

National report



LLP-ERASMUS
Intensive Programme

**Internet advanced promotional tools application for increasing awareness
of social exclusions movement**

Sexual bias exclusion in Germany

Report prepared under supervision of Prof. Dr. Ralf Wagner

by:

- 1) Juliane Buechner
- 2) Yousif Bunni
- 3) Christina Nolte

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Introduction

'Let the Games begin!'

This year, these famous words have been spoken by Russia's president Wladimir Putin on the XXII. Olympic Winter Games in Sochi on February 7, 2014. The Games were a big event where people from nearly all nations of the world came together to compete and celebrate peacefully. But, long time before the Games started, Russia had been harshly criticized and many protests among all European countries had been initiated.

The reason for these difficulties was Russia's attitude towards the relationships of homosexual women and men, also known under the initial LGBT which can be defined as *“an umbrella term covering a very heterogeneous group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who often feature together as a group in political efforts in the local and international political arena for efficiency: in order to get a better social representation and more political support.[...]”*

[Although they represent a] social minority [they] differ from 'traditional' minorities in two main aspects: [First] they are usually not marked by their bodies – for example, by their skin colour –, thus they are not recognisable at first sight; and [second,] their existence is still perceived in a lot of places as 'challenging the natural order of things'” (Takács, 2006: 21).

While in many European countries sexuality different from heterosexuality is not a problem anymore, even accepted by law, Putin publicly expressed his negative attitude towards homosexual people only three weeks before the Olympic Games were supposed to start. He stated that homosexual men were welcome to participate in the Games, but at the same time exhorted them to keep their hands off Russia's children. With this statement, the discussion about Russia's anti-gay-laws reached its peak, and as a result, many nations wavered whether they should participate in the Games under these circumstances.



Figure 1: The German team at the Olympic Winter Games 2014

Source: Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund



Then, at the opening ceremony of the Games where all the teams were presented, there was one team that grabbed particular attention: it was the German one that had decided to openly present their attitude towards LGBT people. When they entered the stage, the whole world viewed their rainbow-colored suits that had especially been designed for this event. They symbolize the team's support for the fight against sexual bias discrimination and exclusion not only in sports but in every part of life.

But although the German national team showed reluctance to homophobia, does that mean that all Germans go along with this opinion as well? This paper will, therefore, deal with the topic of sexual bias exclusion in Germany. To better understand what this term is about, a definition formulated by the EU Commission and EU Council will first of all present what social exclusion means. In their report, they define social exclusion as a *“process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination. This distances them from job, income and education and training opportunities as well as social and community networks and activities. They have little access to power and decision-making bodies and thus often feel powerless and unable to take control over the decisions that affect their day to day lives”* (European Council, in: Takács, 2006:12). Sexual bias exclusion can, therefore, be defined as social exclusion of LGBT people on grounds of their sexual orientation.

Germany's history shows that the country has had dark times regarding discrimination, persecution, and exclusion of LGBT people. Under Hitler, gay men were put into concentration camps to be killed. Even after the war had ended, there still have been several laws in the Federal Republic of Germany as well as in the German Democratic Republic that punished sexual activities between men. Only in 1994, § 175 of the German Criminal Code that punished those activities was abolished (Mengel, 2012:5).

In 2000, when the European Union passed its law aiming at fighting discrimination on grounds of religion, weltanschauung, disability, age, and sexual orientation in employment and occupation (Amtsblatt der Europäischen Gemeinschaft, 2000:18), the foundations were laid to achieve less discrimination and exclusion on grounds of sexual orientation in Germany. In February 2001, the Lebenspartnerschaftsgesetz (Life Partnership Act), short LpartG, was passed enabling couples of the same gender to legally enter a registered civil partnership.



The original LpartG has been improved since then, when for example in 2013, the disparities with regard to income taxes (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2014). In 2006, the Allgemeine Gleichstellungsgesetz AGG (General Act on Equal Treatment) was passed ruling that all people are equal and may not be discriminated for whatever reasons. The law includes discrimination with regard to job applications employment, education, welfare protection, and provision of public goods (Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz, 2006).

Although the laws were milestones in the legislative for German LGBT people, disparities between these partnerships and heterosexual relationships or marriages still exist.



1. Level and structure of sexual bias exclusion

The European Union executed a survey on discrimination and victimization of LGBT people within all member states in 2012, referring to 93,079 participants that provided a wealth of comparable data (FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights, 2012). The following section of this paper will present a holistic overview of these statistical results on the perceived discrimination in Germany. Based on these findings, conclusions on the level of sexual bias exclusion in the country will be drawn.

