European Commission

Eurobarometer on Discrimination 2015:

Social acceptance and perceptions on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

Factsheet | **September 2015**

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The European Commission is fully committed to combatting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Improving social acceptance, fighting prejudice and promoting the benefits of diversity in an increasingly diverse society are key objectives of the EU.

The Eurobarometer survey conducted in June 2015 amongst 28 000 EU citizens included a number of specific questions focused on LGBT ([1]) persons. **A better understanding of citizens' views and perceptions on groups at risk of discrimination is crucial for both the Commission and the Member States to develop effective equality policies.**

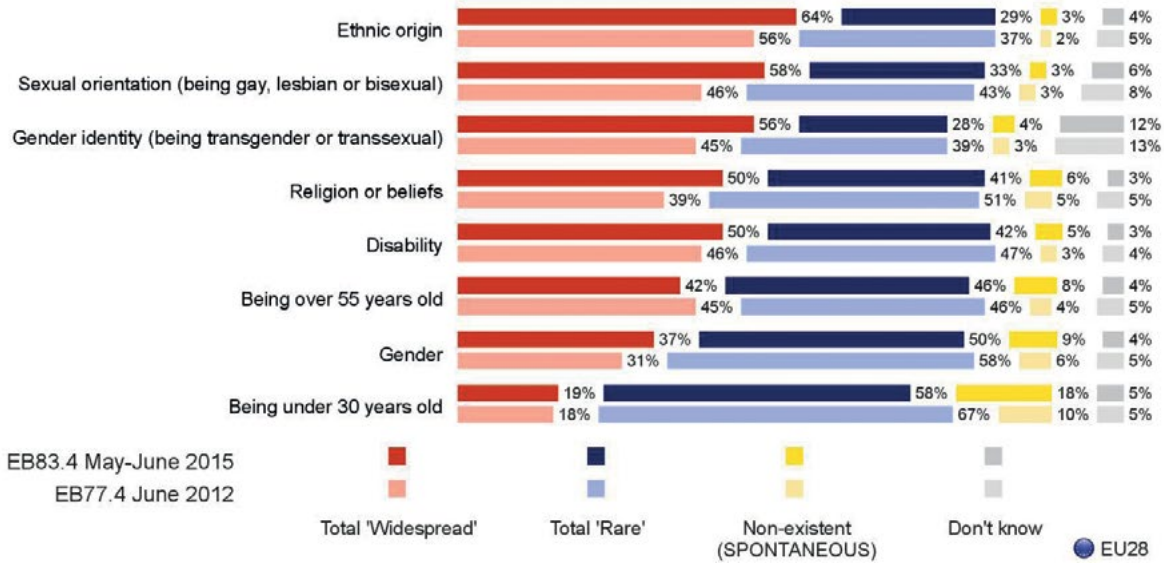
There are great variations between Member States in terms of social acceptance. Despite of that, **a large majority of EU citizens support policies and legislation to ensure LGBT-Equality and combatting discrimination.**

1. Perceptions of LGBT discrimination

- LGBT discrimination is perceived as more widespread than discrimination on the grounds of religion, age, disability and gender.
- 58 % of Europeans believe that discrimination based on sexual orientation is widespread (12 percentage points higher than in 2012).
- 56 % of Europeans believe that discrimination based on gender identity is widespread (11 percentage points higher than in 2012).

([1]) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

QC1. For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? Discrimination on the basis of...

