



● THE BELGIAN PRIDE 2018: YOUR LOCAL POWER!

Feeling free and at home in your neighborhood, town or city. Be and show yourself in the streets. Holding hands with the person you love and smiling at each other in public. Our personal lives occur in the public space. Considering the approaching communal elections, everyone (youngsters, seniors, families, couples and all people - no matter what gender or orientation) asks the local politicians: How do you make a difference? What do you do to improve diversity in our everyday life? Where the rain makes way for the sun, we will walk proudly under the rainbow!

We will all be heading to the voting booths for the local elections on 14th of October. Deciding which circle to colour in is an important decision. A conscious decision can lead to a better living environment in your city or municipality.

And we're not just talking about the redesign of the local park, the policies in the municipal school, or the proper functioning of the local Public Centre for Social Welfare. Your local municipal or city administration can also make a real difference and turn the place where you live into a true rainbow bubble, if that's what you'd like, of course.

So it's no wonder that this year's Pride is focusing on the local elections. Belgian Pride is putting the municipalities and cities in the limelight in 2018, or better yet, at the end of the rainbow! We want the slogan 'Your Local Power!' to encourage municipal and city administrations to enact explicit, integrated local LGBTI+ policies.

Municipalities and cities can and must make the difference. They must accept responsibility for the well-being of all their residents. Flying the rainbow flag at the local government offices during the Pride period is a symbol of this. This is also a way that the municipality or city can show their solidarity with the LGBTI+ community. This symbolic gesture is not an infringement on neutrality. On the contrary, we can only actively work on ending all forms of discrimination once there is recognition for diversity and inclusion.

Policy-makers can make the lives of many citizens that much rosier by taking both small and large actions: by introducing a diversity charter in sports clubs, by making information on gender and sexuality available at the local libraries, by providing logistical and financial support to local associations, testimonials, and courses in the municipal education system, by holding a queer film festival in the local movie theatre or cultural centre, by holding LGBTI+ actions in community centres and youth centres, by providing information on what to do if you are the victim or witness of discrimination, by offering space for intimacy and (LGBTI+) sexuality in assisted-living centres, by training local police precincts and municipal officials, by including Equal Opportunity as an explicit competence within the city administration, etc.

The list of things that cities and municipalities can do is endless. Plus, many of these actions are very easy to implement. Sometimes, your local administration only needs a little boost, and you can give them that boost in the voting booth on 14th of October. A good local administration meets the needs and requirements of all residents. What does the LGBTI+ community in your city or municipality need?

You can already send the politicians a signal that is loud and clear on Saturday, the 19th of May. Make your wishes heard during the Belgian Pride.

We hope to see you there! Everyone is welcome!

Go to our website pride.be to learn more about Your Local Power!