1.1 Level of sexual bias exclusion

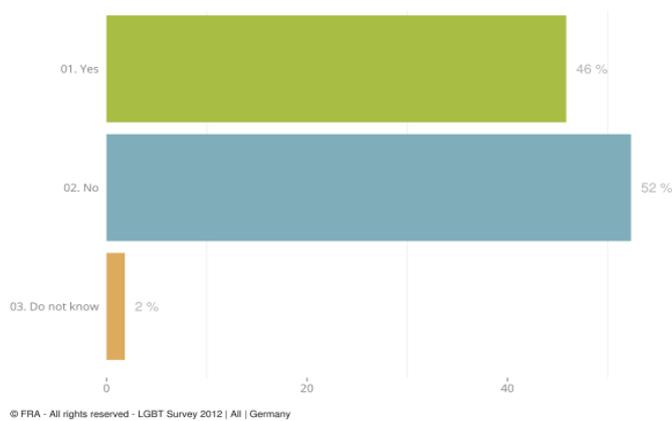


Figure 2: Perceived discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the last 12 months

Source: FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)

The level of sexual bias exclusion may only be derived from the degree of perceived exclusion by LGBT. Based on the number received in the survey, almost half of the respondents within Germany felt discriminated due to their sexual orientation (See Figure 2).

However, based on a nationwide and also public perception, only 22% of the participants considered discrimination within Germany as very widespread (FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)).

With regards to the Rainbow Europe Country Index of 2010, which measured the degree of equality of LGBT people in a country based on eight relevant key factors, Germany only ranked a mid-table position, with five out of ten possible points (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2010). According to a survey of the STERN in 2013, a renowned nationwide and politically oriented magazine, 74% of the German population supports the equalization of same-sex relationships and their right of marriage (Spiegel, 2013). This demonstrates a rapid change in society's perception of non-heterosexuality, since in 2006 only about 52% of all respondents promoted this issue (Europäische Kommission, 2006).

Especially in the recent years, many people of public interest declared their coming-out. Among them were many actors, and also politicians. In fact, not only is Berlin's mayor an

avowing homosexual, also the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guido Westerwelle, does not deny his sexual orientation. Society seems to have accepted their way of living, being proved by a study of 2007, in which 79% declared to approve of a homosexual chancellor (Die Zeit, 2007).

Then again, within other areas of interest, **for instance in sports**, the existence of non-heterosexuality in society has been ignored, if not denied. Overall, however, Germany may be considered a country of little sexual bias exclusion although other countries in Europe are even better positioned with regards to this matter.

1.2 Structure of sexual bias exclusion

Within the following paragraph, the extent of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation will be analyzed according to various structural issues like age, education, place of living etc.

- **Age**

The respondents within the youngest age group (18 to 24 years) were the most likely to state that they had been victims of violence discrimination in the year prior to the EU survey because they were LGBT (48 %). The oldest German participants, on the other hand, felt the least discriminated on the grounds of their sexual orientation (23%). You may therefore derive, the younger the respondents, the larger the extent of the perceived discrimination (See Figure 3).

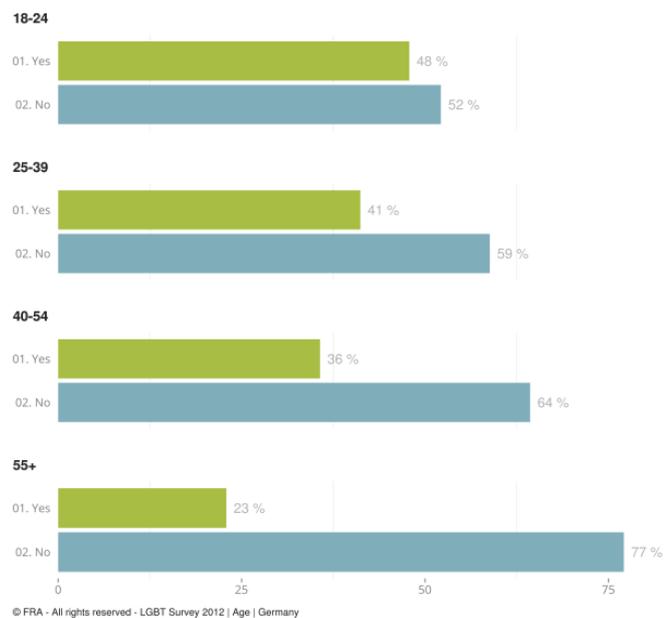


Figure 3: Perceived discrimination because of being L, G, B or T during the last 12 months / Age

Source: FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)

- **Education**

With regard to the aspect of the participants' degree of education, different perceptions of the country's

level of sexual discrimination were noted. People of no formal education (38%) perceived the discrimination in Germany as *very widespread*. Further results show that the higher the form of education, the lower the perceived discrimination within the country. Moreover, 31% of the



higher educated consider German discrimination to be *fairly rare* (FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)).

