

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

17 May 2024

English only

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia

On this International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, the Advisory Council on Youth stands in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community and learns from its courage, resilience, and compassion that have been steadfast in the face of longstanding injustices and discrimination.

Young people are growing up in a world that is more connected than ever, yet we observe that the bridges of understanding and acceptance are often slow to be built. We acknowledge the notable legal progress that member States have achieved regarding the decriminalisation of private, consensual same-sex relationships. This was set into motion by the European Court of Human Rights in *Dudgeon v. United Kingdom* in 1981.¹ Yet, more than four decades later, the struggle continues as the LGBTQIA+ community still faces widespread discrimination. This can lead to exclusion, lower educational achievements and overall economic position, difficulty accessing health care, and deteriorated mental health from a young age. We underline the importance of intersectionality when addressing these issues. We regret that important documents, such as the Istanbul Convention and the Reykjavik Declaration, do not acknowledge yet the need to protect specifically the right to gender and sexual expression. We applaud that the new Gender Equality Strategy does mention the discrimination that queer people face in their daily lives.

Today, while we welcome and support the ongoing progress and underscore the necessity for more progress, we advocate for a more inclusive society that celebrates diversity instead of condemning it. There has been minimal progress for over seven years regarding how LGBTQIA+ individuals in the EU experience their human and fundamental rights day-to-day.² The need to advocate for inclusion is more urgent than ever, demanding immediate action that cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, it is important to adopt an intersectional perspective to understand the multiple layers of discrimination and barriers that queer individuals face based on other aspects of their identities, especially young people, belonging to minorities or disadvantaged groups, or young people in rural and remote areas.

The Advisory Council on Youth condemns all forms of discrimination and hatred towards LGBTQIA+ individuals and urges all member States and public authorities to foster an environment where the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals are respected at all times and in all aspects of life. This is in addition to Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Further, there is a critical need to ensure a safe environment for young people in rural areas, where LGBTQIA+ youth often face additional challenges. Likewise, we call for recognition of young people's right to freely express their gender identity

¹ <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57473>

² https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf

and sexuality, surpassing the binary perception of gender and discrimination it poses to non-binary young people.

We remain available to support the member States and the Committee of Ministers with any further consultation on LGBTQIA+ rights, while encouraging all young people to join us in promoting youth access to LGBTQIA+ rights at international, national, local and regional levels. We also applaud the incredibly important work that youth organisations, like the members of the IGLYO network, do daily to make a difference for queer youth.

Together, we should build a future where no one has to fear being themselves.

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