COUNCIL OF EUROPE STRATEGY FOR EQUAL RIGHTS FOR LGBTI PEOPLE (2027-2032)



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Foreword

Across Europe, there is a backlash against equality.

It does not stop at political debate. It is amplified online, where hatred can spread at extraordinary speed. Attacks on feminism, equality and so-called "woke" ideas increasingly feed a broader politics of resentment and exclusion.

What is at stake goes beyond LGBTI equality. It is the freedom to live openly and freely, without having to conform to the expectations of the majority. A democracy cannot be measured only by the freedoms it protects for the majority. It must also protect the freedom to live differently.

We have faced this question before.

In 1981, the AIDS epidemic emerged, bringing fear, stigma and discrimination. For many LGBTI people, living openly remained impossible. That same year, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its first judgment concerning the rights of LGBTI people. In *Dudgeon v. the United Kingdom*, it recognised that criminalising consensual same-sex relations violated the right to respect for private life. Much has changed since then.

But the question of who gets to be free remains.

45 years later, across Europe and beyond, organised anti-rights and anti-gender movements are turning LGBTI communities into political targets. The language of "tradition" is increasingly instrumentalised to legitimise exclusion and challenge the universality of human rights. LGBTI people are again being made symbols in a wider struggle over the boundaries of freedom and belonging.

This is why the Council of Europe is adopting its first Strategy for Equal Rights for LGBTI People for 2027-2032. It does not mark the beginning of our commitment to LGBTI equality. It marks a new stage in it: providing a framework for action grounded in the Council of Europe's human rights standards and the commitments undertaken by its member states. It will help turn those commitments into reality by fostering a culture of equality and inclusion; countering disinformation and manipulation; preventing violence and hatred; and strengthening the legal, institutional and regulatory protections that make rights real.

Rights do not protect themselves. They require vigilance, commitment and action. The progress achieved over the past decades cannot be taken for granted. But it shows what is possible when we stand together for equality.

The Council of Europe was founded on the conviction that human rights belong to everyone. This strategy helps make it a reality.

There can be no exception to inclusion.



Alain Berset

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Introduction: the Council of Europe and the human rights of LGBTI people

"Dignity and equality are the foundation of modern European societies. We acknowledge the need to ensure equality and combat any kind of discrimination, as well as the important role the Organisation plays in this regard. We therefore commit to strengthening work towards inclusive societies without marginalisation, exclusion, racism and intolerance."

Reykjavík Declaration

The resilience and legitimacy of democracies depend on equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, and on the ability of all individuals to participate safely, openly and meaningfully in public life. Forty-five years after the European Court of Human Rights delivered its first judgment on the rights of LGBTI people in 1981, the Council of Europe is adopting its first Strategy for Equal Rights for LGBTI People (2027-2032). The Strategy reaffirms our commitment to human rights, equality, and dignity for all, anchored in its core values and in line with relevant European and international standards. It provides a framework for coherent and coordinated action across the Council of Europe to promote equality and prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). It is based on the principle that LGBTI people, like all individuals in the member States, are entitled to the full enjoyment of the rights guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and other international and European instruments, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

The Strategy was developed by the Council of Europe and its member States, in consultation with civil society and other international organisations, to identify needs and formulate targeted responses in the areas where the Council of Europe can be most impactful, ensuring shared ownership and broad engagement.

It aims to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights by LGBTI people, combat discrimination, hate and violence against LGBTI people, address disinformation and misinformation that instrumentalise the rights of LGBTI people, and harmful narratives that affect their lives both in private and public spheres, and to support the member States in maintaining and advancing equality legislation and policies.

Key references of the Council of Europe

The Strategy relies on the Court's jurisprudence and the findings of the Council of Europe's monitoring mechanisms, which provide the evidence base for identifying and addressing implementation gaps and ensuring that LGBTI equality is fully integrated into the Council of Europe's broader efforts to uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Court has consistently asserted that "*democracy does not simply mean that the views of a majority must always prevail: a balance must be achieved which ensures the fair and proper treatment of people from minorities and avoids any abuse of a dominant position*"[1], starting with establishing the decriminalisation of homosexuality with the *Dudgeon v. the United Kingdom* case in 1981 and ultimately stating that laws and measures that reinforce stigma and prejudice and encourage homophobia are *"incompatible with the notions of equality, pluralism and tolerance in a democratic society."*[2]

As outlined in General Policy Recommendation No.17 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons,[3] the rights invoked by the Court in cases involving LGBTI applicants or people supporting LGBTI equality range from protection against degrading treatment, including protection from anti-LGBTI hate speech and violence,[4] and positive obligations to effectively investigate any such treatment,[5] the right to liberty and security,[6] the right to freedom of expression (pertaining to the promotion of the human rights of LGBTI people),[7] the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association,[8] and the right to legal gender recognition without abusive requirements.[9] In the sphere of the protection of the right to respect for family life, the Court has confirmed that transgender individuals[10] and same-sex couples[11] should enjoy the same human rights as the rest of the population. It also applied the principles of non-discrimination and equality for same-sex couples in areas such as tenancy succession,[12] access to health insurance,[13] residence permits,[14] and adoption,[15] and affirmed that States Parties to the European Convention on Human Rights have an obligation to provide legal recognition and protection to same-sex couples.[16]

A milestone was reached with the adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, the world's first international legal instrument to specifically address the rights of LGBT people. It was complemented by Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)7 on equal rights for intersex persons. The setting up of the Committee of Experts on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (ADI-SOGIESC) as a subordinate body of the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) is another significant step, establishing an intergovernmental body to set standards on LGBTI equality and to support the member States in the development and implementation of effective legislative and policy frameworks related to SOGIESC.

Moreover, since the adoption of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, the Council of Europe has increasingly addressed discrimination based on SOGIESC across its institutions and monitoring mechanisms. Key contributions have come from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE),[17] the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities,[18] and the Commissioner for Human Rights.[19] The intergovernmental expert cooperation under the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in various steering committees has addressed many aspects of LGBTI equality, in particular the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH),[20] the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its substructures,[21] the Gender Equality Commission (GEC),[22] the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF),[23] the Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO),[24] and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).[25] These initiatives are complemented by ECRI's country monitoring reports[26] and General Policy Recommendation No. 17[27] on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, but also notably by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR),[28] and the findings of other monitoring bodies.[29] This growing engagement of various sectors and entities of the Council of Europe underpins the need for stronger cooperation and coordination within the Organisation to ensure that equality for LGBTI people is effectively mainstreamed and coherent across all policy areas.

The Strategy for equal rights for LGBTI people (2027-2032): rationale

Context and trends

The third comprehensive review of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity[30] shows that many member States have advanced protections, such as strengthened anti-discrimination frameworks, the inclusion of SOGIESC grounds in hate crime laws, self-determination-based legal gender recognition, and bans on conversion practices. The Court has continued to clarify states' positive obligations in several areas including hate speech, violence, family life and non-discrimination. Recent advances with regard to non-discrimination relating to healthcare, education, and asylum demonstrate the capacity of member States to align national measures with Council of Europe standards. A growing number of states have also recognised multiple and intersectional discrimination in legislative and policy frameworks, providing more comprehensive protection.

