



**LGBTIQ STAFF
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS**
REPORT OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

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Contact information:

www.egalite-online.eu

info@egalite-online.eu

Disclaimer:

The views expressed are purely those of the authors and Égalité staff group and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Institutions, European Bodies and European Agencies.

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WORDS FROM THE ASSOCIATION

FOREWORD

After a couple of months of hard work by our dedicated team and the supportive participation of our members, I am happy to present the survey that Égalité conducted to provide updated information concerning our situation, feelings and expectations towards the EU institutions, bodies, and agencies as a workplace. The survey is organised periodically (the last one was published in 2019) to see how LGBTIQ people working in the institutions feel among time, to provide a tool for the diversity services to support inclusive decisions towards LGBTIQ staff, and to explore the needs of people that are less presented and give them a reliable voice.

The survey took place between January-March 2023 and 242 people, representing about one third of our members, participated. Coming from all EU Member States (MS) our members experience diverse situations in their home countries. “As equality is at the core of democracy in Europe, some MS are pushing forward, while others continue to [instrumentalise LGBTIQ discrimination](#) to erode freedom. According to [ILGA's latest Rainbow Map](#), across Europe, [authoritarian leaders continue to target](#) and scapegoat LGBTIQ individuals, increasing polarisation of public discourse, particularly against trans* people, and violence in the streets. However, to add a positive aspect, despite intense anti-LGBTIQ attacks in several countries, equality is still advancing across Europe thanks to political determination. In 1993, when Égalité was founded, probably our members would not have imagined the progress made so far for the protection of our rights – thanks also to

the cooperation with the Commission and the support of the European Parliament. We have witnessed many improvements through the years, with three main breakthroughs: the introduction of the principle of non-discrimination according to sexual orientation in the Treaty of Amsterdam and the staff regulations, the recognition of same sex partnerships and marriages by the EU institutions, and more recently the internal strategies on Diversity and Inclusion of the different European institutions.

The survey highlights many important facts that should be taken into account and reminds us that progress in human rights in general and LGBTIQ rights in particular is not irreversible and that implementation of already decided policies still matters. Although the EU institutions can be rated ‘friendly’ as a workplace with 50% of the respondents being completely out at work, 23% were out with most or some of their colleagues including their hierarchy, 15% only with their hierarchy, and, finally, 11% were not out at all. Also, 12% of the respondents reported having faced direct discrimination because of their gender identity, sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation.

For all these reasons, we are here to raise awareness on LGBTIQ issues, stand up for our rights and promote an inclusive and diverse workplace. We will continue to work for and support the EU institutions to become and remain a role model employer in diversity and inclusion. And we ask you all to work together with us to improve our lives.

WHO ARE WE?

Égalité, is the staff association representing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) staff and their families working in all the European institutions, bodies, and agencies. It was founded in 1993 by a group of LGBTIQ staff in the European Commission to combat any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

We are now an inter-institutional association counting around 900 members and we are here to promote an inclusive and diverse workplace & combat any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, to provide a support network & offer assistance for LGBTIQ staff of the Institutions, their families, friends and allies and to organise social, cultural and educational activities.

SUMMARY

The picture displayed by the results shows that in general the experience of LGBTIQ in the European Institutions is positive. However, this promising vision of an inclusive workplace noticeably changes according to the colour of the rainbow to whom the respondents belong.

- The findings suggest that lesbian, bisexual, trans*, or gender diverse respondents are more likely to experience discriminatory attitudes across various situations;
- Only one intersex respondent provided input in the survey;
- 5% of the respondents identified as Trans*, non-binary, or other genders different from the binaries;
- Discrimination is prevalent across all institutions, bodies and agencies, without one being better than another.

Openness at work

Only 50% of the respondents were completely out at work. This percentage fall to 31% for bisexuals.

Discrimination at work

12% of the respondents reported having faced discrimination in the current service or institution within the past two years. This number increases for gender diverse people (27%), people with a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth (19%) and bisexuals (17%).

While 73% of the respondents think they could speak up or intervene in the case of discriminatory behaviours by their

colleagues, this number falls to 52% if the discrimination would come from the hierarchy.

Among the 17% of respondents who faced directly or witnessed discrimination, 61% thought that the Human Resources department did not handle the situation appropriately.

Respondents reported cases of discrimination coming from their own hierarchy.

Medical insurance system discrimination

The medical insurance system is more inclined to discriminate specific colours of the rainbow.

7% of the whole participants reported forms of discrimination, this number dramatically increases for people with a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth (38%), that are gender diverse (27%) or identify as lesbian (17%).

Diversity

Only 12% of the respondents think that the official diversity /equal opportunities policy in place in their institution was sufficient to deal with LGBTIQ issues.

69% think that there are not enough 'role models' openly identified as LGBTIQ in their institution or service.

The report also proposes [Recommendations to support LGBTIQ staff working for the institutions.](#)

THE STUDY

The objective of the survey was to explore the attitudes, feelings and expectations of the LGBTIQ members of Égalité working for the European institutions.

Data were gathered through the [EUsurvey platform](#) between January and March 2023. All the members of the association were invited to answer to the survey through the Égalité newsletter. A total of 242 people responded to the survey, representing about one third of Égalité members.

To align with the objective of the survey, participants were selected based on whether: 1) they identify with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual/straight, and/or if their gender identity was different from cisgender, and/or if they were intersex; 2) they worked for the European institutions, including all agencies and bodies. The final dataset for analysis included 235 respondents.

The quantitative analysis performed on the dataset comprises the following sections. Firstly, a descriptive analysis was performed to depict the general opinions of the respondents to the survey. Secondly, inferential statistics were used to explore differences among the different populations of the sample. To perform the tests were used the following variables:

- The working institution;
- The working location;
- The sexual orientation;
- Variables related to gender identity:
 - Gender diverse (i.e., non-binary or self-described genders not

belonging to the gender binary);

- Gender identity different from the one assigned at birth.

The variable related to being intersex was not used since only one person reported being intersex. The tests used were the one-way ANOVA and the Fisher's exact test. Only statistics that are significantly different are presented in this report.

The qualitative analysis was performed by using the content analysis method. The information provided by the respondents was classified by creating codes and themes describing the variety of answers.

The answers of the height respondents removed from the analysis were further investigated in three dedicated sub-sections:

- Section "Perspective of the intersex respondent", describes the answers of the only intersex person who answered to the survey;
- Section "Perspective of the intersex respondent" describes the answers of the non-LGBTIQ respondents working for the European institutions, bodies and agencies;
- Section "Perspective of the trans respondent not working for the institutions" describes the answers of the single LGBTIQ respondent who does not work for the European institutions.

