



European  
Commission

# Advancing LGBTI equality

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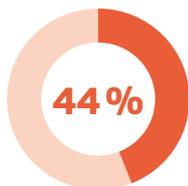
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The European Commission is fully committed to combating discrimination against LGBTI people. This factsheet provides data on the perception of LGBTI equality in the EU and examples of policy areas in which the Commission mainstreams equality for LGBTI people across the European Union.

## CURRENT SITUATION

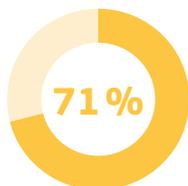
What is the general view on LGBTI people across the EU according to the Eurobarometer (2015)?



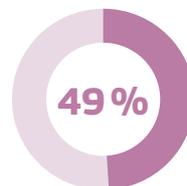
of EU citizens feel comfortable with the idea of **one of their children being in a relationship with a person of the same sex**



of EU citizens feel comfortable with the idea of a **gay, lesbian or bisexual person being in the highest elected political position**

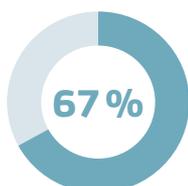


of EU citizens agree that **gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people**

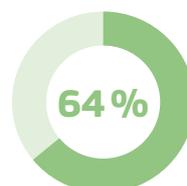


of EU citizens feel comfortable with **gay couples showing affection in public** (e.g. kissing or holding hands), compared to 72 % for heterosexual couples

While **91 %** of respondents had heard negative comments or seen negative conduct towards a schoolmate who was perceived to be LGBTI (EU LGBT Survey, FRA, 2013), the Eurobarometer 2015 showed that:



of EU citizens agree that **school lessons and material should include information about diversity in terms of sexual orientation**



of EU citizens agree that **school lessons and material should include information about diversity in terms of gender identity**

## WHAT DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION DO TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTI PEOPLE?

Discrimination against LGBTI people in the EU is wide-spread. To tackle this issue, and as a response to a resolution from the European Parliament in 2014<sup>(1)</sup> and a joint call from Member States, the Commission developed the *List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality*<sup>(2)</sup>. The actions outlined in this list cover all the main policy areas; effectively aiming to mainstream LGBTI equality. The Commission has committed to regularly reporting on the implementation of the actions.

**Mainstreaming, in addition to targeted actions**, ensures that actions to combat discrimination are not ‘stand-alone’ actions, but are developed and integrated within other relevant policy areas. Including them in the regular policy processes ensures a greater impact of the actions and more sustainable outcomes to advance LGBTI equality. This factsheet describes why certain actions in a number of key policy areas are important for LGBTI people and gives **concrete examples** of the Commission’s work and efforts to advance LGBTI equality.

### Non-discrimination

Millions of LGBTI people in the EU are not protected against discrimination outside the area of employment. While discrimination based on sexual orientation is prohibited in the workplace at EU level, LGBTI people remain vulnerable to unequal treatment in many other areas. The European Commission counts on the European legislator to adopt the proposed Equal Treatment Directive that would grant protection against discrimination in other areas besides employment, such as in health, education and housing.

### Awareness raising:

#### We All Share the Same Dream

Awareness raising campaigns are necessary to inform people about the issues and challenges LGBTI people face, and to underline that they enjoy the same fundamental rights as the rest of society. Through the ‘We All Share the Same Dream’ campaign, the Commission tries to bring out the things that unite us rather than divide us, and underlines that hopes and dreams are universal to us all.

### Data collection

To be able to combat inequality it is important to understand the phenomenon and gather facts about it. The Commission is working on methodologies for the collection of non-personalised equality data, which would have a beneficial impact on the efforts to advance equality for LGBTI people. The latest information collected on LGBTI equality in the EU, include the Commission’s Eurobarometer on Non-Discrimination (2015), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ LGBT Survey (2013) and more recently the revised version of the European handbook on equality data (2016).

### Health

Many LGBTI people experience unequal treatment when trying to access healthcare, and the specific healthcare needs of LGBTI people are often not met. To counter this discrimination, the Commission started the pilot project ‘Health4LGBTI: Reducing health inequalities experienced by LGBTI people’.

### Education

The bullying of LGBTI people in education can result in students experiencing anxiety, depression and dropping out of school. Through the Paris Declaration, EU Education Ministers agreed to step up social inclusion, tolerance and non-discrimination through education. The Commission also published two reports on the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, including LGBTI people in educational settings.

<sup>(1)</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2014-0009+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>(2)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti\\_actionlist\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/lgbti_actionlist_en.pdf)

## Hate speech/Hate crime

Homo- and transphobic hate speech and hate crimes are an attack on a person's dignity which affects the victim's enjoyment of their fundamental rights. It affects not only the victims and the community which they belong to, or are perceived to belong to, but also society as a whole, by undermining the basic values of non-discrimination and tolerance. The 'High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance' aims to foster discussions, exchange best practices and develop informal guidance on how to better prevent and counter hate crime and speech in the EU, including against LGBTI people.

## Diversity in the workplace

LGBTI people often suffer from discrimination in the workplace, which can result in them leaving the workplace and which can negatively affect business. The Commission ensures that the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78 prohibiting discrimination in employment is correctly transposed into national law. Moreover, the Commission also tackles discrimination through diversity. It encourages employers to sign the Diversity Charter, which boosts the development of diversity policies in companies and the public sector. Currently there are Diversity Charters in 17 Member States.

## Enlargement and neighbouring countries

The Commission assists candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership in adopting laws and policies to protect the rights of LGBTI people. The Commission also monitors and supports the development of legal and policy tools to ensure non-discrimination and engages in Human Rights Dialogues with certain neighbourhood countries.

## Foreign policies and third countries

Despite some recent progress in some countries, homosexuality is still criminalised in more than 70 countries. In many places LGBTI persons face daily discrimination and acts of violence, which often are not investigated. The Commission and the European External Action Service defend and promote the rights of LGBTI people outside the EU by raising this topic during Human Rights Dialogues and other political engagements with partner countries. They also support local organisations in third countries who are fighting discrimination against LGBTI people. In 2016, the EU became a signatory of the 'International Coalition for Equal Rights Worldwide for LGBTI People'.

## Asylum

In some countries, LGBTI people are persecuted because of their identity, which often forces them to seek asylum in other countries. The Commission recently proposed to strengthen the rules for addressing the specific needs of vulnerable asylum seekers (including LGBTI people) in relation to their reception and in asylum procedures.

## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

The actions outlined in this factsheet can also be found in more detail in the recently published *Annual Report 2016 on the List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality* **here** <sup>(3)</sup>. For more information on the 'We All Share the Same Dream' campaign, **click here** <sup>(4)</sup>.

 [ec.europa.eu/lgbti](http://ec.europa.eu/lgbti)

 [#EU4LGBTI](https://twitter.com/EU4LGBTI)

<sup>(3)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc\\_id=42903](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=42903)

<sup>(4)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/orientation/awareness-raising/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/orientation/awareness-raising/index_en.htm)