



LEADERS FOR CHANGE: YOUTH TRAINING

POLICY PROPOSALS



**Co-funded by
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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the policy proposals developed during the Erasmus+ Youth Participation Activity “Leaders for Change.” From 14 to 23 February 2026, young participants from five countries came together in Ochoz u Brna, Czech Republic, and Brussels, Belgium to explore LGBTIQ+ representation, civic engagement, youth leadership, and the ways in which young people can actively contribute to European democratic processes. Through non-formal education, workshops, discussions, group work, and institutional visits, participants strengthened their understanding of European values, policy-making, and inclusive leadership, while building the confidence and skills needed for active participation in public life.

A central moment of the project was the final simulation, in which participants stepped into the role of policymakers and worked in international teams to develop concrete proposals for a more inclusive and equal Europe. Inspired by their learning journey and by visits to key European institutions in Brussels, they focused on some of the most pressing issues affecting LGBTIQ+ communities and young people today. The result is a set of five policy proposals addressing human rights and diversity, youth participation, healthcare, employment and social affairs, and culture and education. In this booklet, you will find these proposals — the result of the commitment, cooperation, and vision of young people determined to contribute to positive change across Europe.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

RELEVANCE

Human rights are one of the fundamental values of the European Union, as stated in the Charter of Values. LGBTIQ+ community faces many challenges in multiple areas, such as employment, education, healthcare and the online sphere. Because of the rise of discrimination, harassment, hate speech, and even violence, it has become increasingly clear that the European Union should defend the value of diversity.

Diversity is inherently connected to the basic human right of equality, and non-discrimination means acknowledging, respecting, and appreciating the differences among people. Diversity celebrates the variety of human differences and recognizes the richness and strength that all forms of difference bring to society.

Human rights are universal, inalienable, and apply to everyone regardless of background. It is then fundamental to protect the right to be ourselves without facing discrimination and foster inclusion, especially towards the more marginalized groups like trans people, who enjoy even less privileges than other members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

It is important for every person to know their human rights so they can seek legal protection.

Another relevant aspect is the impact of inclusive language, as it is a tool to feel everyone included and represented, and helps create a communication free of prejudices and stereotypes.

CURRENT STATE

The need to address inclusive language stems from the discriminatory behaviour in multiple areas of life, such as workfield, education or health services, which is still present. The European Union provides a number of legislation in order to protect and empower people all over Europe.

Based on the survey of the European institutions from 2019, there is a 5% increase in agreement upon equalizing the rights of LGBTIQ+ people in comparison to the year 2015.

Since its adoption in 2020, the EU's first-ever LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020–2025 has led to a wide range of tangible actions across policy, legislation, and funding. The strategy aimed to tackle discrimination, ensure safety, build inclusive societies, and promote LGBTIQ+ rights globally.

The new proposal for the term 2026–2030 highlights some of the key challenges that LGBTIQ+ people face, however, there is a visible lack of discussion concerning inclusive language in legislation works. Currently, gender non-conforming people are at a risk of the lack of representation in legislation. It is fundamental that gender non-conforming people know their place in legal documents in order to understand their rights and obligations.

PROPOSALS

Some initiatives that the EU could take to improve the quality of human rights and foster diversity by applying inclusive language and policies among the Member States include:

- Modify official documents regarding basic human rights, for example the Article 23 of the Fundamental Charter of Values (“equality between men and women”) so that it can adopt a more inclusive view, for example “equality among people of different gender identities”, and invite Member States to apply the same change to the relevant legal documents from now on
- The writing of a “Inclusive Communication Guidelines for Public Institution” document, suggesting its adoption to the Member States for their paperwork, institutional communication and any other field in which they believe it is relevant.
- Suggest the adoption of laws that classify violent behaviour towards people of the LGBTIQ+ community as hate crimes.
- Promulgate awareness campaigns on the importance of inclusive language through the official EU channels.
- Audit Member States on their rules with a particular regard towards transgender people.
- Fostering the participation of specialized people such as psychologists, lawyers and researchers who are also part of the LGBTIQ+ community to improve the quality of the policies towards the community itself.
- Reinforcing and improving financial funds reserved to local initiatives who work in the direction of sensitisation and awareness of LGBTIQ+ rights.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

RELEVANCE

Youth participation is fundamental to democratic societies that aim to embody values such as inclusion, equality, and active citizenship. Young people within LGBTIQ+ often experience discrimination in schools, workplaces, and public spaces. Moreover, based on the EU Equality Strategy for 2026-2030, youth living in rural areas or socially conservative regions may face greater social stigma and fewer safe spaces for engagement compared to those in larger urban centres.

