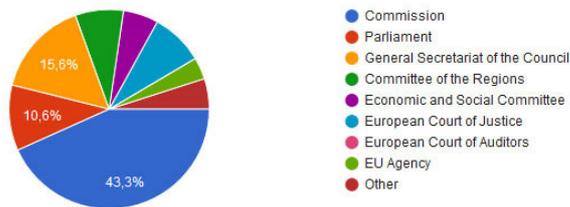


## European Union LGBTI + Staff: Results of a survey

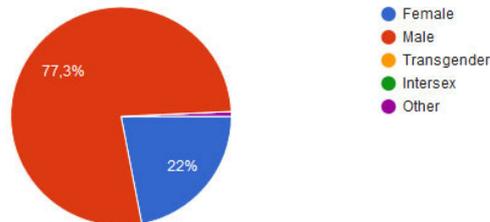
Egalité – LGBTI+ staff of the EU institutions have recently carried out internal on-line consultations to inquire about our members' situation at work and potential cases of inappropriate behaviour and harassment. The questionnaire was carried out in September and October of 2017 with total of 141 replies from all EU Institutions and bodies.

### Profile of the respondents

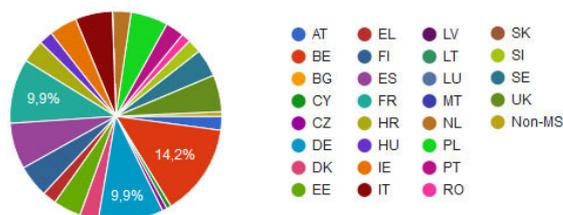
**Institution**  
141 réponses



**Gender**  
141 réponses



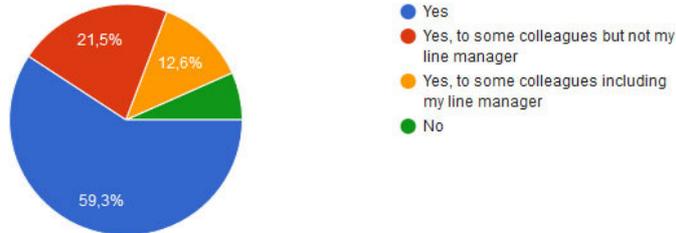
**Your home Member State**  
141 réponses



## Situation at work

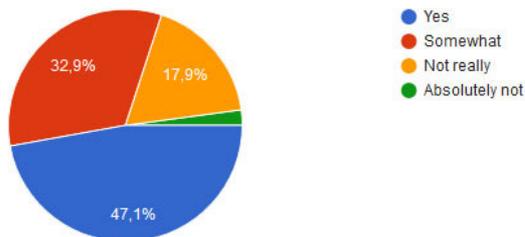
### Are you out at work?

135 réponses



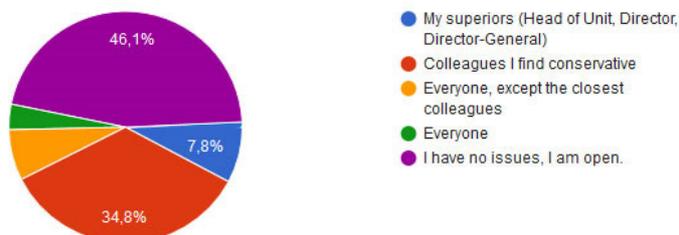
### Do you feel at ease to discuss your private life with your colleagues at work?

140 réponses



### Which of your colleagues would you feel most uncomfortable to come out to?

141 réponses



The Survey shows that 40% of the respondents are not fully out at work and that 53% of staff does not feel at ease to discuss their private lives with their colleagues and managers.