However, progress remains uneven across member States. In some contexts, reforms have stalled or been reversed, often through legislative and constitutional measures weakening existing protections, reinforced by political rhetoric and rising levels of hostility against LGBTI people. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and ECRI have highlighted this as part of a wider democratic backsliding and attacks on the rule of law in Europe. Hate speech and hate crime are on the rise, especially online, despite strengthened[31] legal and policy responses. Civil society organisations face increasing restrictions affecting their ability to operate freely and effectively. Restrictions on LGBTI-related educational materials and age-appropriate awareness-raising activities have further entrenched stigma, particularly affecting young people. Although visibility has increased through a growing number of Pride marches, the environment in which many of these events take place poses risks to freedom of assembly and expression. Across other policy areas such as employment, housing, health, and education, progress remains uneven, with groups at higher risk of discrimination and exclusion including transgender, intersex, and migrant LGBTI people facing persistent and systemic barriers.

Rising challenges

While it is not a new phenomenon, anti-LGBTI sentiment is intensifying and is amplified by the use of digital technologies. The spread of misinformation and disinformation about LGBTI people fuels stigma, hate speech, and violence, while also eroding public trust in democratic institutions, undermining international and European human rights standards, hindering participation in public life and weakening the social fabric. While LGBTI individuals bear the immediate impact and consequences, it is the resilience of Europe's institutional human rights infrastructure and the foundations of democracy that are threatened when equality and dignity cease to be valued, and pluralism is no longer upheld as a societal objective.

Moreover, while advances in technology have the potential to enhance the enjoyment of human rights and democratic participation of LGBTI people, as underlined by ECRI in its General Policy Recommendation No. 17, some forms of technology may also be used to undermine the privacy, security and equality of LGBTI people.[32] This is notably the case for algorithmic systems, including artificial intelligence (AI), which may give rise to biased profiling and facial recognition, intrusive surveillance, misuse of biometric data, and the reproduction of LGBTI-phobic or stereotypical content by large language models, bearing also in mind that in the evolving nature of AI systems, discrimination can also occur by proxy.[33] These risks intersect with technology-facilitated violence, including online abuse, harassment, harmful digital forgeries,[34] and threats that are perpetrated or amplified, generated or reproduced through AI-driven tools. Such violence not only causes harm to those affected but also restricts their ability to participate safely in public and political life as well as online spaces, driving individuals – particularly LBTI women and girls – out of these spaces altogether.[35] In addition, the misuse of AI enables the automated production and targeted dissemination of disinformation, further deepening polarisation and undermining the integrity of democratic debate.

The need for the Strategy

> "We consider democracy as the only means to ensure that everyone can live in a peaceful, prosperous and free society. We will meet our obligations under international law. We will prevent and resist democratic backsliding on our continent, including in situations of emergency, crisis and armed conflicts, and we will stand firm against authoritarian tendencies by enhancing our shared commitments as member States of the Council of Europe."
>
> Reykjavík Declaration

The challenges outlined highlight the need to strengthen Europe's commitment to equality, human dignity and democratic security. The Council of Europe has a fundamental role to play in closing protection gaps by supporting member States in implementing established standards and positive obligations. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, forward-looking and coordinated approach at all levels of governance, ensuring that equality is effectively safeguarded and rights are realised in practice.

Reaching the goals set by the Reykjavík Declaration requires sustained and coordinated action at the level of the Council of Europe to support governments in designing and implementing sustainable measures to advance equality, strengthening partnerships with civil society, and fostering synergies with other national and international actors. Effective responses demand proactive and embedded strategies. Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms, national authorities, and civil society have demonstrated that legally precise, operationally robust, and structurally coordinated action is needed. This includes stronger enforcement of hate crime, hate speech and anti-discrimination legislation, inclusive and consultative policymaking, adherence to the rule of law with judicial and administrative proceedings easily accessible and available to individuals and civil society organisations, countering disinformation and misinformation, and broad alliances across human rights and democratic actors. Where such measures are aligned across institutions and systems, protections become more durable and resistant to political, societal and cultural regression.

The Strategy directly supports the New Democratic Pact for Europe by addressing the democratic, societal and institutional challenges that underpin current backsliding trends. Both frameworks recognise that

equality, dignity, and pluralism are essential conditions for resilient democracies, and that their erosion weakens trust in institutions and fuels division and violence in society.

The current context and shortcomings in protection expose LGBTI people to discrimination, violence, and marginalisation, undermining equal participation in political, social, economic, and cultural life and weakening democratic resilience. The Strategy responds to contemporary challenges by providing a renewed and comprehensive framework for action and covers all protected characteristics: it ensures that individuals are effectively protected against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, thereby reinforcing the Council of Europe's role as the guarantor of equality and human dignity for all.

The Strategy for equal rights for LGBTI people (2027-2032): aim and transversal approaches

Embedded in wider Council of Europe efforts, the Strategy's objective is to **uphold the dignity and equality of LGBTI people and promote and protect their human rights by fostering a safe and inclusive society free from discrimination, harm, and violence**. It is articulated in the following four strategic objectives:

1. **Fostering recognition of equal rights and dignity of LGBTI people in society and promoting a culture of respect and inclusion to counter stigmatisation and intolerance**
2. **Countering disinformation and manipulation of information regarding LGBTI people to uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law**
3. **Preventing and combating violence and hatred to uphold the rights of LGBTI people**
4. **Establishing, safeguarding and strengthening protection through effective legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks**

Comprehensive human rights approach

The Strategy recognises that the rights of LGBTI people are indivisible, universal, and interdependent on the broader framework of human rights protections in Europe. Rooted in this understanding, the Strategy seeks to address complex and cross-cutting issues by building on existing efforts and ensuring that responses are effective, coordinated, coherent, and complementary across all Council of Europe bodies. It sets out priority areas for action, informed by the third comprehensive review of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, while complementing other Council of Europe strategies such as the Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029) and the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022–2027). In so doing, it aligns with the Organisation's broader commitment to countering democratic backsliding and strengthening the effective implementation of human rights standards through legal, policy and technical support.

