

A milestone: European Commission publishes the first ever EU LGBTIQ Strategy

Today, on the 12th of November 2020 the European Commission has published the first ever EU LGBTIQ strategy. It is the first policy framework specifically combatting discrimination against LGBTIQ people on EU level. The LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025 includes a comprehensive set of action points to tackle discrimination of LGBTIQ people, ensure their safety, build LGBTIQ inclusive societies and leading the call for LGBTIQ Equality around the world. A particular strong focus is put on protecting and improving the situation for intersex people (as well as trans and non-binary people). The strategy also specifically addresses harmful practices such as non-vital surgery and medical intervention on intersex infants and adolescents without their personal and fully informed consent (intersex genital mutilation).

“The first ever European Commission LGBTIQ strategy is a milestone for the EU and a proof of what political will can achieve”, says Dan Christian Ghattas, Executive Director of OII Europe. “This action plan not only addresses the inequalities and challenges affecting LGBTIQ people, but it pays particular attention to the diversity of LGBTIQ people’s needs and to the most vulnerable individuals within this group, who are among the least accepted groups in society and generally experience more discrimination and violence: intersex, trans and non-binary people. It will be critical for improving the access to fundamental rights for LGBTIQ people.”

“We particularly congratulate the European Commission for explicitly addressing the impact of harmful practices such as non-vital surgery and medical intervention on intersex infants and adolescents without their personal and fully informed consent (intersex genital mutilation)”, adds Miriam van der Have, Co-Chair of OII Europe, “and for committing to action points that will help to work towards ending this practices.”

“In the past years OII Europe has worked hard to raise awareness about the human rights breaches intersex people face”, continues Kitty Anderson, Co-Chair of OII Europe. “As Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli just stated in today’s EC press conference: ‘This Strategy is about humanity.’ With this Strategy the European Commission has firmly committed to protecting intersex people and all LGBTIQ people.”

Action points presented by the LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025 include the commitment of the European Commission to

- ensuring synergy in the implementation of the LGBTIQ equality strategy and the EU action plan on integration and inclusion
- examining how non-binary, intersex and queer people can be better protected against discrimination and how to avoid discrimination and stigmatisation in access to health services
- including an intersectional perspective in the Recommendation on harmful practices against women and girls announced in the Gender equality strategy 2020-2025.
- gathering evidence regarding the barriers to full equality experienced in employment, but also in other areas, such as social protection. This work will feed into guidance for Member States and businesses on enhancing trans and intersex people’s participation in the labour market.

- promoting the use of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)[1] to improve the socio-economic position of the most marginalised LGBTIQ people and develop initiatives focusing on specific groups, such as the gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex subgroups.
- proposing by 2022 any legislation following up to the upcoming report on the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive, in particular to strengthen the role of equality bodies;
- ensuring appropriate protection of vulnerable (including LGBTIQ) applicants in the context of the common European asylum system and its reform;
- ensuring support for LGBTIQ equality in action under the Asylum and Migration Fund;
- supporting health research of relevance to LGBTIQ people, including the trans and intersex communities, through Horizon Europe.
- presenting an initiative in 2021 to extend the list of ‘EU crimes’ (Article 83 TFEU) to cover hate crime and hate speech, including when targeted at LGBTIQ people;
- providing funding opportunities for initiatives that aim to combat hate crime, hate speech, violence and harmful practices against LGBTIQ people (‘Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values’ programme) and promote the rights of victims of crime, including LGBTIQ people (‘Justice’ programme);
- tabling a Recommendation on the prevention of harmful practices against women and girls.

The European Commission also commits to supporting Member States in

- ensuring legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics in various areas;
- improving safe and inclusive education for LGBTIQ children and youth;
- addressing the specific needs of LGBTIQ applicants for international protection while ensuring safe reception, detention and accommodation conditions;
- improving the training of protection officers and interpreters dealing with asylum claims by LGBTIQ people.
- fostering Member States’ exchange of good practice on ending harmful medical practices
- exchange best practice on protection against hate speech and hate crime against LGBTIQ people;
- promote a safe and supportive environment for LGBTIQ victims of crime;
- improve training and capacity-building for law enforcement to better identify and record LGBTIQ-phobic bias and increase crime reporting.

#EU4LGBTIQ #UnionOfEquality

The European Commission press release on the LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en

The LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025 download (PDF):

https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en

The LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025 Factsheet in 12 languages:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025-factsheet_en