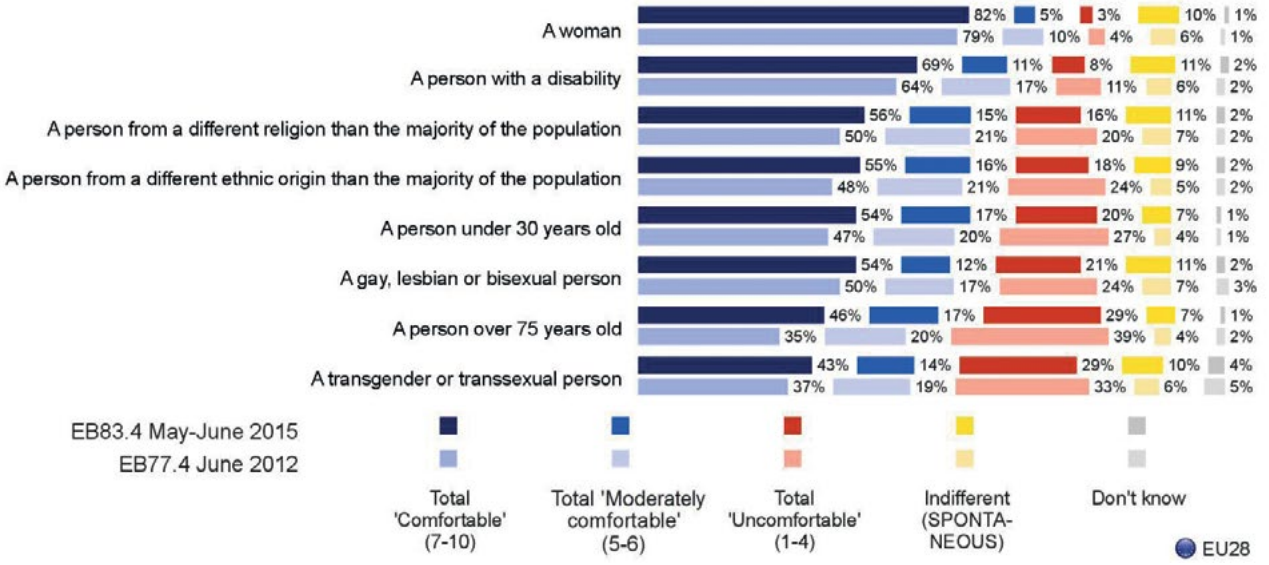


2. Social acceptance of LGBT people in political positions

- 65 % of respondents would feel at ease (54 % comfortable, 11 % indifferent) with a gay, lesbian or bisexual person in the highest elected political position; 21 % said they would feel uncomfortable.

- 53 % of respondents would feel at ease (43 % comfortable, 10 % indifferent) with a transgender or transsexual person in the highest elected political position, 29 % would feel uncomfortable.

QC4. And using a scale from 1 to 10, please tell me how you would feel about having a person from each of the following groups in the highest elected political position in (OUR COUNTRY). '1' means that you would feel "not at all comfortable" and '10' that you would feel "totally comfortable".

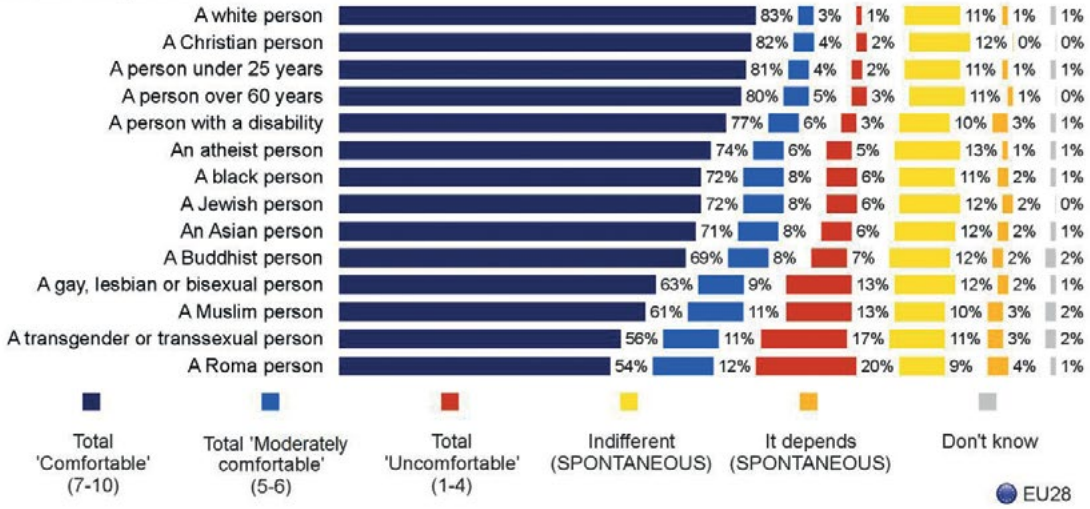


3. Social acceptance of LGBT people at the workplace

- 75 % of the respondents report to be at ease (63 % comfortable, 12 % indifferent) with a gay, lesbian or bisexual colleague. National percentages range from 94 % to 21 %.

- 67 % would be at ease (56 % comfortable, 11 % indifferent) if one of their colleagues at work was a transgender or transsexual person. National percentages range from 88 % to 15 %.

QC13. Regardless of whether you are actually working or not, please tell me, using a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable you would feel if one of your colleagues at work belonged to each of the following groups? '1' means that you would feel, "not at all comfortable" and '10' that you would feel "totally comfortable".