Strategic objectives

Overall objective

Upholding the dignity and equality of LGBTI people and promoting and protecting their human rights by fostering a safe and inclusive society free from discrimination, harm, and violence

Strategic objective 1

Fostering recognition of equal rights and dignity of LGBTI people in society and promoting a culture of respect and inclusion to counter stigmatisation and intolerance

According to ECRI, "across the area of the Council of Europe, LGBTI people still experience high rates of discrimination and abuse, including violence due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics [...], which may be rooted in [...] sexism, misogyny, patriarchy and rigid beliefs about identity, body, sexuality and gender roles."[36] The persistence of prejudice and intolerance towards LGBTI people often leads to restricting their full participation in society and their full enjoyment of human rights. Misinformation and prejudice result in reinforcing stereotypes, undermining cohesion in society. In this context, promoting knowledge and understanding of the realities and lived experiences of LGBTI people is essential to counter fear, prejudice and hatred. Moreover, outputs produced by AI systems can, if poorly designed, trained on biased data, or misused, reproduce and amplify existing inequalities, for example in access to education, employment, housing, social services, healthcare, or justice. Algorithmic profiling can expose LGBTI individuals to surveillance, "outing" or discriminatory treatment, while generative technologies can be used to produce and spread stereotypes at unprecedented speed and scale.[37] Knowledge and understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTI people and the impact of discrimination and violence on their lived experience including intersecting identities are key to ensuring effective responses. Cultivating acceptance, celebrating diversity, and establishing inclusive practices across communities and institutions, where all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, can participate fully, thrive authentically, and contribute their unique perspectives and talents, is central to a democratic society. The Council of Europe aims to build the capacity of key institutions at local, regional and national levels to enhance education and awareness on SOGIESC issues and engage the media to ensure ethical and accurate reporting, including through mainstreaming SOGIESC into the Council of Europe's intercultural inclusion approach. Particularly, equality bodies and national human rights institutions are crucial for the promotion of equal rights for LGBTI people. The effectiveness of their action needs support through providing them with adequate mandates and resources and through ensuring their independence, in line with ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 2.

Such efforts will contribute to a society where LGBTI people and their families can enjoy and exercise their rights without fear of discrimination or hostility, building on the Council of Europe standards and the well-established jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and rejecting policies and decisions which embody "a predisposed bias on the part of a heterosexual majority against a homosexual minority".[38]

Specific objective 1.1: Build the capacities, and ensure SOGIESC inclusive mandates, adequate resourcing and independence, of equality bodies, national human rights institutions, other public authorities at local,

regional and national levels, and where appropriate other relevant institutions as well as parliamentarians and political representatives, to:

- enhance knowledge and understanding of SOGIESC matters and increase awareness of the benefits for the whole of society of the inclusion, full participation and active citizenship of LGBTI people, and
- address the online and offline discrimination and exclusion experienced by LGBTI people, which stem from stigma and intolerance and are enhanced by the use of digital technologies.

Specific objective 1.2: Increase efforts and build capacity of all relevant stakeholders to guarantee an inclusive environment in schools, workplaces, and other public services and institutions, challenge stereotypes and address misconceptions about LGBTI people.

Specific objective 1.3: Increase the awareness and capacities of journalists and other media actors, media regulatory authorities and the communication officials of public authorities to report in an ethical and accurate manner on SOGIESC matters so as to contribute to:

- fostering social acceptance, countering prejudice, gendered stereotypes, and misinformation among the general public, and
- promoting knowledge of different groups within LGBTI communities.

Specific objective 1.4: Ensure that public authorities provide for:

- the recognition of LGBTI families on an equal basis, including in relation to mutual rights and obligations of same-sex partners, parental rights and obligations, equal enjoyment of services by LGBTI families and for the cross-border recognition of official documents,
- the legal recognition of gender identity through quick, transparent, and accessible legal gender recognition procedures, free from abusive requirements in order to guarantee dignity, legal certainty, equal treatment and full participation in society.

Specific objective 1.5: Support member States in ensuring the highest attainable standard of health and access to healthcare for LGBTI people, and the full depathologisation of LGBTI identities.

Specific objective 1.6: Support member States in addressing human rights violations affecting LGBTI people, including past harms.

Specific objective 1.7: Support the role of LGBTI civil society as a key stakeholder in promoting equal rights and dignity of LGBTI people as well as a culture of respect and inclusion to counter stigmatisation and intolerance.

Council of Europe action in this area will seek to, inter alia:

- Work with member States in building the capacity of equality bodies and national human rights institutions to effectively address the discrimination and human rights infringements that LGBTI people encounter in many spheres of life including through the provision of expertise, peer exchanges and knowledge sharing (Specific objective 1.1).
- Engage with parliamentarians and political actors to strengthen their role as promoters and defenders of equality and dignity, ensuring that political discourse contributes to inclusion and does not perpetuate stigma, prejudice or misinformation about LGBTI people (Specific objective 1.1).
- Work with member States and other stakeholders to conduct research and collect data on public perceptions, challenges, and discrimination, including when enabled by SOGIESC-based biases of AI algorithms, faced by LGBTI people in different spheres of life to inform policy development (Specific objective 1.1).
- Provide targeted and accessible capacity building and training to all relevant actors, including on recognising and addressing bias, stereotypes and risks of discrimination (Specific objective 1.1).
- Mark annually the International Day Against LGBTI-phobia celebrated on 17 May to raise awareness of SOGIESC matters among member States, and support wider civil society initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the equality of rights of LGBTI persons, including through the commemoration of key days and events (Specific objectives 1.1 and 1.7).
- Ensure that the practices of the Council of Europe in relation to staff and visitors and the organisation of events are LGBTI-inclusive, including through the development and implementation of policies and guidelines as well as capacity building of staff (Specific objective 1.2).

- Work with public authorities and other stakeholders, including LGBTI civil society and the youth sector, to ensure safe and inclusive learning environments in formal, non-formal and informal education, including through SOGIESC inclusive curricula, effective anti-bullying and diversity, equality and inclusion policies, and capacity building of educators, as well as to disseminate existing and develop new resources (Specific objective 1.2).
- Work with member States and other stakeholders such as employers, trade unions, professional bodies and LGBTI civil society to promote safe and SOGIESC-inclusive workplaces, particularly for those most at risk of social exclusion and intersectional or multiple discrimination, including through anti-discrimination and equality legislation and policy, raising awareness of discrimination faced by LGBTI people in the workplace, highlighting the positive contribution of LGBTI people in the world of work, mentorship programmes, peer learning platforms, and capacity building (Specific objective 1.2).
- Disseminate existing and develop further guidelines and tools, and build the capacity of journalists and other media actors, media regulatory authorities and communication officials of public authorities, to report in an ethical and accurate manner on SOGIESC issues, combat stigma and prejudice on SOGIESC grounds, raise awareness on the lived experiences of LGBTI people and improve the visibility, representation, understanding, and dissemination of accurate information, particularly regarding those who are underrepresented or at a heightened risk of discrimination (Specific objective 1.3).
- Work with member States in developing legal protections for all couples, through marriage or civil union, striving to align all rights and obligations for all couples, and in ensuring that parenting rights and options available under national law are applied in a non-discriminatory manner to all individuals irrespective of SOGIESC (Specific objective 1.4).
- Promote the ratification by member States of instruments supporting the recognition of public acts which are inclusive of LGBTI families, to further support cross-border recognition and free movement of LGBTI people and their families[39] (Specific objective 1.4).
- Work with member States to ensure that legal gender recognition procedures are available, quick, transparent and accessible, free from abusive requirements in line with the jurisprudence of the Court, and moving towards a self-determination model (Specific objective 1.4).
- Work with member States in developing LGBTI-inclusive health policies and services, including ensuring access to high-quality, accessible, depathologised, and rights-based gender-affirming and trans-specific healthcare consistent with international standards (Specific objective 1.5).
- Work with member States in adopting and implementing laws and policies to introduce comprehensive bans on conversion practices and, in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)7 on equal rights for intersex persons, prohibit non-urgent medical interventions on a person's sex characteristics and in particular children, without their consent (Specific objectives 1.5 and 1.6).
- Work with member States towards formally recognising, pardoning and expunging historical convictions under laws regarding same-sex sexual activity, which have since been repealed or abolished, and other offences that have specifically targeted LGBTI people and identities, and which now enjoy protections under the law (Specific objective 1.6).
- Work with member States to address the impacts of historical criminalisation and convictions under laws regarding same-sex sexual activity, which have since been repealed or abolished, and other offences that have specifically targeted LGBTI people and identities and which now enjoy protections under the law (Specific objective 1.6).
- Work with member States to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to funding opportunities, including to long-term funding, for LGBTI civil society organisations at all levels, including international (Specific objective 1.7).
- Support member States to engage in meaningful dialogue with LGBTI civil society, for example for thematic and comprehensive reviews of Committee of Ministers Recommendations (Specific objective 1.7).