Finally, section "Future perspective of Égalité" includes the preferences and expectations of all the survey respondents (N= 242) towards Égalité.

GLOSSARY*

Biphobia: Fear or dislike of someone who identifies as bi based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about bi people.

Bisexual: A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with pansexual.

Cisgender: A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cisnormativity: A discourse based on assumption that cisgender is the norm and privileges this over any other form of gender identity.

Coming Out: The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender

identity and begins to share that with others.

Gay: A man who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other men. Men and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Gender assigned at birth: The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Gender binary: A system in which gender is constructed into two strict categories of male or female. Gender identity is expected to align with the sex assigned at birth and gender expressions and roles fit traditional expectations.

Gender identity: A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Heteronormativity: A discourse based on assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and privileges this over any other form of sexual orientation.

Heterosexual: Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women or to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men.

Homophobia: Fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bi people.

Interphobia: Dismissive attitude and negative feelings towards intersex people.

Intersex: Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of differences among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads,

internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

LGBTIQ: Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and queer.

Lesbian: A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. Women and non-binary people may use this term to describe themselves.

Non-binary: An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

Queer: A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many

people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ movement.

Questioning: A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sexual orientation: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

Trans: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

Transgender man: A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman: A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Transphobia: Fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it.

***Sources used to define the terms in the glossary:** Human Right Campaign, Stonewall, thisintersex.org

ÉGALITÉ'S LGBTIQ MEMBERS

WORK RELATED INFORMATION

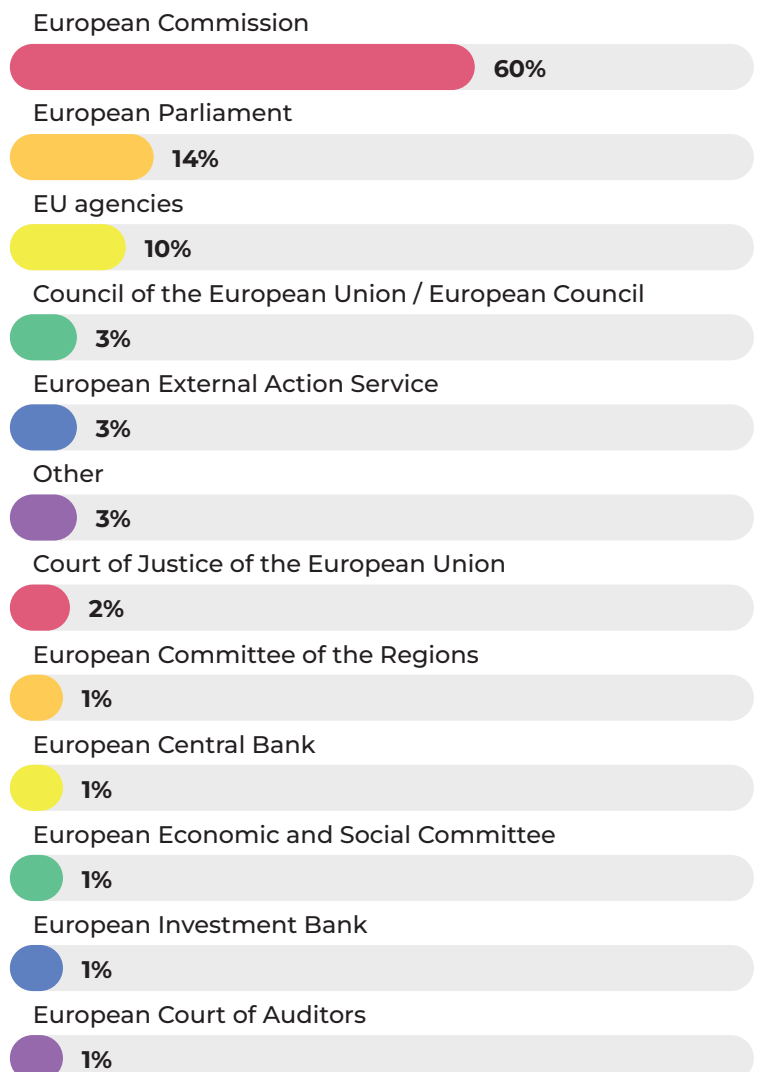
The survey showed that most of the respondents worked for the European Commission (60%), followed by the European Parliament (14%) and the EU agencies (10%). The other EU bodies summed a total of 16% of the respondents.

In total, 83% of the respondents were based in Brussels, while 8% in Luxembourg, 8% in other EU countries and 2% outside of the EU.

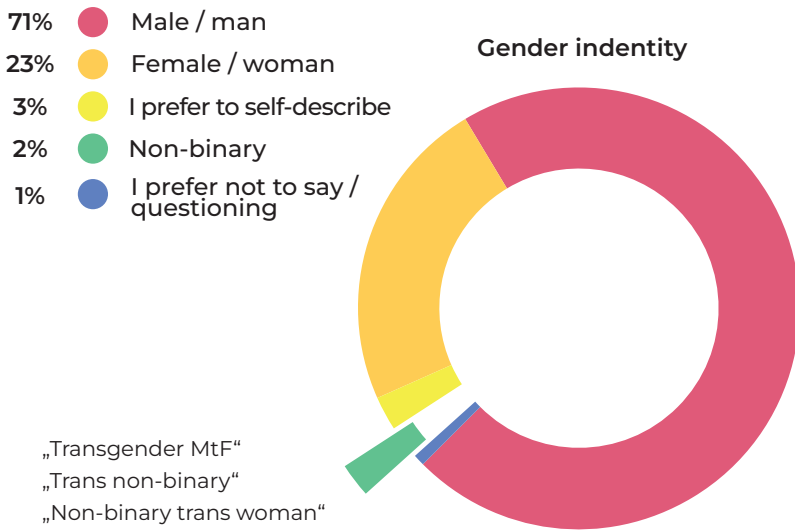
When it comes to management positions (i.e., head of unit/division, director, director general, etc.), results showed that only 8% of the respondents held a management position. Among those 8%, 79% identified as gay, 16% as bisexual, and 5% as lesbian. No respondents in management positions described having a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth or being intersex.

A slight majority of the respondents were permanent staff (54%), while 38% contractual or temporary agents, 7% in another situation, and 1% trainees.

