



President of the Republic of Portugal

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa

Brussels, 27 April 2018

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing on behalf of ILGA-Europe (the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), Transgender Europe and the Organisation Intersex International Europe to urge you to promulgate the law adopted by the Parliament on 13 April.

This law updates Portugal's legal gender recognition procedures to match standards set by other European countries and by the Council of Europe. The people in Portugal are awaiting this reform, which will be proof yet again that Portugal is leading regarding the recognition of fundamental human rights, including the rights of trans and intersex people, which recognises the right to self-determination of gender identity and gender expression and the right to the protection of sex characteristics.

The changes introduced through the law are in line with recent legislation adopted in countries such as Norway, Malta, Denmark and Ireland and finally provide rights that the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly adopted with the resolution on 'Discrimination against transgender people in Europe'. During many hearings in the Portuguese Parliament in preparing the law, trans and intersex people, as well as their parents gave forceful testimonies of how this legal reform will improve their daily lives.

The reform provides everyone with one of the most basic fundamental rights, the right to be trusted to know who they are. This is what self-determination is about: ensuring that people have ownership, can be fully autonomous and take responsibility. Statistics from countries with progressive gender recognition laws show that the principle of self-determination works in practice. People can go on pursuing their lives, knowing they are respected and recognized. What's harmful is not self-determination – what's harmful is when people are forced to undergo medical treatments or to get diagnosed or to be judged in order to get their identity recognised.

When the law was adopted in the Parliament two weeks ago, thousands of people celebrated, were proud of their country and impatient to see trans people have their rights recognised at last. And the international community, LGBTI people as well as government representatives and international organisations, are looking forward to celebrating this important step together with the Portuguese government and the Portuguese people on the occasion of the IDAHOT Forum hosted by your country this year on 14 May 2018 in Lisbon. We strongly hope that you will endorse this law and make history.

Yours sincerely,

Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director, ILGA-Europe

Julia Ehrt, Executive Director, Transgender Europe

Dan Christian Ghattas, Executive Director, OII-Europe