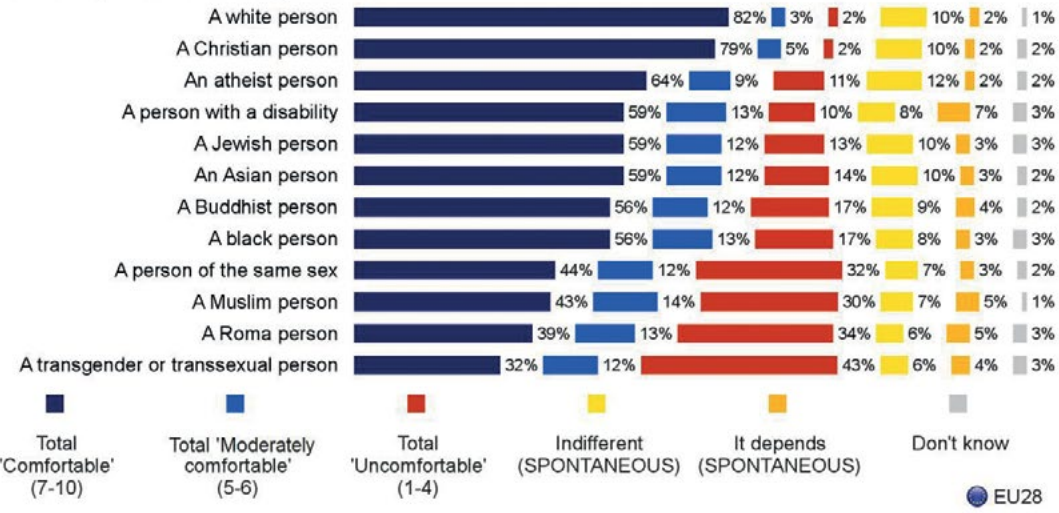


4. Social acceptance of LGBT people in closest circles

- 51 % of Europeans would feel at ease (44 % comfortable, 7 % indifferent) if one of their adult sons or daughters was in a relationship with someone of the same sex. National percentages range from 80 % to 7 %.

- 38 % of Europeans would feel at ease (32 % comfortable, 6 % indifferent) if one of their adult sons or daughters was in a relationship with a transgender person. National percentages range from 66 % to 5 %.

QC14. Regardless of whether you have children or not, please tell me, using a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable you would feel if one of your children was in a love relationship with a person from each of the following groups. '1' means that you would feel, "not at all comfortable" and '10' that you would feel "totally comfortable".

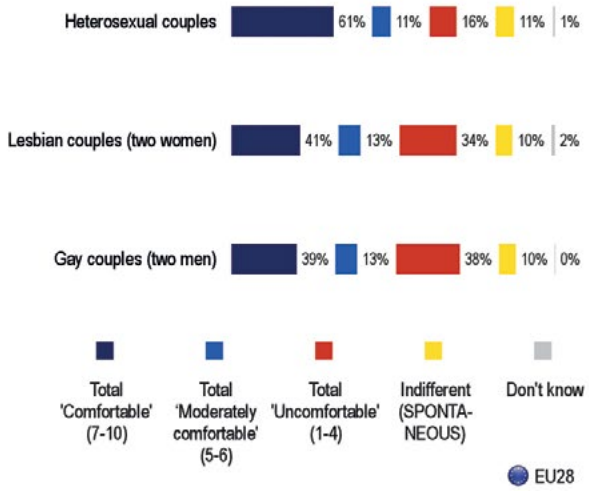


5. Attitudes towards same-sex couples showing affection in public

- 72 % of respondents would be at ease with heterosexual couples showing affection in public. The proportion is lower with regards to gay couples (49 %) and lesbian couples (51 %). 38 % of respondents would be uncomfortable with gay couples showing affection in public, 34 % for lesbian couples. The percentage for heterosexual couples is 16 %.

- Again, there are considerable variations between countries. While the differences are limited, in all Member States the level of comfort is higher for lesbian couples than for gay couples.