Workplace of respondents



LGBTIQ INFORMATION



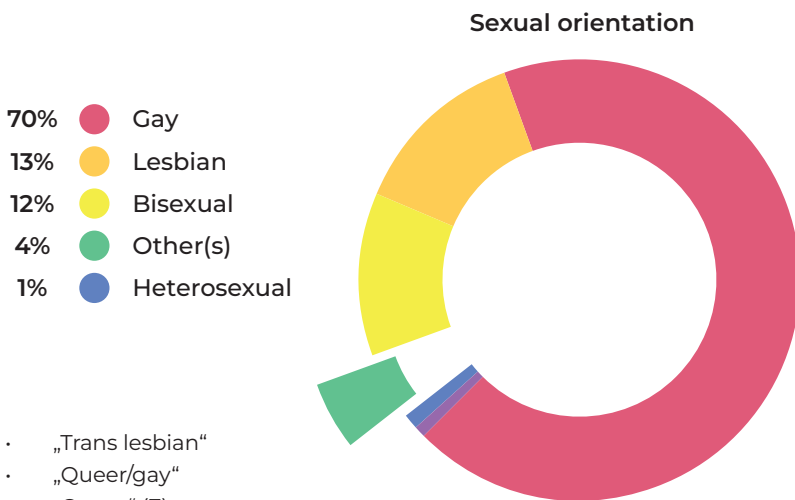
Almost three quarters of the respondents identified as male/man (71%), while 23% as female/woman, 5% as gender diverse (prefer to self-describe: 3%, non-binary: 2%) and 1% preferred not to say or reported being questioning.

Regarding the gender assigned at birth, 7% of the respondents identified with a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth, and 1% preferred not to answer.

Only one person who answered the survey declared to be intersex, while 4 others preferred not to answer.

Majority of the respondents identified as gay (70%). Other sexual orientations were less or under-represented: 13% of respondents self-described as lesbian, 12% as bisexual, 4% preferred to other sexual orientations and 1% as heterosexuals.

- „Transgender MtF“
- „Trans non-binary“
- „Non-binary trans woman“
- „Male/non-binary/queer“
- „Agender“
- „I generally identify as male but I am exploring this non-binary identity as well“



- „Trans lesbian“
- „Queer/gay“
- „Queer“ (7)
- „In between Gay and Bisexual“

OPENNESS AT WORK

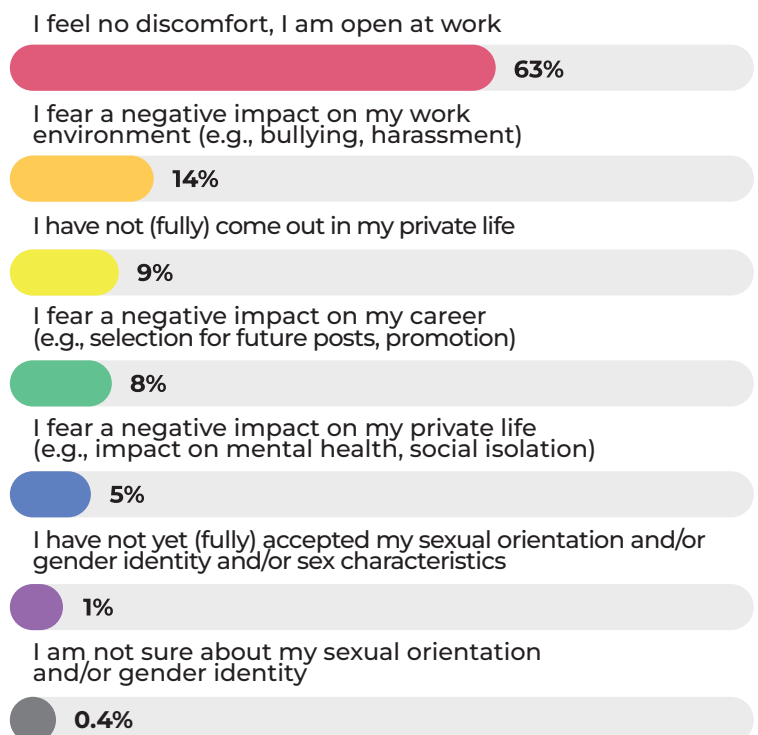
A short majority of the respondents were completely out at work (50%), while 23% were out with most or some of their colleagues including their hierarchy, and 15% only with their hierarchy. Finally, 11% were not out at all. It appears also that people having a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth were not more out compared to cisgender respondents. Regarding sexual orientation, bisexual respondents were less out compared to the rest of the sample (31%), while majority of gay respondents were completely out (59%).

Concerning with whom respondents would feel uncomfortable to come out to, it appears that the discomfort would be related to colleagues expected to be uncomfortable (22%) or opposed (14%) to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or sex characteristics, to their hierarchy (9%) and or even all their colleagues (2%).

When it comes to discussing their private life, 50% expressed feeling partially at ease, 40% at ease and 10% not at ease. In addition, among the different groups studied, only 14% of bisexual respondents were feeling at ease. Interestingly, non-negligible part of gender diverse respondents reported feeling uncomfortable discussing their private life (27%) while non gender diverse respondents had the lowest rate (9%). Finally, only a minority of bisexual respondents (14%) felt at ease while lesbian and gay respondents were in general more at ease (respectively 40% and 45%).

The most important reason explaining the discomfort to come out or to discuss private life was the fear of a negative impact on the work environment (14%), the fact of not being out in the private life (9%), the fear of a negative impact on the career (8%) or in the private life (5%).

What is the main reason for your discomfort to discuss your private life or to come out?



FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION



FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

When considering discrimination faced in their current service or institution within the past two years, 12% of the respondents reported having faced direct discrimination because of their gender identity, sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation. It is worth noticing that this number increases to 27% for gender diverse respondents, 19% for respondents with a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth and 17% for bisexual respondents.

73% of the respondents felt they could speak up or intervene if they would experience discriminatory behaviours by their colleagues, while 20% did not know and 7% answered no. Looking deeper in the results, it appears that a strong majority of gay respondents thought they could speak up (80%); when compared to lesbian and bisexual respondents (respectively 57% and 59%). In the case where hierarchy has discriminatory attitudes, 52% think they could speak up, while 31% did not know and 17% answered no.

On the other side, 20% of the respondents witnessed discriminatory behaviours during the past two years related to their gender identity, sex characteristics and/or sexual orientation while 19% did not. 75% of the

respondents also felt they could speak up or intervene if they witnessed such behaviours, while 18% did not know and 7% answered no.

Among the 17% of respondents who faced directly or witnessed discrimination, 61% thought that the Human Resources department did not handle the situation appropriately, 22% preferred not to say and 7% answered yes.

When asked if being LGBTIQ had affected their career development (selection for future promotion), 5% reported having faced discrimination, 8% answered yes but could hardly prove it and 87% answered no.