This territorial disparity creates unequal access to democratic tools and amplifies structural discrimination. LGBTIQ+ youth are directly impacted by legislative decisions concerning education, healthcare, digital safety, and anti-discrimination frameworks. If youth participation is limited or symbolic, policies risk being disconnected from lived realities.

A European society that fails to actively include its young LGBTIQ+ citizens risks marginalizing a generation that is ready to contribute innovative ideas, social commitment, and transformative leadership.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

At the European level, youth participation and LGBTIQ+ equality are addressed through interconnected but partially separate policy frameworks. The main instrument guiding youth policy is the European Commission's EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, structured around the three core pillars Engage, Connect, Empower.

The strategy promotes meaningful youth participation in democratic life and is operationalised through the European Youth Goals, including "Equality of All Genders," "Inclusive Societies," "Space and Participation for All," and "Moving Rural Youth Forward." These goals acknowledge diversity and aim to foster inclusive environments where all young people, regardless of background, can actively contribute to society. However, while the framework explicitly promotes non-discrimination and inclusion, LGBTIQ+ youth are not systematically addressed as a distinct group within the Youth Strategy itself.

Their specific vulnerabilities - particularly in rural or socially conservative areas - are more often discussed in complementary research and policy documents rather than embedded into binding youth participation mechanisms. Reports from the European Parliament highlight persistent discrimination, hate speech (including online), and territorial disparities affecting LGBTIQ+ individuals across Member States.

In parallel, the EU has adopted dedicated equality policies, such as the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (and its renewal for 2026-2030), which focus on combating discrimination, improving safety, and promoting inclusion in education, employment, healthcare, and digital spaces. While these initiatives represent significant progress, the integration between youth-specific participation tools and LGBTIQ+ equality measures remains limited.

As a result, LGBTIQ+ young people are protected in principle under broader anti-discrimination frameworks but are not yet consistently empowered as active co-creators of youth policy at the EU level.

PROPOSAL

In light of the existing framework, the next revision of the EU Youth Strategy should move beyond general principles of non-discrimination and introduce concrete mechanisms to strengthen LGBTIQ+ youth participation in democratic life. The proposals would be as stated:

- Creation of thematic consultation channels within the EU Youth Dialogue that specifically address LGBTIQ+ issues, ensuring that young people from the community are systematically involved in shaping policies that affect them.
- Establishment of permanent advisory panels or youth-led working groups connected to the EU Youth Coordinator
- Targeted funding allocated to educational and civic empowerment initiatives aimed at removing barriers that alienate LGBTIQ+ youth from political participation. Particular attention must be given to rural areas, this would reduce territorial inequalities and ensure that participation is not limited to urban contexts.
- Creation of Erasmus+, youth exchanges, and non-formal education programmes (such as EU-funded youth programmes, including Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps, and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme) with dedicated LGBTIQ+ participation to strengthen young people's skills in advocacy, leadership, and policy literacy.
- Creation of annual reporting and specific metrics in the EU Youth Dashboard to track their participation, accessibility, and safety in all engagement spaces.

HEALTHCARE

RELEVANCE

LGBTIQ+ discrimination takes many different forms: this committee chose to focus on the bias in healthcare. Queer people of all ages face several problems in the medical environment: denial of hormone therapy on the basis of consciousness clause, erasure of their gender identity or sexual orientation and prejudice regarding sexually transmitted diseases are just some of them.

Equality and human rights are fundamental rights of the European Union, therefore discrimination divides and goes against this agreement. It is important to notice that in healthcare, trust is a necessity that ensures proper treatment, a fundamental thing that builds up the doctor-patient relationship.

