

STATEMENT BY THE NORDIC QUEER AGING CONFERENCE IN STOCKHOLM ON 6 OCTOBER 2024

We, delegates at the Nordic Queer Aging Conference, held in Stockholm 4-6 October 2024, have unanimously agreed upon the following statement. We offer this statement in order to promote the indisputable human rights and improve the living conditions of a vulnerable and sometimes forgotten minority - the LGBTIQ+ senior citizens ("Rainbow Seniors") of our societies.

While legislation differs across the region, the Nordic countries have committed to be world leaders in applying the principle that all people are equal under the law. An important element of this action has been the recognition and application of this fundamental principle to sexual and gender minorities. However, the experience and knowledge development of recent years highlights the many actions we are aware of that still need to be taken.

Aging can pose challenges to an individual's quality of life and well-being. This can include a decline in functional capacities and may contribute to social isolation. When an individual in addition belongs to a minority which has been unrecognized, harassed or even criminalized during their lifetime, these challenges become even more daunting. This can lead to individuals withdrawing from social interactions and even hiding their true identity. This is a loss not only for the individual, but also for society.

Recognizing the broader contribution to society made by members of this community, the trailblazers who fought for their visibility and rightful place in society, it is vital that Rainbow Seniors are afforded the right to age with pride.

LGBTIQ+ people represent a cross-section of society at large, and as such are a diverse group. Rainbow seniors that also belong to other minority groups often face additional challenges that need to be addressed.

Acknowledging this and the facts gathered from science-based knowledge, including research presented during this Conference, by the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency's bi-yearly LGBTI-studies in the EU27, by the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, NIKK – Nordisk information for kunskap om kön, and research from universities in the Nordic countries, we note that LGBTIQ+ citizens face additional challenges when aging as compared with the population at large.

We the Nordic delegates emphasise the need for further action regarding:

- Education in LGBTIQ+ issues: All education, including vocational training in health or social services, must include sufficient and relevant training on LGBTIQ+ issues such as legal, social and health aspects. We recommend that these topics should be included in the required curriculum.
- Additional training and continuing professional development in LGBTIQ+ issues for all staff in social and health care, both in the public and private sector. We recommend that these trainings be a part of the licensing system and that knowledge on LGBTIQ+ issues be required in service procurement.
- Expanded research in the field, adequately funded.
- Public funding for expanded LGBTIQ+ education.

- Expanded effort, including regional and municipal funding and facilitation of Rainbow Seniors organisations and activities.

We also urge the Nordic Parliaments and Governments to ensure that:

- Action plans of governments should explicitly speak to Rainbow Senior's rights and well-being, and define actions to be taken.
- Relevant legislation should always address Rainbow Seniors rights unconditionally in a manner that improves their life conditions and well-being.
- When adopting new legislation, it is essential to engage civil society representatives such as Rainbow Seniors organisations.

Finally, we declare,

- That decent life conditions and improved well-being of all Rainbow Seniors of all eight Nordic countries are part of basic human rights that are indivisible now and in the future.
- That all Nordic countries should identify the vulnerability of Rainbow Seniors, and act in accordance with that knowledge for their benefit.
- That all Nordic countries should implement mechanisms that protect the rights and life conditions of all Rainbow Seniors.

In Stockholm, 6 October 2024,

The 74 delegates attending the Conference from

Regnbågsfyren rf
Åland Islands

LGBT+ Føroyar
Faroe Islands

Transfeminina rf / Transfeminiinit ry
Regnbågsallians Svenskfinland rf
Regnbågsseniörerna - Sateenkaariseniorit ry / Rainbow Seniors
VTKL – The Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older Adults
Queerhistoriens vänner rf / Friends of Queer History
Dreamwear Club ry
Todellisuuden tutkimuskeskus / Reality Research Center
Seta rf / Seta ry / LGBTI rights in Finland - Seta
Finland

Sipineq+
Greenland

Samtökin '78
Iceland

FRI
FRI Oslo Viken
Skeiv Verden

Seniorgruppa, FRI Oslo Viken
Skeiv Verden Vest
Norway

RFSL
RFSL Stockholm
Hbtq-seniorerna Örebro
FPES
Regnbågslinjen
Transammans
Hbtq-seniorerna Göteborg
Malmö Senior
Hbtq-seniorerna Gävle
Sweden