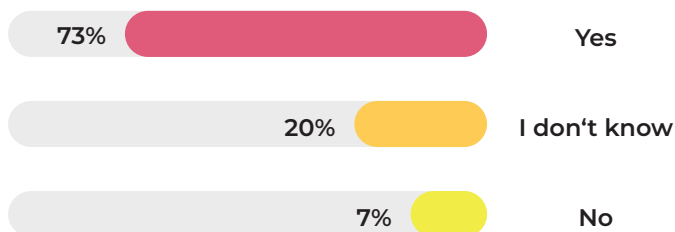
As to means of reporting discriminatory attitudes, in total, only 27% of the respondents answered they knew where to address themselves in case of discrimination, while 35% did not know and 38% were not sure.

Also, a short majority of the respondents (55%) reported they would trust their hierarchical manager (HoU/Director/DG) to help in case they would face discrimination, 31% did not know and 13% would not.

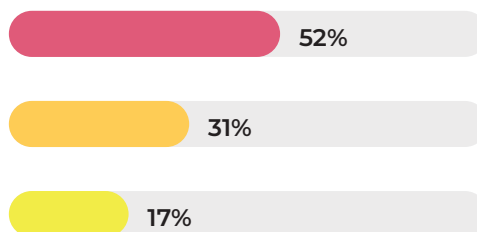
When invited to explain their thought on

Do you feel you can speak up/intervene if you experienced discriminatory behaviours...

... by your colleagues?



... by your hierarchy?



the reasons why they would not trust their hierarchy to help to face discrimination, respondents reported different cases of discrimination and harassment perpetrated by their own hierarchy. Those different cases would take the shape of homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic comments or actions openly used at the office. A lack of representation at hierarchical level reinforced the respondent's perspective of a cis- and heteronormative work culture. One of the respondents even mentioned a fear of retaliation if they tried to go over their n+1 to their top manager.

"[...] I experienced discrimination as gay man coming from one of my managers, and if I told my top manager about it, it would just get worse, and I would still remain under the same manager."

Others mentioned the reported issues being ignored. They report their manager turning a blind eye and not acting on any of the complaints filed.

Specific to the European Parliament and related to the strong autonomous political work and career dependency, one respondent mentioned that there was no protection in place in case of discriminatory behaviour coming from a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) or from the

political groups.

Even if being from one respondent, this demonstrates the difficulty that can face LGBTIQ people that are out at work, and the fragility of their situation.

"Also, I have been told in the past that my lifestyle is my choice and I have to face the consequences that come with it."

Some respondents directed their lack of trust not on the person, but on a general lack of understanding of the issues faced by the LGBTIQ community. They also felt that there are not enough tools in place to raise awareness among the managers nor to tackle the issues efficiently. These are some examples of open field answers left by respondents on the work culture, understanding of Diversity & Inclusion, and managers preparedness:

"Lack of understanding about the several layers associated with someone belonging to a minority."

"Although with best intentions, I think he would be uncomfortable, but would encourage me to find others to help".

"HoUs/Directors are not trained to handle issues related to discrimination".

MEDICAL INSURANCE SYSTEM DISCRIMINATION

Considering the medical insurance system, while 91% of the respondents did not face any issues, 7% answered positively, and 2% reported yes but could hardly prove it. Lesbian respondents reported feeling more discriminated against (17%) compared to the other sexual orientations. The same feeling was reported by respondents whose gender identity was different from the one assigned at birth (38%). In addition, gender diverse people also felt more discriminated against compared to the ones that were not (27%).

Among the issues faced with the medical insurance system, 8 respondents answered it was related to IUI/IVF (intrauterine insemination / In-vitro fertilization) reimbursement, 5 say it was related to gender affirming reimbursement and 3 related to PrEP reimbursement.

Looking deeper in the answers regarding the discrimination faced with the medical insurance system, participants expressed different issues. Among the responses related to IUI/IVF reimbursement, the higher difficulty for homosexual (man/male)

couples to obtain help and reimbursement was underlined.

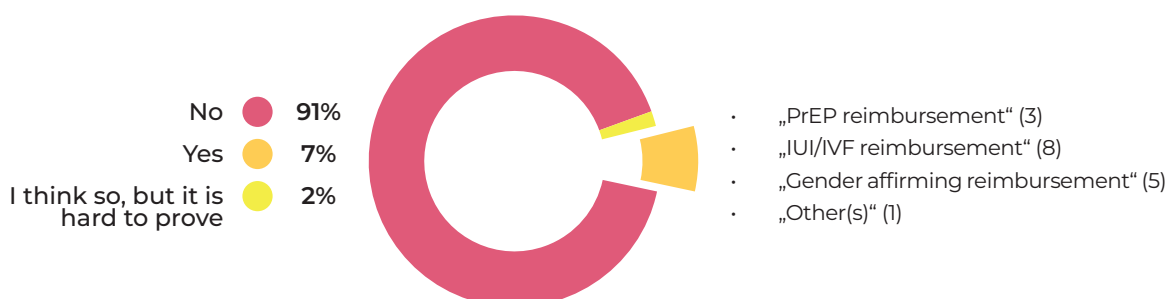
“The doctor during recruitment did not know what PrEP was and told me I may have to pay for it myself.”

The respondents encountering issues with gender affirming reimbursements brought up concerns with the imposed conditions, such as the pathologization of the gender affirming process (i.e., refers to the obligation to furnish. The necessity of a full year of hormonal treatment before to undertake gender affirming surgery was questioned. One respondent reported that their facial feminisation surgery was not reimbursed at all, which represents a violation of the rights to access to gender affirming treatments provided by JSIS.

“I may need to transition without the hormones for medical reasons”.

“[...] the medical insurance should be aligned with the most beneficial regulation in the EU so that all LGBTI employees would have the same, best support guaranteed.”

In the past two years within the EU institutions, have you faced issues with the medical insurance system because of your sexual orientation and/or gender identity and/or sex characteristics? (In which area)



DIVERSITY

When asking if they thought the official diversity /equal opportunities policy in place in their institution is sufficient to deal with LGBTIQ issues, 47% answered to some point, 19% no and 12% yes. Finally, 23% were not aware of any relevant strategy in their institutions.

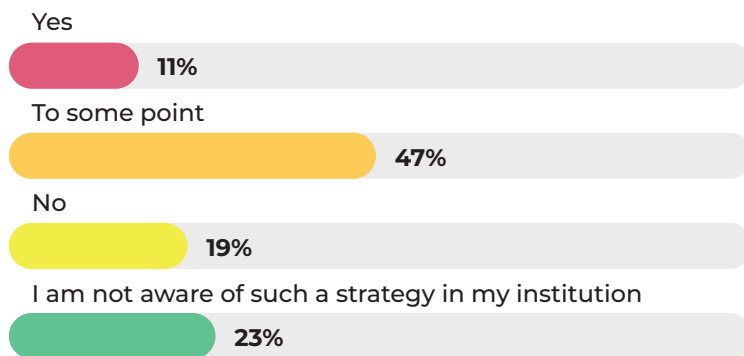
Considering the different ways of promoting awareness for Diversity & Inclusion, the most selected options for actions were related to the training of staff (frequency = 157) and managers (frequency = 151), followed by Reinforcement/update of internal behavioural guidelines (frequency = 125). Also 23 respondents proposed different alternatives that could support solving diversity issues.