- **Place of living**

The results with regard to the participant's place of living showed an almost even distribution of perception in between the given options – *city, suburbs, town, country village, and countryside*. In every place of living, 40% of the participants felt discriminated (FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)). This leads to the conclusion that the place of residence in Germany does not have a major influence on the person's extent of perceived discrimination. However, non-heterosexual communities tend to especially evolve within bigger cities, like Berlin or Cologne.

- **Area of discrimination**

LGBT people have to face discrimination and exclusion within different areas of daily life. With regard to this aspect, various exemplary areas of great relevance can be distinguished. The findings resulting from the study will be presented in the following table (Table 1).

	<i>Felt discriminated against because of being L, G, B or T</i>					
	at work	when looking for a job	by school / university personnel	when looking for a house or apartment	by healthcare personnel	by social service personnel
Yes	20%	14%	16%	17%	11%	8%
No	76%	81%	81%	80%	87%	88%
Do not know	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%	4%

Table 1: Perceived discrimination in different areas of daily life

Source: FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights (2012)

The table shows that less than a quarter of all LGBT people asked claimed to feel discriminated in the areas of daily life examined in the study. Especially at work, 20% struggled for having a non-heterosexual orientation, whereas 76% felt not discriminated. Even less feel discriminated when applying for a job. These figures somehow contradict the general perception that most LGBT struggled majorly in the German working and school environment.



1.3 Forecasting of level and structure of sexual bias exclusion

Based on the various findings of the studies presented, it can be seen that there has been a positive development in which people favored the inclusion of LGBT into the overall society. Even politically, the legal equalization of LGBT partnerships seems to become an ever more important and inevitable step in these modern times. In case the ruling government may not address necessary issues to promote further anti-exclusion development, the German Federal Constitutional Court will step in and pave the road for equal treatment of all German citizens regardless of their sexual orientation.



2. Causes and consequences of sexual bias exclusion

2.1 Description of causes of sexual bias exclusion

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation has a long tradition in the history of mankind. Especially with regards to sexuality, strict rules and regulations defined what was socially accepted and what was not. Even though non-heterosexuality is legal by German law nowadays, discrimination continued, less on a governmental level but on a personal one. The following abstract will therefore discuss potential causes for this circumstance.

- **Missing education on sexual diversity in schools**

Nowadays, schools lack the competence to educate students with regard to the subject of sexual orientation and its possible discrimination in society. Even though an insight into the topic is given, a deeper knowledge among students is not anticipated, and also merely focusses on human reproduction itself.

In recent years, German states' educational guidelines have slowly been adapted to evolving society-related developments. However, this does not seem to influence the general perception of non-heterosexuality as an uncomfortable topic to publicly talk about. This reflects the recent events in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, where a teacher was boycotting changes within the school's curriculum, that were supposed to be complemented by issues of non-heterosexual living. His petition raised more than 221.000 approvals among residents (Die Welt, 2014a).

- **Legal preference of heterosexual orientation**

Germany has been a role model for democratic societies in the post-war period. However, even though German citizens are legally treated equally, heterosexual partnerships have ever since been preferred and considered to be a desirable ideal when judged by political issues (Die Welt, 2014b). It is a fact that marriage between man and woman is still legally preferred, whereas registered non-heterosexual partnerships lack equal rights regarding various issues (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2014). Especially the currently ruling party CDU (Christian Democratic Union) treats this issue with neglect, thereby communicating a biased attitude to the public. Other parties, however, have presented their support by favoring the equalization regarding same-sex marriages by about 80%, claimed in a study of 2013 (Spiegel, 2013).



- **Non-acknowledgement through the church**

Furthermore, the Roman-Catholic Church does not acknowledge same-sex relationships resting upon traditional beliefs. Regions with a great degree of religious beliefs tend to adapt more to this conservative ideology. Even though the relevance of church-related matters in German daily life has been decreasing, it is still carrier of many social institutions. Therefore, their employees who refer to themselves as LGBT may have to face fewer rights and less coverage by labor laws, since these may be overruled by the church (Die Welt, 2012).

The Protestant Church, following a more liberal direction, does acknowledge this specific way of living within the modern German society.

