

Joint Statement: Paving the way for an equality-centred policy cycle

[article, non-discrimination](#)

Ursula von der Leyen has presented the political guidelines for the EU Commission for the term 2024-2029. It includes the commitment to a renewed LGBTIQ Equality Strategy. The first-ever EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy was a breakthrough in naming commitment for trans people's rights throughout the EU Commission areas of work. We were disappointed by its weak implementation of important legislative proposals, such as addressing gender-based violence or the reform of the Common EU Asylum System (CEAS), which did not reflect on trans people's specific and intersecting vulnerabilities. The proposal to make hate crime (including on grounds of transphobia) a crime recognised across the EU is stuck in the EU Council.

For the next Strategy, we want to see clear improvements. As well as measurable, time-bound and resourced goals, we expect the Strategy to include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The protection and recognition of trans people need to become a priority in legislative and non-legislative initiatives. Trans people deserve better when it comes to equal access to employment and to goods and services, combatting hate crime, tackling gender-based violence, fighting back misinformation and anti-rights backsliding, implementing CEAS, mental health and general research on LGBTI health, HIV service provision, trans depathologisation, legal gender recognition, trans parenthood recognition, the EU neighbourhood program, and external/international relations.

Since trans people do not exist in a bubble, other Commission measures, such as the Gender Equality Strategy, need to better reflect the realities of women and men in all their diversity, both in the drafting and the implementation. The current EU Gender Equality Strategy acknowledges the existence of trans and non-binary people. The next strategy needs to contain concrete inclusive measures.

To emphasise our demands and because trans people do not exist on their own, together with 140 civil society organisations across the EU, we have written to EU leaders. We urge them to make equality and non-discrimination top priorities in the EU's five-year work plan. Read the Joint Statement below to find out more.

Joint Statement: Paving the way for an equality-centred policy cycle

Along with 140 civil society organisations across the EU, we are calling on EU leaders to include equality & non-discrimination as central priorities in the EU work programme for the next five years.

The European Union was founded on the principles of equality and non-discrimination. Yet too many people continue to face discrimination and inequality across the Union, including intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination in all aspects of their lives.¹ In the current climate, it is now imperative that the EU institutions strengthen their resolve to take meaningful and urgent action to address this reality.

As European Union leaders decide on their priorities for the 2024-2029 cycle, we call on them to ensure that equality and non-discrimination are included as central priorities in the EU work programme for the next five years. Only by centring equality and protection from discrimination in this way can the EU truly respond to the key concerns of people living in the Union.

The equality and non-discrimination agenda was afforded increased visibility and action during the last five years as a result of the ambitious “Union of Equality” agenda and the appointment of the first Commissioner for Equality. This led to unprecedented progress in efforts to advance equality and non-discrimination across EU policy making. Progress included the adoption of important initiatives such as the Directive on violence against women, inaugural Gender Equality and LGBTIQ Equality Strategies, an Anti-Racism Action Plan, a Green Paper on Ageing, an Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, a Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, as well as the renewal of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the EU Roma strategic framework.

At this critical juncture, it is vital that the EU continue to prioritize efforts to guarantee the founding values of equality and non-discrimination, to advance the entire package which comprises the Union of Equality, and to ensure an intersectional approach to this agenda. Failure to do so would seriously jeopardise progress in this area and mark a very dangerous step backward.

To this end we call on EU leadership to take the following steps:

- Appoint a Commissioner for Equality and Fundamental Rights, ensuring the mandate has the power to renew and deepen the Union of Equality agenda and nominating a candidate with a demonstrated commitment to equality;
- Strengthen the Union of Equality agenda by introducing new strategies to address grounds not already covered, mainstreaming all strategies across policy areas and renewing and building-out existing equality strategies, such as the Gender Equality Strategy, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, the EU Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Roma strategic framework;
- Ensure the next EU budget includes robust funding streams for civil society organisations working on equality and non-discrimination;
- Ensure equality and non-discrimination objectives are also core components of EU priorities in the sphere of international cooperation, external and humanitarian action;
- Maintain the current status of the Parliament’s Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and refrain from weakening its mandate;
- Establish a Council configuration dedicated to equality in the EU and ensure concrete commitments towards implementation of equality strategies by member states;
- Establish a new Directorate-General for Equality and Fundamental Rights thereby strengthening the Commission’s ability to design and monitor equality and non-discrimination laws and policies;
- Renew and upgrade the mandates of the Commission Coordinators working on equality, ensuring a focus on intersectionality during this term;
- Entrust the Commission Task Force on Equality with a strong mandate and ensure it works transparently and in close consultation and cooperation with civil society organizations and networks.

As 143 civil society organisations with significant expertise on equality, and as representatives of groups at increased risk of discrimination across the EU, we issue this call as a testament to our solidarity with each other, and urge EU leaders to ensure that the people most affected by EU policies and legislation on equality and non-discrimination are always involved in their development and implementation.