When developing what other possible solutions could be implemented, respondents focused on the current state of the actions proposed in the institutions, underlying that, for now, only communications and training seemed to be offered to raise awareness on diversity issues. They indicated that it was not enough. Indeed, they indicated that the current training offer was “trendy”, with no real lasting effects; one respondent said they didn’t see any change at all. Respondents would like to see more practical workshops, on different topics, starting as soon as possible, with diversified recruitment and even involving the European Schools as role models for the parents. Beyond training, most of them feel that it is necessary to act, with two paths underlined.

First, positive initiatives should actively acknowledge diversity in everyday work and events. The second type of action should be taken when identifying discrimination. They should be acknowledged, discussed and reparative steps should be taken, up to disciplinary actions if necessary. One respondent added the importance of a regular assessment of the behaviours of management and colleagues.

“Joining the EU should be about adhering to and respecting EU values and we should check that right from recruitment and

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



throughout the career.”

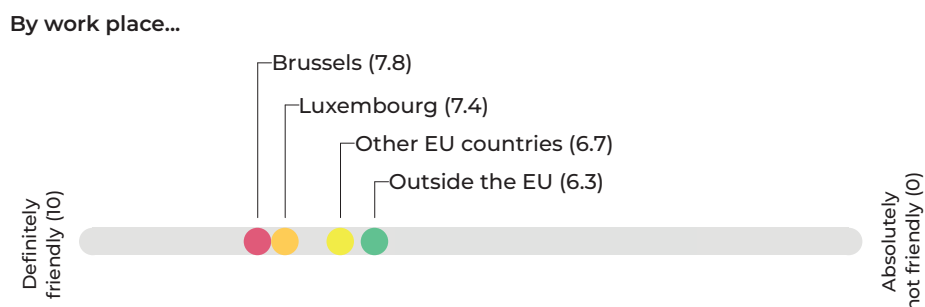
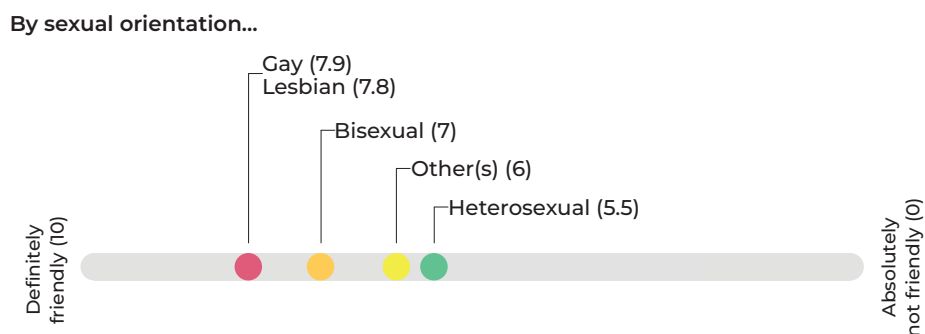
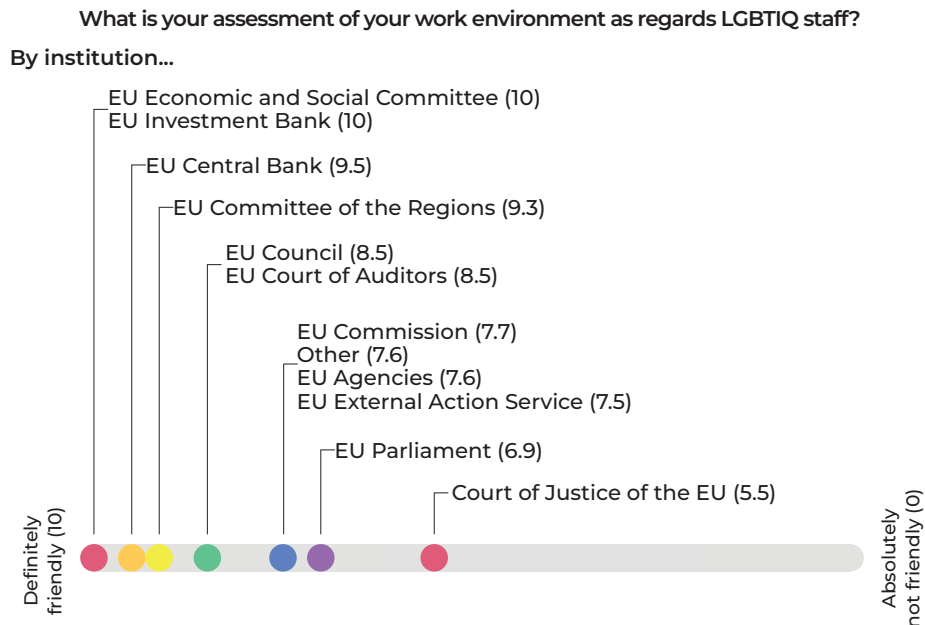
Respondents would like the hierarchy to be more involved. One respondent shared their positive experience with visibility and representation in their management. One respondent proposed to work on involvement and representation of diversity, incorporating distinct requirements in the selection process for managers. The hierarchy should lead by example and normalise, for example, open talks about LGBTIQ issues, and inclusive language.

Again, specific to the European Parliament, a respondent highlighted the lack of protection, and specifically legal protection for Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APA) against the MEPs or political groups. This is related to the nature of the hiring and career, which is dependent on a direct link.

Finally, when asked if it was important to have openly LGBTIQ “role models” in management position to create open and respectful workplaces, 90% of the respondents thought that it is, while 7% answered no and 3% preferred not to say. In line with these answers, 69% thought that there were not enough ‘role models’ openly identified as LGBTIQ in their institution or service. This can impact the perception of staff that it is possible to have a successful career and be fully out at work. Also, 13% answered that there were enough “role models” but only amongst middle management, not amongst top management, 10% said yes and 7% preferred not to say.