### Detailed replies on why they do not feel at ease to be out at work:

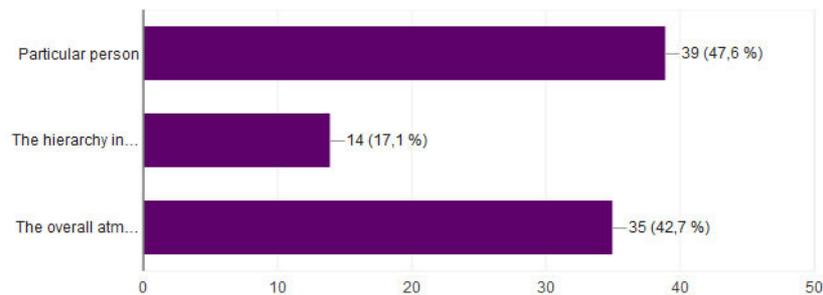
- I do not think it would be an issue, but still I would feel discomfort.
- Homophobia
- As a bisexual young woman, I often worry that outing myself will lead to people (mostly men) viewing me as a target for sexual advances. (I.e. they then make the assumption that I am promiscuous and willing to start something at work)
- Possible rejection, casual jokes
- I am open but do not generally like to discuss private life at all. With regards to sexuality, there is at times fear of discomfort because when you mention you have or have had a same-sex partner, some colleagues suddenly feel like they can be curious about your private life (eg, 'oh, and how will you do it to have kids?') and tell you how they feel about same-sex marriage, families, life, etc. And I do not always feel like being the subject of discussion.
- I guess I am afraid that people will react negatively
- Gay hostility
- Their reactions
- Judgement
- Bad jokes, remarks about gay people
- Do not want to be classified by sexuality
- Some of them are practicing Catholics
- My unit of 25 people has five gay men (including myself), but the others are either not out, either only partially out. I am normally very "out and proud", but I don't want to compromise them.
- Fear that bias could play a role in judging me on strictly professional matters
- Afraid of being judged negatively, knowing that they don't approve of who I am and of my way of life (having children for example)
- At my DG most colleagues are very traditional, they ask also often if I have a husband or worse they assume I have a man and kids... But if I tell them that I am a lesbian they do accept
- Attitude scrutiny
- Fear they would change their opinion of me.
- Judgement
- I am not certain what their reaction would be.
- I cannot talk about my kids
- Just the idea that will judge me
- Being bisexual is always complicated to explain
- The way people 'look' at me
- Judgement, close-mindedness, the feeling my image as a professional could be reconsidered because of my sexual orientation and personal choice
- I do not feel comfortable talking mostly with "macho guys"

- Afraid of gossiping, less respect (I'm a shy person)
- The overall atmosphere
- In the first years of starting in the institutions, I wanted to prove myself through my work before colleagues (mainly my superiors) might judge me based on my sexual orientation, as I was not sure how open-minded people were. In my first job in the CoR in particular, I heard my Head of Unit make negative comments about gay people (a couple of years before I told him I was lesbian), which did not encourage me. Now I am out to everybody, but I still feel slightly hesitant when telling somebody new, especially if I find them conservative.
- Negative and inappropriate comments by some colleagues and superiors about the LGTB people and their rights, following the typical hetero-patriarchal model.
- I live in a very conservative environment on Delegation.
- People reacting differently with you once professionally and personally you have announced it
- No clear open policy towards LGBTI's rights, I can't predict the reaction of colleagues and superiors and I'm not confident that it wouldn't affect my career changes (I'm having temporary work contracts)
- Negative reaction
- Their negative reaction
- I am not talking about my private life at work, not because I am gay, but because I am not having close relationship with my colleagues.
- Gossip/judgement
- Catholic line manager, referring to gays as "la rose internationale"
- Probably my own fears more than others' reactions
- I fear my sexual orientation will make working with them in a team uncomfortable. I often think there's a "don't ask-don't tell" policy in action in my immediate workplace.
- Coming from different cultures making it hard
- I am not the guy who speaks a lot about personal life in the office.
- Expectation of judgement
- I don't want it to affect the way I am perceived professionally.
- I feel not accepted as I am.
- I work in Delegation. In my current posting (Vietnam) people are quite open-minded about LGBT issues. The context was less simple in my previous posting in West Africa.
- lesbian invisibility
- lack of consideration
- Possible professional conflicts based on personal prejudices.
- Some colleagues lack boundaries and tend to ask too personal, invasive questions if given the chance. I feel like coming out explicitly to them would be felt by them as an invitation to probe too much into my personal life. But this is not a structural problem; it's just a matter of managing interaction with a couple of people.

- discrimination impacting work
- Stereotypes
- feeling uncomfortable with their negative attitudes
- Prejudices about my life style
- Could make working relationship more difficult and as I'm a private person anyway, I don't see much benefit in being completely open.

Does this discomfort mainly depend on a particular person or on hierarchy in general?

