

# Freedom at Work Conference Report



its pre- and post-conference events have passed. Participants from many parts of the world showed much enthusiasm and energy and have been collaborating and exchanging information whenever possible.

We all hope that we can continue to cooperate with this energy and enthusiasm in the future, now that we need to rely on electronic communication, and that we can develop our work and create a wider and deeper commitment within labour unions for the struggle against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and for the promotion of diversity policies. One of the concrete outcomes of these days of intense international collaboration is that we will write a proposal for the meeting of the Global Union Federations, aspiring to broaden the basis for LGBTI trade union policies and activities.





# **FREEDOM AT WORK**

## **CONFERENCE REPORT**



Report on the 2016 international conference  
in Amsterdam  
organised by Netwerk Roze FNV





Freedom at work conference report:  
Report on the 2016 international conference in Amsterdam,  
organised by Netwerk Roze FNV /  
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## Preface

Ger Rolsma, chair  
Netwerk Roze FNV



In the summer of 2016 the Freedom at Work conference took place. A conference dedicated to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people at work or in the labour market, focusing on the role trade unions can play. Netwerk Roze FNV (the Pink Network in the largest Dutch trade union organisation) took the initiative for this conference. As chair of this network, I can tell you that organising this conference meant a lot to us. The FNV organised also the first conference on this subject in conjunction with the Gay Games in Amsterdam. The opportunity to link this conference with the EuroPride Amsterdam events and publicity was a rather unique one.

The conference was meant to activate trade union members, staff and officials involved in LGBTI activities and policies. Its aims were:

- ▼ to exchange experiences and increase expertise on strategies regarding LGBTI actions, activities and policies in trade unions and trade union organisations in different cultural, social and political contexts by creating a space for exchange of experiences in these fields.

- ▼ to create new incentives for co-operation between union organisations among themselves and union organisations and social movements and NGOs, and a stronger and more stable commitment and involvement in the labour movement, at various levels, for LGBTI equal rights issues at work and at the labour market.

## WHO

What kind of people did we want to have at the conference?

First, of course, the trade unionists (both volunteers and professionals) who are active in this area. But also members of LGBTI organisations who have an active interest in labour issues. In some countries trade unions are less developed organisations than in Western Europe. In others their very existence is under threat, such as in Turkey.

Turkey has a special position in our work as Netwerk Roze FNV, since we have a tradition of co-operation projects with Turkish LGBTI and trade union organisations. A group of eight people from Turkey would come over the conference – but only three of them managed to get a permission to leave the country, all because of the failed coup.

In total between 80 and 90 people (fluctuating over the days) participated in the conference, from 20 different countries: from France to Indonesia, from Sweden to Suriname, for instance.

The atmosphere at the conference was exactly how we had imagined it: positive, constructive, interactive, vibrating with energy. People trusted each other, really listened to each other and discussions were open. The conference was the basis for an international network, which we hope to maintain through the facebook page Freedom at Work.

## WHAT

The conference workshops covered various topics. It was striking to notice the differences in position for trade unions and for LGBTI movements, in the various countries, and to see that in many countries, trade unions and LGBTI organisations have never co-



operated. Nepal was a such an case. You can read more about the content of the workshops in the rest of this conference report.

During the conference extensive talks took place with the secretaries general of the global union federations Education International and Public Services International, Fred van Leeuwen and Rosa Pavanelli. As a result we have concluded to introduce LGBTI trade union policies to the other global union federations. As Netwerk Roze FNV, we also want to ensure the continuity of work on LGBTI issues in the International Labour Organisation ILO.

This good collaboration with EI and PSI will continue, with the EI/PSI LGBT Forum 2017 in Geneva already scheduled.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the FNV organisation, to the Bildungs- und Förderungswerk der Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft im DGB (Department of Education and Promotion Work in the German Labour Union for Education and Sciences, affiliated to the German League of Trade Unions) and to BOMO funding. Their support made this conference possible.

I also would like to thank all participants, all people in the conference organisation, the EI and PSI people who helped drafting the conference proposal, the 'helping hands' at the conference, without whom this conference would not have been such a successful, pleasant, inspiring and high-quality conference.



Coordination: **Ivo van Harmelen**

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**Jolanda van Gool, Ger Rolsma**

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**Eldert Kuiken, Michiel Odijk**

## Crew



**L** In McDevitt-Pugh hosted the plenary sessions. Eight speeches were given when the conference was completed with music and a hilarious performance by Merel Moistra.

On Friday, before dinner, Mounir Samuel presented LGBTalks with Boris Dittrich, Phyll Opuku and Omar Abdulghani. The transcript of five speeches are printed on the following pages.

The opening speech by MEP Ulrike Lunacek (picture left) was video-recorded<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkOOUpCuaY&feature=youtu.be>



**Speeches:  
Leo Hartveld  
General Secretary  
FNV**



**D**ear secretaries-general, dear conference participants and organisers, welcome!

On behalf of the FNV board I would like to welcome you to Amsterdam, to De Rode Hoed and to this international conference 'Freedom at Work'. I am delighted to see people from many countries and people with a lot of different backgrounds.

Special thanks to the global union federations and other organisations that have actively supported the realization of this conference. These include PSI, EI, GEW and ETUC.

What do we mean by "Freedom at work"? Obviously not the freedom for colleagues and bosses to make sick jokes about a lesbian worker, the freedom to insult a transgender colleague, the freedom to fire a guy because he is thought to be "too effeminate" and "maybe even gay". Obviously not the freedom to break promises about diversity policies or legal rules against discrimination. Not the kind of neo-liberal freedom in which everyone should take care of herself or himself, and the weakest people are the victims.

The freedom that we want, is a freedom at heart, a knowledge that you can apply for a job without the fear of being stigmatized for your sexual orientation or gender identity. That, at your workplace, your colleagues and bosses respect you as a person and consider your actions in this workplace as valuable.

Free from discrimination, free from harassment and bullying, free from slandering and prejudices. That regulations at work that apply to spouses also apply to your partner.

That is what we mean by Freedom At Work!

By the way: Condition for this freedom is that workers have a secure job. The core agenda of FNV is therefore what we call 'Echte banen', Real Jobs, which give continuity, quality of work and security of income. Without a secure basis at work, it is not possible to defend your workers' rights, stand up against discrimination and build trade union power.

#### **CONFERENCE**

This desire for freedom at work is not new. Trade union organisations and other groups and organisations have been working for years, sometimes even decades on this kind of freedom and have gathered a lot of experience. We invite you to share these experiences, while being aware that what might have been useful in one country and one situation, will not always be useful in another. We all are different, and yet we share some common causes. And one of these causes is to acknowledge that we are different, to celebrate our diversity.

Combating discrimination, promoting diversity, these are central issues in the policy of the FNV, and they are also cornerstones for this conference.



### NOT ACCEPTED EVERYWHERE

Freedom at work is not acknowledged worldwide as an aim to strive for. Every year, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association ILGA draws a map of the legal situation in all parts of the world. Today, 79 countries of the world prohibit homosexuality. Some examples of this countries are Malaysia, Iran, Morocco, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Puerto Rico. Some countries even have a death penalty for homosexuality, such as Mauritania, Sudan, parts of Somalia and Nigeria, Iran, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

### IMPROVEMENTS AND BACKLASHES

The fact that such maps need to be revised every year shows that the situation is not stable. Worldwide, the recognition that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is wrong and must be combated, is growing. Several countries have introduced legislation to accommodate transgender people, for instance by a gender neutral civil registration and passport. A growing number of countries has granted same-sex couples the legal opportunity to marry. Other countries however seem to be using the delicate position of LGBTI people by blaming them for corrupting children and distorting family life. The United Kingdom, that introduced rules against “propaganda for homosexuality” in the Thatcher era, has now legalised same-sex marriages. On the other hand, where the Soviet Union in its heydays included the word “homosexuality” for the first time as a neutral term in the dictionaries, the Putin administration has introduced legislation that is similar to the Thatcher acts, but with a police force that is supporting gay-bashers rather than victims.

The world is changing, and as trade unionists we need to be aware of the processes behind these changes, if we want to use effective strategies to change it into a better world.

But is not only the direct prohibition of same-sex activities, or the exclusion of so-called “propaganda for homosexuality” that affects the lives of LGBTI workers. Some countries have ambiguous texts in their legislation that can be used against lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals, trans people and people with an intersex status whenever needed. Laws that sanction “immoral and dishonourable behaviour” can be used at any time to criminalize those who do not comply with the heterosexist norms.



### DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION OCCUR ANYWHERE

Even in those countries which **do** recognize same-sex marriages, which **do** prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, which **do** promote diversity, can discrimination and exclusion occur, also at the workplace. Even in those countries, which include the Netherlands, some people are narrow-minded and transphobic and homophobic. Even in the Netherlands cases of blatant discrimination occur – such as the exclusion of a intern by a Christian company because they found out on Facebook that he had a relationship with another guy.

But what is more difficult to cope with is the more subtle form of discrimination: jokes being made, the exclusion and social isolation of LGBTI workers amongst their colleagues. Equal rights – in hiring, in dismissal, in collective bargaining results, in pension rights – is



one thing, combating exclusion at the workplace is another. As trade unions, we want to be active in both these areas. But we also need to convince our colleagues in other unions to take this issue on board. We need to convince some union organisations in Africa, in Asia, in Russia.

Moreover, we do not have the expertise in every detail, and in some countries, the trade unions have a very weak position or they are even illegal. We need allies.



With this conference we hope to encourage you to find such new alliances, to be inspired by the exchange of experiences, to get a more fundamental insight in the various political and social changes that are taking place in this world and to use these insights for effective actions and policies. Let's get rid of discrimination and exclusion at work. Freedom at work!



# Speeches: Ger Rolsma Chair Pink Network FNV



**L**in, thanks for that wonderful, warm introduction. On behalf of the Roze Netwerk FNV, the Pink Network FNV, I welcome you all.

The Pink Network, organiser of this conference, is part of the largest trade union organisation in the Netherlands, the FNV. The FNV is a union organisation with 1,1 million members – in a country with 17 million people. It negotiates collective labour agreements that affect about 4 million workers.

The Pink Network’s main working area is in organising the rights of LGBTI people in the workplace.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It was June 26 1982, when I was demonstrating during the Pink Saturday (the Dutch National Pride, the equivalent of Stonewall demonstrations) in Amersfoort, when a group of conservative and aggressive young men started throwing eggs and stones. I did not only feel threatened, but I was also very

angry. Not just because of the brute violence, but especially because of the fact that these young men could not accept lesbians, gays and transgenders for being themselves. This incident triggered the Dutch government to acknowledge that national policies on LGBT rights and acceptance were necessary – and since then one of the Dutch ministers carries the responsibility for LGBT policies.

Recently I experienced the same kind of anger when I was in Izmir (Turkey), when the local governor cancelled the Pride demonstration 24 hours before its start. The FNV delegates decided to join the illegal Pride that was held on the same moment of the original demonstration. I experienced the repression of the police, who were taking pictures and making sure we felt very uncomfortable. The right to be who we are is still denied in many countries in the world.



## CONFERENCE

This *Freedom at Work* conference is about eliminating discrimination in the workplace. Against exclusion, bullying, the fear of being fired because you are different. *Freedom at work* is about acceptance of diversity at the working place. *Freedom at work* is all about inclusion, in which LGBTI+ rights are an integral part of business and government policies and practises. LGBTI+ workers in such circumstances feel included, and can function better. Research also shows that companies with diverse teams have better results.

*Freedom at work* is about the support unions can give to LGBTI+ workers. To do so effectively, some will need to work on their policies and become more inclusive.

*Freedom at work* is about a growing international network in which the LGBTI+ com-



munity, unions, and other supporters empower each other, to realise equal rights.



## HUMAN RIGHTS

For most of us, it is obvious that LGBTI rights need to be defended by trade unions. But we also know that we have opponents, who will not be convinced easily that lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and people with an intersex status need protected against discrimination.

What do we say if they claim that there is no legal basis for LGBTI rights?

Let me take you back in time. December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948, after nearly two years of drafting and rewriting, during a long night of debates, the UN General Assembly called for a vote on the final text of an important document. Forty-eight nations voted in favour; eight abstained; none dissented. The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted. It proclaims a simple, powerful idea: all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It is not a right conferred by governments or unions, it is the birth right of all people.

Since then, major steps have been made against racism, legal and social practices that reduce women to a second-class status have been abolished, rights of many religious minorities have been secured. Today we speak about the lack of protection LGBTI people are confronted with. They are intimidated, arrested, beaten up and even executed in too many parts in the world.

In 2010, for the first time, the UN General Assembly accepted a resolution recognis-

ing the human rights of LGBTI people worldwide. It took 62 years to come to this.

## OPINIONS AND SOCIAL CLIMATE

So, yes, there is a legal basis for claiming that LGBTI rights are human rights. But we all know that legal rules or regulations and laws can be pieces of paper no-one cares about. It is also important what the social climate is, how people think and feel. So let us look at the general opinion about sexual and gender diversity. What are, for instance, the developments in Europe?

The European Social Survey 2014 shows a wide variety in opinions and policies about LGBTI people. On one side the Maltese government introduced guidelines for schools to improve the situation for transgender children and children with an intersex condition. On the other side the government of Latvia passed a law that schools have to inform children about family values and the value of marriage between men and woman.

In Western Europe opinions about LGBTI people are moving in a positive direction. Opinions in Austria and Finland are less positive than in the Netherlands, France, and Norway. Especially in Germany the opinion has improved in the last 10 years: 13% more people think that lesbians and gays have the right to live their life the way they want. In Eastern Europe: Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia, the opinion is less positive than the European average and remains at the same level.

For an overview of the world I refer you to the website of the ILGA. Basically we see progress in many countries, like the United States, but also less tolerance in many others, like recently in Turkey and Indonesia.

This is just about opinions. I won't bother you with figures about actual discrimination. A lot of work still has to be done.

## CONCLUSION

The Pink Network of the FNV wishes you a fruitful conference and hopes an international network will be built in which we can support each other. Because: LGBTI rights are



union rights are human rights! Thank you for your attention.

