

Out and About: annual Dublin Gay Pride parade attracts almost 10,000

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A celebration of diversity with an international theme marked this year's Dublin Gay Pride, which attracted almost 10,000 people on Saturday.

The parade featured revellers on foot, floats and rollerblades and a sea of multi-coloured flags and umbrellas, which started out from the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square north.

The alternative Miss Ireland float and the wedding bus float gained the most attention as the parade made its way down O'Connell Street, through the city centre, before arriving at the Civic Offices amphitheatre at Wood Quay for a free open-air concert.

Dance and pop music blared from the float speakers as men and women dressed in various attire from sailor suits to drag queen costumes marched and danced along.

Leading the parade was a group of people from countries worldwide waving international flags.

Members of Free! magazine carried a 240ft gay flag, which had been made for the occasion.

"We're doing more than painting the town red," said a leather-clad man. "We're painting it multi-coloured."

Eoin Collins, director of policy with Gay Lesbian Equality Network (Glen), said the celebration was about "one more community having fun".

"It's a visible campaign for equality. We're still not totally free. Gay people still sometimes can't walk down the street holding hands. This parade is about strength in numbers. It's empowering, for one day we get to see what it's like to be straight," he added.

"Stop queer bashing" and "Stop hate crimes" read two of the placards carried by members of the peer-education project, Johnny, which promotes safe sex for gay and bisexual men.