



*The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All is coming to its end. The lasting legacy of this Year should be harmonised legislation providing equal protections against discrimination for all grounds.*

As the European Commission considers expanding EU-wide anti-discrimination laws to areas beyond employment, ILGA-Europe outlines discrimination that affects lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people outside the workplace and why changing the law is needed.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people throughout Europe are facing discrimination in various areas of their lives outside work:

## Health care

Problems faced by LGBT people in accessing health care include degrading treatment of patients, limited access to hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery, refusing to provide help or access to medical services to openly LGBT people, or to share medical information with a patient's same-sex partner, even with the patient's approval. As a consequence, many LGBT people are reluctant to seek care, because they fear insensitivity, dismissal and discrimination from the medical community.

## Social security and pensions

Access to social security schemes such as survivor pensions, equal treatment for tax purposes, financial assistance for carers, is often limited to married couples or legally registered couples. Where marriage and registered partnership is not available for same-sex couples, lesbian and gay couples do not have the social protection which they would be granted if they were in a relationship with someone of the opposite sex.

## Access to goods and services

Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in access to goods and services takes many different forms, from same-sex couples being forced to leave restaurants and bars and being denied access to double rooms in hotels, to unequal treatment in accessing special offers with airline travel, denied access to insurance policies and bank loans available to married couples, to refusals to rent apartments.

## Education

A 2006 Europe-wide survey found that 61.2% of young LGBT people had experienced discrimination at school (ILGA-Europe & IGLYO). The problems faced by LGBT people include: harassment and bullying; discriminatory content in educational materials; lack of representation of LGBT issues in the curriculum; insulting or degrading treatment during classes; refusing access to information about sexuality and sexual health.



The picture that emerges from existing research and surveys demonstrates the pressing need for new legal protection against sexual orientation discrimination. In looking at a new EU anti-discrimination law, ILGA-Europe strongly believes that equal levels of protection against all forms of discrimination must be ensured to avoid perpetuating a "hierarchy of rights" and to address multiple discrimination.

The need for new EU anti-discrimination legislation, including on sexual orientation, is argued in detail in ILGA-Europe's Written Response to the European Commission Consultation on New Anti-Discrimination Measures (available at our website [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org) > Advocacy & lobbying > Policy papers).

**IT IS NOW TIME FOR THE EU TO TAKE UP ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO MAKE EQUALITY A REALITY FOR ALL!**