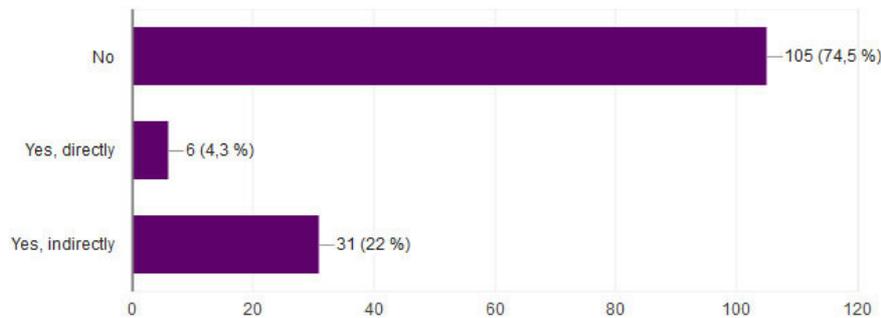
82 réponses



Reasons for not feeling at ease at work are linked to either general atmosphere at work or a particular person and in fewer cases the hierarchy. In its recent Communication "A better work place for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion", the European Commission calls for sensitivity and bias training for Managers, however our survey shows that more issues arise in interaction with other staff, and in lesser extent with managers.

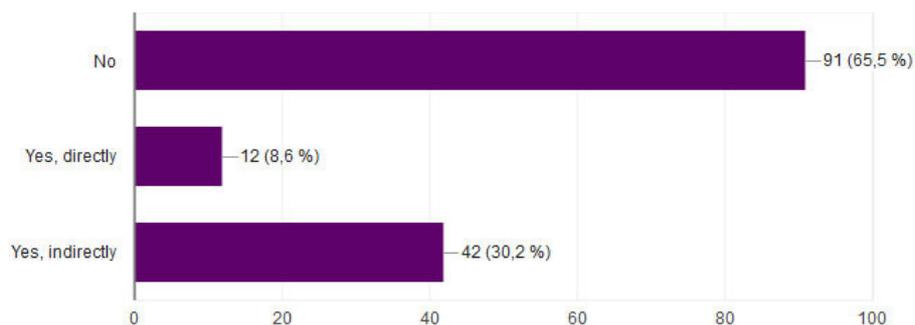
### Have you ever faced homophobia - in your current post?

141 réponses



### Have you ever faced homophobia - in your previous posts?

139 réponses



#### HOMOPHOBIA AT WORK



Some of our colleagues faced direct homophobia at their present or past work place, with considerable number of colleagues facing indirect homophobia.

#### Detailed responses about the homophobia at work:

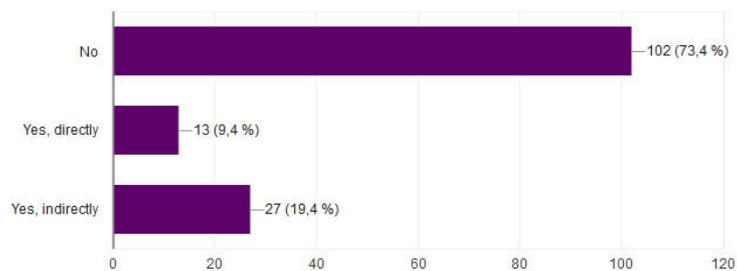
- Harassment from HoU
- Some years ago I was called a "Fairy" by a close colleague in an open plan office of circa 30/40 others, yet none of my colleagues reacted, and neither did my hierarchy who were within earshot. And I didn't react either, although I was hurt and offended. I felt very alone....
- Very subtle harassment
- Sexist remarks by my superiors

- The very conservative line manager had never met an openly gay man before. It took him some time to get used to the idea.
- Although nobody has said anything to me personally, I have overheard - in a professional context - comments on other persons perceived as "effeminate".
- Colleagues not knowing I was gay commented about the fact that we have the right to get married and saying it was ridiculous.
- Different colleagues making fun of how touchy gays can be about their rights (as if gays are annoying everyone with their rights), another colleague telling me how some remote colleagues explained to him how gays shouldn't be allowed to have children
- Judgement, conservative attitude, sly jokes
- Some colleagues are making bad jokes about gays
- My former head of unit explained to me that I could stay longer hours at work because I have not kids to take care of.
- Dirty jokes
- Disrespectful remarks concerning an gay job applicant
- Bad jokes, bad talking about gays.
- Harassment case
- I know of a gay colleague who made another colleague angry and the latter one marked an "e" next to my colleague's first name on the door sign, making it look like a female person. This was done repeatedly and my colleague once found ink poured over his chair at work, which all led to stress. That was only after hidden cameras were installed that the colleague was identified. To my knowledge, the only punishment he got was a downgrading of one step.
- The little comments, the rather conservative approach to dealing with social issues, including gender and LGBT mainstreaming.
- Disregard for colleagues, who faced problems due to them being gay in delegation. I did not feel free to be open about it.
- You sometimes hear things like that you cannot understand common issues faced by colleagues because you have different life. It is often related to the fact that many staff does not see gay people as possibly having family obligations and, in some extreme cases, people thinking that as a gay person you must have no stable partner. As a result, people sometimes make you feel that you should be the one staying in case of emergency/showing flexibility more than others.
- stupid remarks of one colleague on gays
- Inappropriate comments by a colleague.
- Refusal to recognize my civil partnership without any legal basis for doing so
- Got bullied, because of my orientation
- Feeling of being judged or discriminated based on my perceived lack of manliness
- Jokes made at my expense for being gay, but could be worse.
- Comments made by colleagues, not knowing my sexuality.