Strategic objective 2

Countering disinformation and manipulation of information regarding LGBTI people to uphold democracy, human rights and the rule of law

Prejudices and bias against social groups at risk of discrimination may stem from misconceptions and unfounded fears but also from disinformation. They significantly increase the risks of violations of fundamental

human rights and are conducive to the erosion of the values on which Europe is built. LGBTI people are amongst those groups most often stigmatised. This negatively impacts their participation in public life, civic engagement, and trust in institutions. As other groups at risk of discrimination (including racialised communities, refugees and migrants) report similar experiences, intersectional approaches and cooperation among affected groups can strengthen responses and contribute to the protection of a dignified public discourse.

The Court has clarified through longstanding and clearly established jurisprudence that attitudes or stereotypes prevailing over a certain period of time among the majority of members of society may not serve as justifiable grounds for discriminating against people solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.[40] Specifically, it held that these attitudes and stereotypes, references to traditions or general assumptions in a particular country cannot of themselves be considered to amount to sufficient justification for the differential treatment, any more than similar negative attitudes towards those of a different "race",[41] origin or colour.[42] The Court has further stated that adopting laws that reinforced stigma and prejudice and encouraged homophobia was incompatible with democratic values.[43]

It is essential to address the intentional dissemination of stereotypes and unfounded misconceptions of LGBTI people's rights and lives. Divisive narratives aimed at sowing fear and justifying the obstruction of equal rights can result in violence and jeopardise the rule of law.

Attacks on freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and the safety of journalists and of human rights defenders, including in online spaces, necessitate targeted actions. This includes building an inclusive and enabling online and offline civic space in which civil society organisations can operate free from threats, harassment or attacks.[44] It requires a robust understanding of the prevalence and consequences of hate speech and of the manipulation of information, including their cross-border nature and at times State-sponsored proliferation, not only on the communities targeted, but also on democratic societies at large. In this regard, an effective, sustained and multi-stakeholder response at all levels is key.

Specific objective 2.1: Foster multi-stakeholder platforms to promote inclusive discourse and combat intolerance, hate speech and violence against LGBTI people and actively address disinformation and narratives designed to create division and polarisation, including those fuelled by SOGIESC-based AI algorithmic biases.

Specific objective 2.2: Build the capacity of public authorities and relevant stakeholders, such as LGBTI civil society, media and journalists, and faith-based organisations, to establish, maintain and communicate fact-based and positive narratives, counter disinformation and build public resilience.

Specific objective 2.3: Strengthen the capacity and resilience of institutions at local, regional, national and international levels, LGBTI human rights defenders, civil society actors as well as the private sector as key stakeholders in upholding and protecting democratic values.

Specific objective 2.4: Address disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) that targets LGBTI people and exploits pre-existing social divisions to polarise societies, undermine trust in democratic institutions and weaken human rights protections.

Council of Europe action in this area will seek to, inter alia:

- Disseminate existing and develop further knowledge and tools and use relevant platforms to facilitate networking, exchange of views and coherent action within and across the Organisation as well as with member States, local and regional authorities, international partners, civil society, and other stakeholders on the impact of and effective responses to democratic backsliding including outreach to and training for parliamentarians and political leaders to counteract disinformation and strengthen human rights-based narratives (Specific objectives 2.1 and 2.2).
- Ensure that platforms, cooperation programmes,[45] and tools developed to counter disinformation address the specific challenges faced by particularly targeted groups within the LGBTI communities (Specific objective 2.2).
- Support public authorities, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to recognise, monitor and respond to disinformation and anti-rights narratives, in particular anti-gender rhetoric, including those disseminated through AI-based technologies, that create divisions among groups, weaken solidarity between human rights and equality movements and undermine equality and democratic participation (Specific objective 2.2).
- Support, engage, and facilitate discussions with LGBTI human rights defenders, civil society and others impacted by disinformation campaigns through communities of practice that enable knowledge

sharing, meaningful consultation, and the identification of strategies to respond to emerging threats to democracy (Specific objective 2.2).

- Conduct further research and analysis to deepen the knowledge and understanding of the impact of the use of technology on civic space, including the impact of technology-facilitated violence on civil society and LGBTI human rights defenders (Specific objectives 2.2 and 2.3).
- Support the coherent and consistent integration of the protection of the rights of LGBTI people in the work of the Organisation to uphold democratic values and counter anti-rights rhetoric (Specific objectives 2.2 and 2.3).
- Strengthen the capacity of the Council of Europe to identify and address the threats posed by disinformation to democratic processes, including respect for the equality and human rights of LGBTI people (Specific objective 2.3).
- Mainstream equality including on SOGIESC in all the Council of Europe's work in relation to disinformation and FIMI, and ensure the development of effective responses to FIMI that address the systematic targeting of LGBTI people (Specific objective 2.4).

