

Key recommendations from Aidsfonds (NL) and AIDS-Fondet (DK) for the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy civil society consultations

The next EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy (2026–2030) comes at a critical juncture. Across the European Union and globally, LGBTIQ communities are facing increasing threats to their rights, safety, and access to essential services. A rollback of protections, rising hate speech and violence, underfunding of community-led responses, and politicisation of gender and sexual diversity have all contributed to a shrinking space for LGBTIQ people.

Despite progress in some Member States, many LGBTIQ people still experience systemic discrimination in health, employment, housing, education, and legal recognition. Access to HIV and STI prevention, mental health care, and gender-affirming services remains unequal and, in many cases, under attack. In parallel, globally, increasing backlash against gender and sexual rights threatens to undermine decades of hard-won gains.

In this context, the EU has a responsibility – and an opportunity – to lead with a renewed and strengthened commitment to equality, dignity, and inclusion. A bold, well-funded, and rights-based LGBTIQ Equality Strategy must serve as both a shield and a springboard: protecting communities from regression, and enabling community-led change that improves lives, advances health, and upholds fundamental rights.

Central to all this work is the role of community-led organisations, since they are uniquely positioned to provide guidance on policies that directly impact them. Their meaningful engagement must hence be central to the future strategy. We also emphasise the importance of grounding the EU's LGBTIQ policy framework in human rights, equality, and scientific evidence. These principles should guide both the development and implementation of policy, ensuring that responses are not only inclusive and community-informed, but also effective, transparent, and accountable. The new strategy must therefore combine strong political and financial support for community-led action with institutionalised mechanisms to ensure evidence-based and rights-based policymaking across all relevant sectors.

In response to the call for community inputs to this new EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy (2026–2030), Aidsfonds (NL) and AIDS-Fondet (DK) urge the European Commission to pay specific attention to the recommendations below. These recommendations reflect the expertise and lived realities of LGBTIQ communities and civil society across Europe and globally, including those most affected by HIV, STIs, and structural exclusion. They offer a roadmap for an inclusive, effective, and accountable EU policy framework in the years ahead.

Advance LGBTIQ people's rights against violence, discrimination, and violations of human rights in the EU

- Commit to establish EU-level legislation that addresses and closes existing gaps in protection against discrimination across all areas of life, especially robust anti-discrimination and/or hate crime legislation.
- Incorporate dimensions of intersectional discrimination in the implementation of existing EU laws.
- Secure the right to family life and self-determination for LGBTIQ people.
- Ensure that LGBTIQ people are explicitly named as a priority group in social inclusion, housing, and employment policies — and that access to (sexual) health is integrated into these efforts.
- Develop and enforce mechanisms to monitor, prevent, and sanction hate speech against LGBTIQ individuals, with specific safeguards for frontline actors such as healthcare providers, educators, and community organisations.
- Integrate counter-disinformation measures into EU public health and digital policy, recognising the impact of misinformation on LGBTIQ health-seeking behaviour and service access.
- Introduce binding EU legislation to prohibit all forms of conversion practices, ensuring full protection from non-consensual, non-evidence-based interventions aimed at changing sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.
- Strengthen efforts to document discrimination against and improve access to justice for LGBTIQ people, including providing funding for LGBTIQ rights organizations who are actively documenting such discrimination and providing legal support.
- Promote inclusive representation in education, and increase funding for LGBTIQ rights organizations working to advance equality and inclusion.
- Ensure that access to EU funding, to member states or otherwise, is strictly conditional on full compliance with fundamental rights, including LGBTIQ rights and the rule of law, with mechanisms such as rights-based screening, consequences for violations, and enforcement through infringement procedures by the European Commission. This conditionality must also fully apply to accession countries.

Protect bodily autonomy and self-determination for intersex and trans people

- Introduce legislation to prohibit medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries on intersex individuals.
 - Adopt gender self-determination in EU law, and facilitate access to transition for trans and non-binary people by removing the need for prior approvals from so-called "experts".
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Strengthen LGBTIQ health rights in EU and global health policies

