


French Court Rules Gay Adoption Violates Public Policy

In two judgments of June 7th, 2012, the French Supreme Court for private and criminal matters (*Cour de cassation*) ruled that foreign judgments allowing adoption by a same sex couple were contrary to French public policy. 

In the first case, the couple was composed of two men, one French and one Canadian, who had lived together in Montreal since 1997 and had welcomed in 2005 a three year old. They had obtained an adoption order from a Quebec court in 2009.

In the second case, the couple was composed of two men, one French and one British, who lived in the United Kingdom. In 2008, an English court had issued an adoption order for a 10 year old.

Both couples sought recognition of the relevant adoption judgment in France so that they could appear as the parents of the child on French registries. The lower courts had granted recognition. The *Cour de cassation* reversed, and ruled that the foreign judgments violated French public policy.

Attendu qu'est contraire à un principe essentiel du droit français de la filiation, la reconnaissance en France d'une décision étrangère dont la transcription sur les registres de l'état civil français, valant acte de naissance, emporte inscription d'un enfant comme né de deux parents du même sexe

In substance, the Court held that a fundamental principle of French law prohibited that French registries provide that a child had parents of the same sex. An important factor was that the foreign judgments were perceived as cutting the filiation relationship between the child and his biological parents. This suggests that incomplete adoption would not raise the same issue.

The conciliation of these decisions with a previous one of 2010 which had recognised a foreign gay adoption will be an interesting exercise for French scholars.