Strategic objective 3

Preventing and combating violence and hatred to uphold the rights of LGBTI people

LGBTI people remain disproportionately affected by violence, hate crimes and hate speech driven by prejudices and stereotypes, exacerbated by inadequate legal protections and a lack of accountability.[46] Furthermore, religion, tradition, culture, political opinions or ideas of honour must never be used to justify hate, discrimination or violence against LGBTI people. Despite some progress in legislative protections, these forms of violence remain widespread across Europe. Under the European Convention on Human Rights and the well-established case law of the Court, member States are required to prevent, investigate and respond effectively to such acts. These obligations are reinforced through Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 on combating hate crime, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech and Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, which articulate comprehensive standards for legislative and policy responses. Where hate crime provisions exist, these may not equally protect LGBTI people either because SOGIESC grounds are not specifically mentioned or because the protection is restricted to certain grounds and not others. Hate-filled anti-LGBTI rhetoric in both online and offline spaces increasingly puts the safety and well-being of LGBTI people, including young people, at risk; the same is true for those engaged in protecting the rights of LGBTI people. Online hate speech forms part of the wider phenomenon of technology-facilitated violence, including the exacerbation of online hate speech through AI system-generated biases, which disproportionately affect LBTI women and girls with intersecting identities and increases both their exposure to harm and the severity of its impact.[47] Where protections do exist, they might not cover particularly harmful actions such as conversion practices, which call for specific bans.

Many cases of violence, hate crime and hate speech go unreported due to mistrust in authorities or fear of LGBTI-phobic reprisals and may be exacerbated where politicians engage in hate speech. Stigmatisation, social exclusion linked to socio-economic status, migrant background or family rejection affecting young people, as well as discrimination against LGBTI people more broadly, contribute to increased vulnerability, including in some cases a heightened risk of trafficking in human beings. While all LGBTI people face an increased risk of gender-based violence, for women and girls within LBTI communities, these risks are compounded and often manifest in sexualised attacks (e.g. so-called "corrective" rape) as well as violence within the family and domestic settings and online abuse. Combating gender-based violence should include the involvement of men and boys. According to ECRI, "there are numerous examples of national and other authorities across Europe either failing to protect LGBTI people and groups from hate crimes, including violence or hate speech amounting to incitement to violence, particularly online, or refusing to properly investigate and prosecute such crimes when they occur, often in response to attempts by LGBTI people to exercise their rights to freedom of assembly or freedom of expression."[48]

The Council of Europe, based on the application of its strategic triangle of standard setting, monitoring and cooperation is well placed to promote comprehensive hate crime and hate speech legislation, strengthen the capacity of police services and judicial actors to investigate and prosecute hate crime, and improve reporting and support mechanisms for victims. Civil society plays an important role in awareness raising, monitoring, advocacy and victim support in member States. Enhancing cooperation with, and strengthening

the capacity of civil society, including through adequate funding, alongside ensuring adequate responses by public authorities at all levels and raising public awareness of the consequences of such violence, will be key to fostering safer and more inclusive societies.

Specific objective 3.1: Ensure that comprehensive, effective and accessible hate crime and hate speech protection measures encompassing all SOGIESC grounds are introduced and enforced nationwide, while fostering political leadership and accountability in upholding these protections.

Specific objective 3.2: Support equality bodies, national human rights institutions, police services, prosecutors, the judiciary, and other public authorities as well as LGBTI civil society and other stakeholders, including faith-based organisations, religious leaders, and employers, in the development, dissemination and implementation of awareness-raising as well as capacity-building tools to address violence and hatred towards LGBTI people in all contexts, including when manifested through conversion practices.

Specific objective 3.3: Establish or enhance mechanisms and capacities for the prevention, recording, reporting, monitoring, investigation, and prosecution of hate crimes and hate speech, including those based on SOGIESC grounds, online and offline as well as technology-facilitated discrimination and violence, also when they are committed by politicians.

Specific objective 3.4: Ensure that national frameworks and responses to violence, including gender-based violence in line with the Istanbul Convention, effectively address intersectional forms of violence, prevent protection gaps, and ensure access to appropriate support for LGBTI people, while fostering coordination and information-sharing across existing national frameworks and mechanisms.

Specific objective 3.5: Support LGBTI civil society in their established role as key providers of support services to LGBTI victims of violence and hate, complementing State responsibility and support the coordination with other providers of support services, in particular for victims of gender-based violence.

Specific objective 3.6: Encourage employers, in consultation with social partners, to establish safe, confidential and victim-centred mechanisms for reporting SOGIESC-based harassment at work, ensuring linkages with police services where hate-crime thresholds are met.

Council of Europe action in this area will seek to, inter alia:

- Provide legal and policy expertise to support member State legislative reform of hate crime and hate speech laws that are inclusive of SOGIESC grounds and in line with Council of Europe standards, including through the proper execution of Court judgments (Specific objective 3.1).
- Engage with parliamentarians, journalists and media professionals to combat the vilification and scapegoating of LGBTI people in the public discourse, foster accountability, and speak out strongly against SOGIESC-based hate speech (Specific objective 3.1).
- Engage with member State police services and other authorities to ensure that LGBTI people can fully enjoy their rights to freedom of assembly and expression, for instance around events such as Pride and that hate incidents in such contexts are effectively prevented, investigated and prosecuted (Specific objective 3.1).
- Support member States' implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 on combating hate crime and Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on hate speech and disseminate and review existing tools, develop further resources on combating hate speech and violence, and support their effective implementation through co-operation activities and capacity-building (Specific objectives 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, and 3.6).
- Coordinate and implement awareness-raising initiatives in member States on the harm caused to democratic societies by hatred and violence, both offline and online against LGBTI people, including the specific harms caused by conversion practices, and address these such as by coordinating the sharing of best practices between member States and supporting the implementation of legal bans in cooperation with civil society (Specific objective 3.2).
- Implement and enhance capacity building measures, including by facilitating best practice exchanges, for police services, prosecutors and the judiciary to support identification of the hate element in the investigation and adjudication of hate crimes and hate speech motivated by SOGIESC and the effective collection and analysis of disaggregated data, while ensuring that these measures factor in intersectional dimensions of discrimination and hate, including in relation to gender-based violence (Specific objectives 3.3 and 3.6).
- Build capacities of LGBTI civil society and other stakeholders, including faith-based organisations, to prevent and combat SOGIESC-based hatred, and to provide assistance to victims of anti-LGBTI violence,

in collaboration with victim support services, in particular services for victims of gender-based violence (Specific objectives 3.3 and 3.5).

- Address intersectional forms of violence and discrimination through the dissemination and implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls and Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 on equality and artificial intelligence (Specific objective 3.3).
- Strengthen the capacities of relevant actors to recognise, monitor and tackle technology-facilitated discrimination and violence, including against LBTI women and girls (Specific objective 3.3).

Strategic objective 4

Establishing, safeguarding and strengthening protection through effective legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks

With its legal instruments, the Council of Europe provides member States with critical tools to both improve and enforce protections for LGBTI people. While progress has been made, rollback efforts and uneven implementation of human rights standards persist among member States. Legal uncertainty, lack of data, and gaps in protection leave LGBTI people vulnerable to discrimination, violence and other crimes which exploit their vulnerability.