**Speeches:  
Rosa Pavanelli  
Secretary-General  
PSI**



In this age of neo-liberal globalization, environmental crises and mass migrations, racism, xenophobia and all types of discrimination are on the rise. In addition to the demonization of migrants<sup>2</sup>, entire segments of national populations are de-legitimized and condemned. The link between racism, sexism and the exploitation of labour reminds us of who is on our side.

The privatization and PPP mantra is heard all over the world and has a massive impact on both the quality, accessibility of services and the working conditions of public service workers. Ensuing inequality and social crisis must be addressed urgently and is one of the causes of the growing discrimination, further fuelled by populist politicians.

We must combat anti-social policies that aim to divide workers to exploit us. While

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/migration>

inequality and precarious work<sup>3</sup> is on the rise all over the world and public services are being attacked by austerity and privatization schemes<sup>4</sup>, we need to reach out to all workers and stand united to protect current and future generations. Public service workers have an important role to play in terms of providing public services on the basis of equality and delivering human rights for all, promoting social and economic justice.

**Fighting discrimination means** challenging governments and support organisations that are the voice of those who are marginalized. The trade union movement must continue to fight for proactive pay and employment equity legislation, including through collective bargaining, which will eliminate the systemic discrimination in employment faced by indigenous peoples, women<sup>5</sup>, persons with disabilities, LGBT<sup>6</sup>, young<sup>7</sup> and migrant workers.



We have to maintain our position that human rights are not negotiable. Governments have to have the political courage to tackle discrimination in all its multiple forms, instead of promoting it through legislation. PSI and its affiliates are committed to fight against discrimination and for an inclusive, non-violent society.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/precarious-work>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/privatisation>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/gender-equality>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/lgbt>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.world-psi.org/en/issue/young>



At the same time, we need to recognize that much more needs to be done in terms of breaking down gender stereotypes, we need to think outside the box and stop dividing people in separate categories with their specific rights and/or challenges. This also means rethinking equality policies that only confirm the reality and do not change behavioural and cultural patterns. Celebrating diversity in all its forms is the way forward to ensure more tolerance, understanding and respectful societies. And this includes standing up for transgender workers – who are often the most discriminated.



By promoting best practices, trade union policies and campaigning for anti-discrimination legislation and implementation, PSI also contributes to the progressive identity of the trade union movement. A progressive union fights for LGBT workers' rights. We have achieved a lot in the last decade, but we need to continue working together to ensure that the progress made is not lost and to stand up against injustice and fight for more inclusive societies.

In October 2017, PSI and EI will organise a joint LGBT Worker's Forum, as a pre-meeting of the PSI Congress. This will be a key moment for our organisations to deliver a strong message of unity, strength and the central role human rights. We need to strengthen the representation of LGBTI workers in trade union structures and ensure that unions adopt LGBTI policies – this will also make our joint work more efficient and more visible.

I am here today to show the commitment of PSI to LGBT workers' rights and I will ask all of the leadership of our affiliates to do the same at the PSI Congress.



## Speeches:

**Fred van Leeuwen**  
**Secretary-General EI**



**D**elegates, colleagues, friends! We have travelled a long and winding road in our struggle for equality; one dotted with plenty of potholes and detours along the way. And even though it has been an arduous and too often painful experience, and one yet to be completed, we have come a great distance on our journey to seeing equality for all achieved. Just this week, if you can believe it, I learned that a US navy ship will adorn the name of Harvey Milk, the renowned openly gay San Francisco City Supervisor gunned down in an act of hate. But, just as the LGBTI community inches closer to mainstream acceptance, we bore witness to the horror of Orlando. Our work is far from complete.

This is why eradicating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is one of the constitutional aims of Education International. All of our member organisations are expected to help achieve that aim in their countries. Education unions and public services unions are among the most active organisations when it comes to the protection of minority rights. In 2003 EI and PSI created a Global LGBT Forum, one which is open to all of our members.

The Forum helps us encourage and assist our member unions to actively defend the rights of their LGBTI members, to help us develop training programs, set up regional networks and improve our advocacy work with intergovernmental agencies. Before taking a quick look at what has been achieved in the past decade, I want to share with you three what I personally believe to be important principles.

### PRINCIPAL ONE

There are few forms of discrimination, which have a deeper and more devastating impact on a person's life than discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And yet there is no form of discrimination as deeply rooted and as difficult to fight as this one. Even in countries where LGBTI rights have been recognized and where anti-discrimination legislation is in force there are sectors where LGBTI persons are still not welcome. Education also remains a problematic one of them. Teachers, children, sexuality. Together, these three words are explosive. There are still millions who do not want to make a clear distinction between homosexuality and paedophilia. Those of you working in our sector are fully aware of the prime precaution to be taken by every class room teacher, namely to avoid to be in a classroom alone with a child. Also, there are countries where education authorities claim the right not to appoint or to dismiss teachers whose sexual orientation is considered not be in accordance with their religious standards.

### PRINCIPLE TWO AND THREE

Anti-discrimination legislation is important, very important even, but it is not the ultimate remedy to discrimination. Let us not put all our bets on national and international laws. You can have very progressive legislation, but if prejudice continues to flourish, such legislation will prove difficult to enforce. I strongly believe in the role our school systems can play in addressing these prejudices.

Which brings me to my **third principle**, which is the right of workers, of employees to be open about their sexual orientation at the workplace. As for teachers, which I strongly believe should have that right, I go even further. I believe teachers should be open about their orientation. In many countries today our students are led to believe that they are being taught only by heterosexuals - or worse, by



non-sexuals. Many of us would rather pretend neutrality than to reveal what is perhaps the most rudimentary element of our personalities. Yet, if we want to effectively fight prejudice and at the same time help students cope with discovering their own sexual identities, we should stop being so uptight about who we are and what drives us. What I am saying here is that the question should not be whether teachers have the right to be open about their sexual orientation, but whether they can be good teachers without accepting their own sexuality and being open about it. Obviously, this is easier said than done. I know teachers who started their career being open about their sexual orientation but who have gone back into the closet afraid of hostile students.

I see three important tasks for trade unions in general and for national teachers organisations in particular:

**Number one:** we must fight against open or covert discrimination by employers, by public authorities, by colleagues, by parents, or by students, with all available means. Here is no room for compromise. If we believe that employees have the right to be open about their sexuality we must create environments in which they can be themselves without fear.

**Number two:** education unions must promote and help develop education programs aimed at fighting intolerance and prejudice, and must provide professional guidance to classroom teachers to carry out these programs effectively.

**Number three:** trade unions must enable and encourage their LGBTI members to organise, nationally and internationally.



Every four years we publish reports about the situation of our LGBTI members which I estimate at 2 million. We send out questionnaires expecting member organisations to provide us with all the required information. Many do, some don't. Some still do not recognize the importance of protecting their LGBTI members. I remember the reply I received from a small member union on a far-away tropical island:

*"Dear Mr. General Secretary,  
This is to inform you that in our country homosexuality is a non-existing phenomenon. Consequently, we have no homosexual teachers and related problems. With best wishes"*

I can tell you here today that I was very tempted to visit that island and to check things out myself.

But for ignorance and bigotry we do not have to travel that far. Some parts of Europe are - to put it mildly - lagging behind. Some time ago on a mission for Education International to Macedonia to help resolve a conflict between the national teachers union and the Macedonian trade union congress, the leader of the national confederation said in a television interview prior to our delegation's arrival in Skopje that he would not meet with me because in Macedonia we don't talk to queers (...). I thought this to be a bit strange for a country that wants to be recognized as the birthplace of - *queer avant la lettre* - Alexander the Great....

Examples of much more serious problems we find in Central and Eastern Europe. In large parts of Russia teachers are prohibited to address issues related to sexual orientation in the classroom, as was the case in England and Wales until the early eighties.

I think that today political leaders in most democratic countries have moved to our side of the isle. There are also positive changes in Latin America, although the Catholic Church and its allies make every possible effort to protect the continent from what they consider to be moral decline. We also see some positive developments in a number of countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Caribbean where we organise LGBTI programmes. But there remain too many places where being



openly gay, lesbian or transgendered is outright dangerous.

And what about countries where LGBTI rights have been achieved? New obstacles are emerging. The increasing multicultural nature of our European societies for example is posing new challenges.



This is why EI will continue advocating their rights and the rights of the students they teach. We cannot expect them to “come out” as long as these rights are not respected. But we will only be successful when our global initiatives are combined with action at the national and local levels, when we join forces with other civil society movements, with dissidents within autocratic regimes who show incredible personal courage: Black lives, LGBTI lives, refugee lives...yes...Lives matter. And we must fight hatred and violence together. Building a broader international movement for democracy and diversity, is, I think, the way to go.

The safe areas, which the LGBTI community world wide has created over decades, are still very small and very vulnerable. So let's not count ourselves rich. Let us not underestimate the determination and strength of our opponents.

As I have said, education unions are among the most active advocates for minority rights. That role is not always appreciated by everyone. In the United States for example, there is fierce opposition and hostility towards LGBTI rights, particularly in connection with schools. Our member organisations are quite active in defending the rights of LGBTI teachers. This is one of the reasons why America's religious right has declared war against them, particularly the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. They regularly receive hate mail and once and a while they sent me copies. Listen to this one:

*„Dear NEA,  
Using our school to further an unsafe and  
abhorrent lifestyle choice is inexcusable  
and is a dangerous precedent.  
It is indoctrinating and recruitment,  
not teaching.  
God will not be mocked!”*

This short message effectively summarizes all existing prejudices and once again reminds us of the important task we have as teachers' movements to defend the interests of our members, of our students and of education at large.



**Speeches:  
Salvatore Marra  
Former president  
of the Youth  
Committee of  
ETUC/CES**



**F**irst of all I would like to thank the organisers for having given me the possibility of speaking to you today. I am aware that this conference is mainly the result of hours of work of rainbow volunteers and activists, so my thanks go to them and to you for being here today and listening to me.

I will try to analyse where the trade union movement stands today in the global scenario in the specific light of LGBTI issues; I will also point out some crucial trends and come up with possible actions and proposals in terms of cooperation, strategy and alliances.

Terrorism, Brexit/Grexit, austerity, financial speculation, borders, refugees, tax heavens and structural reforms are the keywords of a more and more endangered European Union project. European integration seems to be an increasingly harder and further objective in an unstable global environment

and the founding values of the Union seem to be neglected or ignored.

In the past, in many of the countries where Governments or other authorities menaced the violation of the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people – and of minorities at large we dare say – with unjust or discriminatory rules, we were proud to say: this is against the principles of the European Union, that is not possible. And where needed and possible, the European Courts stopped such injustices and violations.

We have a key question in front of us: in such a precarious context, will we still in the position to advocate the EU project as a guarantee for the protection of our rights? Or will we and the youngest generation remember the EU as a threat to our rights?

It is clear that we have lots of challenges ahead, many doubts and few clear instruments to make sure that the future of Europe and of the more vulnerable is a better, more just and fairer one.

In this scenario, we are here to identify and discuss together the most crucial trends that the trade union movement should take into account when tackling the problems of LGBTI people today; let me mention a few:

- ▼ austerity policies and economic crisis resulted in cuts to welfare, education and public services; such policies already proved to be a failure and are a clear threat in terms of access of families and individuals to essential services: data demonstrate that access to care (notably for people with HIV and trans persons) is more and more difficult, and falling into the trap of poverty is much easier than ever; this is even more true for rainbow families where their rights are not recognized
- ▼ the deregulation of labour markets has put the right to non-discrimination at the workplace in a dangerous position: in many countries the reform of dismissal and the overall lowering of protection has increased the risks of unfair dismissals and unfair treatment, with particular concerns over privacy;



- ▼ deterioration of democracy and war are an indirect further challenge for our rights: the massive influx of refugees poses challenges for the entire society; the number of people coming or trying to come to Europe because they are persecuted in their countries for their sexual orientation or gender expression seems to be significant, but we read little about this in official documents;
- ▼ multiculturalism and interaction among religions; radicalisation and the need for an intercultural Europe and societies are a concern of many stakeholders, but very little attention is paid to the need of making such process inclusive and open to the respect of diversity when it comes to sexual orientation and gender identity; we must not give up the secular approach in policy making;



- ▼ attacks to social dialogue and collective bargaining resulted in a weakening of the powers of unions to conquer higher standards of rights and well-being for people at work; obtaining rights in the national collective agreements or at company level for the rights of LGBT people and their families is becoming increasingly difficult also because of the too often difficult

negotiations with employers organisations.



What are possible actions we can take as trade union movement against this backdrop?

I would try to distinguish two different fields of action: internal and external actions.

There are actions that we have to carry out within the trade union movement at large, and actions that we would like to have an impact on the society at large thanks to our trade union action.

On a more general note, we need to reinvigorate the action at the ETUC and ITUC level on LGBTI issues. We must take action in order to keep the agenda on LGBTI rights alive and active. In the last few years there has been a decrease in terms of activism and presence of these topics in the mainstream agenda at European and international level.

During the last ETUC congress that took place in Paris in October 2015, the delegates adopted a Strategy and Action Programme where a series of actions are envisaged for the current mandate, which includes decisions on "Taking a lead in fighting discrimination".

The action programme recognises that "Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender workers encounter widespread prejudice in many



Member States, which is reflected in discrimination in the workplace”.

The ETUC declares to be committed to: “encouraging and assisting affiliates in recognising discrimination on grounds of sexuality and gender identity as workplace and social issues where trade unions should intervene. This commitment covers the fight for equal treatment and non-discrimination, respect and dignity for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans-gender workers (LGBT). A strong message should be sent to trade unions and their members across Europe that LGTB rights are trade union rights; and to developing, in consultation with relevant working groups, the Youth and Women’s Committees, a detailed action programme on equality issues.”

The question now is how to make all this happen and make sure that this will have an impact on LGBTI workers. I will come back to this at the end of my contribution.

The ITUC congress will take place in two years in Copenhagen; that is also an occasion to keep the LGBT agenda high. We must start preparing not to miss that opportunity to influence the global trade union movement alert and vigilant over equality and freedom at work in the global scenario, by linking the priorities of the ITUC with the ILO agenda and its Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch.

On the external level we must make sure that the trade union agenda influences the policy making agenda of the institutions: notably the European ones, the UN and its agencies.



The EU institutions, after some years of activism around the 2008 European Year of

Equal Opportunities for all has been quite silent over the non-discrimination and LGBTI agenda. For instance, what about the so called horizontal directive on non-discrimination beyond the workplace? This and many other legislative and policy items have disappeared not only from the general debate, but also and more importantly from the policy-makers’ agendas.

