. The minimum fee is 500 € per address.

b.. The actual board of the RCN decides about the reduction of fee. They have to decide within eight weeks after request on behalf of the following grounds.

a) The actual Big-Mac-Index of the country the city comes from

b) The actual budgetary situation of the city

c) The amount of money the city is actually paying for LGBTQI+ issues

d) The financial situation of the Rainbow Cities Network

6. Working language:

English. If members cannot communicate in English, this is a disadvantage for exchange via the mailing list and during the annual meetings. However, they are welcome to send a relevant administration staff member to the annual meeting but they have to provide translation on their own initiative and costs. The maximum amount of participants on behalf of a city remains two (including translators).

7. Participation at the annual meetings:

- Every member city shall attend at the annual meeting with min. 1 person, max. 2 persons, but there is only one vote per city.
- Representatives of the member cities to the Network are local administration staff members only; no politicians of NGOs can represent the city.
- Guest cities can attend a meeting once, before eventual adhesion and after explicit permission of the Network members. They will have no right to vote.
- Other guests (experts, colleagues in a field we discuss) can be invited for certain parts of the meeting, when their presence is of added value. They will have no right to vote.
- Observers from institutions/ministries/national governments - who finance the network for example - can be invited as guests, but only when it is of added value.
- "Observers" (non-members who observe and not participate in the discussion) will never be part of the meeting.

8. Cities applying for the network – membership of the Network

A. Procedure for interested cities and confirmation of membership:

1. The official application consists of:

a. The signed Memorandum of Understanding

b. A one pager on the specifics of the local LGBTQI+ policy

2. The applying city sends it to the Network via the coordinator, after which the member cities can give feedback.

a. Member cities have three weeks to respond to the application to the coordinator (to limit the amount of emails: avoid replying to all or via the mailing list);

b. In case of positive feedback of the (simple) majority, the coordinator will confirm membership to both the new city and the Network. The coordinator will add the contact person(s) to the mailing list and the list of contacts and send the new member all relevant documents, including the logo and the user guidelines;

c. In case of an objection or additional questions, the decision on the membership of that particular city will be postponed and discussed at the following annual meeting. An objection needs to be grounded and the applying city will be invited to clarify on any

questions of the member cities. The decision will then be taken via the established voting procedure.

B. Procedure regarding 'inactive' cities

The Rainbow Cities Network is an active and interactive network; it can only exist by the participation of all members. However, due to political developments, budget restraints or prioritising, some member cities can cease to actively take part in the Network. Because the Network wants to prevent just any city being able to call itself Rainbow City, even if they were a member once, the RCN defined the following characteristics of an 'inactive' city:

- not sending the 2 one pagers annually
- no participation in the annual meeting without an explicit and valid excuse
- not responding to important topics and voting procedures via the mailing list
- not paying the fee without an accepted excuse

Any one of the above mentioned characteristics will put a member city to a so-called 'sleeping status', if they have valid reasons for becoming inactive temporarily. Not complying to more than one of the above mentioned characteristics will, after one reminder by the coordinator, lead to the membership being terminated.

If cities do not respond at all to any communication, even not to an explicit reminder by the coordinator, they will be removed as a member from the RCN. Herewith they will lose all membership rights and benefits; the name of the city will be removed from the public list of members and the contact person(s) will be removed from the internal mailing list. The city will need to go through the official membership application procedure again if they want to join again. Moreover, the city will no longer be permitted to use the RCN logo, nor are they permitted to claim membership of the RCN in any form of communication.

C. Representatives of member cities in the Network

Every member city will provide a second contact person to the coordinator, to be added to the mailing list. In case of illness or absence of the first representative, the member city will always have a second person responsible for communication with the Network. This will also prevent a city being wrongly classified as 'inactive' for losing communication with the other members and the coordinator.

In case of long term absence, it is the responsibility of the city to transfer the contact and tasks with regard to the RCN to a colleague. This way the city can still oblige to the membership preconditions.

9. Visibility of the network

The network should have the following instruments for communication and information:

- A website for the network - www.rainbowcities.com
On the website will be:
 - A list of the member cities including logos of municipal LGBTQI+ departments or the City logo
 - The annual One Pagers (one on policy overview and one on a current good practice)
 - Information from the annual meetings (no detailed minutes, but a general report can be shared)
 - The quarterly newsletter
- A quarterly newsletter (*only if enough funding is established*)

- Logo: all (new) members will receive the standard logo's from the coordinator, together with the user guidelines. For alternative sizes and formats, please contact the coordinator.
- The internal mailing list will remain exclusively for member cities only.