Introduction of the consciousness clause becomes an obstacle that damages this crucial bond, a patient no longer can feel comfortable sharing their problems with the doctor without being worried about being judged. Which makes it so that a question of private morality becomes a life and death dilemma.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

This committee acknowledges the fact that healthcare falls under the category of supportive and coordinating competences of the EU. However, equality is one of the fundamental values on which the European Union is founded, reflected in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which give the EU a mandate and responsibility to combat discrimination.

Some measures have been already taken to ensure the protection of LGBTIQ+ community. In the 2026-2030 strategy "free to love, free to be", 3 key areas of action were showcased and highlighted, nevertheless, discrimination in healthcare was not included. Since this matter involves both medical expertise and fundamental human rights concerns, there is no option but to tackle the problem through the means of non discrimination directives.

Furthermore, at present, there are gaps in EU anti-discrimination legislation, creating an artificial 'hierarchy of grounds'. Notably, some grounds are still only covered in the area of employment and occupation. Considering all of the above, the European Union has not a right to act but an obligation to do so.

PROPOSAL

Our proposal is to reinforce the values of equality and human dignity through a directive that tackles discrimination in the healthcare system, integrating this law in the national legislature of the EU Member States in a time limit of 2 years. The goal of this proposal is to eliminate on ground relating to social and public interest all discriminatory obstacles to access a safe healthcare system that acknowledges the specific needs, characteristics and boundaries of the LGBTIQ+ community.

This directive will prohibit direct and indirect discrimination including harassment, microaggressions¹, macro aggressions and instructions to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The goal is to ensure access to a safe and informed healthcare system. The main points which we want to include are:

- Abolishment of the consciousness clause
- Prohibition of non-consensual procedures on intersex people at birth²
- Ensuring more inclusive eldercare and facilities³
- Removal of prejudices towards LGBTIQ+ patients regarding sexual behavior through formation courses, targeted conferences and guidelines to medical professionals of every level to educate them on the issue.

¹ Examples of microaggressions on LGBTIQ+ in healthcare: using incorrect pronouns, assuming heterosexuality, assuming a gender identity, all of which we consider dangerous behaviours.

² Medical professionals often impose non-consensual surgeries on intersex people as early in life as the first days of life, often imposing a biological sex on the newborn with extremely invasive procedures that have severe consequences on the person's quality of life.

³ Queer people can experience erasure of their identities or not adequate attention to their needs once they reach an age that requires eldercare, for example in retirement homes.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

RELEVANCE

Equality is one of the core values of the EU, therefore, every citizen has the right to be equally treated and respected in the work environment.

Moreover, access to information and knowledge is a Human Right, as recognised in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation has been prohibited under Directive 2000/78/EC.

However, according to the 2023 survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 18% of LGBTIQ+ respondents reported experiencing discrimination at work in the previous year, rising to around 30% among trans and intersex persons.

As a consequence, with regard to the LGBTIQ+ community, significant gaps in access to accurate information, awareness, and inclusive workplace practices persist.

Simultaneously, there has been an increase in the use of rainbow-themed branding, not necessarily aligned with a real support for the community. Another aspect to it is focused on economic gain, once consumers are increasingly becoming more exigent.

Therefore, in order to uphold its obligations under International and European Law, the EU must further strengthen and deepen its action in this area.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Currently in the European Union the biggest and most successful rating of LGBTIQ+ is the official survey called Rainbow map that is produced by ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association). However, it only applies to rating countries, policies and laws. In the European Union there is not any index focused on diversity and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in companies and their products.

Stonewall workplace equality index is working in Europe but it is mostly testifying about United Kingdom companies and not about EU ones. It is also not very clear for common people and for the companies and they release the results of only the top 100 most inclusive businesses and not the general overview. It is also not accessible to everyone as it requires registration and allowed access.

One of the very good models is from the United States where there is an index called Corporate Equality Index. It provides a research - based overview of LGBTIQ+ experiences in U.S workplaces and a national comparison of corporate policies, practices and benefits pertinent to LGBTIQ+ employees. However there are some blank spots even in this survey, for example, it is only focused on bigger companies.

PROPOSAL

We propose the creation of the European Corporate Inclusivity Index. This index would be easily accessible via a secure website for companies, their employees as well as customers. It could be used by anybody to check whether a company is truly LGBTIQ+ friendly.

