« The lack of mutual recognition of same-sex partnerships and marriages in the European Union and member states of the Council of Europe: an obstacle to the freedom of movement of persons? »

In Europe, married heterosexual couples constantly cross national borders within Europe without even a second thought. They are secure in the knowledge that their unions and the legal consequences of these unions are universally recognised.

Such is not the case for couples in same-sex unions. Their right to freedom of movement is constantly ignored. Simply by crossing a national border, such couples united by registered partnerships or same-sex marriages may lose all their social and fiscal rights, their rights as parents or even their nationalities of birth. Their unions are not recognised, their rights to freedom of movement across frontiers are flouted or denied.

L’Autre Cercle, a national French LGBT voluntary association of professional men and women, member of ILGA-Europe (International Gay and Lesbian Association) and a founding member of EGMA (European Gay and Lesbian Managers Association) is organizing, in close cooperation with the City of Strasbourg and under the patronage of the Council of Europe, an international conference on this subject on November 18 and 19. The aim of this conference is not only to identify and highlight the unacceptable discrimination based on sexual orientation but also to recommend a number of solutions. To hold this conference in the Palais de l’Europe in Strasbourg (Bâtiment Agora) is to make a strong statement, since the city is home to many European institutions whose common mission is to guarantee the rights of all European citizens.

The Autre Cercle Conference will enable participants to enrich their knowledge base on this important theme which has already been the subject of two half-day seminars organised by the European Parliament’s LGBT Intergroup and a Podcast released on June 1st by ILGA-Europe. It is also
at the heart of a Green Paper consultation launched earlier this year by the European Commission on the mutual recognition of civil status documents.

Conference participants will be have the opportunity in “première” to share the results of some ground breaking research on the cross-border rights of same sex partners conducted in a large number of European countries. They will hear the testimonies of European same-sex couples whose rights have been denied and learn how businesses and public organisations deal with the issue of international staff transfers when transfer candidates live with same-sex partners.

For more information on the Autre Cercle Conference you can visit the conference website at www.mutualrecognition.eu where you can consult the detailed programme for the two days, read more about Strasbourg and how to get there and learn more about l’Autre Cercle.

Registration for the conference is obligatory but free of charge (with the exception of meals for which you will be asked to pay). You can register on-line at www.mutualrecognition.eu

Communiqué de presse Agenda