10. Defining the roles:

Coordinator:

- Supports Rainbow Cities in finding links and good practices regarding LGBTQI+ themes
- Supports Rainbow Cities in contacting potential new member cities (follow up of initial contacts)
- Provides information and relevant documents for potential and new members cities of the Network (membership procedure, common grounds, logo and user guidelines, mailing list subscription, etc.)
- Liaisons between Rainbow Cities Network and international networks and structures (e.g. Council of Europe, European Commission, Focal Points Network, international LGBTQI+ umbrella NGO's, etc.)
- Prepares the annual and prep meetings and supports the host cities in drafting the agenda and communication with the RCN members
- Moderates the (closed) mailing list
- Draws up and sends a quarterly newsletter on (mainly European) local LGBTQI+ policy issues
- Services the website
- Send out the invoices to the members for fee payment to the RCN

Host City of the annual meeting:

- Takes part in the preparatory meeting (2 months before the annual meeting)
- Organises the annual meeting in advance (providing a meeting room and coffee, tea and water for all participants for 1,5 days. No obligation to provide hotel, lunch or dinner)
- Sends out the official invitation to the annual meeting
- Decides on one topic of the annual meeting and prepares an exchange with the local LGBTQI+ community
- Summarises – with the help of the coordinator- the annual meeting in a general report which can be published publicly (e.g. on the website)

Prep team:

- The prep team consists of: the host of last year's annual meeting, the host of the upcoming annual meeting, the RCN coordinator and the host of the prep team meeting
- The prep team will draft the agenda and prepare proposals for discussion or exchange, on the basis of input from the other members.
- The prep team host will organise a meeting approximately 2 months before the annual meeting. The prep meeting takes 1,5 days
- The prep team members are responsible for organisation and costs of their own travel, accommodation and other arrangements during the prep meeting

Members:

- Provide overview on their local LGBTQI+ policy in a so-called one pager prior to the annual meeting (one page according to a template, to be distributed by the coordinator)
- Deliver details on a current good practice, prior to the annual meeting (one page according to a template, to be distributed by the coordinator)

- Are responsible for organisation and costs of their own travel, accommodation and other arrangements
- Member cities who do not attend the prep meeting can send their input for the annual meeting's agenda via email to the host city or the coordinator.
- Are encouraged to share, send or to bring any materials, reports etc. they would like to share
- Take an active part in the communication of the network
- Send contributions to the coordinator for the newsletter
- Are encouraged to host a prep meeting or an annual meeting

11. Annual meetings and prep meetings

A preparatory meeting will be organised approximately 2 months before the annual meeting. These prep meetings are held in a different city each year, to give a chance to cities who are not able to organise the bigger annual meetings to do show their commitment.

The annual meeting is held in a different city each year in the month of November. Exceptions to this can be made, but only for valid reasons and with consent of the members. The length of the meeting is 1,5 days, preferably on Thursday and Fridays. Whether the meetings start on Thursday morning or afternoon is up to the host city, but it is agreed that the agenda is set up in a way that not more than 1 hotel night is required.

The 1st part will ideally be reserved be for internal discussions and decision making. The 2nd part should be more focused on exchange and discussion about specific topics with possible relevant experts and guests. The 3rd part offers the possibility for an exchange with local NGOs.

The prep team will draw up the agenda, with input from all members. A call for input will be sent via the mailing list.

Each year, during the annual meeting, the host city of the annual meeting is established for the meeting two years ahead. The host city of the prep meeting is established one year ahead. Every member city can be a candidate to host a meeting, but they cannot host the prep and annual meeting in the same year. In the case of more candidates to host, there will be a draw for the final candidate, with the other cities taking consecutive places.

Exact dates and times for the annual meeting will be announced by the host city as soon as possible, at least 6 months before the meeting.

In November 2019 the annual meeting will be hosted by in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg. . In 2020, the annual meeting is planned in Bergen, Norway.

Registration deadlines for the annual meeting (confirmation of attendance) will be established and communicated by the host city, in accordance with logistical aspects.