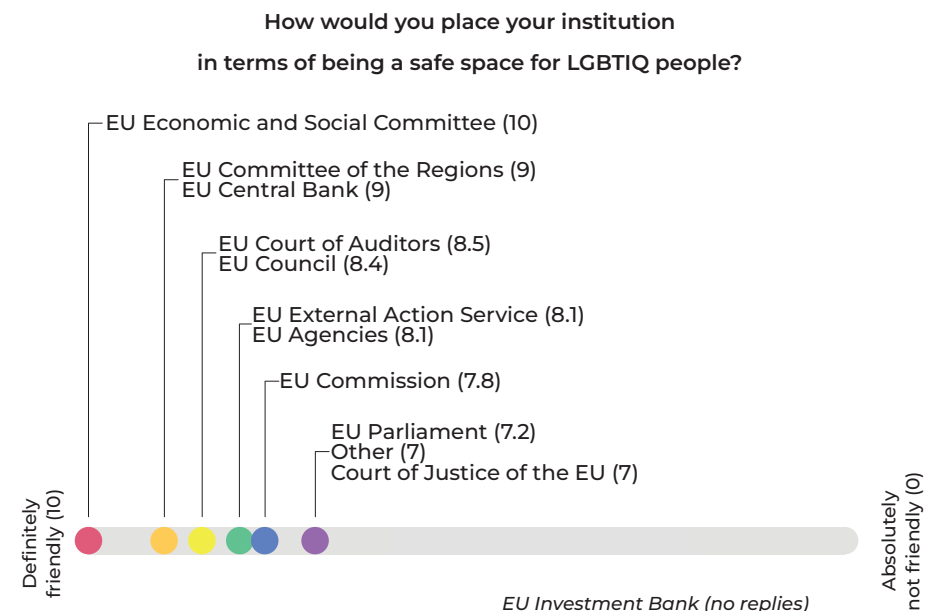
SATISFACTION WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS

Overall, respondents assessed positively their work environment as regards LGBTIQ staff (N=210, mean=8, SD=1.8, max.=10, min.=0). When considering sexual orientation, although lower compared to the general assessment, it appears that self-described gay and lesbian respondents had more positive assessments compared to those self-describing as bisexual and other(s). Also, the assessment is different according to the institution and the working location.



Respondents also assessed their working place as being a safe environment for LGBTIQ people (N=209, mean=8, SD=1.8, max.=10, min.=0). When considering gender, however, it appears that gender diverse respondents felt less safe compared to the other genders.

To the question “What specific issues need to be addressed in your institution/service?”, a total of 88 respondents developed the issues they would like to see answered.



When providing more information related to the specific issues that need to be addressed by their institution or agency, respondents provided information related to different forms of discrimination. The respondents reported they witnessed all types of discrimination, not only towards LGBTIQ people, but also in regard to other minorities (BIPOC minorities in particular). Thus, three respondents underlined the intersectionality of discrimination.

In total, nine respondents specifically mentioned issues related to homophobia, and 18 to transphobia. Among those different testimonies, four mentioned general assumption about cis- and/or heteronormativity, four online hate speech, specifically on MyIntraComm, and the lack of moderation, and four homophobic, transphobic and sexist jokes and comments in more “informal” settings, such as by ‘water cooler gossiping’ and chatting. Respondents added that discrimination against LGBTIQ was made worse by unconscious biases, most often personal beliefs linked to politics and religion.

“Culture in which homophobic comments are socially accepted in informal settings.”

Concerning transphobia, a respondent mentioned that it was an easy political view to defend nowadays. Thus, 11 respondents declared that the institutions did not tackle transphobia properly.

“More consideration should be done towards trans and non-binary colleagues; it is enough to talk and make strategies about gender equality without facing gender diversity.”

“In my institution, I feel 100% comfortable with my sexuality, but less so with my identity as a non-binary person.”

“[...] notably on trans identity, as some of the behaviours observed seem to result from ignorance or lack of empathy.”*

Respondents pointed out specific issues, such as

the improvement of the trans* and non-binary healthcare. Three respondents shared the idea of a new step towards a more inclusive language with the use of generic terms to refer to a person. One person also proposed the addition of the pronouns in signature, although a trans* person reported feeling nervous about it. One person proposed gender-neutral toilets.

“(I) am nervous about how it would be received by people who notice it.”

“Adapting the language (e.g., removing expressions such as „Ladies and Gentlemen“, „ Dear Sir or Madam“, is also very important.”

“[You] need to diffuse more your excellent paper on „what do pronouns in email signatures mean“ (EC HR DIO 2022 campaign on pronouns)

Internal staff of the institutions, as well as external contacts reported discrimination. Thus, the EU delegations were mentioned multiple times. One respondent shared their personal experience working outside the EU, in a country where homosexuality is criminally penalised.

“The EC advises not to disclose your sexuality in a similar context - including with local agents. It is quite understandable, although it is a different situation compared to Bruxelles where I was out and open about it.”

Internally, forms of discrimination are reported at all levels. From staff of the institutions, colleagues and managers, to Members of the European Parliament. Five respondents mentioned the functioning of the Institutions themselves as not fit to welcome and protect LGBTIQ people. Three respondents even mentioned lack of commitment from the Human Resources.

“It is not clear to me to what extent HR and top management actually consider this a point that needs to be addressed as regards diversity and inclusion in the workplace.”

“Mentalities take time to evolve, and we need to stay vigilant, even more in unstable times when it get tempting to look for scapegoats.”

“Continuing to ensure that HR and the hierarchy speak up whenever discriminatory behaviour is encountered so show that it is unacceptable to discriminate in the institution.”

One very specific issue was brought up multiple times, regarding the moderation of the comments left by users on MyIntraComm. Respondents heavily condemn the lack of moderation of the constant hateful comments written in response to LGBTIQ articles.

Almost all the respondents depicted a lack of visibility of LGBTIQ people, more especially of transgender, non-binary and intersex people. They would like to see more openly gay/trans* people not only in management positions, but also in general. These role models would work against the perception of heteronormativity and cisnormativity felt by four respondents. One respondent hoped that such representation would help to create a safer space for other colleagues to come out.

The support for LGBTIQ parents or parents of LGBTIQ children was also brought up by 3 respondents. They mentioned issues met by same-sex parents in adopting or obtaining IVF-related reimbursement for gay male couples.

All respondents who added other issues to address in their Institution wished there was more awareness and prevention of the issues met by LGBTIQ colleagues. Detailed here are the proposed ways to raise awareness and help managers and colleagues foster a positive atmosphere for LGBTIQ colleagues.

Respondents would like the Institutions to organise mandatory training for all staff and management, including Members of the European Parliament. They proposed a series of themes to address more efficiently or around which new training could be created or open discussions led at all levels, from

units to DGs to Institutions wide events.

The proposed themes are the following:

- Harassment (detect and deal with);
- Difficulties met by LGBTIQ and how to approach them;
- Sensitivity training, a form of training aiming to make people more aware of their own behaviour and interactions with others;
- Terminology (difference sex/gender e.g.);
- How to create a LGBTIQ friendly environment;
- Intersectionality;
- Trans Identity;
- Diversity of queerness.