2.2 Description of consequences of sexual bias exclusion for people, local society, country, and Europe

- **People**

People of non-heterosexual orientation have to face discrimination in all areas of life. Special attention should thereby be paid to their life in school and at work, which present the greatest fields of constant struggle. Due to the daily pressure of discrimination and personal exclusion, people suffer psychically as well as physically to a great extent, degrading their own quality of life. They are not only more likely to develop a fear and affective disorder, the probability of suicidal thoughts is also higher. Lesbians even tend to consume greater amounts of alcohol and cigarettes than heterosexual women (Herek & Garnets, 2007). These conditions may worsen in case LGBT find themselves forced to hide or deny their sexual orientation in order to avoid a possible public stigmatization. The sum of all resulting health issues ultimately increases the possibility of causing an early death.

- **Local Society**

The exclusion of LGBT in local societies may eventually lead to the formation of sexual minorities. Therefore, it is likely that people of the same orientation will bind themselves more and more to their peers. Clustering, however, will create the image of an active exclusion from society, possibly even resulting in the formation of a negative stereotype. Moreover, since cities seem to possess a smaller degree of sexual discrimination due to their anonymous nature, non-heterosexual people may even consider migrating to the conurbations. Due to the perception of LGBT exclusion, non-revealed LGBT may even consider to remain hidden due to the fear of future exclusion and stigmatization. This may, again, lead to further health issues.

- **Country**

Moreover, also economic costs are accrued because of the prevalent homophobia and exclusion of sexual minorities in society. Due to worse health conditions resulting from discrimination in daily life, the economy has to face a loss of labor productivity and output which may, in fact, decrease the nation's GDP (UNAIDS, 2014).

It is also proven that married partners are less likely to seek government welfare (SBS News, 2013). Since sexually excluded people possess a level of stress which is higher than average, also higher costs for health care services need to be considered.

A further aspect evolving refers to the image of the country. Since Germany takes over the position of a role model in Europe regarding many important issues like regenerative energy, it may want to reconsider whether it is worth the risk to ruin its image.

- **Europe**

Germany itself plays an important role within all areas among European countries. However, with regard to the equal status of LGBT people, it only ranked mid-table position (FRA - European Union Agency for fundamental rights, 2012). Facing the results of the European study regarding LGBT discrimination, however, the EU perceived the need to further address LGBT people's fundamental rights. Standards on non-discrimination and equality have therefore been developed or reinforced within recent years. Moreover, the EU faces the need to continually monitor the effectiveness of procedures within its countries. The overall aim has to be ensuring that fundamental rights of LGBT people are effectively respected, protected and fulfilled.

In global comparison, the European Union possesses a low degree of sexual discrimination and exclusion of LGBT people. Even more so, many locals support their further process of equalization within the legal system. Since non-heterosexuality is still subject to penalty in many countries worldwide, people may even consider fleeing into the safety of the European Union. It therefore may even develop itself as a worldwide role model for anti-exclusion activities (Die Welt, 2013).



3. Government role in preventing sexual bias exclusion

In Germany, homosexual were discriminated against until the last turn of the century. At the time of the National Socialism, they were mainly affected by discriminatory legislation and persecution. Since then, a lot has been changed and the government has set clear lines to prevent such discrimination to happen again.

3.1 Government activities

- **Paragraph 175 StGB**

The first major step against homophobia was taken in 1994 when paragraph 175, called "*fornication among men*", finally was deleted from the German Penal Code (Klein, 2013).

Paragraph 175 (known formally as §175 StGB) was a provision of the German Criminal Code from 15 May 1871 to 10 March 1994. It made homosexual acts between males a crime, and in early revisions the provision also criminalized bestiality as well as forms of prostitution and underage sexual abuse. All in all, around 140,000 men were convicted under the law (Mengel, 2012:5).

- **Coalition agreement Hesse**

In the coalition agreement between the Christian Democratic Union (CDU – Christlich Demokratische Union) and the Green Party (Die Grünen) of 2014-2019, the realization of equality among all citizens is of high importance. The main aim here is to provide the acceptance and tolerance of homosexuality. In particular, this includes the improvement of monitoring young people in the difficult phase of their Coming Out (Koalitionsvertrag CDU/Grüne 2014-2019).

On March 10, 2013, Hesse joined the *Coalition against Discrimination*. The initiative was launched by the Anti-Discrimination Agency to win federal states and local authorities as partners for a society free of discrimination (Hessen.de, 2013).

Furthermore, on the *World AIDS Day* in 2013, Jürgen Lender, Member of the Parliament and the Free Democratic Party (FDP – Freie Demokratische Partei) demanded to end the discrimination against homosexual men who donate their blood to blood donation associations. (LiSL – Liberale Schwule und Lesben, 2013).

3.2 Law regulations

In 2001, the Life Partnership Act (Gesetz für Eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaft - LPartG) was



passed which allowed the registration of same-sex partnership. It was approved under the coalition government of the Green Party and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Since then, “*same-sex partners can enter into a legally binding partnership, which has largely the same legal status as a marriage*“ (Auswertiges Amt, 2012) being acknowledged by the state of Germany.

