



TRANS PEOPLE FAST FACTS

How many are there? There are no official statistics, but 1% of a representative EU-wide survey reported trans-related discrimination (Eurobarometer, 2015), indicating that up to 5 million trans people may be living in the European Union.

WHO ARE TRANS PEOPLE?

Transgender or **trans people** have a **gender identity** or gender expression that is different than the gender assigned at birth. Some trans people – but not all – take legal, social, and/or medical steps to transition, that is, express their inner gender identity. More than two thirds of trans people do not identify in the gender binary, in other words, not exclusively as female or male (Fundamental Rights Agency, 2014,). This is why **it is usually better to refer to “gender equality” rather than “equality between women and men”.**

Gender identity refers to each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. (EU External Action Service, LGBTI Guidelines, 2013)

WHAT ISSUES DO TRANS PEOPLE FACE?

In our societies a person is perceived as either “male” or “female” – two mutually exclusive categories. As a result, trans people and all those who transgress gender norms are likely to experience stigmatisation and discrimination. Violence, being declared mentally ill, and social exclusion fuel one another. Public measures that explicitly include trans people, however, can have a positive impact (FRA, 2014).

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FACTS

ON TRANSGENDER RIGHTS
AND GENDER EQUALITY

The women's rights movement and the trans movement face a climate of conservative backlash in Europe. These 10 facts are a call for mutual solidarity between these movements. Here is why trans rights are a gender equality issue and why trans activists need to support women's rights.

1 HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE!

Despite the women's rights movement and the trans movement having won recognition for some key concerns, they are still far from having full access to their rights.

2 PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy is the root cause for both misogyny and transphobia: gender differences are used to back a system of male supremacy with women, trans, and gender-non-conforming people in inferior positions. The trans community and the women's rights movements are fighting the violent consequences of disobeying gender norms and questioning predetermined gender roles.

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INTERSECTIONALITY

As with women, trans people form a diverse group: various categories such as race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, class, or gender interrelate and lead to specific experiences of inequality. To provide a concrete example, as a group, trans women of colour are directly impacted not only by transphobia, but also by racism and sexism, which manifests itself in high levels of violence against them. Globally, the majority of reported murdered trans people are trans women of colour. In comparison, white trans people, and many trans men, have certain privileges (for being white; for being read as male) that trans women of colour do not, although transphobia also puts them at risk of violence and discrimination.

The women's rights movement is similarly shaped by diverse realities, with for example white women enjoying certain privileges that women of colour do not, and middle class women enjoying privileges that working class women do not.

4 GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes reduce women and trans people often to being the punch line of a joke, over-sexualize them, and devalue their personalities. Trans people are often expected to overtly comply with gender stereotypes, e.g. permission for legal or medical transitioning might hinge on wearing a skirt/ make-up (for a trans woman), being heterosexual etc. Women, men, and all other gender identities suffer from societal taboos, thus limiting everyone's exploration of individual and diverse gender expressions or gender roles.

5 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence is a burning issue for the women's right movement and the trans movement as they fight against individuals being singled out and attacked for their gender, gender identity, or expression: one in three women and 34% of trans people in the EU have been victims of violence (FRA, 2014). Trans women are "punished" for being women (and for "giving up" being a man), while trans men might be more vulnerable to domestic and sexual abuse. Being poor and/or a young trans person further increases the risk for a violent attack. Underreporting, shame, and dependence on the attacker are commonly shared concerns for women and trans people alike. Many women and trans people who are affected by gender-based violence cannot access safe spaces, shelters, or dedicated services. Often, these structures are under-resourced and not prepared to also serve trans persons. Additionally, public awareness, statistics, law enforcement, and prevention programs are too scarce, restricted, or overstrained.

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BODILY INTEGRITY AND SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

While the women's rights movement and the trans movement fight for individuals to be able to make their own decisions, their bodies remain under-served and over-policed: 23 states in Europe require a trans person to be sterilised before recognising their gender identity. Gender affirming medical treatment often depends on unwanted treatment, such as sterilisation, other surgical interventions, hormone treatment, or psychotherapy. Properly resourced family planning and safe abortion services are key in reducing pregnancy-related mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health (World Health Organisation, 2012).

7 EMPLOYMENT

Did you know the average hourly wage of a trans woman drops by 20% after coming out? The structural devaluation of women's work (gender pay gap) culminates in a gender identity pay gap for trans women (Geijtenbeek, Plug, 2015). Women and trans people encounter the glass ceiling on their way to higher ranking positions; their gender is problematised and their qualifications are overlooked. Being fired or discriminated against when pregnant and/or transitioning hits a person when they are often most vulnerable.

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LOCKED-UP POTENTIAL

The women's right movement has been fighting hard to end patronisation based on gender, as well as having legal and mental capacities taken away from women. Trans people are wrongly declared as mentally ill by the World Health Organisation, similar to how 'hysteria' or 'homosexuality' diagnoses were used to pathologise and control women.

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POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Women's rights organisations have been calling out the barriers many women encounter when trying to progress through the political hierarchy. 29% of the EU population would not be comfortable with a trans identified head of state. One of the results of lacking political representation is that allocated financial resources remain scarce for both groups.

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TRANS EQUALITY IS NOT A THREAT TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Accepting and supporting human rights for trans people does not eradicate the specific existence or experience of women and their struggle for equality. On the contrary, greater gender diversity benefits all by allowing every-one to explore and define their gendered identity more individually. It is likewise important that the trans rights movement supports full equality for all women.