A website for the Index would also be created. It would be easy to navigate - a simple search bar for people to look a company up, areas of business for people to search specific areas such as shoe makers or banks and a map of LGBTIQ+ friendly shops.

The index would be based on the data compiled from different reports and/or questionnaires, covering three perspectives :

- The company and management - every company that would participate in the index would report on the education of managers about LGBTIQ+, diversity of the management, possible donations to LGBTIQ+ NGOs and charities, dedicated personal/professional development programmes and other inclusivity targeted initiatives.

- The employees - a brief anonymous survey would be created for every company that takes part. This survey would ask employees about protection policies in the company, inclusion and balance, benefits such as leave to take care of a sick partner no matter the gender and availability of support such as legal and psychological specialists.

- The client/customers - we would also include a possibility for customers to report on their negative as well as positive experience with a certain company on the website regarding LGBTIQ+ treatment and inclusivity. There will also be a possibility for a specialist to report on the company's behaviour and marketing connected with LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Most importantly the European Corporate Inclusivity Index would be EU-controlled, regulated and standardised in order for it to be reliable.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

RELEVANCE

The integration of the history and culture of minority groups in general is essential due to the current rise of social polarization and erasure of minority identities. LGBTIQ+ people in particular are nowadays being weaponized in political battles. Rising awareness can prevent the spread of misinformation and therefore the spread of hateful narratives about the marginalised people.

This inclusion will have a direct psychological impact on LGBTIQ+ community. It can improve their wellbeing by eliminating the feeling of alienation and a lack of role models by providing a sense of historical belonging. In a time where for example different "anti-gender" movements are becoming more relevant in several Member States, reclaiming the history and culture of the LGBTIQ+ community helps to prove that this is not something new, as this group of people was present throughout different historical periods and it is not something against traditional values, because it has its own longstanding tradition.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

In the educational and cultural field the International LGBTIQ+ Youth & Student Organisation (IGLYO) raises awareness and promotes the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ pupils in schools.

IGLYO include in their website:

An interactive map and index table scoring the Council of Europe Members

- A report providing an in-depth account of the situation on LGBTIQI-inclusive education in 49 European countries (not just EU countries);
- A comparator tool allowing to compare several countries' scores in each of the 10 indicators.
- A good practice map and database gathering measures laws, policies and programmes implemented by governments and civil society organisations to create safer and more inclusive education systems for LGBTIQ+ children and youth across Europe.

The All Inc! project ran between 2020 and 2023, and aimed to foster safe, supportive school environments at secondary and tertiary levels that allow all pupils to thrive, regardless of their sexual orientation or sexual identity.

PROPOSAL

- Including LGBTIQ+ in historical museums and creating exhibitions.
- Building more monuments or statues of LGBTIQ+ people who were important for the community's history and the fight for their rights.
- Organising Erasmus+ projects about more specific LGBTIQ+ topics such as gender identity and challenges of the community.
- Investing in school psychologists' education regarding the LGBTIQ+.
- Funding pride month activities in small cities. Each city can apply for this funding.
- Organising courses for teachers providing information on the LGBTIQ+ community and how to deal with homophobic behavior.
- Investing in media literacy and debunking workshops, e.g. developing courses for teachers and educators on how to critically analyse media content and identify manipulated narratives that target marginalised groups or promote discrimination.
- Promoting political and religious neutrality, ensuring training emphasises the minimisation of religious influence in public education to safeguard the pluralistic values of the EU.
- Funding a verified digital platform that maps "safe spaces" - LGBTIQ+ friendly - such as café, restaurants or bars and inclusive services in rural areas to counter isolation and disinformation.
- Create permanent Rainbow Safe Points in public nightlife spaces.

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Thank you for joining us in presenting the ideas, commitment, and vision of the young people who took part in Leaders for Change. Throughout this journey in the Czech Republic and Brussels, participants explored youth leadership, civic engagement, democratic participation, and LGBTIQ+ representation in Europe, transforming their learning into concrete policy proposals for a more inclusive and equal future.

Together, we continue to believe in a Europe built on dignity, equality, participation, and respect for all.

Content of this booklet was created by following participants of the “Leaders for change” project:

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