The Life Partnership Act is divided into 6 sections, which include a total of 23 paragraphs. Its content is briefly shown beneath.

- Section I :Justification of civil partnership
- Section II: Effects of civil partnership
- Section III: Separated life partner
- Section IV: Annulment of the civil partnership
- Section V: Transitional provisions
- Section VI: Deviating country legal responsibilities

The paragraphs that fall under these sections contain the rights and obligations of the partners (for example, the law of succession, the tax law, or the adoption law).

However, the status of civil partnership of same-sex couples is not equal to same-sex marriages under the German law because the term 'marriage' only represents the rights for heterosexual couples in Germany. This aspect is of particular interest with regard to adoption or taxation laws. Some of the paragraphs have been changed since 2001 as the German government tries to adapt the rights and obligations of same-sex marriages to those of life partnerships. On May 7, 2013, the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe decided that, with regard to taxation, civil partnerships of same-sex partners have to be treated equally to marriage of heterosexual partners. The Court also determined that the applicability of this new law is retroactive to August 1, 2001 (Steuertipps.de, 2013).



4. Institutions and their actions

4.1 Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany (LSVD)

The *Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany (LSVD)* is the largest civil rights and self-help organization for gays and lesbians in Germany with approximately 4,000 individual members. It is both nationally and internationally active. The Federation is represented in all federal states in Germany.

In addition, the Federation is recognized as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with official consultative status at the United Nations (UN).



Figure 4: The Logo of The Lesbian and Gay Federation in Germany

Source: lsvd.de, 2001.

The federations' objectives are to legally guarantee equal rights for heterosexual and LGBT people, respect and tolerance towards people who are not heterosexually orientated, and LGBT people's equal participation in society without any pressure to hide from it.

- **Self-help and self-organization**

Problems that can arise to lesbians or gay men by prejudice, social and legal discrimination, exclusion, and violence are not immutable individual destiny. The LSVD encouraged and supported gays and lesbians to step out of the victim role and to take matters into their own hands. Many gays and lesbians do voluntary work in the LSVD: in public relations, in the working groups and self-help groups, in consulting work, and in the committees of the Federation. For voluntary workers, seminars and training courses are offered. This educational work aims to support LGBT people in their commitment and further qualifications.

- **Anti-violence work**

Especially the violence against gays is still a big problem in Germany. Many gays do not report any crimes against them to the police because they fear discrimination by them, or they are afraid to be unmasked in their social environment.

After protests against the methods of investigations of the police in a crime case of a homosexual man, first conversations between the LSVD and police authorities came up in

Cologne in 1991. Since then, a continual dialogue has been developed, and finally has a close cooperation between the police and the Federation has emerged. The Cologne Model to the fight against anti-gay violence was developed. Meanwhile, a lot of anti-violence projects in many cities are working on the basis of the model. The Federation helps and advises victims of anti-homosexual violence. It remains not only in counseling, the LSVD also informs politicians and authorities about the issues. This public cooperation shall ensure an appropriate handling of LGBT people by the police. In addition, the LSVD wants to counteract anti-homosexual attitudes by acceptance campaigns, and tries to reduce the potential for violence.

- **Integration**

Today, there is a network of gay and lesbian meeting places such as cafes, bars, discos and meeting centers in the larger cities of Germany. But not all gays and lesbians are fully integrated into this community. Lesbians and gays of non-German origin often experience multiple forms of discrimination: as foreigners, on the one hand, and because of their sexual identity, on the other hand. At the same time, they cannot expect little support from their compatriots as in their culture of origin homosexuality often is even less accepted than in the German society. This is especially true for LGBT people of Mediterranean, and particularly, of Islamic origin. Therefore, self-help groups are formed by the LSVD, which deeply investigate in such problems. In addition, information and clarification activities are taken in the foreign resident population to promote acceptance.

Especially gay men of an advanced age have problems to integrate into their local society. Therefore, the LSVD is working on projects called 'Gay and Grey' on the integration of older gay men in the gay community, for example, information evenings or a Talk Café (lsvd.de, 2014).

4.2 Business Women Association

The *Business Women Association* (Wirtschaftsweiber e.V.) is the only nationwide cross sector network in Germany for lesbians in professional and management positions. The Association, whose headquarter is situated in Berlin, was established in 1999. The club has a total of nine regional groups that are represented across Germany: Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover, North Rhine Westphalia, Frankfurt, Franconia Upper Palatinate, Rhein-Neckar, Stuttgart, Munich (see Figure 5) (Wirtschaftsweiber.de, 2014).



