

Celebrating Legal Gender Recognition Campaign

QUESTIONS

Tell us who you are, your name and your country of origin.

My name is Annette, I am transgender (male to female), my surgery was in 2022 and I live in Luxemburg, a small country in Western Europe.

We're going to focus on LGR and how you obtained it, and how that has changed your life. Later, we'll give you an opportunity to share any thoughts about other issues affecting trans people in your country.

Before you were able to change your identity documents, what challenges (if any) did you face by not having your identity documents that reflect who you are?

As soon as I launched my transition, legal gender recognition was one of my main goals, besides surgery. It was very important to me, to be officially named as "Annette", the girl's name I always felt comfortable with. And also the "M" on my personal documents had to be replaced by an "F". But as long as that had not been the case, I did not feel comfortable, it felt wrong, I was not myself. In the end, I couldn't stand my deadname anymore. When someone called me, even without knowing me being transgender, it felt like an insult and it made me sad.

Tell us about your experiences in being able to obtain legal gender recognition – how you were able to get your identity documents to reflect who you are?

Well, it was very easy for me, due to a new law from 2018. The government of Luxemburg made it possible to change name and sex in all official documents, quite easy and fast. I sent in my request, and only five months later, I had the legal confirmation from the administration of justice, who is in charge of it. It was almost a piece of cake, not one time I was questioned about my purpose. I just had to get plenty of different documents at the beginning, fill out some forms, write my own letter why I wanted to change name and gender, and that's it. Getting all the identity documents was easy too, since the gender recognition is based on a legal decision, signed by our minister of justice. I got all my documents changed within a few days. And I am very thankful for that.

(Follow up) Does the law or policy on legal gender recognition in your country make the process of changing your documents generally easy and accessible? What are the positive elements of that law?

As I have mentioned before, the general process of Legal Gender Recognition -request is extremely easy and fast. And yes, it is our government who is responsible for great tolerance towards lgbtq-people. You want Legal Gender Recognition? You inform yourself how to proceed, you get all the documents which you need, write a few words, and you go for it. No more psychiatric reports and legal approvals by any judges. Nowadays, Legal Gender Recognition is just a matter of yourself, and no one has the right to butt in.

Why is it important to you?

Personally, it was important to me, because it meant, that this part of my own transition did not cause any problems or delays on my way. And now, as I have finished transitioning and surgery, I take pleasure in helping other people who are in the same situation. And it pleases me to see how easy it is for them too. It increases the life quality of transgender people, and that makes me happy. And at the end, it just gives proof to the tolerance of an open minded nation and government.

What benefits have you received/ how has having an identity document that fully reflects 'you' enhanced your quality of life?

The very first benefit was just my own personal happiness. The feeling to be Annette, to feel free, the day I have received the letter with legal approval, was the happiest day in my life (only the day of my surgery felt even better) Oh yeah, I felt so vain those days...

And of course, it was legally justified, no one has the right to question this decision. And almost everywhere, I was accepted as Annette, as a woman, and by making all these positive experiences, I felt like the happiest woman on earth. It was like being born again. It had an immediate positive impact on everything in my life

In some countries trans people are not allowed to change their gender on their documents, what message do you have for those governments about why they should make it possible

Oh, I know very well what I really should tell them, but that wouldn't please their governments and therefore it wouldn't help trans people in those countries. I would say that also for politics, the enhancement of general tolerance within their own nation should be one of their main goals. Tolerance within a nation creates happiness, happiness creates willingness to contribute in prosperity, which could make possible to live as a nation with order and equal rights for everybody.

Any general comments you would like to share about your work on trans rights, or about the state of trans rights in your country/region?

Yes, after Legal Gender Recognition and sex reassignment surgery, it is one of my own goals to help other trans people. I think that I have the skills to deal with psychological elements to help those who really need someone to trust in, and due to my own experiences, I am fully aware of what to do, in order to help others to accomplish their transition and reach their goals.

Closing thoughts: What is your message to the world?

Well, my message is the following lines, written a long time ago, by a wise man...

*If there be righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character*

*if there be beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home*

*if there be harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nations*

*if there be order in the nations,
there will be peace in the world.*

Confucius