We need to re-establish these priorities and this might be easier if alliances were reinforced and/or re-established at all levels, making sure that the steps and actions we want to perform are sustainable. Alliances with the Regional networks of ILGA, with civil society organisations at large and also with the employers organisations at all levels.

We must not miss opportunities like the World Aids conference that has taken place in Durban or the upcoming world conference of ILGA to mainstream trade union rights from the specific perspective of LGBTI unionists in the agenda of such broad platforms. We must make sure that the ITUC takes the lead in this respect and keep offering our knowledge and expertise to create stronger cooperation and action platforms at global level.

Stronger *joint* action has proved to be more successful when facing a hostile public opinion or policy makers. Despite the difficulties of joining wide coalitions, we must continue engaging in this exercise as it proved to be more open and democratic, and more successful.

Before going to some concrete suggestions in terms of action I think it is necessary, in such difficult times for the trade union movement as a whole, to reflect on the way forward and on the vision that should accompany us.

Trade union rights, like LGBTI rights are human rights and are at the basis of the Treaties, conventions, statutes and resolutions that keep the trade union movement united in solidarity at European and global level. We should never underestimate or forget this link.

Furthermore, we should always be aware of the fact that LGBTI workers and their concerns are part of a broader system: it is of course important that we have our own places,



caucuses, offices, departments, where LGBTI issues are specifically tackled, but let's never lose sight on the broader scenario.



I have the impression that there is an increasing tendency in the LGBTI community (also among unionists) to analyse our specific problems and demands in an isolated or disconnected way; decisions taken for the mainstream working population also have an impact on the LGBTI workers, and in some cases even in a stronger way.

Another point not to be forgotten is that more inclusive and rainbow friendly unions are more democratic, more open to innovation and flexible to change: they are closer to the needs of workers and can better respond to challenges.

Let me then draw towards the end of this reflection with you today, with some proposals, points of discussion and actions that we could take in the short and medium term and on which I hope we can open a debate:

We should aim at:

- ▼ mainstreaming LGBTI issues in the ETUC and ITUC, as well as in the European and global federations, decisions, resolutions and actions; we need to lobby our colleagues sitting in the decision making bodies of the confederations to make sure that concrete action points are debated, included and implemented;
- ▼ increasing the access and use of dedicated EU funds by restoring and enhancing cooperation among national confederations and federations to use social dialogue funds and other possible sources of financing for projects on targeted priority subjects that we should identify together;
- ▼ organising dedicated training sessions via the ETUI and ITC/ACTRAV for trade unionists on emerging needs of the LGBT population connecting them to the broader trade union agenda;
- ▼ negotiate at least one priority item that can have a positive impact on LGBT workers' needs in the next work programme of the European social partners: could we imagine a framework agreement/framework of actions to be negotiated with employers on non-discrimination at the workplace, on parenting, or on other topics?
- ▼ making sure in the framework of the negotiations of the European Pillar of Social Rights that beyond the EU acquis, new sets of rights connected to the realities of same sex couples in particular in connection to the freedom of movement are included in the so called "future of work" chapter;
- ▼ aim at improving through lobbying ILO Governing Body the ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation to include gender identity/expression and sexual orientation as non discrimination grounds;
- ▼ re-establish and reinvigorate an informal network of trade unionists active at least at EU level on LGBTI issues, also using the social networks or any other instrument; there is an increasing need to share and act at EU and internationally;
- ▼ organising a parallel/side event on LGBTI issues in Copenhagen for the ITUC congress to meet and share ideas and vision over the future of LGBT rights in the wider framework of the trade union movement;



- ▼ last but not least, we should propose and imagine organising strategies for LGBT members in order to make sure that trade unions reflect the diversity of the working population and make trade unions stronger thanks to the active and militant participation of LGBT activists.

In conclusion, there is still much to be done. I am proud of all the heritage we have inherited from our predecessors as LGBT and trade union activists in the struggle for freedom at work and beyond our workplaces, and am confident that by joining forces and keeping unity and solidarity the rights conquered will be defended. Nevertheless in a rapidly changing and globalised world, we must make sure that our battles are sustainable, carried out on the basis of sustainable alliances and keep relying on the stubbornness that we, trade union and LGBT activists, have demonstrated even at times when we were repressed and tortured. That is, together with the basis of a strong united trade union movement, the key to guarantee equal rights and to be free @ work.

I would like once again to thank the organisers and volunteers for having provided us with this opportunity of inspiration and thank you all for your understanding and patience and wish you all a peaceful and joyful Euro-Pride.



## Workshops

**T**he next pages contain the reports from the workshops. The reports are based on the notes made during the conference by volunteers. Unfortunately, not all the notes were clear. Although we have tried to encourage the workshop facilitators to review these texts, not every workshop report has been authorised by the responsible workshop facilitator(s).



## Workshop 01: Work and career in the Caribbean Netherlands

Facilitator:  
Judith Brekelmans  
(EQ, Bonaire)



Judith Brekelmans was born in the Netherlands, but lives in Bonaire. She is the president of the first LGBT organisation in Bonaire, EQ. Her organisation tries to get rid of discrimination and bullying at work, and to promote legislation on equal rights. Although Bonaire is part of a Kingdom of the Netherlands and even has a status as a “public body” (almost the status of a municipality), it does not have exactly the same legal constellation as the Netherlands. Moreover, people in Bonaire are not inclined to stand up for their rights. Therefore workers, especially LGBTI workers are vulnerable and face inequality.

EQ is (trying to be) present in all kind of meetings which relate to employment.

The workshop started with an introduction about Bonaire and its status, and that of the so-called BES islands<sup>7</sup>, within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This history is important, because as Judith said “*You have to know your history before you know yourself*”.

<sup>7</sup> Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

The first inhabitants of Bonaire were the Caiquetio Indians, a branch of the Arawak who came from what is now Venezuela; they inhabited the island from around 1000 AD. In 1499, Spaniards arrived in Curaçao and a neighbouring island that was almost certainly Bonaire.

The Spaniards thought that Bonaire could be used as a cattle plantation worked by natives. The cattle were raised for hides rather than meat.

In the eighty year’s war the Dutch fought with the Spanish (1568 – 1648), the island was also affected. In 1633, the Dutch — having lost the island of St. Maarten to the Spanish — retaliated by attacking Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba. Bonaire was conquered in March 1636. A small number of African slaves were put to work alongside Indians and convicts, cultivating dyewood and maize and harvesting salt.

During the Napoleonic wars the Netherlands lost their control of Bonaire twice, and in these periods the island was under British rule. The former constellation was restored in 1816, and in 1862 slavery was abolished under the Emancipation Regulation. The islands became part of the Netherlands Antilles in 1954, granting them political autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

This history created a very diverse population on the island: because of slavery, people had been ‘imported’ from various parts of the world.

After the Surinam independence (from the Netherlands) some people thought that the next step would be the independence of the Dutch Antilles. However, this was not what the people on the islands wanted. In 1986 Aruba withdrew from the Netherlands Antilles, becoming a separate country within the kingdom. Upon the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles on 10 October 2010 Bonaire became a special municipality of the Netherlands proper, although it currently maintains its status of an overseas territory of the European Union.

But that does not mean that every European or Dutch rule also applies for Bonaire. Bonaire is the odd one out, with rules from the *Eilandsraad* (= Island council) and rules from



The Hague. A mixture of legislation, and for instance no way to apply for financial support in LGBTI issues. Not only official entities, but also the Dutch national LGBT organisation commented: *"We don't know where to put you"*.

What is the situation now? Slavery has still a huge impact on the mentality of the population. People are not very confident about their own future, there is a culture of fear and mistrust. This is also working against trade unions.

If you look at the human resources business, you need to be aware of the lack of legislation, of the fact that people don't dare to 'be different' and that therefore, they do not know or recognise their own 'human capital'.

Managers in local businesses and government are aware of this type of discrimination, but they are silent.

There is blatant and visible discrimination (such as on ethnic background or colour, on religion, on sexual orientation or gender identity, on political views) and according to the Dutch Equal Treatment Act this is forbidden. However, this legislation was imposed upon Bonaire without proper introduction: the Netherlands demanded that Bonaire had to deal with it.

What is happening on Bonaire is not blatant and open: it is more subtle and hidden. There is a lack of respect, there are less career possibilities, and there are sometimes miserable jokes. And in many cases, gays and lesbians are considered the lowest in the ranking.

The legislation that opened up marriage for same-sex partners was also imposed upon Bonaire. As a result one gay couple married. But it has not changed anything in the general mentality in the island.

In many cases, people who want to live an open life as LGBTs leave the island.

To show the consequences, a case was discussed in which an internal candidate was rejected in an application procedure because of her/his sexual orientation.

Issues that were mentioned during this brainstorm were the constellation of the application committee, the 'glass ceiling', the use of

a confidant/counsellor within the company or institution, the 'small community syndrome' and the role of trade unions. Bonaire has its own trade unions, so those workers, who do organise within a union, will not be members of the FNV (or any other Dutch union).

Co-operation between mainland Netherlands and Bonaire was mentioned, but there were some participants who considered this very complicated.

Update (not part of the workshop:) In September 2016, the parliament of Aruba accepted a bill to legalise registered partnership. This will enable same-sex couples rights almost similar to marriage when the new Civil Rights Act will come into force in Aruba – one of the other Dutch Caribbean isles. Opening up marriage for same-sex couples is currently not acceptable in Aruba.



## Workshop 02

### LGBTI human rights in Nepal since 2001

**Facilitator:**  
**Parsu Ram Rai**  
**(Blue Diamond Society,  
Nepal)**



In 2001, the Blue Diamond Society<sup>8</sup> was founded in Nepal as an LGBTI rights organisation. Its aim was to advocate changing the existing laws against homosexuality and to advocate for the rights of Nepal's marginalised gay, transgender and other sexual minority communities. Working for sexual minorities in a conservative country like Nepal which still disapproves sexual behaviour other than heterosexual and therefore people like us was extremely challenging. The first challenge was registration as an NGO for sexual minorities since the constitution did not recognise sexual minorities. Therefore, BDS was registered as a sexual health programme.

BDS works in Kathmandu with local communities and on a national level with the mission to improve the sexual health, human rights and well-being of sexual and gender minorities in

Nepal including third-genders, lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, and other men who have sex with men.

After BDS filed a complaint, the Nepalese Supreme Court 2007 verdict – ordering the state to repeal its discriminating legislation – became a milestone for the LGBTI community of Nepal in their freedom of movement. The trend of inclusiveness started taking part in Nepal and many community people got affiliated to political parties. A Student Forum was established in 2009. Sunil Babu Pant, the founder of the Blue Diamond Society, became the first MP of Nepal who was openly gay. The community members started taking part in different forum and in trade unions and took part in mass rallies on May Day (Labour Day). This process caused greater LGBTI visibility, not only in Kathmandu but also in wider areas of the country.

However, after several years the initial interest and awareness decreased and it seemed that there would be no follow-up on Sunil Babu's work. All that in spite of the recent change in the Nepalese Constitution (2015), enshrining LGBTI rights and effectively recommending the legalisation of same-sex marriages. Now in 2016, there have been some changes and people are slowly accepting LGBTI community people in different forms and practices.

Parsu Ram Rai is one of the co-ordinating members of the Blue Diamond Society who has been recently involved in constitutional campaign, UPR, CRC and other UN mechanisms. In this workshop, more information was shared about the situation in Nepal. It is hard for LGBTI people in Nepal to be visible in the workforce. It is still hard to be openly gay in Nepal and, although a lot has been achieved, it seems like there is some sort of barrier now and things are not getting better. LGBTI people cannot be open in the workplace because they will face discrimination and even termination of their contracts. Many are not out of the closet and some even get married (to an opposite-sex friend) just to participate in society. BDS is trying hard to make LGBTI people more visible and to reach out to them. August 19 was Pride day where they participated.

<sup>8</sup> For information you can contact:  
[bds.humanrights@gmail.com](mailto:bds.humanrights@gmail.com)



Other actions BDS is taking include documenting violence against LGBTI people and abuse of them, which in Nepal includes arbitrary arrests, attempted murder and rape. BDS provides a legal support and sets up programmes to reach out to LGBTI people and encourage them to come forward and make themselves more visible. HIV and AIDS awareness and treatment programmes are part of that. There is still a lot of work to do and they need funding for that.



## Workshop 03

### Strengthening your LGBTI group through a publication or activity report

**Facilitator:**  
**Giancarlo Pazzanese**  
**(Italian-Chilean living in the Netherlands, Elsevier)**



**P**ublishing strategies help workers' organisations to stand up for LGBTI rights in their workplace, interact with their union, communicate with higher management and collaborate with other companies.

"Freedom at work" means to be able to express the best of oneself at the workplace. This will contribute to a diverse and inclusive culture. A person who is free at work will stay longer, create strong relations and will perform better.

Sometimes, the need of having organised LGBTI groups at the workplace is questioned by others. We face commentaries like "Why do LGBTI people need to separate?" or "We are an open company, we need no ghettos". A sustainable communications plan can help LGBT organisations make their strategy clear to their members, their work union, other non-union groups in the company and higher

management. A consistent activity report (publication) is the result of a well-implemented communication strategy.

Elsevier is a provider of information solutions and member of Workplace Pride<sup>9</sup> since 2014. With a four-year old LGBT group that has gained respect and strong straight-alley support, it became a leader of the diversity and inclusion agenda of the organisation. Recently, the group edited a magazine called 'This is Pride' – a mix between a glossy edition and a sustainability report. It was a yearlong process that helped the group to look back at past events, generate new content, strengthen the strategy and improve the visibility within the organisation.

Giancarlo Pazzanese is an Italian-Chilean who has been living in the Netherlands for quite a while and who now works for Elsevier. He introduced the workshop participants to a step-by-step method of preparing a publication (or action plan), including the actual publishing process.

The method consisted of filling out a 7-step activity sheet to identify stakeholders, most pressing issues, key messages and key topics among other. First, the participants choose their target audiences and formulated a mission/vision statement for their organisation. Then, they selected three key issues and assigned an 'ESP' category to them: economic, social or political. The participants "created an editorial team" and specified which resources and skills they had or needed to include in their team.

