

Important Addresses in The Netherlands

Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Coordination of the Government's Policy on Sexual Orientation

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Federation of Dutch associations for the integration of homosexuality

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National Expert Centre on local LGBT policies, c/o Schorer

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Website www.homo-emancipatie.nl/english

National Federation of local antidiscrimination bureaus

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Website www.lvadb.nl

Dutch Equal Treatment Commission

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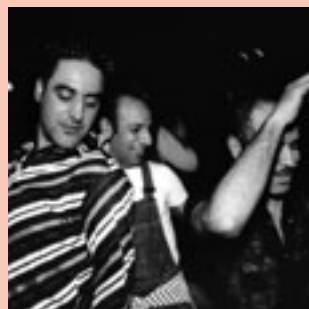
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Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

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**Problems experienced by
gays and lesbians in The
Netherlands and Europe.**

**How does the Dutch government
tackle these problems?**

1 Problems experienced by gay men, lesbian women and bisexuals in European countries.

It is estimated that more than 6% of the European population is gay, lesbian or bisexual. The position of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders (hereafter to be referred to as LGBTs) varies for each country in Europe, as each country is different. This means that the problems experienced by LGBTs within Europe can vary greatly. There are, however, a lot of similarities. During a European meeting of LGBT organisations and government officials a number of similar problems in European countries were brought forward. These include:

- Discrimination and intimidation at work, at school and in the neighbourhood.
- Violence against gays.
- Problems with access to housing, sport or public facilities.
- Social and health risks (social isolation, minority stress, etc.)
- Unequal legal protection.

The Netherlands hosted the above-mentioned European meeting on the occasion of its European Union Presidency in 2004.

A summary of this meeting: "Mainstreaming policies on sexual orientation in Europe" (March 2005) including a list of addresses can be found at: www.minvws.nl/en/themes/gays-and-lesbians/

The full report is available at: www.217.170.38.36/coc/publiek/ESLT_conferentierapport.pdf.



2 What is the situation in The Netherlands?

The Dutch government is of the opinion that, in general, the position of LGBTs in The Netherlands is reasonable. Due to the efforts made by civil society, LGBT organisations, social partners, companies, institutions and city councils, a lot has been achieved up till now.

A full overview of the facts is available at: “The equal treatment of gays, lesbians and bisexuals by the Dutch government”
www.minvws.nl/en/themes/gays-and-lesbians/

However, lately the number of reports about intolerance amongst groups of youths and ethnic minorities has increased, showing society’s attitude has hardened. The growing intolerance towards groups of civilians also seems to affect the LGBT community, and a number of councils is worried about this. The Dutch government is intent to bring this growing intolerance to an end. The most noticeable problems in The Netherlands include:

- Homophobia at school, work, and in the neighbourhood.
- Misunderstandings and lack of understanding between LGBTs and ethnic and religious groups.
- Social isolation of LGBTs within certain ethnic communities or religious groups.
- Social isolation of older LGBTs in need of care.

For a full overview of the policyplan, see:
www.minvws.nl/en/themes/gays-and-lesbians/

3 How does the Dutch government deal with these problems?

For the next few years, the Dutch government will make an annual budget of more than € 1 million available to deal with certain sticking points. These means are available for national research, development and distribution of knowledge, experiments in cities and support to LGBT organisations. In brief:

- A three year long national campaign 'De Dialoog' to overcome misunderstanding between LGBTs and ethnic and religious groups. This Dialogue campaign is run by local and national organisations from civil society (LGBT groups, religious and ethnic groups).

See: www.coc.nl

- Promoting the safety of gay and lesbian teachers and pupils, as a component of the government's general policy on 'safety in schools'.
- Supporting local experiments in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Tilburg, where experiments include giving shelter to Moroccan/Turkish gays and lesbians (and those from other ethnic backgrounds), reaching out to their families and giving further support to these young Moroccan/Turkish LGBTs.

See: www.homo-emancipatie.nl/english/

- Local governments and councils, institutions and LGBT organisations are provided with information about dealing with local sticking points with regards to equal opportunities and the fair treatment of LGBTs. The government is investigating whether and how many local councils are actively showing an interest in the position of LGBTs.

See: www.homo-emancipatie.nl

- The Dutch government has to investigate whether and how the attitude towards gays in The Netherlands is changing. By repeating this investigation frequently the government will be kept informed on all the developments. The first report will appear in spring 2006.

An English summary will be available at: www.scp.nl/english/
or on the English website of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports:
www.minvws.nl/en/themes/gays-and-lesbians/

This list is only part of the entire package of 56 measures. If you would like to know more about the policy plan of the Dutch government, please check: www.minvws.nl/en/themes/gays-and-lesbians/