

## ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

17 May 2025

English only

### **Together, we are stronger. Together, we are the power of communities - Statement of the Advisory Council on Youth on the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)**

Today, on the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), the Advisory Council on Youth stands in firm and unwavering solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community across Europe. This year's theme, *"The Power of Communities,"* honours the vital role that collective action and solidarity play in challenging injustice and fostering resilience.

First celebrated in 2005, each year on 17 May, IDAHOBIT marks the World Health Organization's historic decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. This day is a powerful reminder that every young person - regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression - deserves to live in safety, with dignity, respect, and the freedom to be their full, authentic selves.

In times of crisis and uncertainty, communities offer safety, resilience, and hope. For LGBTQIA+ youth - especially those marginalised by their families, institutions, or broader society - communities often serve as the first, and sometimes only, refuge. Whether physical or virtual, formal, international or grassroots, these communities are lifelines: spaces of support, healing, and empowerment. As the Advisory Council on Youth, we celebrate these communities and their vital contributions to a more inclusive and equitable Europe.

We are witnessing growing restrictions on discussions on gender identity and expression, including attempts to ban Pride celebrations, and escalating hostility toward LGBTQIA+ communities. These are not isolated incidents; they are part of a broader pattern of democratic backsliding and attacks on human rights.

The Advisory Council on Youth strongly condemns all forms of discrimination and hatred against LGBTQIA+ individuals and highlights the crucial responsibility of member States in safeguarding the rights of all their citizens regardless of their personal condition. As the primary guarantors of equality and justice, member States and public authorities must take decisive action to ensure that LGBTQIA+ individuals can live free from prejudice and fear. This includes creating inclusive environments where their rights are fully protected across all areas of life, in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers, which outlines essential measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Now, more than ever, policymakers and stakeholders have a solemn responsibility and a duty to rise to the moment. We call on all the relevant actors to uphold and reinforce mechanisms that protect LGBTQIA+ youth, from comprehensive legislative safeguards and anti-discrimination policies to accessible mental health and other services. It has to be ensured that schools, sports clubs, health centres, and community organisations are not only safe spaces but also places where diversity is actively embraced and celebrated. We further urge a firm commitment to ensuring that no policy, practice, or rhetoric excludes, marginalises, or leaves any young person behind.

To every young person who has felt left behind: you are seen, you are heard, and you are never alone. We acknowledge the strength it takes to navigate a world that too often responds to diversity with fear, hostility, or indifference. We remain firmly committed to defending human rights, promoting youth participation, and working alongside LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies to dismantle discrimination in all its forms. In these turbulent times, your courage, your solidarity, and your presence can light the way forward.

*The statements of the Advisory Council are published for the purpose of informing the public about the activities of the statutory bodies of the Council of Europe youth sector. The statements reflect the opinions and positions of the Advisory Council and its members. The views expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council of Europe.*