The editorial line was discussed next. Issues like tone, point of view and the balance between personal stories and factual data were explained. The participants decided between an editorial line heavily based on people stories and interviews, or one based on data and infographics. The participants decided how much of the editorial space would be allocated to information (data) and how much to personal stories (narratives).

The third part of the workshop focused on creating a content and an action plan. The participants worked with the three key issues they identified earlier and worked on them as if they were writing an article for their publication.

<sup>9</sup> Web site: [workplacepride.org](http://workplacepride.org)



For each issue, they specified a topic, a subject, a point of view and a possible title.

After defining the target audience, the editorial line and drafting a content plan, the attendees imagined possible live or digital events they could produce to raise funds, get support, get media attention or to generate more content. These events were placed on a timeline and the participants were introduced to the concept of the 'media matrix' to plan messages according to stakeholder groups and available channels.

By now, the participants knew what message needed to be told, to whom, in what way, who was responsible and which deadlines they had. By following the seven-step activity sheet, they drafted a communications plan and an action plan that could be initiated the next day or expanded and developed in the coming months.

The examples used in Elsevier's publishing company illustrated some issues. The complete step-by-step procedure, the so-called activity sheet and the PowerPoint presentation for this workshop are available on the Internet<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Web site: <http://goo.gl/zw5WpJ>



## Workshop 04

### Trade unions? How do they act for LGBTI rights?

Facilitators:  
Marc Simard and  
Donald Picotte  
(CSN, Canada)



Donald Picotte and Marc Simard are delegates from the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (in Canada)<sup>11</sup>. In this workshop they discussed the various types of actions in which unions may be involved in the evolution of LGBT rights in the workplace and in general.

They intended to explore those avenues with the participants and share good practices. In order to do so, they illustrated some of these avenues with their own practices in specific areas.

One area that was discussed was the recognition **within the organisation of the trade union**. They have explicitly targeted LGBT rights in different levels in their own organisation (confederate level, work sector federal level, regional level and local unions):

A common challenge faced by LGBT committees within a union organisation is to convince our fellow comrades that LGBT rights are first human rights but also workers' rights. And as such, LGBT rights are inherently part of any union mandate, including at the local level. They are convinced that there is no magical and instantaneous solution to this; it is a long and patient task to seize all opportunity to target instances in which we can be more inclusive in union discussions at all level. They shared the steps they have taken to get to where they are on this issue and what next steps we intend to take.

An organisation scheme of their union immediately launched a discussion about the position of an LGBT(I) group within a union. Several participants told that there is no official position of the people undertaking LGBT(I) actions and activities in the union; others tell that their union acknowledges not only a women's group, an "ethnic" minorities' group and/or a group of people with a handicap, but also a LGBT(I) group. Donald and Marc told that their group gained a position within the union about 15 years ago.

The workshop discussed whether a special group is a prerequisite for effective LGBT(I) policies and actions within a trade union. Most of the participants agree that a special group is necessary because most trade unionists do not have any experience in LGBT(I) discrimination or how to fight it. The argument used in many trade union organisations, that special groups are not necessary, is not valid: trade unions do not only defend the rights of average workers, they also defend the rights of LGBTI workers.

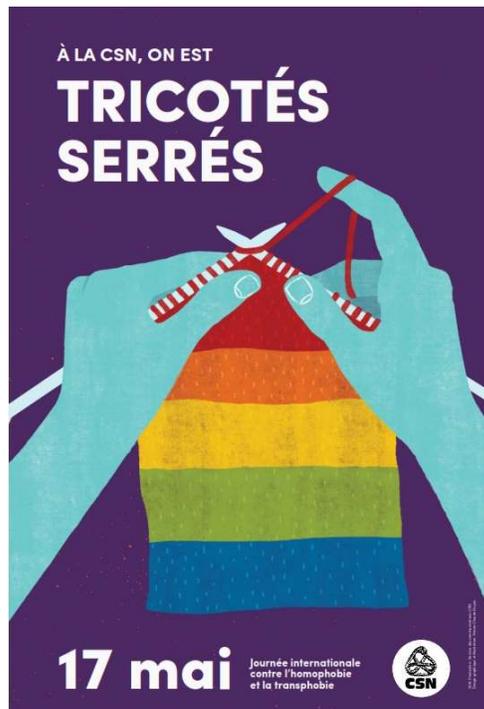
Therefore, they need expertise in this area. LGBTI union committees are not groups lamenting their fate of being discriminated against, being bullied and lacking equal rights, but they (need to) build up expertise and cooperate with other organisations in this area (often completely outside the scope of the other trade union policies).

Moreover, visibility is very important. If LGBTI workers are confident that trade unions defend their rights, they will more easily become union members.

<sup>11</sup> Web site: <https://csn.qc.ca>



The CSN has developed tools **to promote inclusiveness of LGBT persons in the workplace** and to fight against homophobia and transphobia. They tell that posters that were produced together with the authorities with this aim were promoted as free and available for every workplace. Posters were also used in schools, but in some schools the posters were ripped off.



Another tool to promote inclusiveness is the quiz the CSN group has developed. This quiz will also be broadcast on television.



## Workshop 05

### 'Open up': tools for working with LGBTI rights in Vision

Facilitators:  
Anders Gonzalez and  
Mikael Ruukel  
(Vision, Sweden)



The Swedish trade union organisation Vision has 180.000 members representing about 4000 professions, thus forming a useful network. It is politically neutral and affiliated to the TCO (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees). Vision members' jobs involve management, developing and administrating welfare in private companies, municipalities, county councils and churches.

Vision is working for *freedom at work* in various ways – in traditional ways to educate about the fundamental human right to freedom from discrimination, in legal ways to represent our members when claiming compensation for discrimination. Vision members are also proud participants in Pride parades, seminars, workshops and meetings throughout the country.

In the past six years Vision has also been working from another perspective: By discussing values and social norms aiming to create an understanding of the power of diversity

and to create an atmosphere to build the best and most effective teams in a workplace. Within the union it is also important to live our values in all different areas where we represent Vision.

To catalyse and support these discussions Vision have created an E-learning education called "Open up" (*Oppna upp!* In Swedish<sup>12</sup>) and a deck of cards which open up for discussions of values. These are used both internally, to educate Vision employees and elected representatives, as well as externally at lots of workplaces. With these resources Vision aims to change attitudes, prevent prejudice, harassment and discrimination and create a working life where everyone can feel comfortable expressing who they are.

The workshop demonstrated the resources and procedures. The deck of cards contained questions about what a trade union should be and do and is a tool for discussing values and norms. Workshop participants commented that quite often the tolerance in a union is in fact pseudo-tolerance: not from the heart or the brain, but because it is somewhere in a document. If this is the case, people will hardly be real allies.

It is important to make a distinction between measures to prevent and those to combat discrimination: hopefully in time there will be a shift from combative to preventive measures.

The facilitators showed the web site with the short movies and examples of situations at work in which you need to know what your rights are (based on Swedish law and collective labour agreements).

<sup>12</sup>12 In Swedish:  
<http://webapp.vision.se/oppnaupp/> This film was based on the Fritt Fram (All Clear) project:

English explanations to be found at:  
<http://www.frittfram.se/default.asp?lid=1>



## Workshop 06

### The LGBT movement in Turkish trade unions: a history of twenty years



Currently it is unclear if the Turkish government can – now or in the near future -- use the names of the workshop facilitators against them. The conference organisation has therefore decided to delete their names from this conference report.

**T**he human rights situation, labour rights in particular, has been deteriorating in recent years in Turkey.

Especially the members of independent trade union movement are being targeted by repression of governmental institutions and employers, being fired when organising, incarcerated for union activities. Trade union offices have been raided and, as the bombing of a trade union rally in Ankara last year showed, trade union activists even have to fear for their life when claiming their rights in the public space.

At the same time, several reports and activists accounts show the precarious situation of LGBTs in Turkey, including systematic discrimination based on defiant sexualities and genders. Just as in the trade union movement, many – especially trans – people pay with their life for being 'different' from the norm. As the government imposes even more restrictions on trade union freedom, it also tries to block the LGBT movement in Turkey, prohibiting Pride marches and encouraging anti-LGBTI violence.

The LGBT organisation of KAOS had to close its offices because of the many threats, knowing that the police cannot be relied upon to protect KAOS.

And yet against all odds, both in the independent trade union movement and LGBT movement many activists keep struggling for their rights.

One of the initiatives of these struggles is to bring the two together. As a result of these activists part of the Turkish trade union movement is gradually accepting that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is part of the trade union struggle: KAOS GL has marched on labour day alongside the trade union movement for many years. Additionally international exchange projects have been set up in recent years about LGBTI trade union work. Moreover, in several of the local branches of the KESK affiliated education union Eğitim Sen LGBT commissions have been established that have a more or less official character, and there are members from other unions trying to set up LGBT(I) initiatives, too.

What are the backgrounds? What are the perspectives for LGBTI trade union work under these conditions? What will be useful actions to help these initiatives? This workshop has been prepared before the so-called "Gülenist coup attempt" and took place in the immediate aftermath of it: workshop facilitators encountered great difficulties in travelling to Amsterdam. But the questions about the perspectives in Turkey have become even more pressing after the failed coup and the measures since.

After an introduction game (aimed at getting to know each other's name and background) the situation union members, especially LGBT+ union members, in Turkey face at this moment was discussed. LGBT+ union members do not directly face prosecution (for being LGBT+ or for being a union member), but they do encounter rejection, bullying, social exclusion by their families and colleagues, discrimination on a day-to-day basis.

In a PowerPoint presentation the structures of the Turkish trade union movement and LGBT movement were shown. Whereas some countries have seen unions clustering together to get more powerful, most unions in Turkey



are based on sectoral divisions. One of them is Eđitim Sen, the education union, which is affiliated to the KESK. What might be different from other countries is that Eđitim Sen's aims and activities are not limited to the labour area, but that it works with broader social goals, and that it even provides services to non-members, if necessary. The union is also affiliated to Education International, and considers international human rights as one of the principles for its policies, together with serving peace.

Eđitim Sen is the only Turkish union at this moment with LGBT+ chapters: from the 158 local branches, four have such chapters. That does not mean they are very experienced; at the workshop some facilitators say that they are only at the beginning.

The closing part of the workshop was breaking up in three subgroups and brainstorming about two questions:

- ▼ what can Turkish the LGBT(l) movement do to promote the social acceptance of LGBT(l) people?
- ▼ How can LGBT(l) groups in other countries express their solidarity with the Turkish movement?

The reactions from the subgroups included:

- ▼ The Turkish LGBT(l) movement should try to find more allies, e.g. in feminist and women's rights organisations, showing that their struggle is part of a broader battle for equal rights for everyone;
- ▼ All the organisations represented at this conference should sign a solidarity statement in support of the Turkish trade union and LGBT(l) movement(s).



## Workshop 07

### FSC-CCOO collaborating with LGBTI organisations

Facilitators:  
Jana Ramos Canto and  
María José Marín Salas  
(FSC-CCOO, Spain)



**T**he Federación de Servicios a la Ciudadanía (Federation for Services to the Citizens) de las Comisiones Obreras (FSC-CCOO) is a federal trade union organisation at state level within the CCOO in Spain, which has both territorial federations and sectoral organisations. These sectors include: local, state, autonomous region and justice administration, aviation, tourist services, roads and motorways, railways, social services, integral water cycle works, sea, communication, arts, culture, leisure and sports, paper, graphics and photography, mail services, telecommunication.

FSC-CCOO is affiliated to the Public Services International (PSI), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the global union for skills and services in commerce, electricity, finance, hair and beauty, telecom, tourism etc. (UNI), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) and Eurocop.

In 2013, both the CCOO (Comisiones Obreras, Spain's major trade union organisation) and the FSC-CCOO affirmed in their respective congresses their commitment to LGBT (workers') rights.

In practice, the LGBT activities are predominantly carried out in close co-operation with LGBT(I) organisations, such as the FELGTB (the federation of LGBT organisations and groups in Spain) or Gaylespol (the organisation for lesbian and gay police officers in Spain). FSC-CCOO has attended various European ILGA conferences and has facilitated workshops on their work. Recently they applied for (associated) ILGA membership.

For recent publications and projects produced by FSC-CCOO in co-operation with these allies see this link. They include<sup>13</sup>:

- ▼ awareness-raising campaigns about HIV and aids at work (together with FELGTB and CESIDA) and the guide "Industrial action and HIV" (together with FELGTB)
- ▼ two seminars on transsexuality and work and a guide "Transgender people in the work environment. A guide for the transition process."
- ▼ specific campaigns of entities such as "Kisses against intolerance" "Right to be" and "Rainbow League".
- ▼ a publication on safety precautions in cruising areas, saunas, internet contacts etc. (in this case together with Gaylespol). Publishing this brochure is not based on the role of FSC-CCOO as a trade union, but rather on its role as a social movement, but still FSC-CCOO has been under attack by right-wing media claiming that FSC-CCOO would by this brochure promote sexual encounters in public spaces.

FSC-CCOO has been working on specifying the needs of LGBTI workers into issues to be discussed in collective bargaining, but notices that this is not easy.

In the 'action lab' part of the workshop participants discussed what actions might be taken in their respective countries if the next case would occur:

<sup>13</sup> Most of the materials can be found on the Internet (mainly in Spanish):

<http://www.fsc.ccoo.es/Politicassociales>



*Antonia is a bisexual woman who works in a computer company. After her colleagues found out that she is bisexual they stopped greeting her, they avoid sitting next to her in the restaurant and they leave notes containing negative comments on her sexuality. Antonia decides to tell your organisation in which situation she is living and asks for help, because as a consequence of her colleagues' behaviour she is starting to have symptoms of depression and severe anxiety.*

Most participants agreed that although this might not be an act of discrimination as defined under anti-discrimination legislation (if present in a country), it would still be possible to work on the situation. In European countries at least, health and safety legislation would probably cover this situation and create a responsibility for the employer.

The union (or, if the victim of bullying might not be a union member, maybe an anti-discrimination agency) would need to contact the employer and try to persuade him to take actions against the people bullying, and/or to impose anti-discrimination training courses for these workers. The employer's responsibility will certainly be clear by the rules that if the bullied worker would take sick leave – the example indicated that she was becoming depressive – the costs for the sick leave would be for the employer to pay, for at least some months (depending on the country in Europe).