Ten respondents deplored the lack of functioning mechanisms to deal with existing discrimination and/or harassment and the lack of consequences/accountability. *“It is mostly left down to individuals to manage and handle through personal interactions.”*

Concerning the moderation of hateful comments on MyIntraComm: *“I don’t know who to complain to in the hierarchy after the moderators.”*

“I would appreciate more transparency and communication on rules and sanctions applicable to insults on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.”

Four respondents felt like the Institutions did not take toxic behaviours from colleagues and managers seriously, to the point one felt that their Institution did not care about the issues encountered by LGBTIQ staff. Four other respondents considered the actions taken around the issues were not effective, with EU staff not knowing or wilfully ignoring the EU values and related policies in place. The respondents wished that actions were taken to help in this sense.

“Monitoring over time hierarchical managers’ behaviours.”

“All staff should know EU values (which include LGBTIQ rights) and respect them. This should be enforced and taken more seriously.”

OTHER OUTLOOKS

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THE INTERSEX RESPONDENT

This section displays the answers provided by the only intersex person who answered the questionnaire. For privacy reasons, sociodemographic information is not presented in this section. Gender neutral pronouns are used following this purpose.

This respondent was not out at work because they were not fully out in their private life at the moment of the survey. They would feel uncomfortable coming out to all their colleagues, and in line with this statement, did not feel at ease talking about their private life with them.

Regarding discrimination, they did not face or witness anyone in their current institution or service during the past two years being discriminated because of their sex characteristics. They also did not face any issues with the medical insurance system or had the feeling to have had any issues regarding their career opportunities.

THE TRANS PERSON NOT WORKING FOR THE INSTITUTIONS

This section displays the answers provided by a trans* person, spouse of a permanent staff working for the European institutions. For privacy reasons, sociodemographic information is not presented in this section. Gender neutral pronouns are used following this purpose. Although not working for the European institutions, the answers provide information on their working experience. In addition, information related to the insurance system can hardly be related to the European institutions since we do not know if this person is dependent or not.

This respondent declared that they were completely out at work, but they feared a negative impact on their work environment (e.g., bullying, harassment). They also felt partially at ease talking about their private life at work.

They faced discrimination at work, witnessed discrimination, and were discriminated against in their career. They also reported having been discriminated against by the insurance system but that it is hard to prove. In general, they didn't feel they could intervene in case of direct or witnessed discrimination.

THE NON-LGBTIQ RESPONDENTS

This section presents the results to the survey from the six non-LGBTIQ respondents.

17% of the respondents have witnessed a discriminatory behaviour based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, and 50% think they could intervene if a colleague or their hierarchy would behave in such a way. 50% of the respondents declared they did not know where to address themselves in case of discrimination.

All of them thought that it was important for creating an open and respectful workplace to have openly LGBTIQ „role models“ in management positions. In addition, 67% thought there were a sufficient number of „role models“ openly LGBTIQ in their institution or service who demonstrate that it is possible to have a successful career and be fully out at work.

Finally, they would assess positively their work environment as being friendly for LGBTIQ (N=5, mean=8, SD=1.72, max.=10, min.=5), and placed their institutions/services as being safe for LGBTIQ people (N=5, mean=8, SD=1.02, max.=10, min.=7).

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR ÉGALITÉ

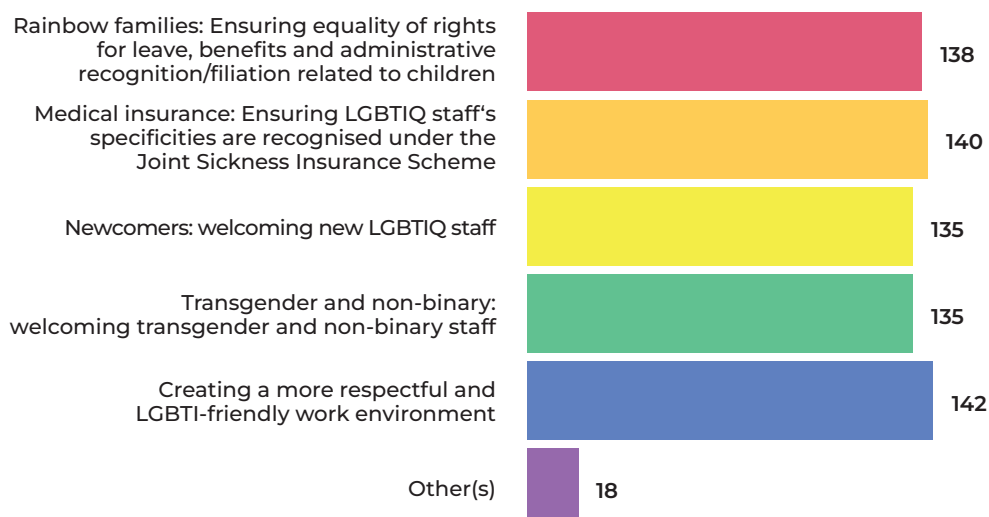
At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to provide their opinions regarding the future path that Égalité should follow as an association.

About the main issues concerning LGBTIQ staff that Égalité should work on in the coming years, no preferences were demonstrated, highlighting that respondents would prioritise all of them.

Regarding the expectations towards Égalité as an association, the most voted option was Advocacy for equality of rights (frequency = 210) social events / networking (frequency = 180), defending staff (frequency = 169) and information / newsletter (frequency = 147).

Finally, respondents highlighted a need for awareness inside the institutions regarding the issues that LGBTIQ people can face. They answered that they would expect Égalité to play a role in raising this awareness, by working both with individual services and institutions, and by developing projects such as conferences or events with other associations.

What is/are the main issue(s) concerning LGBTIQ staff that Égalité should work on in the coming years? (Multiple answers possible)



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey exercise aimed at shining lights on the experience of LGBTIQ colleagues working for the European Institutions, bodies and Agencies, and to support the construction of an LGBTIQ friendly working environment.

The picture displayed by the results shows that in general the experience of LGBTIQ in the European Institutions is positive. However, this promising vision of an inclusive workplace noticeably changes according to the colour of the rainbow to whom the respondents belong. In particular, the findings suggest that lesbian, bisexual, trans*, or gender diverse people are more likely to experience discriminatory attitudes across various situations. Regrettably, only one intersex respondent provided input in the survey. The findings also indicate that discrimination is prevalent across all institutions, with no institution being better or worse than another, despite how levels of satisfaction differ from one institution to another.

