

CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN INITIATIVE (without an impact assessment)

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Union of Equality: 2026-2030 LGBTIQ equality strategy
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Directorate D, Unit D.1: Non-discrimination: LGBTIQ, Age and Horizontal Matters
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Commission communication
INDICATIVE TIMING	Q4-2025
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer equality

A. Political context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

Political context

Achieving a 'Union of Equality' was confirmed as a priority in President von der Leyen's [political guidelines for 2024-2029](#) and the [mission letter to the Commissioner for Equality](#). The EU is committed to ensuring equal rights for all. Promoting equality is a means to strengthen the foundation of a just, democratic and safe society, as well as developing a more competitive economy by drawing on the talent of all individuals. Despite joint efforts, discrimination targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people remains an everyday reality in the EU.

For this reason, the Commission is working on a renewed LGBTIQ equality strategy for after 2025 to combat the inequalities experienced by LGBTIQ people. The aim is to build on the progress achieved through the [2020-2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy](#). This initiative is included in the Commission 2025 work programme. In May 2024, 20 Member States signed a [ministerial declaration](#) committing themselves to work with the Commission to renew the LGBTIQ equality strategy.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

While social acceptance of LGBTIQ people has increased across the EU since the adoption of the 2020-2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy, LGBTIQ people continue to experience disproportionate levels of discrimination, violence and harassment. According to the [2023 special Eurobarometer on discrimination in the EU](#), 59% of those polled are now more likely to feel comfortable if their child were in a same-sex relationship, up 4 percentage points (pps) from 2019. At the same time, the [2023 LGBTIQ survey of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#) showed a significant increase in hate-motivated harassment, with 55% of LGBTIQ people reporting such experiences (up 18 pps), as well as an increase in physical and sexual attacks in most EU countries. Regulatory failures, including under-reporting, exacerbate the issue, with less than one in five (18%) LGBTIQ people reporting such incidents to any organisation.

In recent years, this hate has been fuelled by the rise of anti-gender and anti-LGBTIQ narratives. As the FRA survey attests, most LGBTIQ people (63%) often or always encounter hateful statements about the LGBTIQ community online, most often referencing 'LGBTIQ propaganda' or 'gender ideology'. In addition, LGBTIQ people's level of legal protection against hate speech, hate crime and discrimination varies across the different areas of life (e.g. employment, access to services etc.) and between Member States. Complaints from the public regularly draw the Commission's attention to LGBTIQ-phobic hate speech, discrimination, challenges in legal gender recognition, and discriminatory statements in public debates. Finally, limited data on LGBTIQ people's experiences prevents effective monitoring of how the existing legal and policy instruments are applied to combat hate speech, hate crime and discrimination.

Without coordinated efforts at EU level to combat discrimination and promote LGBTIQ equality, polarisation in society, including on LGBTIQ people's human rights, threatens to undermine hard-won progress. Stereotypes and identity-based disinformation could gain further traction, reversing the trend of increasing social acceptance of LGBTIQ people. Finally, without EU action to harmonise legal protection against discrimination, hate speech, hate crimes and conversion practices, disparities between Member States may persist, leaving LGBTIQ people more vulnerable to these problems. As [analytical work](#) shows, continued discrimination and inequality means the EU is not tapping into the full potential of its society and economy.

Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)
<p>Legal basis</p>
<p>Relevant provisions in the EU Treaties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which refer to the EU's values, including equality; Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides for an obligation to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in defining and implementing the EU's policies and activities; Article 21 of the TEU, which establishes that the EU's action on the international scene must be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, including equality. <p>Article 19 TFEU supplements this with a legal basis for legislative action. The general principles of non-discrimination and equality are reaffirmed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (Articles 20 and 21). Moreover, EU legislation prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the area of employment and occupation.</p>
<p>Practical need for EU action</p>
<p>While many policy areas related to LGBTIQ equality fall under national jurisdiction, the EU plays a crucial role in providing policy guidance, coordinating Member State action, monitoring progress, offering support through EU funds, and facilitating the exchange of best practices. Stakeholders consulted for the report on the implementation of the 2020-2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy recognised the strategy as a milestone but emphasised the need for more EU-level efforts. The priority areas stakeholders identified were: (i) health (especially mental health); (ii) asylum procedures; (iii) legal protection against hate speech and hate crimes; (iv) free movement; and (v) the integration of LGBTIQ equality across funding programmes and Commission initiatives. LGBTIQ inequality remains an EU-wide challenge, with national efforts varying significantly and creating cross-border issues for LGBTIQ individuals and their families moving between Member States.</p>
<p>B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how</p>
<p>Building on the first LGBTIQ equality strategy, this initiative will set out the key Commission actions to tackle the challenges faced by LGBTIQ people. The initiative will set common objectives, provide guidance on policy priorities, and strengthen coordination with Member States, neighbouring countries and other stakeholders. As announced in the mission letter to the Commissioner for Equality, the new strategy will focus, among other things, on addressing 'the continued and persisting hate-motivated harassment and violence, including online, and banning the practice of conversion therapy'.</p> <p>It is intended for the strategy to include actions to: (i) protect LGBTIQ people from hate speech, hate crime and discrimination in all forms; (ii) build more welcoming European societies for LGBTIQ people and the organisations that represent them; (iii) promote the empowerment of LGBTIQ people and ensure equal opportunities in different areas of life, such as employment, education and health, across all EU regions (including rural and remote areas); (iv) uphold the rights of trans, intersex, non-binary people and rainbow families; and (v) foster collaboration with Member States, local authorities and international partners to uphold equality, while also mainstreaming LGBTIQ equality in all EU policies and funds.</p> <p>The new strategy will maintain the approach of combining targeted measures with better mainstreaming of LGBTIQ equality in all EU policies. To this end, the strategy will help foster synergies across major existing and upcoming Commission initiatives and other initiatives in the area of equality, such as the EU comprehensive strategy on the rights of the child and upcoming gender equality and anti-racism strategies. Possible actions include: (i) improving legal protection; (ii) monitoring the enforcement of existing EU legislation; (iii) running awareness-raising campaigns; (iv) bringing together stakeholders; (v) providing financial support to civil society organisations; and (vi) improving the collection and use of equality data.</p> <p>Under the new strategy, the Commission will strengthen cooperation with Member States in the framework of the LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup of the High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality, and Diversity, including by supporting them in adopting and implementing national LGBTIQ strategies. The strategy will also have an external aspect in line with the EU's policies in this area, including advocating for LGBTIQ people's human rights through the UN and other international organisations.</p>
<p>Likely impacts</p>
<p>The adoption of this new EU LGBTIQ equality strategy is expected to have a positive impact on LGBTIQ people in the EU and help build more inclusive European societies. The strategy is intended to foster greater equality, reduce violence, harassment and stigma, and improve the physical and mental well-being of LGBTIQ people and their families. This will enable LGBTIQ people to fully enjoy their fundamental rights, reach their full potential, and</p>

<p>contribute more freely to a thriving EU economy. The benefits of the strategy will be felt across all EU regions, including rural and remote areas, and will be most pronounced in those Member States where disparities currently persist in protecting LGBTIQ people's fundamental rights. This strategy will directly support the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), aligning EU policy with global commitments to equality and inclusion.</p>
<p>Future monitoring</p>
<p>The Commission will actively monitor implementation of the actions outlined in the renewed LGBTIQ equality strategy and intends to conduct a mid-term review in 2028. Future iterations of the FRA LGBTIQ survey and the special Eurobarometer on discrimination will provide valuable data to track progress. Additionally, the Commission will continue to collaborate with upcoming EU Council presidencies to co-host conferences on LGBTIQ equality, ensuring ongoing feedback to strengthen implementation of the strategy's measures. Collaboration with Member States will also be a priority through the High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality, and Diversity and its LGBTIQ Equality Subgroup. Finally, the Commission will maintain an open dialogue and consultations with civil society organisations and other stakeholders to discuss the strategy's progress.</p>
<p>C. Better regulation</p>
<p>Impact assessment</p>
<p>An impact assessment is not required as the new LGBTIQ equality strategy will outline broad policy objectives and processes whose impact cannot be assessed at this stage. If the strategy sets out any legislative initiatives, these may be subject to an impact assessment as part of their preparation.</p>
<p>Consultation strategy</p>
<p>This call for evidence will enable the Commission to gather evidence on the areas requiring further action at EU level to advance LGBTIQ equality. In addition, other input will be collected through targeted stakeholder consultations involving Member State authorities, civil society organisations, social partners, international organisations and academia.</p> <p>Main features of the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • call for evidence; • open public consultation. <p>Both the call for evidence and the open public consultation will be open for 12 weeks and will be available in all 24 official EU languages. Replies can be made in all EU languages on the Have your say portal.</p> <p>The Commission will publicise this call for evidence and the open public consultation in a press announcement, on social media, etc. They will also be promoted with the help of Member States, civil society organisations and the EU Platform of Diversity Charters.</p> <p>A factual summary report of the public consultation will be published on the consultation page 8 weeks after it closes. Contributions to all consultation activities will be summarised in a synopsis report.</p>
<p>Why we are consulting?</p>
<p>This consultation gives stakeholders the opportunity to share their views with the Commission. This will enable the Commission to prepare the new LGBTIQ equality strategy, drawing on a comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive stakeholder perspective.</p>
<p>Target audience</p>
<p>This consultation is addressed to the public and a wide range of stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national authorities in charge of tackling discrimination against LGBTIQ people; • civil society organisations active in the area of LGBTIQ equality; • equality bodies and the European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET); • the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights; • employers, business organisations and trade unions; • LGBTIQ equality academics and experts; • individuals interested in LGBTIQ equality; • stakeholders in rural and remote areas; • relevant international organisations; • other public and private stakeholders that have an interest in specific aspects of LGBTIQ equality (e.g. national statistical institutes, health sector) or that are interested in intersectional discrimination.