## Workshop 08

### Where are the queers? Encouraging LGBTI Activism in our unions and workplaces

**Facilitators:**  
**Darienne Flemington,**  
**Mike Austin**  
**(UNISON,**  
**United Kingdom)**  
**&**  
**Virginia Magwaza**  
**(Foundation for Human**  
**Rights, South Africa)**

challenge is to build the diversity of their LGBT group.

Mike is a young UNISON activist who has recently taken on the role of leading a regional UNISON LGBT group that had slipped into a long period of decline and apathy. In just a few months, change is beginning to happen.

Virginia is an extremely experienced trade unionist and community activist. She leads a project to kick-start LGBT organising amongst South African public sector workers, which was at a low point. Virginia is working outside union structures to reach LGBT activists who are union members but have not previously wanted to engage with the union.

We don't underestimate the organising challenges, but together we will find solutions, whatever the situation in your union and workplace!



**T**his workshop looked at three different experiences of LGBT union organising, to draw out the learning. Participants left with a three-stage plan of how they are going to revitalise their organising for LGBT equality.

Darienne is co-chair of UNISON's well-established national LGBT group. UNISON is the UK's largest public service trade union. Darienne is part of a strong network of activists in her rural region of Southwest England. Their



## Workshop 09

### Sexual diversity education in schools, right wing attacks and trade union counter-strategies

Facilitators:  
Joachim Schulte and  
Bodo Busch  
(GEW, Germany)



Joachim Schulte and Bodo Busch are members of the German union GEW for workers in education and science. For several years, Joachim Schulte has been involved at state level in plans for sexual diversity education in schools. There is a German network of professionally trained LGBTI close-to-peer-group educators (“SCHLAU”) who are visiting schools for workshops, and there is a project for schools who declare to work against homophobia and transphobia (“Schule der Vielfalt”), which is also a network. Bodo Busch is maths teacher at a vocational college, which is member of the “Schule der Vielfalt” network, and speaker of the GEW LGBT caucus in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Sometimes these plans and projects face tough resistance: some parents claim that children should not be ‘indoctrinated’ with ideas about respect for LGBTI people. In many cases, right-wing organisations are behind the parents’ protests.

Currently, right wing and populist groups seem to have chosen sexual diversity education at schools as one of their main battlefields. The arguments and strategies used against sexual diversity education may vary, but are based on the same pattern. Of course, these conflicts have an impact on the schools: can they provide a safe environment for LGBTI pupils or LGBTI teachers?

The workshop started with the (17) participants summarising the situation in their home countries.

- Spain: The situation is not only depending on the national legislation and by-laws, but also on the regional and local situation. As a member of the European Union, Spain has legal provisions to protect LGBT workers. In Valencia, the situation is relatively good: there is a left-wing local government, and they are LGBT supportive. In Spain, there have been some cases of discrimination against teachers who came out during their school career. At places like universities, sexual orientation and gender identity are not a big deal.
- France: The situation at schools for LGBT teachers is different, depending whether schools are public or private. There are peer education projects visiting schools.
- Canada: At the moment the national government is very supportive. The unions have also a commitment to LGBT(I) rights, and LGBT(I) issues are part of many union training courses. The Prime Minister will officially apologise for the wrong-doing in the past to the LGBT(I) community. Materials for use in schools have been developed
- Germany: There are now initiatives for new textbooks that use also same-sex families as part of daily life. Unfortunately, right-wing political groups are growing and are creating lobbies by parents protesting against ‘gay indoctrination’ in schools. It is therefore difficult for schools to openly stand for



LGBTI inclusion and sexual diversity education.  
In Berlin, the LGBT trade union group co-operates with the women's group and the migrants' group.  
There is also an attempt to include LGBT issues in the vocational training courses for nurses.

Some LGBT topics have been included officially into school curricula, but the question is who is going to teach this?  
Transgenders have a problem in schools when they want to be registered under a new name.  
Bonaire: The culture is not negative about sex, but about talking about it. Sexual education seems to be a no go area. There is still a lot of work to be done.

Chile: Chile wants to behave as a modern country, and has legislation against discrimination, but it does not act on it. There are hardly conversations at school about sexuality or sexual diversity, unless students raise the issue. Unfortunately, trade unions are almost invisible if it comes to defending LGBTI rights.

Netherlands: Protection against discrimination at work is included in national legislation and the media in general support victims of LGBT discrimination. But for transgenders there is still a lot to be done, legally and socially. And although the Ministry of Education has identified sexual diversity education as one of the obligatory elements of school curricula, teachers do not receive training in how to deal with these issues in their regular training courses.

- 1) disinformation, downright false information, decontextualization and lies in talk shows, newspapers and internet
- 2) rallies against education goals, "gender madness" and "premature sexualisation"
- 3) (online-)petitions and
- 4) law suits

**Counter strategies can be:**

- 1) It is daily work to disabuse and clarify against false information, decontextualization and lies. GEW published an argument brochure for teachers and parents, there have been TV programme complaints;
- 2) In some cities larger counter-rallies by civil society coalitions ("rather diverse than simple minded") were successful in discouraging smaller right wing groups;
- 3) Counter-petitions have been run;
- 4) Anti-discrimination law including education might help against law suits filed by the right-wing groups.

**Right wing attacks and campaigns**  
against LGBT antidiscrimination education in schools seem to occur in similar ways in most of the participating countries (Spain, France, Canada, Germany), except in the Netherlands, where right wing parties abstain from that subject. They comprise:



## Workshop 10

### Experiences with LGBTI/queer organising in your union and on your workplace

Facilitator:  
**Kenita Placide**  
(United and Strong,  
Saint Lucia)



**K**enita Placide is a human rights, HIV and LGBT activist from St. Lucia. She is the Executive Director of *United and Strong* and the Eastern Caribbean Coordinator of the *Caribbean Forum for Liberation and Acceptance of Genders and Sexualities* (CariFLAGS). Since 2014 she has served at the Women's Secretariat for the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association ILGA.

She has been on the forefront of bringing LGBT issues into discussion throughout the Anglo-Caribbean and international community. In 2013, she was selected as Star Publishing's People's Choice for Person of the Year in St. Lucia, the first time an LGBT person had been honoured with the award in her country.

The main objectives of this workshop were:

- ▼ To share best practices in LGBT sensitivity training with media, security services, public servants and health care providers.
- ▼ To share the challenges of gaps or workplaces training and absence of union involvement in the Caribbean.

Stakeholders involved in the Caribbean HIV and Human Rights response have long identified that there is increased stigma and discrimination against vulnerable groups, especially the LGBT communities. In this workshop Kenita shared her experience of conducting in the workplace training in the public and private sector in Saint Lucia.



## Workshop 11

### Allies, the power of friends

Facilitator:  
Ian Johnson  
(Out Now Consulting,  
Australia/Netherlands)



Out Now has been active as an LGBT consultancy and marketing company for 25 years now. Their main working areas are communication, research, training and strategic consultancy. Out Now's corporate mantra is 'LGBT spells people' which recognises that what matters most to LGBT people is not marketing, research or PR, but actual understanding and solutions that help assist LGBT people to live better lives enjoying

equal standing and respect, in their workplaces and societies – all over the world.

Ian Johnson, CEO of Out Now, has been named as one of the 'Top 10 Diversity Consultants' in the world by the Global Diversity List supported by The Economist.

This workshop was designed to turn new insights into practical recommendations, able to be implemented by participants in their own workplaces, through groups such as Employee Resource Groups and trade unions. The core of the workshop was presented by the lead researcher and consisted of results of the first global study on workplace issues faced by LGBT allies<sup>14</sup>. The workshop commenced with a lecture format speaking to a PowerPoint deck containing key data outcomes and respondent commentary.

For the sake of the discussion, Ian Johnson categorised organisations (and individuals) into two categories of allies:

- ▼ Partners, strong defenders of LGBT rights, such as the trade unions;
- ▼ Friends, who are less proactive but do support.

We seem to intuitively know that LGBT allies matter, yet we hardly know how much and in what specific ways they can make the most effective differences. Out Now has in 2016 implemented a new global initiative to measure the key issues LGBT Allies face, what barriers they experience and which tactics they recommend as most efficient to be implemented for advancing LGBT inclusion at work.

This workshop mixed the big picture data results from this innovative study with the day-to-day experiences reported by more than 2,500 respondents.

One section of the presentation entitled 'Allies Voices' presented key representative free-form text responses provided by workplace allies in the research. They highlighted key problems faced in their own workplaces and counterpointed these with potential steps

leagues.

<sup>14</sup> See <http://Work.LGBT> for the report, including data collection information. The questionnaire is based on the assumption that the respondent has a job and has col-



for action, again focusing on the direct feedback achieved in the research. Comments were made about these experiences and suggestions.

The results of the research show that LGBT workers who cannot be open at their workplaces are more inclined to leave the company or institution where they work. This should be a cause for concern: companies and institutions are losing a lot of expertise in this way and replacing lost workers can be very expensive to organisations.

LGBT workers who are supported by allies, including partners such as unions, tend to stay longer at their workplace: they have a stronger commitment to their company or institution.

Most companies (75%) are not unwilling to create a more positive environment for LGBT workers they just lack the expertise of knowing how they can best do this - a problem Out Now is working on tackling in 2017.



**Workshop 12**  
**Intersex and work**  
**Facilitator:**  
**Miriam van der Have**  
**(NNID, the Netherlands)**



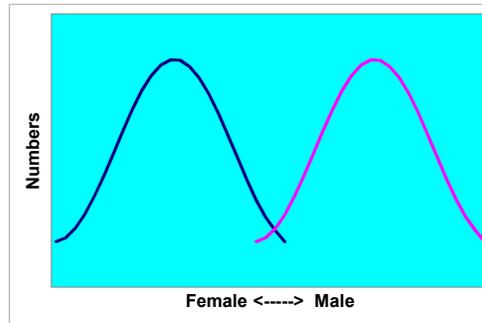
**M**iriam van der Have<sup>15</sup> is executive director of the Dutch Network Intersex/DSD (NNID) and co-chair of OII (Organisation Intersex International) Europe<sup>16</sup>.

She starts the workshop by explaining that there is a growing acceptance for the idea that gender is not a dichotomy, but a continuum. But most people still consider sex as a binary system: either you have a male, or you have a female body. However, sex is also a continuum. Unfortunately, the major part of medical staff does still consider sex as a binary system.

She talks about her own condition and stresses that this is a condition, not an illness. Do not call me 'intersexual', she says. Don't call me 'hermaphrodite'. I do not want to be considered as a patient, or as someone with a disorder.

<sup>15</sup> In January, 2017, Mariam van der Have received a Bob Angelo medal for her work – an award by the Dutch LGBTI organisation COC.

Most people think that the population only consists of female and male persons. At school we learn that females have the chromosome pattern XX, and males XY. We learn that the balance between hormones determines if someone is male or female. We learn that the genitals of males are clearly different from female genitals. But the population is actually built up in a different way.



Most of the people (the peaks in this graphic) are typically female or male, and some of them (left-hand side and right-hand side) are extremely female or male, but there is also an area in which the definitions do not apply (the middle part). Estimations of the part of the population that is in this category vary from 0,2 to 2 %.

Physicians consider this category of people abnormal and try to change their sex so that they clearly belong to the female or male group.

What most people do not know that there are people with chromosome combinations XXY and XO. That there are people who identify as women but do not have the reproductive organs that are considered to be female. At the moment more than 40 intersex conditions are described. There is more diversity in nature than most people think.

There is a difference in terminology: some are more inclined towards DSD = disorder in sex development, some more towards 'intersex status'. However, the influence of medical and psychiatric professionals is still

<sup>16</sup> Web site: <https://oiieurope.org/>



large and the people concerned are hardly able to choose their own terms for their condition. Formerly, the term ‘intersex condition,’ was considered to be stigmatising, currently it is just the opposite.

But of course, the phenomenon that medical practitioners consider themselves experts in the ‘problems of a specific group of people’ is not new: homosexuality was once the area where the medical profession knew what was best for the ‘affected people’. One or two decades ago, physicians were the experts in transgender issues. Now, lesbian women and gay men have escaped from the medical science books, transgenders are gradually doing the same. People with an intersex condition are only in the very start of this process.

Does the intersex condition show? No, sometimes it is not even clear to the person involved. Miriam tells that some friends found out after they noticed that they did not menstruate.

If you consider the consequences for human rights, it might be interesting to know that at least 1 in 200 people have an intersex condition (depending on the exact definitions). Who are they? Some of them are secretive and some of them live with a stigma, others do not even know about their own condition. Doctors avoid talking with the persons with the intersex condition about the causes and consequences, because they cannot deal with it.

Last year there was a remarkable breakthrough in the intersex rights movement: in September, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein<sup>17</sup>, opened the first ever UN convened meeting on intersex rights. Building on a 2013 UN report, he strongly condemned medical practitioners who commit “genital normalising” surgeries and stressed that the surgeries should be considered genital mutilation and be outlawed.

So, gradually, more actions are taken to support intersex rights. On the one hand the UN level and international treaties, affecting

national legislation, on the other hand, the intersex rights movement and the support groups for intersex people.

The important level in-between is education: we need to teach our youth and society that sex is not a binary issue.

Only one country in the world, Malta, has legal provisions to protect people with an intersex status. That does not mean that no other country is active in this area. Morgan Carpenter, the Australian intersex activist, for instance, appeared before the Australian Senate in a hearing on anti-discrimination laws and convinced the Senators of the necessity to include “the intersex status” in legislation against discrimination. Carpenter has a passport with an X as marker of his gender.

In the discussion, it is clear that all participants want to stop surgical (or hormonal and psychological) interventions aimed at ‘normalising’ persons and fitting them into a binary sex model. With the development of medicinal expertise, this type of intervention can now take place at very early stages of childhood, while ‘risk assessment’ concerning an intersex baby can take place even before birth, maybe even before pregnancy.

A survey among Australians with an intersex condition<sup>18</sup> recently showed that many of them have not finished secondary school. About 40% of the survey participants earn an income under AU\$20,000 per year (the minimum wage during the survey period was about AU\$34,000). Most people with an intersex condition avoid coming out, because of the lack of information in their work environment (if they have a work environment), and the stigmas. Therefore, ‘intersex in the workplace’ remains an almost invisible problem.