As people's lives and public participation increasingly move online, the Council of Europe's standard-setting work also provides an important foundation for addressing challenges to non-discrimination and equality in digital spaces, including those linked to artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.[49] At the same time, it offers technical assistance to countries in need of guidance on strengthening and implementing their legislation and policy frameworks, establishing equality bodies, ombudsperson institutions and national human rights institutions, as well as building the capacities of public authorities, national and local institutions and human rights actors.

Several Committee of Ministers decisions and action plans underscore the importance of effective implementation of Council of Europe standards through the execution of relevant judgments of the Court. The Council of Europe's dynamic model of standard setting, monitoring and cooperation helps identify gaps in protections and works to address implementation shortfalls. The implementation and monitoring of other Council of Europe instruments and policy frameworks should also inform and complement the implementation of the present Strategy. The Council of Europe is therefore uniquely positioned to monitor and safeguard existing protections, develop new standards, and provide technical assistance to ensure legal frameworks are inclusive and effectively implemented. By strengthening institutional capacity and enabling civil society participation, this objective aims to reinforce human rights protections.

Specific objective 4.1: Safeguard existing protections and develop further Council of Europe standards, and encourage ratification of Council of Europe and other relevant international standards that contribute to the enjoyment and protection of equal rights for LGBTI people in Europe.

Specific objective 4.2: Ensure effective implementation of Council of Europe and other human rights standards of relevance to LGBTI people in the member States, through technical assistance in research and data collection as well as in monitoring, adopting or reforming legislation and policies.

Specific objective 4.3: Explore new areas of intervention to protect LGBTI people at heightened risk of discrimination, social exclusion, violence, marginalisation, and poverty, taking into account their lived realities and their particular vulnerability to certain forms of violence and crimes, and adopting an intersectional approach.

Specific objective 4.4: Establish or enhance the capacities of public authorities and all relevant institutions at local, regional and national levels, in particular in the judiciary, police services, education, housing, social services, health, employment, youth and migration sectors, to implement, where applicable, legislation and policies protecting the rights and dignity of LGBTI people, including through training and awareness-raising on SOGIESC.

Specific objective 4.5: Establish or enhance the capacities of LGBTI civil society organisations to meaningfully participate in national and international processes related to relevant policy making, monitoring and cooperation, allowing for their substantial, timely, and transparent engagement and contribution, including through long-term funding.

Specific objective 4.6: Support member States in enacting and enforcing comprehensive equality legislation in employment that encompasses all SOGIESC grounds across public, private and self-employment, and addresses digital forms of work.

Council of Europe action in this area will seek to, inter alia:

- Provide technical and legal expertise in the development and implementation of national action plans that aim to improve national anti-discrimination frameworks that are inclusive of SOGIESC as protected grounds and address intersectional discrimination (Specific objectives 4.1 and 4.2).
- Support best practice exchanges between member State equality bodies and national human rights institutions to ensure that discrimination based on SOGIESC is properly addressed through available remedies (Specific objectives 4.1 and 4.2).
- Support public authorities in ensuring that a comprehensive set of measures is in place to promote equality and to prevent and combat anti-LGBTI discrimination in the context of AI systems (Specific objective 4.1).
- Cooperate with national institutions and actors to guarantee alignment of national laws and practices with European standards, including through the PACE Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe (Specific objective 4.2).
- Support member States in ensuring that their national frameworks allow for LGBTI civil society organisations to be established and legally recognised without discrimination including through the repeal of any provisions that effectively hinder their ability to function (Specific objective 4.2).
- Support member States in the execution of Court judgments related to SOGIESC and build the capacity of LGBTI civil society to support them in engaging with Council of Europe mechanisms (Specific objectives 4.2 and 4.5).
- Develop knowledge and expertise on legislative measures that address SOGIESC-based discrimination in all aspects of life, while applying an intersectional lens, such as through thematic reviews of Committee of Ministers Recommendations, the development of policy recommendations and the dissemination of best practices (Specific objective 4.3).
- Support member States in adopting and implementing targeted measures that address the distinct needs of LGBTI groups at a heightened risk of discrimination, exclusion, and violence, as well as other crimes including trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence and ensure their access to victim support mechanisms (Specific objective 4.3).
- Strengthen the capacity of member States to develop public policy and deliver public services that are LGBTI-inclusive by systematically integrating SOGIESC perspectives into public policy-making and monitoring frameworks, especially by ensuring meaningful engagement and consultation with LGBTI civil society and facilitating cooperation of civil society with parliamentarians in their legislative and oversight role (Specific objectives 4.4 and 4.5).
- Support member States in ensuring that appropriate frameworks are in place that prevent digital technologies, including AI, from perpetuating existing prejudices or discrimination based on SOGIESC, especially through the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence (Specific objectives 4.4 and 4.6).
- Support member States in addressing issues arising from emerging digital forms of work, including AI-enabled management and platform work and promote training for labour inspectorates and other regulatory bodies on algorithmic biases (Specific objective 4.6).

Intersectional approach, mainstreaming, and coordination

In the implementation of this Strategy, due account should be taken of the diversity of lived realities of LGBTI people and communities, as well as the increased risks of discrimination, hatred and violence within certain groups. In line with ECRI's GPR No. 17, the Strategy recognises that the "extent to which an LGBTI person may face intolerance based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics may be significantly shaped, altered or compounded by other key aspects of identity or lived realities, such as refugee status or belonging to the Roma or Traveller communities", and that "in seeking to effectively tackle anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination, it is vital to explicitly address the many ways in which LGBTI-phobia intersects with other phenomena, including racism, xenophobia, sexism, ableism and religious intolerance."[50] To avoid a siloed approach to policymaking that would only exacerbate these inequalities and leave the most vulnerable unprotected, this Strategy applies an intersectional approach[51] throughout, in line with the Reykjavík Declaration,[52] recognising how SOGIESC-related discrimination, exclusion and violence intersect across SOGIESC grounds and with grounds such as sex, gender, "race", colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.[53] Moreover, the Strategy acknowledges that LGBTI people may themselves perpetrate hate, discrimination and violence against particular LGBTI sub-groups, such as in the case of trans-exclusionary actors, and that LGBTI people with intersecting identities may experience hate, discrimination and violence from those with whom they share an intersecting identity such as "race" or religion. The Council of Europe's institutional framework, long-standing leadership in upholding human rights, and experience in enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation, place it in a unique position to craft tailored yet flexible solutions to foster inclusion. A gender equality and youth perspective are to be consistently sought, in line with the broader Council of Europe efforts.

By mainstreaming SOGIESC considerations across all relevant policy domains – notably social rights, education, employment, health, gender equality, youth policy, children's rights, Roma and Traveller inclusion, asylum and migration, sport, environment, rule of law, democratic participation, media, freedom of expression and the fight against human trafficking and economic crime – the Strategy ensures that the rights of LGBTI people are not treated as an isolated issue but woven into the broader fabric of European governance and human rights protection.

Through enhanced institutional coordination, stronger partnerships with other international organisations, and closer collaboration with civil society, the Strategy reinforces the Council of Europe's role as a guardian of equality, dignity, and pluralism.