- Yes, with contractors (Electrician of Moroccan origin who would drown his wife and son, if his son was gay)
- general homophobic jokes, jokes directed at other gay colleagues not present in the room, negative comments about gay weddings, reference to a colleague not considered for a foreign posting because he is gay
- some "jokes" which were not really appropriate
- HoU making fun of gay ministers.
- Not explicit, but the expectation that certain things don't apply to me being gay, such as the need to respect my family life.
- Offensive language used in my presence by colleagues and superiors to whom I was not out
- colleagues who avoid me once they find out I am gay
- outed by a colleague with bad intention
- Homophobic remarks

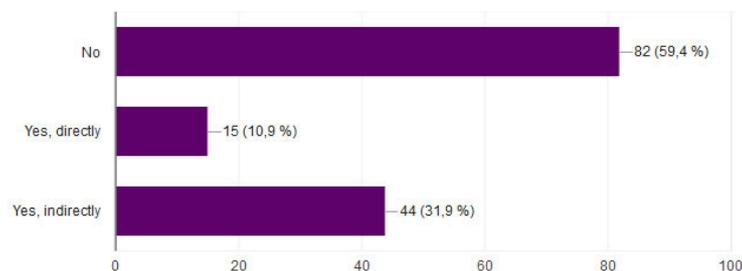
### Have you faced inappropriate comments and behavior - in your current post?

139 réponses



### Have you faced inappropriate comments and behavior - in your past posts?

138 réponses



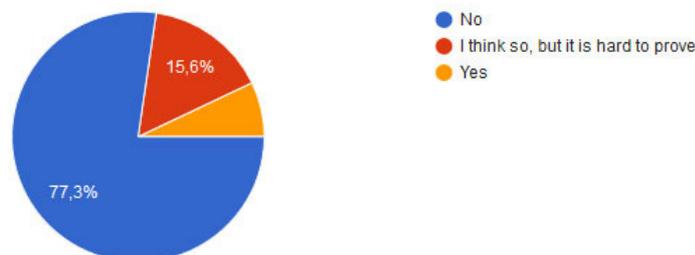
### Detailed replies on the inappropriate comments and behaviour at work

- Outing me bisexual means that men in the office think I'm an easy target for sexual advances. So I encountered some inappropriate comments/behaviour.
- Mostly in the form of men flirting with me (because being bisexual for many people is synonymous with being sexual/promiscuous)
- My Director outed me to my Head of Unit
- Occasionally, inappropriate jokes. But not only with regards to homosexuality - also sexual and gender.
- some general remarks about gays
- Gay jokes (not targeted to me).
- Comments not on myself but on other gay colleagues
- Overhearing comments on LGBTI+ people in a professional context
- I find the current HoU attitude a bit sexist and racist because of the jokes he makes.
- Indirect comments, effective jokes, all regarded as normal for them
- Negative comments about gay people, but not addressed directly to me
- Some colleagues are making bad jokes about gays
- Colleagues explained to me that they are not available because they have to watch a football match, but of course as I am not interested in football I could continue the work alone.
- The homophobia was not aimed at me - to "gays" in general
- Not in a homophobic manner, but some colleagues assume that every gay person can be labelled in a certain way. It might be entertaining at times, but the general assumption that we have a different partner every weekend can be annoying. It is more about the stereotypes, the expected 'gay acting' thing. It would be nice if we were treated as individuals, with the same spectrum of personalities as straight people are. Not having to deny or confirm certain stereotypes people have in their heads. On the other hand, yes - I admit that for some colleagues I am the only gay person they ever met (at least that is what they think).
- the same dirty jokes and comments about gay colleagues
- Before my Head of Unit knew about me being lesbian, he made fun about a gay colleague in front of me, caricaturing him as effeminate. He also asked me to take part in a selection board to recruit a new secretary. Most candidates were female; he decided to short-list also one male, saying to me "I hope he's not gay". When I asked him why it would be a problem, he said he had a reputation to keep. Right after the half-hour interview, he told me "at least he's not gay"...
- Inappropriate reference to gay matters or people. Unfounded conclusions on where in the world gay people can work.
- Jokes or looks about colleagues who were openly gay.