The workshop participants talk about the next steps in actions. Most people think that gathering stories from intersex people is very important. If this information is lacking, the aims to strive for are unclear. *“If you don’t have a problem, you will never find solutions.”*

<sup>17</sup> Web site <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Astepforwardforintersexvisibility.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> Web site <https://oii.org.au/30313/intersex-stories-statistics-australia/>



## Workshop 13

### LGBTI labour rights at work: global unions out at work

Facilitators: Fred van  
Leeuwen (EI),  
Rebeca Sevilla (EI),  
Rosa Pavanelli (PSI) and  
Sandra Vermuyten (PSI)



For several decades, the global union federations Education International (EI) and Public Services International (PSI) have been involved in LGBTI activities and policies. Currently, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has also started to be active in this area.

The workshop was partly planned as a follow-up to the meeting some EI and PSI affiliate members had on Wednesday, partly scheduled as an introduction to the work of EI and PSI.

EI Secretary General Fred van Leeuwen talks about three challenges for teachers:

- ▼ Few types of discrimination have a more personal impact than discrimination of the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity;

- ▼ National and international legislation is hard to change;
- ▼ Most teachers are not open about their sexual orientation.

It is the trade unions' task to combat discrimination in classes, by other teachers, or even by parents. Unions should develop programmes against discrimination on this basis and enable and encourage LGBTI members to organise.

Even in European countries there are problems for teachers when they want to deal with LGBTI issues – consider Eastern Europe, consider the Russian Federation). And let us not forget that in countries in which the legal situation is well-arranged, in which the social climate is positive, everything is all right: in the Netherlands, for instance, the changing society poses new challenges.

PSI Secretary General Rosa Pavanelli added that LGBTI discrimination is part of a bigger issue of discrimination in general. If discrimination increases, LGBTI will also suffer more. She thinks that every minority group must be represented within trade union structures and should have a say about the union's policies on discrimination.

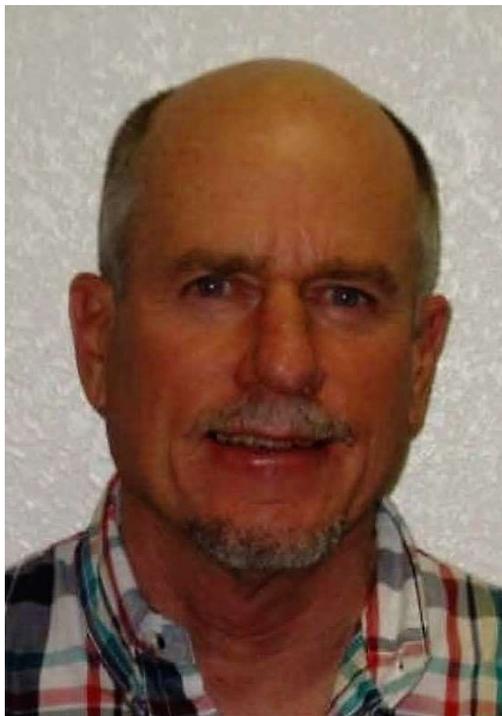
**As a consequence of the remarks made during this workshop and at a fringe meeting PSI and EI organised just before the Freedom at Work conference, Network Roze FNV is working on an initiative to encourage the global union federations (other than EI and PSI) to take LGBTI policies on board.**



## Workshop 14

### Building a coalition against neo-liberalism

Facilitator:  
**Michael Roskey**  
(SEIU, USA)



**M**ike Roskey is vice co-chair of the Lavender Caucus of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and Co-Chair of the Western Region of the Lavender Caucus of SEIU. SEIU represents 2 million public service workers, nurses, hospital staff, nursing home care providers, building services and security guards, in North America.

The progressive “wing” of his LGBTI union organisation and probably the US in general share a concern about

- ▼ the increasing ascendancy of neo-liberal politicians and policies world-wide and
- ▼ its implications, most importantly, for unions, and, next, for LGBTI people, whether within their workplaces or just in terms of their human rights.

The workshop was set up as a general discussion of

- ▼ the nature of this phenomenon and its consequences, but, primarily,
- ▼ the liaisons that may be built to combat it and lead in a more positive direction.

It started with a discussion about ‘pink-washing’, not just by governments, but mainly by private companies. Pinkwashing is a term for marketing and political strategies that claim that the item they promote is LGBTI-friendly, while in fact this has never been the aim, and sometimes not even a side effect.

After that, the workshop participants shared information about the economic policies in their home countries and the influence of neo-liberalism.

Intersectionality has become an important issue: within the LGBTI movement, people are not just L, G, B, T or I, but have other identities too: they belong to a class, they have an ethnic background, etc.

Neo-liberalism is an instrument of capitalism. Capital has co-ordinated neo-liberalism as an international political and economic policy. Neo-liberalism preaches the undermining of state rules claiming that private enterprises can set their own standards and considers the eternal growth of consumption as a prerequisite for human happiness. It has consistently sought to dismantle protections extended by the welfare state” to disadvantaged groups such as LGBTI people. It has international dimensions, and its implementation is co-ordinated across national contexts<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> For news reports (in Spanish) and comments:  
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/economia/2-302833-2016-06-28.html>

<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-301607-2016-06-13.html>  
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-301607-2016-06-13.html>



The workshop concluded that because of the adoption of neo-liberal policies worldwide since the 1990s the life of poor and marginalised people in the western world has deteriorated.

Even the major LGBT(I) movements have developed into right-wing organisations. 'Being' LGBTI does not mean that automatically one is progressive; many LGBTI people are even in favour of neo-liberalism. They do not want to belong to a social movement, they want to go out, buy pretty things and enjoy life. Solidarity with other oppressed groups, or even with other LGBTI people is no automatic reaction for them.

Some workshop participants expressed their concern about the current focus of the LGBTI movement: 'gay marriage' seems to be the final aim of the movement, and it has lost interest in the demands for equal rights in other situations, or by other groups.

Key question is how unions can play a role in raising awareness among its membership and in broader circles. How can unions educate and show the negative impacts of neo-liberal policies?

Unions should not just focus on LGBTI rights as accomplishments in the legislation process, but need to analyse the structures that cause that LGBTI workers cannot effectively use these rights. Of course, a legal prohibition against discrimination is good, but if it takes a worker many years to stand up against an illegal denial of promotion, and if during those years her or his financial position is insecure, only the rich will use the law.

In educating young people, unions (and others) should inform them about the backgrounds of the union movement and the LGBTI movement.

The workshop commented on the statements made earlier in the conference by Workplace Pride: they used neo-liberal arguments and did not use principles such as human rights, equal rights or solidarity. In some campaigns, they are allies of the trade union

movement, but how can we respond to the use of these neo-liberal views?

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<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2016/05/25/-mundo/021n1mun>  
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/el-pais/1-300190-2016-05-25.html>

<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2016/05/23/economia/024n2eco>  
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/el-mundo/4-300251-2016-05-26.html>



## Workshop 15

### Trade union action lab: Working for LGBTI workers. Cases from Spain

**Facilitators**  
**Isabel Descals Sanchis,**  
**Nuno Filipe de Freitas Rocha**  
**& Begoña Fuentes Giner**  
**(Acció LGTBI de las CCOO**  
**Valencia, Spain)**



**A**cció LGTBI is a working group about LGBTI issues in the trade union of Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) in Valencia, Spain. Currently it consists of trade union delegates, affiliates and staff who identify as L, G, B, T and even H(eterosexual). The group has its origins in 2005 and began to work collectively in the next year, therefore celebrating 2016 as the year of its first decade of existence. In these first ten years it has developed many actions and activities, some aimed towards the internal structures of the union, and some towards the social and work climate. It works in close collaboration with social and

cultural LGBTI groups within its region, which frequently results in common actions and activities.

The participants talked about the origins, developments and possible solutions of some real life cases from Spain as examples of how trade union organisations can approach the specific needs of LGBTI people in workplaces.

In the discussion it turned out that the representatives from Acció LGTBI were not aware of the existence of a Spanish version of the Diversity Charter. Network Roze FNV however has been involved in the development and implementation of the Dutch version from the start, and notices that the impact for LGBTI workers in the Netherlands up until now has been relatively limited. More information about Diversity Charters in Europe can be found on the Internet<sup>20</sup>.

It might need some special attention after the publication of the new activities programme of the European Commission<sup>21</sup>, in which trade unions are mentioned as actors for promoting inclusive workplaces, but in which the main focus seems to be the EU Platform for Diversity Charters.

<sup>22</sup>

**During the workshop, ideas for more exchange of information in the future were born. In January, 2017, at a meeting in Valencia, representatives of Network Roze FNV presented an introduction into their backgrounds, experiences and methods and the European structures, and had extensive talks with CCOO representatives.**



<sup>20</sup> Web site:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/diversity/charters/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/diversity/charters/index_en.htm)

<sup>21</sup> Web site [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti\\_actionlist\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti_actionlist_en.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Web site (in Spanish):  
[http://www.pv.ccoo.es/cms.php?cd cms\\_p ag=13286&cd cms\\_el con\\_from=12987&cd cms\\_elconmaster\\_to=95&cd cms conte=231434](http://www.pv.ccoo.es/cms.php?cd cms_p ag=13286&cd cms_el con_from=12987&cd cms_elconmaster_to=95&cd cms conte=231434)



## **Workshop 16 Transformation agent (TAG)**

**Facilitators: Isabel  
Descals Sanchis,  
Begoña Fuentes Giner  
and  
Maria Jesús Cabezón  
(Asociación Atenea,  
Spain)**



**T**he Atenea Association is a group in which transsexual women, bisexuals, lesbians, intersexuals and transgender persons are associated. They work in the LGBTIQ field from a feminist point-of-view. They also bring in a trade union's vision, an employer's vision and an NGO's vision.

The theme of the workshop was: what kind of persons we need for creating a change in work, political, social or trade union environments so that all people are treated with dignity and respect, independent of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and measures are

taken to ensure “equal” rights despite the diversity and variety in life styles, family forms etc. Persons who can start such a process within an organisation are called “transformation agents” (TAGs).

The workshop came up with several qualities and qualifications TAGs need to have. They need to be able to educate and train, and must be able to do that not only in a formal setting. They need to have an open mindset, and be able to deconstruct categories that almost every person uses to classify others in their environment. They need to be skilled and intelligent but also amiable and with humour. For the Atenea people – and there was no objection to that in the workshop – it is clear that any TAG needs to have a feminist view and pursue feminist LGBTIQ policies.

With some delay in the discussions because of translations, the workshop did not get to the point of how unions can identify and use transformation agents for the creation of LGBTI-friendly workplaces.



## Workshop 17

### Collective bargaining, a powerful instrument for LGBT\* workers' rights?

Facilitators:  
Antonello Claps and  
Salvatore Marra  
(FDV / CGIL, Italy)



The Italian General Confederation of Labour CGIL<sup>23</sup>, through its research institute 'Fondazione Di Vittorio' (FDV)<sup>24</sup> has recently launched a research project on the role of collective bargaining in Italy as a tool to improve workers' rights. The research results has been presented in Italy at the end of June and they consist of an analysis of the most recent agreements at national, local and company level including specific actions for the improvement of the working condition of LGBTI workers.

Up until quite recently, nobody did take the interest of LGBTI workers to the negotiating table for collective labour agreements. But now, there are LGBTI interest groups in companies and government institutions. CGIL has created the department of New Rights (*Nuovi Diritti*) to ensure that the agenda for collective labour agreements included rights for LGBTI

workers, too, along with the more traditional issues. But the department also promotes women's rights, migrants' rights etc.

Antonello Claps is a representative of the FDV, Salvatore Marra of CGIL. In this workshop, they were accompanied by a representative of FILCAMS CGIL (the CGIL affiliated union federation for tourism, retail, services and commerce) who also shared experiences about LGBTI inclusive bargaining at company level with the participants.

The fields of action of CGIL and its affiliated organisations may be summarised in the following issues:

1. Marriage and family sphere
2. Healthcare (care and assistance leaves)
3. Work-life balance and child care
4. Welfare at company level (occupational welfare)
5. Crosscutting and transversal actions (equal opportunities commissions, non-discrimination provisions, etc.).

Even though most of the bargaining examples and experiments in the last few years have taken place at the company level, the results of this research suggest that trade union action should be promoted at various levels in order to enforce and promote a homogeneous approach in the enjoyment of rights for "new" forms of partnerships deriving from bargaining opportunities:

1. At company level, include the topic in joint commissions dedicated to equal opportunities, diversity, life-work balance;
2. Again at company level, harmonising the various contracts with the recognition of "new" forms of civil partnerships (e.g. company level welfare, parental leave, family assistance etc.)
3. National collective labour agreements should have a description of the concept of "family" in order (explicitly including civil partnerships) and create a framework for collective labour agreements at company level (work organisation and hours);
4. Through a bilateral system and that of collective agreements welfare, regarding the

<sup>23</sup> Web site (Italian): [www.cgil.it](http://www.cgil.it)

<sup>24</sup> Web site (Italian): [www.fondazionedivitto-](http://www.fondazionedivitto-rio.it)

[rio.it](http://rio.it) (for English: add "/en" at the end of the URL)



extension of services to family members, meant in a more plural and inclusive way;

5. At confederation bargaining level with the Government, through legal innovation (together with the INPS (National Institute for Social Security) to extend the indemnity foreseen for maternity/paternity to new forms of civil partnerships.
6. Through territorial social bargaining performed by the unions with local administration, and through cultural information and non-discrimination events for the wider population (schools, education for adults, access to services, etc.), in the area of active labour market policies and of policies for the public administration (rules for public tenders, social clauses, social balance, corporate social responsibility, etc.)



## Workshop 18

### Conflict Transformation Methods: handling frictions in the workplace

Facilitator:  
Rachel Kartodikromo  
(Women's Way  
Foundation,  
Suriname)



**R**achel Kartodikromo is a student International Law with a particular interest in human rights; she has written a thesis on this subject. She is also active in the Women's Way Foundation Suriname, the only registered organisation in Suriname providing safe spaces for lesbian and bisexual women<sup>25</sup>. The Women's Way Foundation collaborates with the LGBT Platform Suriname in lobbying and advocacy. Having taken part in the Peace Program in Canada and getting acquainted with mediation skills in particular but life skills in general, she will share this knowledge via interactive exercises.