In addition to regular network meetings, the association offers exciting theme nights and interesting workshops. And of course, there are also common enjoyment and celebration (Wirtschaftsweiber.de, 2014).

In 2011, when the Women's Football World Cup took place, the Business Women Association hosted the L-Soccer Reception in Berlin for the opening game of the World Cup under the motto "diversity in women's football - against homophobia". Guests were, for example, Eren Ünsal, head of the Anti-Discrimination Unit of the Federal State of Berlin, ex-professional players and sports scientists.



Figure 5: Representation of Wirtschaftsweiber e.V. in Germany

Source: Wirtschaftsweiber.de, 2014

For 2014, they have already planned some interesting events. Two examples of events they are looking forward to join are the Hannover Fair and a trip to Munich in May of this year where they meet with the Swiss organization Wybernet to share experiences and information as international networks are very important for the association. On the Hannover Fair, the 11th Congress Women Power takes place on April 11, 2014. The association's slogan of this year is: *Using Networks. Experience Integration. Learning new Things.* At the Hannover Fair, the association will have an information booth to inform about the work and to encourage new people (Wirtschaftsweiber.de, 2014).

4.3 Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration – Same-sex lifestyles

The Ministry has worked on a variety of policies concerning the topic of LGBT people. They can be found on the Ministry's internet portal. There, homosexuals have the possibility to inform themselves about a variety of subjects, if they wish to remain anonymous. The Ministry's goal is that people are open and inform themselves about the life, the difficulties, and the possibilities of LGBT people in Germany. If anyone is looking for personal contact, advisers are on the location to take care and consult individuals and talk about their affairs. Some points of the Ministry program, which are reported and inform about the topic in great detail, are for example:



- Life situation of homosexual people
- Rainbow Families
- Homosexual people at school
- Homosexual people and their families
- Homosexual people in their working environment
- Older homosexual people
- Homosexual people with disabilities
- Homosexuality and Migration (Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration, 2014).

These are only some topics of the program of the Ministry, but what can be seen is that the policy is willing to deal with the topic to offer support for LGBT people.



5. Other activities against sexual bias exclusion

Besides the organizations presented above which fight homophobia and discrimination of LGBT people, many other organizations support them as well by organizing events and other activities against sexual bias exclusion. Three of those actions and events, respectively, will be presented in the following.

5.1 Respect Gaymes

Respect Gaymes is a sports event which is organized by the Gay and Lesbian Association Berlin-Brandenburg which is part of the Lesbian and Gay Association Germany (LSVD), the biggest and widest spread German organization supporting homosexual people by fighting prejudices and intolerance towards them.

The event annually takes place in the 'Jahn sports park' in Germany's capital Berlin on the first weekend of June. Young people compete for mutual respect. The event's message is clear: We show the red card to hate and violence! By offering 60 various kinds of sports like soccer and beach volleyball, break dance, battles, concerts, workshops, and much more, the project tries to bring together people of different backgrounds having different interests and preferences.

For the first time, the project was initiated in 2005. Respect Gaymes wants to connect people of all forms of sexual orientation who would probably not meet and get to know each other in their usual everyday life. It aims at reducing prejudices and increasing respect and tolerance towards homosexual people.



Figure 6: Break dancing at the Respect Gaymes in 2013

Source: LSVD Berlin Brandenburg

Besides the event, there is an accompanying campaign called 'Show respect for gays and lesbians!' which aims at attracting attention to the topic of homosexuality within the city but also beyond its boundaries. Additionally, the project conducts educational work in schools and youth clubs to make young people aware of sexual diversity by offering workshops which last from one day to one whole week. Moreover, Respect Gaymes not only works with students, but also with teachers, social workers, and all people interested in order to sensitize them for the topic, on the one hand, and to teach them how to handle it in their daily work life at schools or youth centers, on the other hand.



Thanks to prominent ambassadors like German politicians and celebrities, sponsors, and cooperation partners, the Respect Gaymes have become an inherent part of Berlin's event scene (Lesben-und Schwulenverband Berlin-Brandenburg, 2014).

5.2 MANEO

MANEO is Germany's most experienced and most popular gay anti-violence program which was originated by the Mann-O-Meter Association in 1990.

MANEO's mission, first of all, is to help and support gay and bisexual men, who have to face homophobic violence and discrimination, no matter whether they are victim, witness, or life partner. Additionally, MANEO raises the awareness and concerns about homophobia and its consequences, and provides public relations work to prevent violence before it occurs. They, for instance, regularly organize anti-violence trainings together with Berlin's police. To develop those protective measures, MANEO collects and documents all occurring acts of violence, from insults to personal injury. Last but not least, the program mobilizes active civil engagement to fight for the rights of homosexual people. In 1992/93 already, MANEO initiated Berlin's homosexual city festival. Moreover, they conduct surveys regarding experiences of homophobic violence.

