

22-9-2017

Action urinating in public urinals for women definitely going ahead



ACTIE #ZEIKWIJF

The Action Group Zeikwijven! is organising the First National Public Urinal Urinating Day on Saturday 23rd September. In a nutshell Action Zeikwijf #actiezeikwijf. A 'zeikwijf' is a Dutch word which literally means a woman who is urinating. It's usually used to mean a nag. This Saturday, members of the action group will be ready for a tongue in cheek action at public urinals in towns and villages throughout the Netherlands. They want to prove that it isn't possible for women to urinate in a decent, hygienic and dignified manner in a public urinal designed for men. This is aimed at gaining attention for the lack of public toilet facilities for women.

Women from across the country are being invited to demonstrate the (im)possibilities of urinating in a public urinal built for men, in photos or on film and to share these on social media with the hashtag #zeikwijf or #actiezeikwijf.

The photos will be offered to Jet Bussemaker, the Dutch minister for Education, Culture and Science, and responsible for emancipation issues, at a later stage, along with the petition 'Urination Equality in the Netherlands'. This has been organised after, earlier this week, Geerte Piening was found guilty of public urination at a location where no public urinal for women could be found for miles around.

Amsterdam Centre has 35 permanent public urinals compared to 3 public toilets for women. At weekends, the situation becomes even more skewed as temporary public urinals are placed to reduce public nuisance from men urinating in public. In the end, Piening received a fine of 90 euros, because she could 'also have urinated in a public urinal'. This raised questions with Cathelijne Hornstra, founder of the Facebook page 'urinoirplassen voor vrouwen' (public urinal urinating for women). Initially, she organised a small event in Amsterdam, but following considerable attention in the national and international media, she decided, with a group of like-minded people, to take the protest to a national level.

Fact sheet

Background

Court judgement on Geerte Piening, woman urinating in public.

In May 2015, following a night out she needed to urinate. The bars and cafés were all closed, so she decided she would have to urinate outside in an alley near the Leidseplein, in central Amsterdam. She was fined for public urination and decided to let the case come before the court, because there are facilities for men, so that they do not have to urinate publicly. These facilities are lacking for women.

Arguments of the judge and the public prosecutor:

- women do not urinate in public, so there do not need to be any facilities provided for them,
- the woman could reasonably be expected to realise that she needed to urinate before she left the bar or café,
- comparison with littering: if there is no rubbish bin nearby, you would not throw your rubbish on the ground,
- the woman could have made use of the public urinal for men “because it may not be pleasant, but it is possible”,
- according to the judge, the lack of facilities did not mean that the fine should be lower for women than for men because “that would be discrimination”.

In addition, a comment was made that nobody has the right to a public toilet and that these have been provided for men to reduce public nuisance, as they are notorious for urinating in public.

Reaction

Initially, Cathelijne Hornstra set up a Facebook event for Friday 22nd September so that some women could experiment with urinating in a public urinal. The interest for taking part was so enormous, that the initial plans for the event proved impossible.

The enormous interest shows that women are fed up of having no public toilet facilities, in comparison with men. In addition, the arguments used by the judge and the public prosecutor can be seen as both legally as well as realistically bizarre. A great many women, as well as men, are angry about this.

Action

Saturday September 23rd is hereby declared

National Public Urinal Urination Day for Women

What is planned?

The women of the Netherlands are called upon to attempt to urinate in a public urinal. Creativity is the order of the day. Take a photo or film and share it via social media with hashtag **#zeikwif** or **#actiezeikwif**.

Women who already understand the impossibility of urinating in a public urinal, are requested to take a creative, angry, playful or otherwise striking photo at/on/in/next to a public urinal.

In addition, a website will be opened: www.actiezeikwif.nl. This is expected to go online on September 22nd. Until then, as well as afterwards, news about the event will be posted on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/146662185938347>

Photos shared with the hashtag #zeikwif will be published on the website. A professional jury is being assembled to judge these. The winner will be invited to accompany the action group to offer the photos to Jet Bussemaker.

At the same time, people supporting Geerte Piening have set up a petition 'Plasgelijkheid in Nederland' (urination equality in the Netherlands) for more public toilets for women. This petition will receive extensive attention on the website.

Aims

The aims of the National Action Day and the petition are:

- drawing attention to the issue of lack of public toilets for women,
- asking for recognition of this problem,
- asking local councils to provide more public toilet facilities for women,
- asking the government, specifically the Minister responsible for emancipation issues, Jet Bussemaker, to reject this unacceptable form of inequality between men and women and to support the provision of facilities for women.