This workshop<sup>26</sup> started with a short presentation of the facilitator and her organisation. Then it moved on the core of the matter: conflicts in workplaces. The process enlightened during the workshop only works if both parties involved in a conflict are really seeking a solution. In that case, mediation can be a solution.

The Transformation Methods require that both parties are able to speak out and define the core of the conflict in rational terms, apart from describing the emotional impact that the conflict has on her or him. Both parties are also invited to mention which situations need to change before he or she can feel comfortable again. The mediator's role is to ensure that both parties can tell their stories without interference from the other, the help each parties separating the factual information from the information about the emotional impacts and encourage both parties to transform a conflict situation into a peaceful situation for both parties rather than resolving it.

Some of the elements of the conflict transformation methods were applied to case situations during the workshop.

<sup>25</sup> Web site: [http://www.womensway foundation.com/](http://www.womenswayfoundation.com/)

<sup>26</sup> The PowerPoint presentation of this workshop can be found at:

[https://onedrive.live.com/view.aspx?resid=50135438EB489A5A!1309&ithint=file%2cptx&app=PowerPoint&authkey=!AD-WXIk\\_dEkNEzk](https://onedrive.live.com/view.aspx?resid=50135438EB489A5A!1309&ithint=file%2cptx&app=PowerPoint&authkey=!AD-WXIk_dEkNEzk)



## Workshop 19

### Changing schools and companies into more inclusive environments

**Facilitator:**  
**Peter Dankmeijer**  
**(GALE, the Netherlands)**



**P**eter Dankmeijer is director of the GALE Foundation, The Global Alliance for LGBT Education<sup>27</sup>. GALE is a global platform that brings educators together to enhance the impact of education about sexual diversity. GALE is a consultative partner of UNESCO. The GALE Foundation supports the platform and works to increase the quality of LGBT education and strategy to get an acceptable level of sexual diversity education in the education sector. Dankmeijer has worked for 40 years in sexual education, AIDS prevention, LGBT liberation, and has especially focused on the education sector.

The workshop was based on the annual international course “Sexual Diversity in Schools”, organised by GALE in Sitges (Spain), and on the recently developed e-courses “Combating SOGI-phobia<sup>28</sup> in schools”

<sup>27</sup> Website: [www.gale.info](http://www.gale.info),

email: [p.dankmeijer@gale.info](mailto:p.dankmeijer@gale.info)

<sup>28</sup> SOGI = sexual orientation and gender identity.

<sup>29</sup> The presentation can be found on the con-

ference website: <https://www.free-domatwork.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/GALE-2016-Changing-schools-and-companies-into-more-inclusive-environments.pdf>

and “Company Business with LGBTI”. It contained a presentation<sup>29</sup> and an interactive quiz. Questions and answers/discussions were:

**Q1:** Are we effective in making schools and companies LGBTI inclusive?

**D1:** There are a lot of differences geographically: this can only be answered per country. Moreover, the situation differs between schools and companies. In the business world, people tend to talk more about diversity whereas in the education sector the term inclusiveness is more common. In general, the experience of the workshop participants is that even in those countries that have rules and regulations, sometimes even legislation, to promote inclusiveness in schools, the day-to-day practice shows a poor implementation of those good intentions.

**Q2:** Why are we not effective enough in changing this environment?

**D2:** One of the issues with which we have to deal with is religion. An example from South Africa showed that there is a crucial influence from religion on schools, and that this creates a conservative atmosphere in which sexuality cannot be talked about openly. On a global scale the impact of neo-liberalism and privatisation is visible: a growing number of schools is no longer paid by government money. Even if governments have diversity and inclusiveness as education goals, these schools can ‘avoid’ government interference, especially if it comes to a subject such as sexuality –mainly because of the religious issue.

Intersectionality is mentioned as an important theme nowadays.

The focus of the LGBTI movement is on visibility rather than on real social and cultural change in schools. For example, despite the efforts by some governments, training courses for teachers do not consider (sexual and gender) diversity or inclusiveness as a priority. The government policies often lack leadership and may turn out to be more window-dressing than effective.



How can we really reach teachers? It is important that we gain influence on the curricula in schools, but also in teachers' courses.

The workshop concluded that it is important that we gain more influence on these curricula, probably through government intervention. An example is from the Netherlands, in which the School Inspection Authority has received the instruction by the Minister (based on a request by Parliament) to prioritise sexual and gender diversity education in their school reviews for the 2015/2016 school year<sup>30</sup>.

It is sad to notice that only 16% of the students in secondary schools can tell that they have received any attention to LGBT issues in 2016, even though this has been made a mandatory curriculum element since 2012.

**Q3:** Which SOGI-phobic behaviour is most frequent in schools?

**A3:** Bullying seems to be the most prominent SOGI-phobic behaviour in schools. What LGBT people do not realise is the LGBTs can also be the perpetrators, not only the victims of this type of behaviour.

**Q6:** What is the most effective measure to make a school LGBTI-safe?

**D6:** The workshop participants seemed to have different views on tolerance and acceptance within schools. What they did acknowledge is that awareness is a basic principle. Research tells us that organising "golden weeks" to build good class interaction and setting clear behaviour rules is probably most effective. It seems the LGBT movement is largely unaware of such research, which may result in awareness campaigns being less effective.

Participants concluded that it is vital for LGBTI movements to ensure that their demands are more precise and elaborated. For example, that our exact objectives for students' behaviour are clear and observable. Peter advocates for behaviour objectives in terms of diminishing social distance between LGBT and straight students (make homework together, be friends, have lunch together, share a room during outings).

Teachers should be more willing to serve as role models. This is not only about being open as LGBT but especially role-modelling openness and 'living' tolerance towards issues that are outside your 'comfort zone'. Schools should educate the pupils about gender roles, gender identities and expressions, and about gender stereotypes,

A final remark from the workshop was that it is important to embed sexual and gender diversity issues in a broader framework of school or company priorities.

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<sup>30</sup> Results of the reviews have been published (in Dutch): [www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/assets/publicaties/2016/09/o-](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/assets/publicaties/2016/09/o-)

[gaan-met-seksualiteit-en-seksuele-diversiteit](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/assets/publicaties/2016/09/o-)



## Workshop 20

### Network Roze FNV: origins, goals, methods

**Facilitator:  
Barry Okunick  
(Network Roze FNV,  
the Netherlands)**



The workshop, that started with a funny video showing stereotypes about homophobia and homosexuality, was attended by participants from different countries. We discussed if participants recognised these images. The participants from Indonesia and Nepal indicated that they did not recognise the images from the video and that they were clearly examples from the Western world. That was also the intention: we have to be aware that there is a wide variety within the LGBTI community and that there is also a large cultural diversity.

The origins of the Network Roze FNV are mainly in the public sector (in the education union, in the public services union that also organised people working in the health and care sectors, later also in the police union, the military union). The group discussed if this is a general pattern and if so, how this pattern can be explained. Public services seem to be an ambience for more diversity in personnel and not for a typical male-dominated – and macho

– group of workers. If one can expect sympathy for social issues, it would be in this sector. In countries that have introduced anti-discrimination policies, LGBTI workers feel more secure in the public sector than in the private, was a general comment. Because in that case, the authorities are more likely than private enterprises to ‘practice what they preach’ and set the good example.

The aims of the Network Roze are:

- ▼ Combating discrimination and working for a working environment that is socially safe, so that workers can be who they are at the workplace;
- ▼ Social acceptance of sexual and gender diversity;
- ▼ Equal or similar rights.

It works both internally (changing the union itself and union institutions and organisations) and externally (lobbying – through the union’s structures – for social and legal change), both nationally and internationally. Solidarity and activism are basic elements of the Network’s spirit.

Comments from participants made clear that it is very hard in some countries to start a group like this. In Nepal, structures for organising as such are hardly accessible. In Indonesia, the social climate towards LGBTI is getting more and more repressive.

After these comments the presentation was ceased and the problems of the workshop participants were the focus for the workshop discussion.

Three processes/steps that are working within the Network Roze FNV were introduced:

1. Internal coherence (finding each other);
2. Recognition of the group;
3. Creating changes in the union and in society at large

These are dynamic steps; sometimes you have to take a step back, before you can develop the next. For instance: if the political circumstances change and the recognition as an LGBTI group is no longer secure, you have to focus on the internal coherence.



People from Indonesia recognised this pattern. The Network Roze itself is also looking for allies and alliances with other groups that are confronted with discrimination, such as women and migrants, sometimes not even considered as a group.

The second process is the recognition of the group. It is crucial to develop a critical mass in which the group can survive and become stable. This critical mass can be different for each country. What is also important is to define common characteristics and strategies so that the group can be considered as one group and can act in the outside world together.

In the past, for instance, the Network Roze has used scientific research to make the position of the LGBTI group visible. The research report has gained international attention and thus improved the Network's position.

The third process is creating real change, for instance in legislation. It is vital for this that the group is represented in the important decision-making bodies, that it is visible, that the demands are clear, the arguments are convincing and that it is possible to build up sufficient pressure (together with allies).

Participants recognise this. For several decades, the Indonesian authorities have tolerated the LGBTI movement (not fully accepted, but at least tolerated). Now, the authorities have changed their policies and they take steps against the LGBTI movement. Which means that the group has been falling apart. The remaining members must find new terms for the group and stimulate the internal coherence. The best location for solidifying the group in a safe environment is somewhere private.

What could the Network Roze learn from the experiences of other groups? The workshop discussed this. Spanish delegates felt that the current level of professionalism can be a barrier in the renewal of the group. It

might be important for Network Roze to take up more activities in the area of internal coherence.

The delegate from Nepal commented that it is hard to set up a network in Nepal because the structures are not clearly defined. Others stated that a clear structure is not an absolute prerequisite for a network. This Freedom at Work conference is meant to start a (new) network, without clear structures, but with at least the facebook page as a means of communication.

The co-operation between Network Roze FNV and the Turkish organisations and the events in Izmir<sup>31</sup> have shown that transnational co-operation can have some influence. Network Roze is glad to play such a role if it can.

<sup>31</sup> A delegation of Network Roze FNV was visiting Izmir (LGBTI and trade union) groups as an element in the existing co-operation project. The authorities cancelled the allowance for Gay Pride celebration in

Izmir. The presence of the Dutch delegation probably played a role in the further policies by the local authorities: they allowed a meeting where Gay Pride should have started, and even speeches (such as by the Network Roze) were tolerated.



**Participants' views:**

**Parsu Ram Rai,  
Blue Diamond  
Society, Nepal**



**F**reedom at Work gave me the chance to represent the Blue Diamond Society in the international network and to work on the way forward. To share the birth of LGBTI movement in Nepal and the difficulties we faced and to gain knowledge on such great issues and meeting so many diverse activists.

*I brought a lot of knowledge of work for inclusion from other sectors and countries home to Nepal. And I am sure other participants have done the same. Coordination between community members has increased, which enhances the work I can do.*

*The information I gathered was shared through interviews with different media including Pahichan of Nepal<sup>32</sup> and SOGI. I have coordinated with Trade Union, ILO and different NGO's in Nepal and worked with the Ministry of Woman, Children and Social Welfare for the right of LGBTI. I am sure these talks will have positive outcome.*

*As most of my community members do not get work or even remain in the closet, because of stigma and discrimination, I wasn't*

*aware that LGBTI groups in unions exist. I was surprised to hear about such organisations in Turkey and Indonesia. Now I know we should also take initiative to do so.*

*It was enlightening to work with such a diversity of groups for the freedom of work, even intersex<sup>33</sup>. Intersex issues, with the raising concern in UN, are very new for us and it was very encouraging for me and will be for my other activists in Nepal. Our work with national and international organisations now includes intersex issues.*

*It is important to work in united ways to achieve human rights of LGBTI, in a global context. The larger the communities, the more information can be addressed. The more learning experiences can be shared and implemented in the respective countries. Like the innovative ideas to tackle LGBTI issues through the labour force.*



<sup>32</sup> Web site: <http://pahichan.com/>

<sup>33</sup> Workshop 12.



**Participants' views:**

**Thyaz Mhaniez,  
Pengroanisiran  
Indonesia**



**Thyaz Mhaniez (right) with her fellow delegate**

**F**or us it was the first time we could attend an international conference to discuss the relationship between trade unions and Pengroanisiran Indonesia and we had a hard time picking workshops. I

would love to have been able to follow all of them.

*In between we did meet a lot of new friends from so many different countries and exchanged hope, inspiration and strategies. We are connected to the participants of CCOO, the Teacher Union, Ken from Australia and Virginia from South-Africa, but the contact is yet limited to exchanging news letters and encouragement.*

*We also need inspiration to enrich strategies, especially for a predominantly Muslim country like Indonesia in which the government restricts LGBT. We are considered immoral and damaging the nation. What strategies can help effectively approach the government?*

*It is difficult in Indonesia for the trade unions we have alliances with on women's issues are self-limiting. If we offer to discuss sexual identity and gender diversity, their reaction usually is 'whoaaaa, that is an issue for later'. Not only does the state not recognize LGBT, the social communities do not accept its existence either.*

*The current situation is that vigilante parade and humiliate revealed LGBT and the institutional court is processing a trial to criminalize LGBT. The struggle against stigma and societal discrimination is a long process of gradually creating awareness. Change will not come suddenly.*

*Freedom at Work strengthened my conviction that the trade union and the LGBTIQ overlap. The more spirit in fighting for LGBTIQ rights, the more equality at work. In Indonesia it is very difficult to align both struggles.*

*During the Network Roze workshop of Barry Okunick<sup>34</sup> we talked about FNV coming to Indonesia so we can create an agenda for public debate together with the trade unions. Perhaps we can build capacity through internships. Target is to open the minds of the other unions. Perhaps agreeing to the struggle for*

<sup>34</sup> Workshop 20.