In 2009, when a youth club for homosexuals in Tel Aviv was attacked, the program initiated the so-called 'rainbow-bridge' to connect Tel Aviv's and Berlin's gay youth. Sponsored by the cities of Berlin, Cologne, and Tel Aviv, the young Israelis who had survived the dreadful attack were invited to visit Berlin.

Since 2006, together with French and Polish anti-violence projects, MANEO has been awarding the European Tolerance Prize to outstanding personalities who have contributed to more tolerance within Europe and the whole world (MANEO, 2014).

5.3 Christopher Street Day

Christopher Street Day (CSD) is an annual LGBT celebration and demonstration held in various cities across Germany, and all over the world, fighting for the rights of LGBT people, and against discrimination and exclusion.

The CSD is held in memory of the first big uprising of homosexual people against police assaults which took place at the bar Stonewall Inn in New York's Christopher Street on June 28, 1969. On June 28, 1970 the Christopher Street Liberation Day marked the first

anniversary of the Stonewall riots with an assembly on Christopher Street and the first Gay Pride Parade in the history of the United States. It has become an international tradition to hold a demonstration for the rights of LGBT people in the summer (Klein, 2013).

The first German CSD took place in Berlin in 1979. The first documented LGBT parade in Germany was in Münster on April 29, 1972. Now almost every large city in Germany celebrates the CSD. The most prominent German CSD events are the Berlin Pride, the CSD Hamburg, and the CSD Cologne (Berlin.de, 2013). When Cologne hosted Europride in 2002, it attracted more than one million participants and spectators to the city (Kölner Stadtanzeiger, 2004).

Due to organizational reasons, the CSDs in Germany do not take place on the historic date of June 27, but on different weekends between June and August. Often, those parades are compared to carnival processions or techno parades, in which celebrating and partying are the main focus. This is the idea of all gay pride parades: through celebrating, the LGBT community shows that they can be proud of themselves and their community.

Berlin, of course, is one of Germany's cities, celebrating not only for one day but for a whole week. On every Thursday before the parade weekend, the 'Christopher Street Day on the river Spree' takes place. It is a mixture of sightseeing and party tour enriching the CSD- week by contributing a unique event that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. On June 19, 2014, the CSD on the Spree will celebrate its tenth birthday. Having started with one boat and 80 participants, the event has become a big party with 2,000 party people on ten different boats, sponsored and organized by LGBT organizations like GMF, L-Tunes, and Club SchwuZ (Berlin.de, 2013).



Figure 7 :CSD on the Spree, 2013

Source: Das Queere Onlinemagazin

The following chapter will presents SchLAU Kassel, a local association situated in Kassel, which supports LGBT people and provides educational work for the city's schools and youth centers.



6. Characteristic of SchLAu

First of all it must be mentioned that SchLAu is a network of German projects that conduct educational work with regard to all kinds of sexuality different from heterosexuality including homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexualism. In 2000, the network was founded in North Rhine Westphalia, a federal state in the west of Germany. Today, the network is active in the states of the Rhineland, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hesse.

As can be assumed due to its geographical location, SchLAu Kassel is part of Hesse's educational network that also includes the cities of Wiesbaden, Darmstadt, and Frankfurt am Main. Together, they coordinate projects and support each other in each city's educational work.

The joint logo of all the SchLAu associations contains a bulb whose glow wires are formed like the Venus symbol of femininity and the Mars symbol of masculinity. The bulb itself symbols enlightenment which means that the whole logo, illustrated in Figure 8, represents the associations' goal to make people, especially the young ones, aware of the problems LGBT people, and educate them in tolerance and openness towards people who have a different sexual orientation.



Figure 8: Logo of SchLAu Kassel

Source: SchLAU Kassel

- **SchLAu Kassel**

SchLAu Kassel was founded in July 2013 under the trusteeship of the 'Deutsche AIDS Hilfe e.V.' (German AIDS Association) and can, therefore, be described as an association that still is in its very early stages. The association's name '*SchLAu*' consists of three German terms that shortly illustrate its aims: *Sch* stands for gay which is '*Schwul*' in German, *L* means lesbian ('*Lesbisch*' in German), and *Au* stands for enlightenment which in German is '*Aufklärung*'. Originally, the SchLAu associations only made homosexuality the subject of their discussion but for some years, they have been doing educational work on transsexualism and bisexuality as well.

According to their motto 'Better talk with instead about us!', they want to strengthen tolerance and try to reduce prejudices and cliché thinking in the youth's heads.