Despite the general efforts made by the European Institutions to welcome diversity (e.g., the diversity /equal opportunities policy in the different institutions), it appears that -as in society in general - LGBTIQ-phobia and its culture are well rooted within the workplace. Quantitative results supported by qualitative testimonials demonstrated that discrimination and harassment are present at all levels, from lower-level positions to higher tiers of the hierarchy, within the different institutions, administrative services and the medical insurance system. It is important to note that the personal

experience or acknowledgement of discrimination has a significant influence on the well-being of LGBTIQ colleagues, and that such discrimination can also hinder the effectiveness of the Institutions. And the same applies to all minority groups.

Based on the findings of this survey and our conviction that the European Institutions should personify its own values and be an example in terms of core human rights, equality, inclusion and diversity, we present the following recommendations.

1. TAKE THE LEAD IN CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORK-PLACE FOR ALL

- We understand leadership as the direct implementation of decisions, resolutions and positions made at the political level in practice. It is necessary to ensure that political statements or calls for one or other changes, both for member states and third countries, are also implemented within the institutions.
- Institutions must respond clearly and unambiguously to changing judicial precedents, constantly monitor and assess whether decisions of International Courts related to

inclusion issues comply with internal rules and practices. Make immediate and urgent changes if gaps are identified.

- Regardless of the country of origin of the staff member and the nature of the employment contract, ensure that, a specific person is given all the same rights. In this way, can be avoided situations where a LGBTIQ person faces discrimination within institutions solely due to their country's reluctance to implement inclusive policies stemming from certain political decisions.
- Finally, we believe that human rights, once earned and recognized, should be regarded as inviolable. As belonging to universality and inalienability, they should not be revocable or compromise under any circumstances.

2. DEVELOP CLEAR POLICIES

- Establish unambiguous, comprehensive zero tolerance policies that address discrimination and harassment towards individuals based on their sexual orientation, sex characteristics or gender identity. Apply sanctions commensurate with the severity of the acts committed. In addition, ensure that all reports, without exception, are

thoroughly investigated while protecting the victim during and after the investigation process.

- Ensure that all staff is aware of the policy on diversity and actively communicate it. Additionally, make sure that the process for reporting instances LGBTIQ-phobic attitudes, bullying and harassment in the workplace is clearly established.
- Improve the monitoring of harmful and hate speech in the intranet of the institutions (e.g., blogposts, Have your say, etc.). Provide specialized training and support for the teams responsible for monitoring and responding to these messages, ensuring that they can effectively differentiate between constructive debates and instances of LGBTIQ-phobic behaviours. Establish protocols for managing conversations with staff members who engage in such behaviours, with a focus on promoting respectful and inclusive communication.

3. CREATE AN ADMINISTRATION THAT SUPPORTS LGBTIQ STAFF

- Ensure that LGBTIQ employees, regardless of the

type of their employment contract, do not experience repeated discrimination in institutions if their country of origin does not yet recognize their rights (e.g., gender self-determination of legal documents, same-sex unions, adoption). In practice this would require changing the existing procedures, as for example (but not restricted to):

- Facilitate the process of updating names on all official documents for individuals identifying as non-binary or trans* without the need for legal documentation.
- Change the requirements for household allowance, which require to submit documents, to perform certain legal actions that are not possible in their country of origin.
- Reinforce and harmonize across institutions the recognition of rainbow families, equating formally all rights and benefits with cisgender and/or heterosexual couples. Also, provide administrative support in dealing with local and national authorities in registering and recognising dependents.
- Create adequate and personalised mechanisms of support for staff based outside of the EU, namely in the EC and EEAS Delegations, considering the legal, social

and economic protections needed for staff to work in countries with several legal restrictions and attitudes towards LGBTIQ people. For example, the recruitment and mobility process could include information on overall context for LGBTIQ people. Such statement could include (but is not restricted to) information on: the legal framework, the social climate, the presence of an active civil society for the rights of LGBTIQ people and their freedom of expression, the recognition of the status of dependents as well as possible solutions to ensure diplomatic protection and continuous support from the Institution.

- Provide personalised support to staff based outside of the main employment centres (Brussels, Luxembourg), based in Member States with legal restrictions on the full autonomous and complete life of LGBTIQ people and their families.
- Develop supportive rules and guidelines supporting non-binary and trans* staff. This may include: providing guidance on best practices for coming out at work through a comprehensive document or personalized support, allowing staff to change their civil title and pronouns across all workplace platforms to reflect their gender identity (and including Mx as a third-gender option) while offering the option to not publicly display titles on institutional channels if preferred, and any

other measures that promote an environment that values diversity and inclusion.

4. CREATE AWARENESS THROUGH TRAINING AND CAMPAIGNS

- It is crucial to provide comprehensive training and ongoing support to line hierarchical managers (HoU/Director/DG) and MEPs to support them in adopting a zero-tolerance stance towards any form of homophobic, biphobic, interphobic, or transphobic abuse in the workplace.
- Provide diversity and inclusion training to all staff, including MEPs and staff from external service provider working and collaborating with the institutions (e.g., canteen staff, etc.), covering the identification and prevention of anti-LGBTIQ discrimination or abuse, its negative effects on business, and ways to confront such attitudes among co-workers. The training should also emphasize the significance of intersectional identities, as for example dual discrimination faced by disabled LGBTIQ staff members.

- Establish diversity, inclusion and sensibility training as part of the newcomer onboarding cycle.
- Promote different campaigns and actions. This may include: an interinstitutional campaign promoting the use of pronouns in email signature, interinstitutional Coming Out Day events, the promotion of diversity through testimonial campaigns.

5. IMPROVE THE MEDICAL INSURANCE SYSTEM

- Implement training for staffs involved in the health insurance system about the practices that are already implemented, and that are supportive towards the rights of LGBTIQ staff.
- Demedicalise the healthcare services of LGBTIQ staff, following the most advanced Member States' approach towards essential services. As for example, such implementation could be: the depathologization of and the reimbursement of all gender affirming cares without restrictions on the path to follow; or the facilitated access to medication (e.g., PreP) or

services (e.g., IVF).

6. RECRUIT & PROMOTE DIVERSE CANDIDATES

- Create clear guidelines for recruitment and promotion based on diversity and inclusion with an intersectional approach.
- Train the recruitment teams on identifying potential discrimination against LGBTIQ employees during the recruitment process and ways to decrease bias.
- Provide diversity sensibility training to mentors and managers hosting trainees, fostering an inclusive and safer environment.

7. ENGAGE WITH THE ÉGALITÉ STAFF GROUP

- Égalité can offer an interinstitutional approach and assistance in several internal topics. It can also share its in-depth knowledge on matters related to LGBTIQ rights.