By integrating a human rights-based, cross-sectoral, and intersectional approach throughout, it seeks to deliver a more inclusive and resilient European human rights framework where no one is left behind.

Institutional setting and working methods

Institutional setting

Implementation will be coordinated within the Council of Europe by the Committee of Experts on SOGIESC (ADI-SOGIESC) under the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and the SOGIESC Unit, engaging key bodies such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, Observer States to the Council of Europe, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Department for the Execution of Judgments, Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), Gender Equality Commission (GEC), Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), Steering Committee for Human Rights in the fields of Biomedicine and Health (CDBIO), Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI), other substructures under CDADI, the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ), Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), as well as other bodies of the Council of Europe engaged in related work.

The Strategy also situates itself within a broader global and regional policy framework. Collaboration with international organisations such as the European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations agencies will ensure alignment with broader human rights objectives. At European level, it is designed to complement the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030 adopted by the European Commission, ensuring coherence while reinforcing common objectives. By seeking complementarity with the EU's priorities and supporting cross-regional cooperation, the Council of Europe Strategy contributes to a stronger, more coordinated European response to democratic backsliding. Common priorities include combating harassment and violence targeting LGBTI people, both offline and online with particular attention to the risks posed by AI systems, combating social exclusion, and banning conversion practices. This cooperation is notably secured through mutual participation in both organisations' intergovernmental structures, namely the Council of Europe's ADI-SOGIESC, and the European Commission's group of experts on LGBTIQ+ equality. At the global level, the Strategy is firmly anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[54] and reflects the overarching principle of "leaving no one behind".

Working methods

The Strategy will employ a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral approach, integrating standard-setting, monitoring, and cooperation frameworks. This will involve engaging with all sectors of the Council of Europe, ensuring that the bodies support and actively contribute to the achievement of the goal and strategic objectives of this Strategy. They are invited to take initiatives within the scope of their respective mandates and resources. To stimulate and facilitate this process, the following elements complete the Council of Europe institutional setting for LGBTI equality.

The ADI-SOGIESC, as subordinate structure to CDADI, whose mission is to steer the Council of Europe's intergovernmental work to promote equality for all and build more inclusive societies, will advise and liaise with relevant intergovernmental bodies, providing expertise and a forum for exchange on good practices and

issues of concern. The ADI-SOGIESC will further work to mainstream LGBTI equality in the functioning, policies, programmes and activities of the respective bodies and structures of the Council of Europe, and will identify opportunities to develop new measures and activities to promote equality of rights for LGBTI people.

The SOGIESC Inter-secretariat Task Force's mission is to share information and expertise, provide visibility of results, identify opportunities for joint action and make proposals to facilitate the implementation of this Strategy. The SOGIESC Unit convenes and chairs the meetings of the Task Force, which take place at least twice a year.

In order to assess progress in the implementation of the Strategy, the ADI-SOGIESC will regularly take stock of results achieved, taking due account of reports prepared by Council of Europe monitoring bodies, in particular ECRI, and will prepare mid-term and final reports on its implementation, which will be submitted to the Committee of Ministers, to assess its impact. The Council of Europe's focus on fostering peer-to-peer exchanges and assisting in the follow-up to recommendations of the monitoring mechanisms through technical assistance will ensure that member States receive the necessary support to comply with their human rights obligations.

Partnerships

Partnerships with government authorities, local and regional authorities, parliamentarians and parliamentary institutions, and other relevant bodies will ensure the effective implementation and follow-up of the Strategy. Additionally, collaboration and coordination with the aforementioned international and regional partners, including the EU, the International Commission on Civil Status (ICCS) and the HCCH (Hague Conference on Private International Law), OSCE, OECD and UN agencies, as well as equality bodies, national human rights institutions, and their respective networks, will be reinforced to ensure policy coherence and resource sharing. The Strategy will also engage LGBTI civil society organisations and human rights defenders, including to provide on-the-ground insights into emerging challenges. Non-member States may also contribute by sharing good practices in line with the Strategy's objectives.

Communication and visibility

Strategic communication will promote awareness of the Strategy, ensuring visibility across the Council of Europe bodies, as well as at national and international levels, building notably on the established Council of Europe methodologies on positive narratives to deflect anti-rights rhetoric. Awareness campaigns and public engagement initiatives will be implemented to counteract misinformation and promote factual, rights-based narratives about LGBTI people. This will involve collaborating with the media, academic institutions, and other relevant stakeholders and networks to ensure effective dissemination of information and visibility of the Strategy and its impact.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Building on ECRI's country monitoring by independent experts and the comprehensive and thematic peer-to-peer reviews by government experts of the implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and Recommendation CM/Rec(2025)7 on equal rights for intersex persons, the Strategy will include a mid-term progress report and a final implementation report, similar to the approach used in other Council of Europe strategies (Gender Equality and Rights of the Child). These reports should also reflect, where relevant, gender equality and youth perspectives, including intersectional impacts and links with relevant Council of Europe strategies. The ADI-SOGIESC will oversee the implementation review process, with input from member States, civil society organisations as well as the SOGIESC Inter-secretariat Task Force. Internal or external evaluations may be conducted to ensure that the Strategy remains effective and responsive to emerging challenges and to inform subsequent strategies.

Resources

Budget

The implementation of the Strategy will be based on Council of Europe budget allocations dedicated to work on the equality of rights for LGBTI people, anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion. In addition, funding will be supported through voluntary contributions and project funding. Other Council of Europe operational entities will contribute to joint activities identified in the action plan.

Other resources

Additional funding sources, including external partnerships and grants to civil society organisations, will be explored to enhance the Strategy's effectiveness. The Council of Europe will also leverage existing technical expertise and knowledge-sharing platforms to support implementation efforts.



