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LGBT Discrimination

EU Survey reveals fear, isolation and discrimination common in Europe's LGBT community



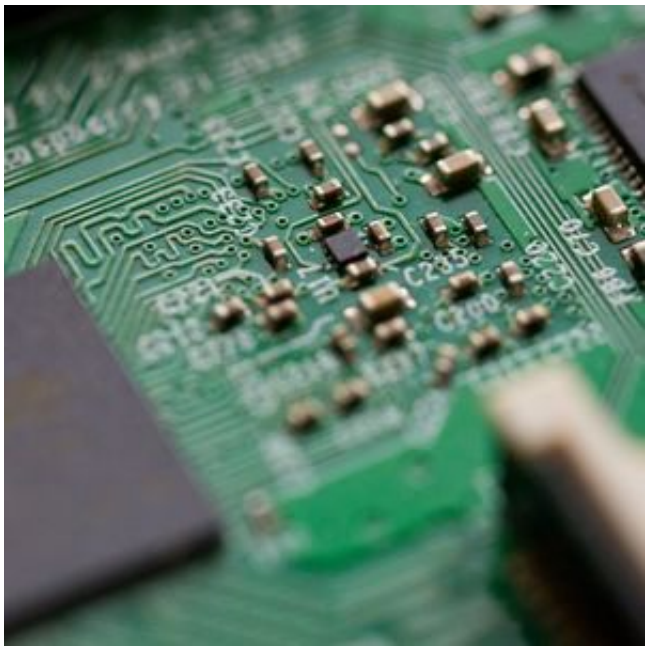
Today the EU Fundamental Rights Agency published the first-ever comparative study on the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the 27 EU Member States and Croatia. Drawing on over 93,000 responses and more than 20,000 additional individual sources, it finds that many hide their identity and live in isolation or even fear. Almost one in two (47%) LGBT people felt discriminated against or harassed in the last year when being themselves, underlining the need to promote and protect fundamental rights so that they too can live their lives with dignity and without humiliation. Marking Internatioanl Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, Green MEP, and Co-President of the European Parliament's LGBT Intergroup, Ulrike Lunacek attended the launch in the Hague today and challenged the Commission to act on the results: *"What has been achieved in Europe over the last decades is good - but far from being good enough. This study is a wake up call. We've called on the European Commission, specifically on vice-President Viviane Reding, for a comprehensive road map to do more to outlaw discrimination and harassment. The EU is seen as leading for many LGBT organisations and people around the world, but Argentina is now ahead of us on transgender rights. The European Parliament will do its part and the time for the Commission to act is now."* An overarching roadmap from the Commission is needed to highlight weaknesses and apply pressure where it is needed most, including on member states, to tackle all forms of discrimination. According to the survey 32% were discriminated against in housing, education, or when accessing healthcare, goods or services. This could be outlawed under EU law if Member States stopped blocking a draft Directive addressing these issues, proposed by the Commission in 2008 and approved by the Parliament in 2009. Commenting on the survery results, Green MEP Raül Romeva, rapporteur for this

anti-discrimination directive in the Parliament said:
"Our governments should be ashamed of themselves. If Member States continue to block anti-discrimination laws, they are responsible for one in every three LGBT people suffering discrimination in their lives in 21st century Europe. The study also found that, lesbian women (55%), young people between 18 and 24 (57%) and poorer LGBT people (52%) are the most likely to be discriminated against. And it unveiled that around two thirds of LGBT people are afraid of holding hands with their lovers in public - a really appalling figure! For Ulrike Lunacek, this shows the effects of discrimination and harassment are multiplied for people who tend to be marginalised: *"Anti-discrimination isn't an elitist concern, it's a crucial imperative for people from many different social groups."* Finally, 20% of all respondents (29% among transgender respondents) were discriminated against on grounds of sex or sexual orientation in their job or while looking for one, despite EU law forbidding this. The results from the FRA survey shows that fear, isolation and discrimination are common in Europe's LGBT community. Everyone should feel free to be themselves at home, work, at school and in public regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Greens/EFA group will continue to push for EU-wide action so that everyone can fully enjoy their rights.

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Responsible MEPs



Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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