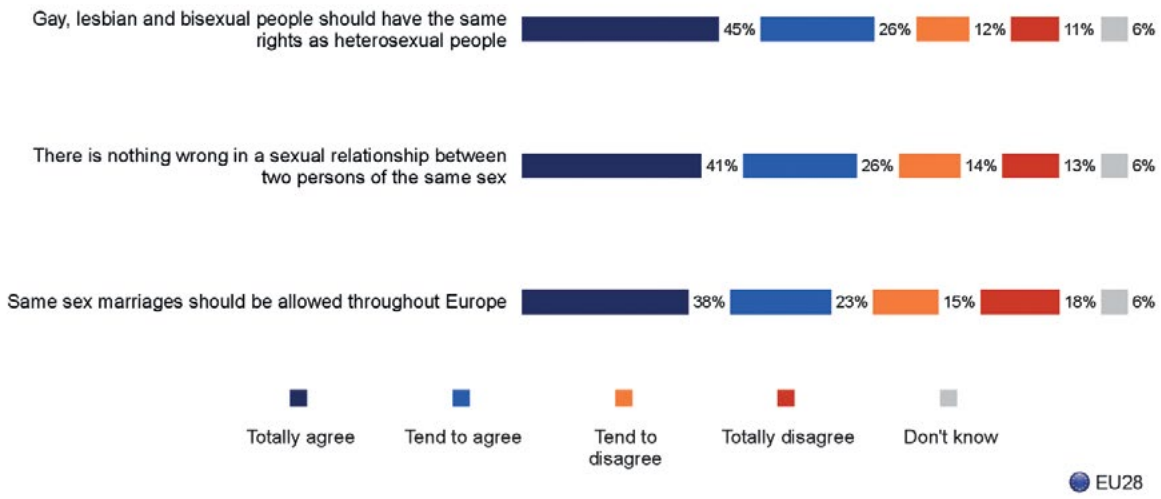
QC18. Using a scale from 1 to 10, please tell me how comfortable you would feel with people in each of the following groups showing affection in public (e.g. kissing or holding hands). '1' means that you would feel, "not at all comfortable" and '10' that you would feel "totally comfortable".



6. Citizens' views on same-sex couples rights

- A large majority (71 %) of Europeans agrees that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people. 61 % think that same sex marriages should be allowed throughout Europe.

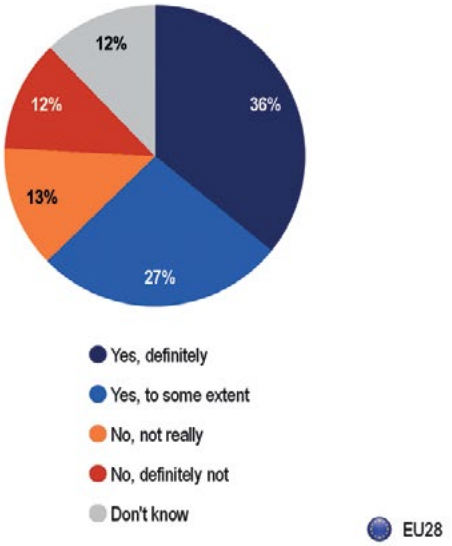
QC16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



7. Citizens' views on legal gender recognition

- A majority (63 %) believes that transgender people should be allowed to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity. In 19 Member States there is a majority in favour of this.is a majority in favour of this.

QC19. Do you think that transgender or transsexual persons should be able to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity?



8. Other insights from the Eurobarometer relevant for LGBT policies

- 62 % of Europeans think that new measures should be introduced to raise the level of protection for groups at risk of discrimination.

- Respondents feel that diversity is sufficiently reflected in the media in terms of sexual orientation (58 %) and gender identity (41 %).

- 28 % of respondents believe that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is likely to lead to disadvantages in recruitment practices. Being transgender is likely to lead to disadvantages according to 34 %.

- 42 % of European workers feel that enough is being done to promote diversity in their workplace in relation to sexual orientation, 35 % think this is not the case. 33 % of European workers feel that enough is being done to promote diversity in their workplace in relation to sexual orientation, 40 % think the contrary.

- 63 % expressed support for providing personal details on an anonymous basis on their sexual orientation if it could help to combat discrimination in their country.

- A majority of respondents agree that school lessons and material should include information about diversity in terms of sexual orientation (67 %) and gender identity (64 %); in each case, 27 % and 29 % respectively disagree.

- Social circles of Europeans are steadily becoming more diverse. 47 % of respondents have gay, lesbian or bisexual friends or acquaintances (+6 percentage points since 2012), and 9 % have transgender or transsexual friends or acquaintances (+2 percentage points since 2012)

- Experienced discrimination [2]: Almost one in three (32 %) of self-identified LGBT members report discrimination the basis of sexual orientation.

[2] WARNING: only 2 % of the respondents (around 550 in total) identified themselves as LGBT. Given the small size of this sample, interpretations on experienced discrimination might not be sufficiently representative and need to be made with extreme caution. Detailed data on LGBTI experienced discrimination can be found at the latest FRA survey on this topic (2013) (http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/eu-lgbt-survey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-survey-results).

Full report and country factsheets in national languages can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077