



Joint statement from European Trade Union Federations

LGBTIQ discrimination strongest felt at work

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia – 17 May 2025

No one should have to live in fear of being themselves. Yet, for many, this fear remains an everyday reality. Imagine being afraid to hold your partner's hand in public or feeling unable to speak openly about your family at work—this is still the lived experience of countless LGBTIQ individuals.

According to the **2024 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) [LGBTIQ Survey](#)**, discrimination is felt most acutely **in the workplace**:

- Nearly **one in five** LGBTIQ workers (18%) report experiencing discrimination at work.
- For trans and intersex individuals, this figure rises to **around one in three**.
- Among all areas of life, **working life remains the most common space where discrimination is experienced**.

Trade unions must act

Trade unions have a vital role to play in fostering **equal, safe, and welcoming workplaces**. Together with employers, we must work to **eliminate discrimination** and ensure that every worker—regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity—is treated with dignity and respect and is fully protected from third-party violence and harassment. A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental worker's right. Diversity is not always visible. **Around 45% of LGBTIQ workers hide their identity at work, often or always** fearing negative consequences.

Concerns beyond the workplace: education matters

LGBTIQ youth face persistent challenges. While schools now discuss LGBTIQ issues more than before, **over two-thirds of LGBTIQ students report being bullied at school—a figure that has risen since 2019**. This trend spans generations and EU countries, underscoring the urgent need for **stronger protections in education and to equip all education personnel with the skills to support inclusive learning environments**. Moreover, the fear and discrimination that many LGBTIQ youth experience in school follow them into adulthood, potentially negatively impacting their mental health, educational opportunities, and entire career.

Rising challenges: special attention to trans and intersex rights

The past few years have seen an alarming backlash against LGBTIQ rights, with **trans and intersex people disproportionately targeted** for political exploitation, attacks and hate speech. According to the [ILGA Europe Annual Review 2025](#), **hate crimes have reached record levels**. Trans rights have been restricted in countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom, and Hungary by introducing anti-transgender legislation (that defines gender strictly as binary). **Provision of trans healthcare has been restricted**. In schools, information about gender identities and sexual orientation has been limited under the pretext that reducing access to information about LGBTIQ people prevents harm to minors.

Call for action: a new LGBTIQ Strategy with teeth and strong legislation

We welcome the European Commission's commitment to a **new LGBTIQ strategy (2026-2030)**. It must include concrete actions that foster improvements for LGBTIQ+ in every respect, including support for a more inclusive and non-discriminatory society and labour market.

However, we urge **strong legislative action** to secure lasting improvements for LGBTIQ+ people across all walks of life. Therefore, we **deeply regret** the stalled progress on the **Equal Treatment Directive**, which would extend legal protections against discrimination **beyond employment**—including social protection, education, housing, and access to goods and services. This is a **missed opportunity** to ensure uniform anti-discrimination protections across the EU.

Only strong, binding EU laws can guarantee full protection for everyone. We will not accept anything less.