

ABSTRACT

Before the entry into force of the law instituting the Civil Solidarity Pact (Pacs Law), there were two manners of living as a couple : marriage and cohabitation. The former is the legal status for heterosexual couples, but this status was felt to be no longer as important as in the past. The latter was permitted for heterosexual couples but it did not allow the same rights and duties. In addition, the appearance of the AIDS was a cause of crisis, in particular for homosexual couples. This phenomena led to a demand for legal and social recognition of homosexual couples as well as unmarried heterosexual couples.

In 1999, law 99-944 of November 15th relating to Civil Solidarity Pact was enacted. The Pacs Law was developed through the pressure of several groups : the homosexual mouvement, associations fighting against AIDS, mass media and public opinion, political currents and European influence. This law is a legal status offered to the couples having a joint project of life. It is a contract which makes it possible to organise the common life of these two people. The possibility is permitted for both heterosexual couples and homosexual couples.

Since the implementation of this law, several opinions were appeared, in particular the improved recognition of homosexual couples in legal and social status. Moreover, the statistics showing an increase in the number of couples living under the Pacs Law indicate the success of the law. However, certain problems remain : the absence of statistical breakdown into groups, the delays in adopting a tax status equal to married couples, the rights of foreigners to stay in France, and the status of children.