Endnotes

1. *Fedotova and Others v. Russia,* App. Nos. 40792/10, 30538/14 and 43439/14, § 216 (17 January 2023).
2. *Bayev and Others v. Russia*, App. No. 67667/09 (20 June 2017).
3. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023.
4. *Oganezova v. Armenia*, App. No. 71367/12 and 72961/12 (7 August 2022).
5. *Identoba and Others v. Georgia*, App. No. 73235/12 (12 August 2015).
6. *O.M. v. Hungary*, App. No. 9912/15 (5 July 2016).
7. *Bayev and Others v. Russia*, App. No. 67667/09 (20 June 2017).
8. *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland*, App. No. 1543/06 (3 May 2007).
9. *A.P., Garçon and Nicot v. France*, App. No. 79885/12 (6 April 2017); X and Y v. Romania, App. No. 2145/16 (19 January 2021).
10. *X, Y and Z v. the United Kingdom*, App. No. 21830/93 (22 April 1997).
11. *Schalk and Kopf v. Austria*, App. No. 30141/04 (22 November 2010).
12. *Karner v. Austria*, App. No. 40016/98 (24 July 2003).
13. *P.B. and J.S. v. Austria*, App. No. 18984/02 (22 October 2010).
14. *Taddeucci and McCall v. Italy*, App. No. 51362/09 (30 June 2016).
15. *X and Others v. Austria*, App. No. 19010/07 (19 February 2013). In relation to the rights of transgender parents, see: *AM and Others v. Russia*, App. No. 47220/19 (06 July 2021).
16. *Oliari and Others v. Italy,* App. Nos. 18766/11 and 36030/11 (21 July 2015); *Fedotova and Others v. Russia*, App. Nos. 40792/10, 30538/14 and 43439/14 (17 January 2023); *Buhuceanu and Others v. Romania*, App. Nos. 20081/19 and 20 Others (23 May 2023).
17. Resolution 2048(2015) on discrimination against transgender people in Europe; Resolution 2191(2017) on promoting the human rights of and eliminating discrimination against intersex people; Resolution 2239(2018) on Private and Family Life: Achieving Equality Regardless of Sexual Orientation; Resolution 2417(2022) on combating rising hate against LGBTI people in Europe; Resolution 2543(2024) on Freedom of expression and assembly of LGBTI people in Europe; Resolution 2576(2024) on Preventing and combating violence and discrimination against lesbian, bisexual and queer women in Europe; Resolution 2629(2025) on Sexual violence against men and boys; Resolution 2631(2025) on Preventing and combating gender discrimination in health; and Resolution 2643(2026) For a ban on conversion practices.
18. Resolution 230(2007) on Freedom of assembly and expression for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered persons; Resolution 380(2015) on Guaranteeing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people's rights : a responsibility for Europe's towns and regions; Resolution 470(2021) on Protecting LGBTI people in the context of rising anti-LGBTI hate speech and discrimination: the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities; Recommendation 458(2021) on Protecting LGBTI people in the context of rising anti-LGBTI hate speech and discrimination: the role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities.
19. Human rights and intersex people, Issue Paper (2015); Human Rights and Gender Identity and Expression Issue Paper (2024); Nothing to cure: putting an end to so-called "conversion therapies" for LGBTI people, Human Rights Comment (2023). See further the Commissioner's thematic work on the human rights of LGBTI people.
20. First Report on the implementation of 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; Second Report on the implementation of 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.
21. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech; Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate crime; Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence; Third report on the implementation of 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; Annual thematic reviews of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5.
22. Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029.
23. Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027.
24. Oversees the work under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine CETS No. 164.
25. Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs); Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users; Guidance Note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform design solutions in a human rights compliant manner.
26. ECRI Country Monitoring Reports.
27. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023.
28. Monitors the implementation of the European Social Charter and its subsequent revisions and amendments – see: European Social Charter CETS No. 35, Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter CETS No. 128, Protocol amending the European Social Charter CETS No. 142, Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints CETS No. 158, European Social Charter (revised) CETS No. 163, and an example of an LGBTI-related Decision: Decision on the Merits: Transgender Europe and ILGA-Europe v. the Czech Republic: Complaint No. 117/2015.
29. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS), European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).
30. Third report on the review of the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.
31. Thematic review report of the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 to member states on measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, focusing on 'Combating hate speech on grounds of SOGIESC.'

32. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023, §24.
33. Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence.
34. The term "deepfake" was coined by a perpetrator, and due to the potential for the use of related terminology to cause further harm to victims, this Strategy uses the term "digital forgery."
35. Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.
36. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023, § 2-3.
37. For example, the stereotypical association of words associated with the word 'lesbian' with pornographic content often results in so-called 'shadow-bans' that limit the reach of social media posts or in the outright impossibility to use certain words in account names and handles. The silencing effects of biased content moderation have a severe negative impact on the visibility and reach of organisations, activities and events aimed at countering hateful and discriminatory narratives targeting people belonging to minority communities (see Explanatory Memorandum to Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2).
38. *Smith and Grady v. the United Kingdom,* App. Nos. 33985/96 and 33986/96 (27 September 1999), § 97*; Salgueiro da Silva Mouta v. Portugal,* App. no. 33290/96 (21 December 1999), §§ 34-36*; L. and V. Austria,* App. Nos. 39392/98 and 39829/98 (9 January 2003), §§ 51-52.
39. See for instance Convention (No.34) on the issue of multilingual and coded certificates and extracts from civil-status records signed at Strasbourg on 14 March 2014 and Convention (No. 35) on the issue of certificates of matrimonial capacity and capacity to enter into a registered partnership signed at Strasbourg on 13 September 2024.
40. *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*, App. No. 41288/15 (14 January 2020), § 125.
41. Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Council of Europe rejects theories based on the existence of different "races". However, this Strategy uses the term "race" in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from its protection. (See, in this context, ECRI's Opinion on the concept of "racialisation", 2021).
42. *Smith and Grady v. the United Kingdom,* App. Nos. 33985/96 and 33986/96 (27 September 1999), § 97*; Salgueiro da Silva Mouta v. Portugal,* App. no. 33290/96 (21 December 1999), §§ 34-36*; L. and V. v. Austria,* App. Nos. 39392/98 and 39829/98 (9 January 2003), §§ 51-52.
43. *Bayev and Others v. Russia,* App. Nos. 67667/09, 44092/12 and 56717/12 (20 June 2017).
44. Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate crime, §65.
45. See for instance the Intercultural Cities Programme.
46. Thematic review report of the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 to member states on measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, focusing on Hate Crimes and other Hate-motivated Incidents based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics in Europe (2023).
47. See the Explanatory Memorandum to Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.
48. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023, §42.
49. Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality and artificial intelligence; Recommendation CM/Rec(2026)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on accountability for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.
50. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons, adopted on 28 June 2023, §5.
51. Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029: "An intersectional approach can allow for insight into the more complex forms of discrimination, exclusion and violence to which individuals may be exposed. Various grounds on which such discrimination is based may intersect, leading to unique lived experiences and vulnerabilities."
52. Reykjavík Declaration, page 7: "In this regard, we will use an intersectional approach in the work of the Council of Europe to address the multiple discriminations faced by people and groups in vulnerable and marginalised situations."
53. The Court's reasoning in *F.M. and Others v. Russia,* App. nos. 71671/16 and 40190/18 (10 December 2024), reflects an intersectional approach in finding a violation of Article 14 (see §§340-344).
54. Contributes directly to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 1 on ending poverty through equal access to opportunities and resources; Goal 3 on health and well-being by addressing disparities in healthcare access for LGBTI persons; Goal 4 on quality education by ensuring inclusive, safe and non-discriminatory learning environments; Goal 5 on gender equality by addressing gender-based and SOGIESC-based violence; Goal 8 on decent work by promoting equal access to employment; and Goal 10 on reducing inequalities across all spheres of life. The Strategy also supports Goal 16 by strengthening justice systems and protections against violence, and Goal 17 by fostering inclusive partnerships with civil society and international organisations.

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