

BELGIUM

Population: 10,3 Mio

Area: 30.518 km²

Part 1: Laws concerning Homosexuality

Forbidden by law: No

Age of consent: 18 (or 16 when they are both under 18).

Registered partnership/marriage: Yes, since January 30th 2003

Differences to heterosexual marriages: Lesbians and gays do not have the same rights, for instance concerning adoption and children's inheritance

Anti-discrimination law, protecting lesbians/gays (L/G) against discrimination: Yes, since December 12th 2002

At work: Yes

On the housing market: Yes

In other areas: Yes

Comments: There exists a general anti-discrimination law.

Other groups in the society protected through such a law: Yes, in the general anti-discrimination law. No discrimination is allowed on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, origin, nationality, ethnicity, civil state, age, economical resources, belief, philosophy, physical aspects or handicaps.

Incidents that briefly describe the situation of L/G in society:

Discrimination is forbidden, but in fact, gays and lesbians often have to fight for equal rights.

Part 2: Situation in the Church(es)

Open L/G welcome to

Eucharist: Yes

Do volunteer work: Yes

Work as ordained ministers: Yes

Comments: There are gay priests who had a coming out without any problems, as long as they live in celibacy

Other employment in church(es): Yes

Partnership blessing possible: No

Comment: It's not allowed in an official service, but many priests are doing it.

In a questionnaire 80 % of the questioned priests say that they will say 'yes' when a lesbian/gay couple asks for a blessing ceremony.

Incidents that briefly describe the situation of L/G in the churches:

Catholic Church: There's a good atmosphere in parishes: lesbians and gays are appreciated.

There's a good atmosphere at the top: Catholic bishops are open for lesbian and gay people.

But in the official language of the Catholic Church it says that bishops have difficulties with the sexual aspect of lesbian and gay relationships.

Cardinal (Mgr. JOOS) said in an interview (in 2004!) that homosexuals are 'perverted' or 'people with huge problems'. Cardinal Danneels, president of the bishops in Belgium, has reacted by saying: 'Its not the viewpoint of the Catholic Bishop-Conference of Belgium!'

Part 3: Christian Lesbian/Gay Networks

All these groups are specifically for lesbian and gay Christians. At the time of writing, most of them have only male members.

Network name/contact address:

Homo & Geloof Nationaal, Tiberias
C. Meunierstraat 95/8, B 3000 Leuven
(National coordination)

Network name: Holebi-Pastores

Number of members: 50

Year of foundation: 1980

Web page/contact address:

Varkensmarkt 52/0, B 3590 Diepenbeek

holebipastores@hotmail.com

Network name: La Communauté du Christ Libérateur

Web page/contact address:

P.O. Box 104, B 1000 Brussels

ccl@ccl-be.net

Network name: Homo & Geloof Kempen, De Klaproos

Number of members: 10

Year of foundation: 1985?

Web page/contact address:

Goudvinkstraat 32, B 2260 Westerlo

Network name: Homo & Geloof Limburg

Christen, gewoon anders

Number of members: 10

Year of foundation: 1985?

Web page/contact address:

Kuringersteenweg 179, B 3500 Hasselt

info@holebilimburg.be

<http://www.holebilimburg.be>

Network name: Homo & Geloof Oost-Vlaanderen

Lieve Deugd - gelovige holebi's Gent

Number of members: 50

Year of foundation: 1985

Web page/contact address:

Kammerstraat 22, B 9000 Gent

lieve.deugd@advalvas.be

<http://surf.to/lieve.deugd>

Network name: Homo & Geloof Vlaams-Brabant

Gerust Geweten

Number of members: 20
Year of foundation: 1985
Web page/contact address:
gerustgeweten@hotmail.com

Network name Homo & Geloof West-Vlaanderen
Effeta

Number of members: 20
Year of foundation: 1985?
Web page/contact address:
PB 136, B 8000 Brugge 1

Questionnaire filled in by [REDACTED] *from* Holebi Pastores