



Section 3

The LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy

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Objective

This section outlines the key elements of an Anti-rumours Strategy to support its design and implementation step-by-step in the field of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). It adopts a human rights perspective that promotes safety, well-being, participation, and belonging, contributing to the creation of more inclusive, discrimination-free environments, with particular attention to mainstreaming an LGBTIQ perspective across governance, participation, and implementation.

Structure and content

This section includes three tools and begins by defining what an Anti-rumours Strategy is and the objectives it pursues. The first tool focuses on describing the key elements to consider before starting to design an Anti-rumours Strategy, ensuring it is consistent with the conceptual framework of the anti-rumours approach. The second tool is a practical guide on how to design an Anti-rumours Strategy step by step. Finally, the third tool identifies the criteria to consider for the creation and sustainability of an Anti-rumours Network within the framework of the strategy.

What is an Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS)?

The Anti-rumours Strategy (ARS) is an initiative that combines public policy – particularly at local level – with the creation of an ecosystem of cooperation between the administration and various civil society actors and citizens.

The strategy seeks to address the challenges posed by disinformation, misinformation, rumours, prejudice, discriminatory narratives, and hate speech that legitimise or normalise the exclusion, violence or violation of the rights of LGBTIQ people and communities. The main goals are preventing discrimination, strengthening equal rights, fostering inclusive and democratic coexistence and respect for diversity.

The ARS focuses on:

- * Promoting critical and reflective thinking.
- * Identifying the roots of stereotypes, prejudices, misinformation, disinformation and discrimination.
- * Challenging discriminatory narratives and creating alternative narratives.
- * Identifying the structural and systemic causes of discrimination.

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- * Strengthening social cohesion and improving community relations.
- * Influencing public discourse and political agendas.
- * Promoting safe, inclusive and participatory spaces that enhance rights, well-being and a sense of belonging.
- * Fostering a community-led response to hate speech, discrimination and anti-rights narratives through a human rights-based approach.

The first ARS was launched in Barcelona in 2010 and has since evolved and expanded to more than 100 cities in over 20 different countries, with the support and commitment of the Council of Europe. Although it initially focused particularly on diversity relating to origin, ethnicity, culture or religion, over time it has come to focus on a very broad concept of diversity, incorporating other dimensions such as, in this case, diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics, recognising that inequalities and discriminatory narratives are constructed on the basis of individual, social and structural factors, which require comprehensive and sustained responses over time.

→ See Tool 14: The key elements of an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy

Designing an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy

In the previous section, we identified the different types of anti-rumours initiatives and actions, which can be implemented in isolation, jointly within the framework of a temporary project or, as in this case, within the framework of a city-wide strategy. An LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy represents a more ambitious level of intervention, as it is based on a political commitment to promote public policy in collaboration with various social actors, with medium- and long-term objectives.

The design of an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy must be based on a genuine political commitment, and although in most cases such strategies have been implemented at city level, driven by local authorities, they have also been implemented at neighbourhood level, in regions or, as in the case of Malta, at national level.

In the case of an LGBTIQ ARS, this commitment also entails an explicit defence of equal rights and an active commitment to preventing exclusionary narratives, misinformation, disinformation and situations of discrimination, violence or exclusion affecting LGBTIQ people, whilst ensuring their meaningful participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of the strategy.

Designing an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy requires the creation of a working Core Team that should receive training to properly integrate the Anti-rumours Approach into the strategy. The design process should be based on a solid assessment that identifies the specific challenges of the context in which the strategy will be implemented, as well as the key priorities. The creation of an Anti-rumours network is another central component of the strategy, along with the development of an initial Anti-rumours action plan to drive its implementation.

This tool provides a concise guide to the steps required to design an LGBTIQ ARS that specifically addresses challenges relating to diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

→ See Tool 15: How to design and implement an LGBTIQ Anti-rumours Strategy step by step

Creating an Anti-rumours network

The objectives set out by the Anti-rumours Strategy can only be achieved if a wide range of social and institutional actors come together and join forces. The idea is to focus on shared values and objectives, and on the need to act across a wide range of fields and sectors, such as migration, education, culture, sport, the voluntary sector, healthcare, the media, commerce, the private sector and, in particular, the institutions themselves, fostering partnerships that enable the incorporation of specialist knowledge on SOGIESC, equality and human rights.

There is no single model for an anti-rumours network. Each city or region promoting an ARS must assess which format best suits its context; it may opt for a more quantitative model involving many Anti-rumours agents, or for a more qualitative one with fewer participants but a higher level of engagement.

However, despite this flexibility, there are certain criteria that help ensure these networks have a positive impact; these relate, amongst others, to the diversity of the network's members. A significant presence and effective participation of representatives from the groups most affected by harmful narratives and discrimination is key, including LGBTIQ organisations and people with diverse lived experiences and an intersectional perspective. But it is also essential to have a range of civil society profiles, as this is the only way to achieve a truly cross-cutting commitment that incorporates different perspectives, profiles and areas of action.

This tool sets out the main criteria to be considered when setting up an Anti-rumours network.

→ See Tool 16: Criteria for setting up an Anti-rumours network

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