

Bi+ Equal 2026 Conference Highlights



29 July 2026 – Amsterdam

Welcome

On 29 July 2026, Bi+ Equal brought together bi+ activists, community organisers, researchers and supporters from across the pan-European region and beyond for a full day of exchange, discussion and community-building.

The conference programme combined research, activism, community organising, creative expression and peer support. Throughout the day, participants explored both the challenges facing bi+ communities and the opportunities for strengthening bi+ visibility, representation and cooperation across borders. We hope that you enjoy reading this report and either relive the day, or can catch up on Bi+ Equal. Enjoy!

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Opening Session

The Bi+ Equal Conference was opened by one of the Bi+ Equal founders **Soudeh Rade**, who welcomed participants and introduced the organisation, its origins and its ambitions for strengthening bi+ equality and cooperation across Europe.

The opening was followed by a speech by **Graeme Reid, United Nations Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**. In his remarks, Reid reflected on the importance of sustained activism and engagement with political and institutional decision-makers. He encouraged activists to remain visible, stay in dialogue with lawmakers and continue advocating for structural change, particularly at a time when LGBTIQ+ rights were increasingly under pressure in different parts of the world.

Following the speech, the new Board of Bi+ Equal was introduced to the audience. Through several rounds of questions, board members introduced themselves, their backgrounds and their motivations for contributing to Bi+ Equal. This also provided an opportunity to present the organisation's new leadership and its ambitions for the coming period.

The opening session therefore marked both the start of the conference and a new phase in the development of Bi+ Equal as a pan-European bi+ umbrella organisation.



Top to bottom, left to right: Soudeh Rade, Nadja Arontschik, Jace Ríos Rivera, Niek Rood, Barbara Oud, Graeme Reid, Aagje Ieven, Ieva Feldmane.

Session Round 1

The first parallel session round focused strongly on community-building, empowerment, resilience and the lived experiences of bi+ people.

One session, **Empowerment Formats for Bi+ Specific Life Situations: Insights from a Community-Led Meetup for Bi+ People in Hetero Facing Relationships**, explored empowerment formats specifically designed for bi+ people in hetero-facing or mixed-orientation relationships. Drawing on experiences from a community-led meetup in Berlin, participants discussed how spaces built around specific bi+ life situations could offer recognition, mutual support and empowerment that was not always available in broader LGBTQ+ spaces.

Another session, **Rethinking Normativity Through Bisexual Lived Experiences**, examined normativity through the lived experiences of bi+ university attending men (18-23) involved in so-called *bro culture*. The discussion considered how masculinity, social expectations and peer environments affected the process of recognising, understanding and disclosing a bi+ identity.

The programme also addressed the experiences of bi+ activists and communities working in hostile or high-risk contexts in the session **Rooted and Resistant: Bi+ Resilience Across Hostile Contexts**. Participants exchanged strategies around resilience, personal and collective safety, activism and solidarity, highlighting the very different political and social circumstances in which bi+ organising takes place.

In another workshop, participants contributed to the development of the **Sister Cities Network**, an initiative intended to connect LBTIQA+ and women's organisations in different European cities. The session invited participants to help shape how such partnerships could work in practice and how organisations could cooperate across borders to combat violence against women and non-binary people.

Alongside these sessions, the **Bi+ Equal Community Forum** created a dedicated space for participants to discuss priorities for the organisation's future. Through small-group discussions, community members were invited to contribute ideas and experiences related to advocacy, research, community-building and European cooperation. The forum helped connect Bi+ Equal's organisational development directly to the communities it aims to represent.



Lunch Break and meeting with Dutch Minister

There was more to munch on during the lunch break than food. **Judith Thielen, Dutch Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Equality** visited the conference. In a closed session there were three round tables each with a distinct theme to give the minister a broad insight into the pan-European and personal Bi+ Space.

The first round covered the personal experiences of bi+ people. How the monosexual norm influenced their lives and what they experience on a personal level as a bi+ person. Some of the topics mentioned were being more invisible in the media, not having examples of other bi+ people in their youth and facing erasure in mono-sexual spaces.

In the second round speakers from several countries including Cyprus, Belarus and The Netherlands explained how they shaped their activism, what hurdles they experience, and how important opportunities for coming together are to not lose motivation and get inspired by other fellow activists. Difficulties like obtaining a visa for non-EU citizens or receiving asylum as a bi+ person were emphasized. Country specific differences were shared and discussed what can be done at the EU-level to make sure that bi+ people are not disadvantaged further.

The last round addressed the need for bi+ advocacy. Through concrete numbers and examples the speakers illustrated how many people (e.g. 1,7 Million only in the Netherlands are bi+*) are affected by a lack of representation and proper support. The persistent underfunding for bi+ initiatives results in higher costs for states and public services, as they have to cover the consequences of insufficient inclusion, bi+ erasure, and inadequate support, including impacts on people's mental and physical health.

The minister was very attentive and asked good questions to deepen her insight and understanding of the bi+ community. After a group picture she joined lunch and talked to other activists as well. We were very happy that the minister could join us and hope that she will bring attention to bi+ on all levels she can influence.