A Scuola Per Conoscerci, Italy

ACCEPT LGBTI Cyprus

ACCEPT Romania

ACT Alliance EU

AESCO (América, España, Solidaridad y Cooperación)

Agapanto, Italy

AGE Platform Europe

Agedo Nazionale, Italy

Aidos (Italian Association for Women in Development)

ALFI – Associazione Lesbica Femminista Italiana, Italy

AlfiLune, Italy

Amnesty International

Amref Health Africa – Italy

Anemos Dimiourgias – Greece

ANTAMA (Greece)

Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels

APRe! Associação de Aposentados, Pensionistas e Reformados (Portugal)

ARCIGAY LGBTQIA+ Association, Italy

ASKV Refugee Support

Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Iberoamericanos – AIETI (Spain)

Asociación Por Ti Mujer

Association Bagdam Espace Lesbian – France

Association Legebitra, Slovenia

Association Liberas – Italy

Association for Monitoring Equal Rights / E?it Haklar ?çin ?zleme Derne?i (Turkey)

ASTRA Network

ATDAL Over 40 (Italy)

Austrian Disability Council

Austrian Family Planning Association (OGF)

Autism-Europe

Avaaz

Avocats Sans Frontières

Belgian Disability Forum (BDF)

Brain Injured and Families European Federation (BIF)

çavaria, Belgium

Center for Gender Rights and Equality DIOTIMA

Center for Reproductive Rights

Certi Diritti, Italy

Circolo di Cultura Omosessuale " Mario Mieli", Italy

Civil Rights Defenders

COC Nederland

Cologne Counselling – Germany

Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO)

Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V. – Germany

Danish Family Planning Association

Deutscher Behindertenrat (DBR)

Disabled Peoples' International European Region (DPI Europe)

Doctors of the World Spain

Društvo Parada ponosa – Slovenia

EDGE, Italy

EMAIZE Sexologia Zentroa – Centro Sexológico

End FGM EU

Epen, El Parto es Nuestro

EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C)

European Blind Union (EBU)

European Disability Forum

European Dyslexia Association

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network)

European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA)

European Women's Lobby

Famiglie Arcobaleno APS, Italy

Federación de Mujeres Progresistas

Fédération Laïque de Centres de Planning Familial (FLCPF)

Foundation for Women and Family Planning (FEDERA)

French Family Planning / le Planning Familial

Fundación Aspacia

GAMS Belgium (Groupe pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles féminines)

Gaynet – Formazione e Comunicazione sui temi Lgbti, Italy

GenderLens, Italy

General Commission for Justice and Peace of Spain

GLAS Foundation, Bulgaria

Haurralde Fundazioa

HelpAge International

HelpAge International Spain

Human Rights Watch

IGLYO

ILGA-Europe

Iniciativa Inakos?, Slovakia

International Commission of Jurists

International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)

International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

International Federation of Persons with Physical Disabilities (FIMITIC)

International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights

International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)

IntersexEsiste, Italy

Irish Family Planning Association

Jovesólides

Kif Kif vzw

KISA

Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo (Spain)

La Strada International

Labrisz Lesbian Association – Hungary

LesbenRing e.V. – Germany

Lesbian Magazine and Program Organizing Association – Hungary

Lesbian Organisation Rijeka – LORI – Croatia

LesWorking – Spain

LGBT Ireland

LGBT komiteen – The LGBT Committee, Denmark

Light for the World

LSVD, the Lesbian and Gay Federation, Germany

Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability (MFOPD)

Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM)

medicusmundi

Mujeres Jóvenes de la Región de Murcia: 8 de marzo (MUJOMUR)

Mujeres Supervivientes de Sevilla

National LGBTI Rights Organization LGL – Lithuania

NET.Collect – Germany

N?kért Egyesület / Association for Women, Hungary

Nothern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE)

OII Europe

Older Women’s Network

PA.SY.D.Y. Pensioners Union (Cyprus)

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

Polish Women’s Strike

Possibile LGBTI+, Italy

PRISME – Fédération wallonne LGBTQIA+, Belgium

pro familia Bundesverband

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Queer Base – Welcome & Support for LGBTIQ Refugees – Austria

Queer Sisterhood Cluj – Romania

Quore, Italy

Rainbow Families Croatia

Red de Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe – España

Rete Genitori Rainbow, Italy

RFSL, Sweden

Rutgers

Save the Children

SB Overseas

Sdružení pro integraci a migraci (SIMI) / Association for Integration and Migration

SEDRA-Federación Planificación Familiar

Sensoa

Society for Education on Contraception and Sexuality – SECS

SolidarityNow

Stichting LOS, Netherlands

Terre des Femmes

TGEU – Trans Europe & Central Asia

Toutes des Femmes -France

Turun Valkonauha ry, Finland

Women Against Violence Europe – WAVE Network

Zavod Moja mavrica – Slovenia

Zavod Transfeministi?na Inicijativa TransAkcija – Slovenia

More info

[The EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and its key action items for trans people: TGEU Progress Report 2023](#)

[EU Commission political guidelines 2024 – 2029](#)

1. Throughout the text, “equality and non-discrimination” is to be understood as encompassing equality and non-discrimination in the enjoyment of the full range of human rights, including all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. ??