*LGBT is too much to ask, but at least other unions could learn to know and understand LGBT.*

*We share the inspiration and strategies from Freedom at Work with friends in our organisation and are building 'Pelangi Mahadhika', a community organisation with LBT workers from various unions that itself don't facilitate LGBT issues. Now, our colleagues have even more questions.*

*Lesbian lovers like myself cannot express their love in public, not even wear the (masculine) clothes they want. It's not possible to confess we are lovers to our tentangga (neighbors), so to live in the same house we pretend to be family. And even in our intipun (family environment) we cannot disclose our identity.*

*In Amsterdam I felt Freedom at Work, I mean I felt safer than at home. A lot of people talked about visibility during the conference. I think it will be very difficult to make this possible in Indonesia.*



*At the conference Freedom at work a lot of people spoke about the visibility of LGBT. I think it is very difficult to make it possible in Indonesia. Personally I do not choose to cover but I certainly do not openly declare my identity. Usually I choose to use another name in many activities.*



## Participants' views:

### Bodo Busch, Gewerkschaft Er- ziehung und Wis- senschaft (GEW)



**F**reedom at Work was an inspiring conference with touching moments in the plenary keynote speeches as well as in the workshops. I met again with friends I know for years and I made new contacts.

The members of our delegation are all volunteers working in LGBT trade union groups, except our board member. Freedom at Work gave them experience in international exchange which motivates them to further develop international networking. LGBT activism is worldwide and we have issues in common to network on. Hopefully this will continue with the

*EI/PSI LGBT Forum in Geneva next year, with participation from other sectors.*

*We gathered new ideas to address in Germany, like building a network with other sectors in our national trade union council.*

*In particular the speeches Phyll Opoku-Gyimah and Salvatore Marra<sup>35</sup> gave, impressed me deeply. I learnt from Phyll that sharing personal experiences from your daily life, activism and organising can help intersectionality in discrimination and in emancipation to be understood.*

*Salvatore's speech taught me to place the fight against homo- and transphobia in the context of larger global political developments. He pointed out that the European Union is worth fighting for because of its original values and because of its practical benefits for LGBT emancipation, even if 'this is not the Europe our ancestors have been fighting for'.*

*Peter Dankmeijer's<sup>36</sup> workshop demonstrated how it might help LGBT antidiscrimination work in schools to take the same pragmatic view that is successfully used in HIV prevention.*

*Freedom at Work made a difference as a LGBT trade union activist conference, because we had the general secretaries of two global unions present showing and explaining their commitment that LGBT rights are human rights and trade union rights. They promised there will be continuity in the EI-PSI-LGBT-forums with Geneva 2017 and attempts to broaden the network by including other global union federations. In their very inspiring keynotes Fred and Rosa gave a vivid understanding that LGBT work is part of a global political struggle for solidarity and emancipation.*

*In our workshop the participants confirmed that the approaches for sexual diversity education in schools are similar in different countries like France, Germany, Spain and Canada. And that in all these countries this education is attacked by right wing groups, except in The Netherlands. These right wing groups are networking, at least in Europe. We discussed how it might be worth for teacher*

<sup>35</sup> Page 14 of this conference report.

<sup>36</sup> Workshop 19.



*unions to network as well in order to protect sexual diversity education.*



*All participants of our workshop exchanged mail addresses and some of the conference participants are now on my friends list on Facebook. This way I see their activities and pictures from pride events e.g. in Canada or Nepal. These online connections can make us stronger. Yet, there's with meeting people personally. I am looking forward to the EI-PSI-LGBT-forum in Geneva and hope to see even more teachers, maybe also from the Netherlands!*



## Participants' views:

**Judith  
Brekelmans,  
EQ Bonaire**

*have picked up responsibility beyond salary rules and law.*

*At EQ we will surely spend time and effort in keeping connected with other participants. If we inform each other on how we do things where we live, we'll achieve more together. For EQ especially the cooperation with Kenita Placide<sup>37</sup> as well as with the crew from Surinam will be of great added value.*



**M**eeeting up with so many activists at Freedom at Work has given me new inspiration. The strength it brought me personally helps our work with EQ on Bonaire.

*The workshops gave me new insights in networking and together with the speeches helped me to look at our work in different ways. As my workshop helped people begin to understand what life in the Dutch Caribbean is about.*



*Freedom at Work made a difference because it made clear for all of us that union*

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<sup>37</sup> Workshop10.



## Participants' views:

**Giancarlo Pazzanese, Elsevier**



*It felt great to watch the photo collections.<sup>38</sup> It was a pleasure to participate and the pictures helped me recreate so many great moments.*

*Freedom at Work was special for the atmosphere, with enough time and space to interact with everyone. It easily got very personal compared to other LGBT Conferences I attended. The level of contact between attendees was deeper. Especially after the music show with Merel Moistra and the LGBTalk. The host, Mounir Samuel, was great and all guests moved me in a different way. Enlightening!*

<sup>38</sup> Web site: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eldertkuiken/albums/72157669228229933>



*The biggest added value of the conference is that you meet face to face, as a teacher, a student and as a companion. In a world of digital profiles and email communication, these events help humanize relations and create real bonds between people and organisations.*

*What I could give the participants of my workshop, is the insight that you need a plan. A publishing strategy that includes a method of measuring and communicating your impacts. They all designed their own future LGBT report as a practice. To help them to further develop their strategy, they took away an action plan, a basic communications plan and a magazine draft to keep on developing in the next 6 to 18 months.*

*In LGBT+ networks, straight people make great allies.*

*The workshop I attended, on Intersex by Miriam van der Have<sup>39</sup>, was very informative and confirmed my vision on gender as a*

<sup>39</sup> Workshop 12.



*fluid process. We need to talk about sliders, not checkboxes.*

*LGBT+ is the term I like because it's short whilst including all possible letters. I think that every letter of the LGBTIQ and ones to come have to recognize themselves in diversity.*

*A strong profile is a manifestation of a difference, whilst inclusion is to accept everyone independent of differences.*



*Watching the Canal Parade on Saturday with many participants was great. I always like to see the military and the police boats on the parade. It is always a nice moment to see these institutions as friends and not as opponents.*

*I grew up in a dictatorship where armed forces are an image of repression, violence and human rights violations. It is always an emotional moment for me when I realize I live in a country where uniformed forces are not only informed about sexual diversity but encouraged and represented inside of governmental institutions as well.*



## Participants' views:

**Jennifer Michelle  
Rath,  
Ver.Di**



**P**articipating in the Freedom at Work conference felt good. Although it was difficult to find funding for the travel cost and to understand the English speeches and workshops, it was clear to me that there was great interest in my issues on trans rights. That and the great teamwork were impressive and this raises hope that the situation will change.

*We have to realise that changes cause uncertainties. It is my impression that some participants still cherished the binary gender and identity system. I understand the general concern that if we would consider genders and identities as fluid, this could make the fight for women's rights invisible, but it's important to include all people in our fight for LGBTTI rights.*

*The gender gap is important, but if we neglect to report on people outside the two-gender system, we still stigmatise and exclude people. This way, even gay organisations add to the stigma if they do not support trans and inter issues.*

*We need to develop a gender inclusive notion and to dismantle the binary gender assignment. If it is important to refer to a specific gender, for example women or men or others, then the gender gap shouldn't be used. In this cases the gender gap would make the specific gender invisible. Generally spoken, it depends on the context.*

*During the conference in Amsterdam everyone I spoke showed they feel the responsibility to change this binary mindset.*

*Even more, it was enlightening to feel the support of so many participants in my fight for trans and intersex equality. On no conference before have I felt so much explicit solidarity on my topics. Over 15 participants already contacted me since the conference!*

*Freedom at Work was my first chance to get a worldwide insight into the trade union involvement for LGBTI matters. It is very important we team up with trade unions to increase their efforts against hate crime and discrimination.*

*The labour movement can make a big difference by empowering people who are willing to fight for all human rights. Don't generalize by claiming being gay or lesbian automatically qualifies people to represent trans and intersex issues. Take away the obstacles and create chances for everyone to represent themselves.*





## Media coverage: FNV magazine



### Global unions unite in struggle for equal rights of LGBTI workers

By Linda Vermeulen (August 8, 2016)

In far too many countries of this world workplaces are not safe for LGBTI people. At the FNV conference 'Freedom at Work' in Amsterdam, international trade union leaders Fred van Leeuwen (Education International) and Rosa Pavanelli (Public Services International) agreed to put more effort into combating this unequal treatment. As a result of the conference and a request by FNV, they will seek the support from other global union federations in the struggle against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Thursday was the opening of the Freedom at Work conference. Trade union delegates and others met in Amsterdam and discussed how they can act in favour of equal rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and intersex people. Saturday will be a special day for the conference participants: they will embark on a boat, together with FNV delegates, and watch the Canal Parade from there.

### Human rights

'In this world, there are a lot of cases in which LGBTI people are discriminated against. At work, or in the labour market. Trade unions have an important task to stand up for safe workplaces.' says Ger Rolsma, chair of the Pink Network (Netwerk Roze) in FNV. 'In seventy to eighty countries homosexuality is still illegal and six countries have put a death penalty on same-sex sexual acts. But in other countries, people are still being fired if someone finds out about their sexual orientation. In most countries it is almost impossible for transgenders to find a job; they are forced into prostitution. It is our principle that LGBTI rights are trade union rights, and that trade unions rights are human rights!'



### Combating homophobia and transphobia

Boris Dittrich, Human Rights Watch representative and one of the guest speakers at the closing of the conference, said that the ILO will easily accept a proposal for LGBTI policies if it comes from the joint group of Global Union Federations. 'I think that unions can play a tremendously important role in combating homophobia and transphobia', says Dittrich, 'but they will have to put the issue on the agenda explicitly and not talk about LGBTI policies, but also talk with LGBTI members and workers. We have seen how fruitful this conference has been. I do hope this will resonate at a wider international level. It will be a powerful gesture if trade unions take the role of combating homophobia and transphobia in the rest of society.'



### Real jobs

There was also a delegation from Turkey, despite the fact that more than half of the planned delegation was not allowed to leave the country and had to cancel the conference participation. FNV Secretary Leo Hartveld spoke about the importance of real jobs, also for LGBTI workers. 'Are you allowed to be yourself at your workplace? Without experiencing discrimination, assault, bullying? Without gossip or prejudices? And your colleagues? For many lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals, transgenders or people with an intersex condition such a good and safe working climate does not exist. FNV claims that every person has a right to it, but without real jobs it is almost impossible to demand.'

### Network Roze FNV (Pink Network in FNV)

The proponent and organiser of the conference is Network Roze FNV, a rather new network of FNV members, volunteers. The Network acts for a good and safe working climate for lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals, transgenders and people with an intersex condition. The Network is dedicated to improving the situation at workplaces and at the labour market, so that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity can be prevented, and combated. It is firmly committed to sexual and gender diversity policies in labour unions and at workplaces.. Several organisations that have merged into the Pink Network have a strong tradition in international co-operation.

## Media coverage: Web sites

For media coverage internationally:

ETUC web site:

<https://www.etuc.org/press/freedom-work#.WldYZxvhCUk>

PSI web site:

<http://www.world-psi.org/en/freedom-work-conference>

EI web site:

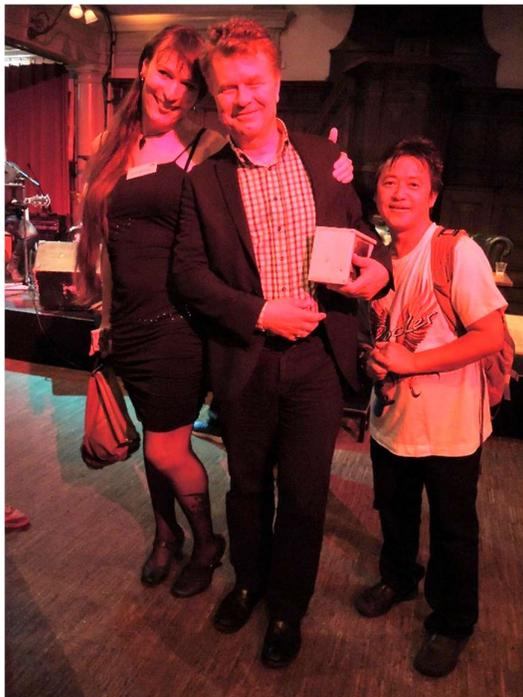
[https://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news\\_de-tails/4069](https://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_de-tails/4069)



# Pictures













## Terms and abbreviations

ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers 'Activities; part of the ILO organisation, this is the main link between the International Labour Office and the world of work through one of its constituents: workers 'organizations. ACTRAV works in close coordination with and assists the Secretariat of the Workers' Group of the ILO Governing Body.
AOb	Algemene Onderwijsbond, General Education Union (in the Netherlands), affiliated to FNV and to EI
BDS	Blue Diamond Society (in Nepal)
CES	(in French:) Confédération Européenne des Syndicats = ETUC (in English)
CCOO	Comisiones Obreras = Workers' Committees. Spanish major trade union organisation
CGIL	(in Italian:) Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro = Italian General Labour Confederation
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by UN General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989; into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49
CSN	Confédération des syndicats nationaux (de Canada) = Confederation of national trade unions (of Canada)
Eğitim Sen	Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası (in Turkey) = Education and Science Workers' Union, affiliated to EI
EI	Education International
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation

FELGTB	Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Transexuales y Bisexuales (in Spain) = Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transsexuals and Bisexuals (all over Spain)
FNV	(no longer an abbreviation; largest Dutch trade organization)
FSC	Federación de Servicios a la Ciudadanía (in Spain) =Federation for Services to the Citizens, union affiliated to the CCOO
GALE	Global Alliance for LGBT Education
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, (German) Trade Union for Education and Science
GUF	Global Union Federation (e.g. PSI, EI)
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation, the world wide trade union umbrella organisation
KAOS (GL)	Turkish LG(BTI) organisation
KESK	Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (in Turkey) = Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (or transgender)
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (or transgender) and intersex
LGBTIA	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (or transgender), intersex people and their allies
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (or transgender), intersex and queer (or questioning)
LGBTT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite and transsexual (or transgender)
	(etc.)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
PPP	Public-private partnership
PSI	Public Services International
SEIU	Service Employees International Union (North-American Union)
SOGI	Sexual orientation and/or gender identity



TCO	Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (in Sweden) = Confederation of Professional Employees
UNISON	British trade union for public services
UPR	The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) aimed at improving the human rights situation in each of the 193 United Nations (UN) Member States.

	Under this mechanism, the human rights situation of all UN Member States is reviewed every five years. 42 States are reviewed each year during three Working Group sessions dedicated to 14 States each.
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