- Ensure that LGBTIQ health, including HIV and STI prevention, is systematically embedded in EU health strategies and supported by inclusive data collection and funding, in particular through the renewal of the EU4HEALTH instrument under the next MFF with a robust budget allocation for LGBTIQ health and inclusion.
 - Promote integration of sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and STI, services for LGBTIQ persons with other key health services such as mental health.
 - Recognise the strategic role of community-led organisations in the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of health and inclusion policies, and ensure their institutionalised participation across EU health governance mechanisms.
 - Endorse the WHO Europe Action Plan on HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and STIs, along with the 2022 WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and STIs for Key Populations.
 - Leverage the intersectionality of the HIV/AIDS movement and the LGBTIQ rights movement to further LGBTIQ and human rights.
 - Make sure that the position that the EU adopts in relevant global health initiatives it funds/oversees reflects a commitment to LGBTIQ rights and a human rights-based approach to ending HIV/AIDS, while ensuring dedicated funding and political support for LGBTIQ health and rights.
 - Ensure that the healthcare needs of LGBTIQ people are accounted for and addressed in health crises responses.
 - Make EU funding conditional on respect for not only fundamental rights but also LGBTIQ health rights, enforced through health access-based screening and accountability measures.
 - Ensure access to PrEP for all relevant groups across EU countries.
 - Ensure consistent health services across EU countries for migrant LGBTIQ people struggling with access to health services – including access to PrEP, testing and other sexual health services.
 - Ensure robust data collection and monitoring for health equity by using EU agencies and including sexual health and rights indicators in LGBTIQ-focused monitoring efforts, and using that data, with meaningful community input, to guide policy decisions.
 - Encourage block negotiations and buying of HIV and sexual health prevention and treatment medication (especially long-acting PrEP). This is to ensure affordability and continuous availability across member states of life saving medication.
 - Coordinate with the National Contact Points of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive to ensure that LGBTIQ people can equally access their rights under the Directive.
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Protect LGBTIQ asylum seekers: ensure safety, health, and inclusion in EU migration and refugee policies

- Ensure safe, inclusive reception and asylum procedures by providing dedicated housing, prohibiting unsafe mixed accommodations, and training staff on LGBTIQ rights, anti-discrimination, trauma-informed care, and gender diversity.
- Guarantee access to inclusive, essential healthcare by recognizing gender-affirming care as a medical necessity and funding tailored mental health services for LGBTIQ asylum seekers.
- Provide accessible legal recognition and support through non-discriminatory gender recognition procedures, funded legal aid, and referrals to LGBTIQ friendly legal, medical, and psychosocial services.
- Involve LGBTIQ civil society organizations in shaping asylum, migration, and emergency response policies to ensure their expertise and community knowledge inform inclusive practices.
- Secure sustainable support for community-based services by structurally funding LGBTIQ focused healthcare providers and protecting their access to critical locations like refugee camps, including during crises and disasters.

Address LGBTIQ needs in crisis and humanitarian response

- Fully include and update the specific needs of key and vulnerable populations, including LGBTIQ people, in Rebuild Ukraine programmes as well as all humanitarian assistance.
- Consider access to HIV treatment and prevention medication a humanitarian need, since it is a necessity for maintaining the health and immunity of people. Especially in times of conflict, war or other crises.

Tie EU enlargement to fundamental rights and LGBTIQ equality

- Make sure that EU enlargement meaningfully and sustainably advances LGBTIQ rights in candidate countries by ensuring that access to EU funding is strictly conditional on full compliance with fundamental rights, including LGBTIQ rights and the rule of law, with mechanisms such as rights-based screening, consequences for violations, and enforcement through infringement procedures by the European Commission.
 - Ensure financial and political support for LGBTIQ organizations in candidate countries.
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Combat global discrimination against LGBTIQ people through EU external action

- Pledge at least €800 million to the Global Fund to ensure a strong replenishment and fight discrimination that is preventing key and marginalized populations from getting the health services they need.
- Increase EU Official Development Assistance to at least €200 billion in the next MFF ensuring flexible funding to grassroots LGBTIQ groups and organizations, especially in restrictive environments.
- Reinforce and support partner countries' commitments to improve human rights, democratic values, and LGBTIQ rights through diplomatic backing, capacity-building, and targeted assistance.
- Engage diplomatically with countries maintaining discriminatory laws or practices, promote decriminalisation of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sexual characteristics, and support equal rights through EU diplomacy.
- Ensure that EU external action instruments, such as Global Gateway and others, mainstream, protect and promote LGBTIQ rights.
- Resist calls from the US on reducing DEI policies by adopting a common, strong EU position on support for communities.
- Continue effective implementation of the global health strategy, including by ensuring sufficient funds for global partnerships and research and development that includes and promotes the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people.