Top to bottom, left to right: Reşat Şaban, Nadja Arontschik, Barbara Oud, Judith Tielen, Mireille de Ridder, Jantine van Lisdonk, Esther Wouters, Tijn de Jong, Elle Striewski, Soudeh Rade.

*<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2024/41/the-netherlands-has-2-7-million-lgbtqia-people>

Session Round 2

The second session round examined **age, biphobia, representation, sustainability and the political position of bi+ activism.**

The session **Too young to dare, too old to care? An intergenerational conversation about becoming bi+** brought together participants at different stages of life to discuss what it meant to become, identify as or understand oneself as bi+. The conversation challenged the assumption that there was one correct moment in life to recognise or disclose a bi+ identity. Instead, participants reflected on how identity, community and visibility could evolve throughout a person's life.

The session **The Architecture of Biphobia** approached biphobia from a structural perspective. Rather than treating individual experiences of prejudice as isolated incidents, the presentation explored the mechanisms through which biphobia continued to influence research, policy, activism and the everyday lives of bi+ people.

Bi+ experience was also explored through art. During the session **Between Invisibility and Hypersexualisation: Encountering Bisexual+ Experience through Art Installation** an installation combining film and sound addressed bi+ invisibility and hypersexualisation, by **Yola Kenyon**. The installation was focused on AFAB experiences. Participants were able to engage with the installation at their own pace and take part in informal reflection around the themes it raised.



Organisational sustainability formed another important part of the programme. In **From Survival to Sustainability**, activists and organisers from across Europe discussed the realities of building meaningful bi+ communities with very limited financial and human resources. The session addressed difficult questions about prioritisation, volunteer capacity, burnout and how organisations could remain effective when funding was scarce or absent.

The political position of bi+ activism within the wider LGBTI movement was discussed explicitly in **The Elephant in the Room: Bi Activism as a Challenge to the Lesbian/Gay Agenda**. Participants examined the tension between autonomous bi+ organising and cooperation within broader LGBTI movements. The discussion considered how bi+ movements could strengthen their own political voice while continuing to build strategic alliances around shared objectives.

Taken together, the second round moved beyond visibility alone and addressed the structures, institutions and movement dynamics that shaped the position of bi+ people and organisations.

Session Round 3

The final afternoon round placed particular emphasis on **research, intersectionality, inclusion, creativity and safer community spaces**.

The **American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB)** presented its history, mission and work in research, education and community-building. The session also created space for participants to provide ideas and feedback about the future role of research and educational initiatives in improving the position of bi+ people.

The intersection between neurodivergence and bi+ identity was explored in **Beyond Any Norm**. The session provided a dedicated safer space for neurodivergent bi+ participants, including people with experiences related to autism, ADHD, dyslexia and dyscalculia. Rather than treating these intersecting identities as sources of complexity that needed to be reduced, the session centred recognition, connection and collective strength.

Questions of inclusion within queer and feminist spaces were addressed directly in the session on **FLINTA and other ways bi+ people are excluded from safe spaces**. Participants shared examples of language use that could unintentionally or explicitly exclude bi+ people. Using the terminology FLINTA as an example, the discussion showed how continuous and sometimes unintentional bi+ erasure persists and how terminology is adapted and changed in different countries without further reflection on its implications for bi+ people. The discussion also focused on identifying practical alternatives and examples of more inclusive approaches from different national contexts.

Creative expression provided another way of exploring bi+ experience. During **Finding Your Voice**, participants used creative writing and spoken word to reflect on identity and storytelling. The workshop encouraged participants to develop confidence in expressing and sharing their own experiences.

A dedicated **Sharing Circle for trans Folks** provided an additional community space within the programme. The session contributed to the conference's broader aim of recognising the diversity within bi+ communities and ensuring that intersecting identities and experiences were represented.



The final session round demonstrated the breadth of the bi+ community and reinforced the importance of creating spaces in which different experiences could be discussed on their own terms.

Evening Programme and Closing

The conference day concluded with a screening of the Dutch documentary **Queer Enough**, followed by a discussion with its director **Annemarije Rus**.

The documentary followed three people who questioned whether they were sufficiently "queer" to belong within queer communities. This provided a recognisable starting point for a wider conversation about insecurity, belonging, bi+ identity and biphobia amongst the attendants. During the aftertalk, participants were invited to reflect on the themes of the film and on the pressures bi+ people could experience when their identities or relationships did not conform to stereotypical expectations of queerness.

The documentary and discussion provided a fitting conclusion to a day in which many sessions had returned to a common question: **how can bi+ people build communities in which they do not have to prove that they are queer enough, visible enough or politically convenient enough to belong?**

Across the whole conference day, over **150 participants** with **40+ nationalities** exchanged knowledge, built new connections and reflected on the future of bi+ organising. In **18 sessions** the programme demonstrated both the diversity of bi+ experiences and the need for stronger, sustainable and more autonomous bi+ structures at local, national and pan-European level.

For Bi+ Equal, the conference provided an important opportunity to connect its organisational development with the wider bi+ community and to strengthen the foundations for future pan-European cooperation. Bi+ Equal looks forward to welcoming the community again at next year's conference! See you there!



The conference has been made possible by:



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