- **The team and its educational work**

The SchLAu Kassel team consists of five young adults - four women and one man - who are homo-, bi- or transsexual themselves. As they come from various backgrounds, have different lifestyles and jobs, they can offer a wide range of experiences and insights regarding the topic. The team works voluntarily and meets regularly to discuss specific issues and plan the activities for their school and youth club visits.

Main aim of SchLAu is to create the possibility for young grown-ups to meet with and talk to other young people not being heterosexually oriented to lose fears of contact and ask questions openly. The team prepares workshops which last from at least 90 minutes to entire project weeks. To get into contact with the young people and the topic, the team has prepared several games for the classes or groups. What is important is that teachers or group leaders do not participate in those workshops to better 'access' the young adults.

Each workshop starts with a relaxed entry to get to know each other, and to find out about the status of the students' knowledge concerning the topic. The team, for example, brings along signs illustrating terms like 'heterosexual', 'rainbow family', or 'CSD' to define and explain them together with the young people. Entry games, for example, serve as a kind of introduction into the topic which helps to loosen the atmosphere and to abandon first fears with regard to the topic.

In a second step, the team provides several games in which the students need to emphasize Alex who, according to the kind of game and the groups the students are assigned to, is either heterosexual, homosexual, or transsexual. All in all, games like 'Love for the first time' and others aim at two main lessons to be learned. First of all, the participants will notice the unequal reception and treatment of LGBT people in society. Secondly, similarities of homo- and heterosexual relationships can be identified like, for example, the fear of introducing the new partner to the parents for the first time. In a third step, the team members tell about their lives and their experiences. Additionally, the students are allowed to question the team with regard to the topic. After each workshop session, the students are asked to fill in a questionnaire to gain information about their personal opinion on the topic and to get feedback on the workshop itself.

- **Further activities and events**

But besides the educational work in schools, SchLAu Kassel also organizes events, parties, and other projects to increase the people's awareness. They, for example, provide thematic film series in Kassel's cinema 'Bali' with support of the 'Queer Association' which also fights



against homophobia. Additionally, they organize parties in Kassel's clubs and bars like the 'Gleis 1', and even motto parties as on Halloween. In August 2013, SchLAu Kassel participated in Kassel's Christopher Street Day for the first time and provided information for interested ones. Moreover, they offer educational work on specific events in schools and youth clubs like the healthcare day in the 'Reichspräsident-Friedrich-Ebert School' in Fritzlar, or on project weeks in several schools of Kassel and its surrounding.

As the Association still is in its early stage, the team currently is working on its website, on contacts to other organizations, on leaflets, posters, and other material to advertise themselves and their engagement to get even greater attention and to be even more successful in what they do.



Conclusion

As has been shown in the previous elaborations, **sexual bias exclusion in Germany still exists.** Although there are several laws like the AGG or the LpartG by now, discrimination still is a problem in the German society – may it be at school, at church, at the working place, or at any public facility.

In comparison to some southern European states, Germany serves as role model as, for example, 'homosexual marriages' are allowed, and LGBT people may not be harassed or discriminated for their sexual orientation. However, in comparison to the northern European countries like Sweden, Germany lacks acceptance and integrity of LGBT people. Therefore, it can only be recommended to insert this system of integrity into the German one to better integrate homo-, bi-, and transsexual people into the society. **But, of course, the best system does not work if its single elements do not support it. This means that the thinking in the heads of each single member of the German society itself needs to change.**

The idea of homophobia is still mainly anchored in the heads of the older generations and in those of people being xenophobic. This probably results from Germany's history under the Nazi regime and the Soviet Union where homosexuals were seen as 'un-normal' or, respectively, did not even exist according to the system. Germany's future generations will, hopefully, have a more open-minded and unbiased view on the topic of LGBT people.

As non-heterosexuality still is a taboo issue, for examples in German sports, many German politicians and celebrities like footballers or singers are engaged in educational work with regard to sexual bias exclusion to make the people aware, and to take away their fears of contacting LGBT people. **However, the state has taken first steps into a society free of prejudices, but full of tolerance and acceptance towards improvements with regard to social exclusion on rounds of sexual orientation.**

The European Commission also is aware of the importance of integrity of LGBT people. It conducted studies concerning the topic to find out more about the situation in its member states, and also ruled that they provide asylum for pursued people from all over the world. Their task should now be to strengthen each country's government to implement anti-homophobia laws. Additionally, they should demand anti-homophobia attitudes and behavior from all their member states and the ones that enter the European Union in the future. Furthermore, they should actively fight against homophobia in those states in which people are still pursued because of their sexual orientation.



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