



European Economic
and Social Committee

Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship

Public hearing:

SOC/849 – Union of Equality: LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030

Thursday, 29 January 2026, 09:30 – 13:00

*Room JDE 63 and online with Q&A via SliDo**

ABSTRACT

The EESC will hold a public hearing to examine the recently adopted LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026–2030. The event will bring diverse stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges in implementing the strategy's actions, enforcement of anti-discrimination norms, and strategies to ensure that EU policy frameworks meaningfully foster the Union of Equality. Key questions will focus on mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ equality, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, mechanisms for Member State engagement, and strategies for bridging gaps between EU-level and national practices.

STEERING TOPICS

1. Implementation gaps & uneven enforcement across Member States

How can the new LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy move beyond political commitments to ensure consistent implementation and enforcement of EU anti-discrimination standards across all Member States, particularly in contexts where national legislation, administrative capacity, or political will remain weak? Are existing EU monitoring, infringement, and conditionality tools sufficiently used or reinforced to address persistent disparities?

2. Backlash and anti-gender movements

In light of growing backlash against LGBTIQ+ equality and the increasing influence of anti-gender movements in parts of the EU, how effectively does the new Strategy anticipate and respond to these dynamics, and what additional preventive, protective, and resilience-building measures are needed to safeguard fundamental rights, civil society space, and democratic values?

* Event website with a web-stream link: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/union-equality-lgbtqi-equality-strategy-2026-2030>

3. Limited progress on trans and intersex rights

Despite explicit recognition in the Strategy, why does progress on trans and intersex rights remain limited in practice, and how can the 2026–2030 framework more decisively address legal recognition, healthcare access, bodily autonomy, and protection from harmful practices, while ensuring that these issues are not marginalised within broader LGBTIQ+ equality actions?

4. Inconsistent data collection and lack of intersectional analysis

Given persistent gaps in comparable, disaggregated, and intersectional data, how can the Strategy strengthen evidence-based policymaking while respecting fundamental rights and data protection, and what concrete mechanisms are needed to ensure that the experiences of the most marginalised LGBTIQ+ persons, such as migrants, racialised communities, persons with disabilities, and those living in poverty, are fully reflected in policy design and evaluation?

5. Workplace inclusion difficulties

While non-discrimination in employment is well established in EU law, why do LGBTIQ+ persons continue to face barriers to inclusion, career progression, and safety at work, and how can the Strategy better engage employers, social partners, and public administrations to translate legal protections into inclusive workplace cultures, particularly for trans, non-binary, and intersectionally discriminated workers?

6. Sports inclusion for transgender athletes

How can the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy contribute to a balanced, rights-based approach to the inclusion of transgender athletes in sport, addressing concerns around fairness and safety while avoiding exclusionary practices, and what role should the EU play in promoting evidence-based, inclusive standards in a policy area often left to fragmented national or sectoral regulation?

DRAFT PROGRAMME†

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| 09:30 – 09:40 | Welcome and introduction by Juliane Marie Neiiendam (Member - Group III, EESC) |
| Panel I Chaired by Maria del Carmen Barrera Chamorro (Member - Group II, EESC) | |
| 09:40 – 10:45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission: Non-Discrimination: LGBTIQ, Age, Horizontal Matters Unit – DG JUST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Susanne Knoefel • European Parliament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kim van Sparrentak (TBC) • European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Miltos Pavlou • Council of Europe: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) Unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gabriella Calleja <p style="text-align: right;">Q&A</p> |
| Panel II Chaired by Anders Ladefoged (Member - Group I, EESC) | |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bristol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peter Dunne • The European LGBTIQ Chamber of Commerce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pavel Subrt • Unión General de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ José Juan Álvarez Alejandro <p style="text-align: right;">Q&A</p> |
| Panel III Chaired by Ionuț Sibian (Member - Group III, EESC) | |
| 11:45 – 13:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILGA EUROPE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Katrin Hugendubel • Civil Society Development Foundation Romania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bianca Oprea • Transgender Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isa Nico Borrelli • Euro Central Asian Lesbian Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ilaria Todde <p style="text-align: right;">Q&A</p> |

† **Interpretation regime:** Participants can speak in: French, English and Spanish and listen to: French, English and Spanish.