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## WORLD news

### THE NETHERLANDS

Gay couples from other countries can get married in the Netherlands provided they have lived there for four months. The city of Amsterdam has said it thinks gay couples from the other 14 nations that are members of the European Union can come to Amsterdam and marry without establishing residency. Readers of *De Gay Krant* magazine are offering to assist gay couples from non-European Union nations in establishing a legal address in the Netherlands so they can get married here.

"If an American couple has a permanent address in Amsterdam, they can get married," publisher Henk Krol said. "*De Gay Krant*, in cooperation with some of our readers, is willing to provide American couples with addresses in Amsterdam. These foreigners have to prove that they are using the Amsterdam address for at least four months. During these months it is possible that the City Hall will ask them to come by. If this is asked, they have to show up within three weeks. American citizens need a permit to stay that long in the Netherlands, but it is rather easy for Americans to get that permit."

Anyone interested in this should e-mail [h.krol@gaykrant.nl](mailto:h.krol@gaykrant.nl).

The Netherlands opened regular marriage to gay people April 1. Amid an international media frenzy, Amsterdam Mayor Job Cohen married four same-sex couples at the stroke of midnight in the City Council chambers.

Evan Wolfson, director of the U.S. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund's Marriage Project, said the landmark action will reverberate across the planet. "Nongay people throughout the world, including in the U.S., will see that the sky does not fall when same-sex couples are included in the protections—and the public celebration—of civil marriage."

Special partnership laws giving registered gay couples many or almost all rights of matrimony have been passed in Denmark, Greenland, France, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Vermont. A few other nations, including Canada and Hungary, grant gays many rights of marriage under common-law marriage statutes. Portugal's gay partnership law is expected to take effect later this year.

### BELGIUM

Belgium plans to be the second country to let gays get married under the regular marriage laws, Health Minister Magda Alvoet said April 2.

Legislation will be introduced at the end of this month," she said. "The government considers that the right to marry is a constitutional right and that access to marriage is the only real guarantee that homosexual and heterosexual couples will be treated the same way."

### CANADA

Gay-bashers in Toronto are using Internet chat rooms and Web sites to arrange trysts with gay men whom they then assault.

"The culprits list a phony [cruising] location, and they then sit and wait," Police

Detective Doug O'Driscoie told the *Toronto Sun*. "The homosexuals are assaulted or robbed when they show up. People have to be leery of what's on the Net. What you read isn't always true."

### GERMANY

The German state of Bavaria will launch a constitutional court challenge to overturn a federal partnership law for gay couples. The measure, approved by Parliament last year, will take effect in August.

"We consider that this law is an attack on the protection of couples written in the constitution," Bavarian Justice Minister Manfred Weiss said. The law extends spousal rights to registered gay couples in areas such as inheritance, tenancy, health insurance, immigration, hospital visitation, child custody and alimony.

Meanwhile, a new Emnid Institute survey for Hamburger Media AG has found that 72 percent of straight women and 61 percent of straight men think gay marriage is a good or very good idea. Pollsters surveyed 15,000 people nationwide at the beginning of the year.

The survey also found that homosexuals are well-educated, wealthy and live in big cities. Two times as many gays as straights went to college, the poll revealed.

### UNITED KINGDOM

British Home Secretary Jack Straw said March 29 that the government will repeal Section 28, an 11-year-old law prohibiting cities from "intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality" or teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools. He called it a piece of "discrimination and prejudice."

"It has caused confusion in schools and local councils, inhibiting teachers who are unsure about their ability to provide information, guidance and support to young people who are, or think they may be, gay," Straw said. "It undermines our commitment to fair treatment for all irrespective of their sexuality."

Scotland's newly created Parliament repealed the U.K.-wide law June 21, 2000.

Britain's largest toy retailer, Woolworths, has banned an Eminem doll because it doesn't fit the store's image.

"The visual impact didn't fit with our family environment," a spokeswoman told Reuters. "Having it around a Barbie doll, for example, didn't feel right."

Only queers  
play with  
dolls, right?

