



European Commission - Speech [Check Against Delivery]



Speech by Commissioner Dalli: Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025

Brussels, 12 November 2020

This is a Strategy about Humanity, Humanity in all its diversity. The way we are born is not an ideology, the way we are born is nature, is biology, is science. And despite this, the experience of discriminations against LGBTIQ people in the EU increased in recent years.

We want to build a European Union where all of us can thrive, where all of us will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

And we must build from the foundation up.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) equality strategy adopted today is an important milestone towards achieving a Union of Equality.

It aims at building a Union where **diversity** is celebrated as part of our collective richness. So that all people can be themselves **without risk of discrimination, exclusion or violence**.

A Union where we have the same freedoms and rights, no matter our personal characteristics.

We must pay particular attention to the diversity of LGBTIQ people's needs and to the most marginalised, including those experiencing intersectional discrimination.

This first ever LGBTIQ strategy presents the Commission's key actions and objectives for the next five years around **four pillars, namely:**

- tackling discrimination against LGBTIQ people,
- ensuring LGBTIQ people's safety,
- building LGBTIQ inclusive societies, and
- leading the call for LGBTIQ equality around the world.

The strategy **tackles discrimination and aims to ensure equal opportunities** for LGBTIQ people by combining efforts to **improve legal protection** against discrimination while actively promoting **diversity and inclusion policies**.

To tackle discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation, the Commission will ensure rigorous application of the Employment Equality Directive and will report on the Directive's implementation in 2021.

By 2022, the Commission will put forward any legislation required, which may include the reinforcement of the role of equality bodies.

We will also ensure that the gender equality strategy is implemented correctly which regards its coverage to gender reassignment.

We will also continue to work towards adoption of legislation to cover all spheres of life.

Besides, we will address discriminations through policy making and sharing of best practices. Take for example bullying and stereotyping which go on in schools towards those who are perceived as different. We need to address such discriminations.

Anti-LGBTIQ hatred or violence, and any practices aiming at "fixing" LGBTIQ people have absolutely no place in the European Union.

No-one needs fixing, it is the discrimination that needs to be wiped out of all social interactions.

Harmful practices such as:

- non-vital surgery and medical intervention on intersex infants and adolescents without their personal and fully informed consent, including 'intersex genital mutilation';

- forced medicalisation of trans people and
- conversion practices targeting LGBTIQ people have to stop.

As announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in her State of the Union address, we will present an initiative to **extend the list of 'EU crimes'** in article 83 of the Treaty to cover hate crime and hate speech, including those targeting LGBTIQ people.

Besides, our **societies should** not stop at guaranteeing safety for LGBTIQ people.

Our societies must **also be inclusive**.

We will therefore ensure that case law such as the Coman case regarding the coverage of same sex partners and the definition of spouses within the freedom of movement directive is implemented by all Member States. We will propose a legislative initiative on the mutual **recognition of parenthood between Member States**.

If one is a parent in one country, one is a parent in all countries.

At the same time, we will counter the erasure of intersex people, as well as address difficulties with regard to the recognition of trans and non-binary identities.

Sex and gender, are not two fixed and immutable boxes.

We also underscore the EU's firm commitment to **promote equality for LGBTIQ people across the globe**.

Many LGBTIQ people face discrimination, harassment, persecution, imprisonment, murder or the death penalty even – simply for being who they are, simply because of the way they were born

We will **strengthen** the EU's engagement on LGBTIQ issues in **all its external relations**.

LGBTIQ rights are human rights, and should be enjoyed fully everywhere and at all times.

To deliver on the strategy's objectives, the Commission will make **full use of the tools at its disposal**.

Targeted actions will be combined with enhanced **equality mainstreaming**.

LGBTIQ people exist and are part of our diverse societies everywhere.

Their presence in society, their visibility, and their demand for rights is as much of an ideology as the presence, visibility and exercise of rights by cisgender and heterosexual people.

There is no difference.

This is why we can never accept the so called 'LGBTIQ ideology free zones' as what they actually are is 'humanity free zones'.

All persons are unique, and have different elements in their personality, which is why **intersectionality** will be used as a cross-cutting principle throughout the implementation of the strategy.

These include sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and sex characteristics.

To achieve the change that the Commission wants to deliver, all stakeholders need to work in tandem.

We need to work **hand in hand**.

This is why we are calling on EU institutions, Member States and EU agencies, in partnership with civil society organisations, social partners and the private sector to foster the equality that we are promoting.

The strategy flags what needs to be done **at the European level**, but also offers guidance and support for what needs to be done at **the national level**.

I invite all the **Member States** to develop their own **action plans** on LGBTIQ equality.

The Commission services are there to support the development and review of such plans in partnership with Member States.

We must make clear progress towards an EU where LGBTIQ people, in all their **diversity**, are equal, **safe** and free to **fully participate in society**.

Let's build a **Union of Equality**

And this is another step in that direction.

Thank you.

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