- Nothing serious, just poor choice of words and bad jokes. I have never been harassed or discriminated.
- Comments often take the form of bad jokes about gay life
- Misplaced comments by hierarchy but that was almost 20 years ago and stopped when I threatened to file a complaint; not being invited to social events organised by a particular colleague - but I would have declined the invitation anyway, so it didn't really bother me
- Colleagues using homophobic language in front of me when referring to LGBTIQI people.
- A head of unit in the EC, though very indirectly. He was harmless and I had no real problems
- Jokes that have an undertone, comments etc
- Insensitive jokes and arguments while discussing/gossiping about public/famous people.
- Being present when 'jokes' about gays were told.
- It's a small issue, but one that a straight person would never face. People refer to my husband as my "partner" or "boyfriend". Getting this right would be a start.
- however, I was told that it did have an effect and did not help my advancement
- I find it hard to make a difference between inappropriate comments and homophobia; to me inappropriate comments are homophobic?
- Colleagues making jokes about gays
- I know that one or two people have made remarks about other LGBTI colleagues behind their backs. I wouldn't be surprised if similar remarks are made about me behind my back.
- if avoiding someone can be defined as inappropriate behaviour
- Comments about a potential male recruit described as not being "a true man"

### Are you having, or have you had problems at work as a result of your orientation?

141 réponses



#### DISCRIMINATION AS A RESULT OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

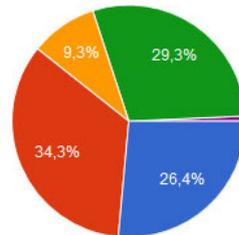
33% of colleagues believe that their orientation resulted in difficulties at their work place

### **Detailed replies on the discrimination at work as a result of the sexual orientation:**

- I think that maybe people took me less seriously, but it is hard to prove, because this was my first internship, so people weren't taking me serious in the first place. I also did not stay at the company long enough for it to become a real problem.
- My current manager, who knows I am actively involved in égalité, never formally refuses my requests to attend égalité-related events, but often makes negative comments about my availability and "frequent socialising".
- The Parliament's administration systematically failed to recognise my civil union (PACS) despite my efforts and considered me single.
- Heterosexuals are promoted for their families
- I have not been proposed for promotion this year. I have no idea why not since several of my colleagues have been proposed (with the same seniority in grade as I). Maybe my sexual orientation had a negative effect?
- It was in the past with my previous boss
- One of my male superiors perceived as a nice person by female colleagues feels uncomfortable in my company
- Not taken seriously, lack of promotion
- Promotions bias - I failed some job interviews without receiving clear explanations why;
- A former Head of Unit put more work on my shoulders because I have no kids.
- A former HoU, in another institution, had a lot of respect to straight people with families and organized the work around them, around the school holidays. Any 'unusual' holidays requests were very strange to him. He considered that the whole world revolves around school holidays.
- I could not get insemination expenses covered by the JSIS as a lesbian, as the JSIS rules foresee insemination only in case of infertility (as Egalité is aware of).
- In terms of promotion I have seen differences but when I talked with the hierarchy they managed to change the situation. So it is difficult to say whether unequal treatment depended on being gay or not
- Refusal to recognize my civil partnership
- A gay colleague gave inappropriate attention
- I work in Delegation. The issue of a spouse visa for my same-sex spouse was difficult in both countries where I have worked outside of the EU.
- It is hard to say why and how, but in the end heterosexual males dominate management, and a disappointing percentage of them are more likely to bond with, trust, mentor and support other heterosexual males

Do you think the official diversity / equal opportunities policy in place in your institution is sufficient with regard to LGBTI issues?

140 réponses



- Yes, I believe so
- To some point
- It has no effect
- I'm not aware of any LGBTI / equal opportunities strategy
- There is a disconnect between what the institution writes and what our needs are. It is very difficult to propose action points as we have to go through Staff Associations wher...



#### DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

Are either not known or are not effective. Only 26% of respondents believe they are useful