



## INPUT TO CONSULTATION

### EU LGBTIQ EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR 2026-2030

GENDERACTIONplus welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2026–2030. We write from the perspective of research and innovation (R&I) and gender equality policy, where the safety and inclusion of LGBTIQ communities remain an urgent concern.

In recent years, we have seen a rise in attacks on LGBTIQ individuals, including within academic contexts. Researchers and activists working on gender and LGBTIQ issues face increasing political hostility, institutional pressure, and personal risk. This has been well documented in the 2024 Free to Think report by Scholars at Risk and the latest UN Independent Expert's report on academic freedom and sexual orientation and gender identity. These threats are not abstract: they affect hiring, funding, student experience, and the ability to carry out research safely and freely across the EU.

At the same time, LGBTIQ people — especially trans and non-binary individuals — are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, including in higher education and research institutions. The UniSAFE survey on gender-based violence in academia and the GenderSAFE Research Brief on institutional responses highlight persistent patterns of violence, digital abuse, misgendering, and exclusion. These realities demand meaningful institutional change.

**Gender Equality Plans:** We urge the Commission to ensure that the next strategy explicitly supports LGBTIQ inclusion in research and higher education. Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) should clearly address the needs of LGBTIQ staff and students through an intersectional and inclusive lens. Institutional policies must include training, protections, and reporting tools that reflect the realities of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. Crucially, gender-based violence prevention and response measures must treat LGBTIQ people as a priority group. Finally, representatives of LGBTIQ staff and students must be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GEPs and actions specifically addressing these groups.



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**Safeguarding academic freedom:** Academic freedom must also be safeguarded. The EU should continue to fund and protect research on gender, sexuality, and trans health, and defend scholars against political interference and backlash.

**Data protection:** Finally, we note growing concern over the misuse of LGBTIQ-related data, especially in relation to health, identity, and institutional databases. Ethical, rights-based data handling should be a core principle of the new strategy, with strong safeguards to prevent political or institutional misuse.

This consultation takes place in a wider context of democratic backsliding and organised resistance to inclusiveness in several Member States. The most recent findings from the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights confirm rising gender-based violence, online hate, and deepening inequality. Intersectionality is facing sustained pushback — and yet, it remains essential to designing effective and future-proof policy.

The LGBTIQ Equality Strategy must be robust, bold, and unafraid to name and resist backlash. It should centre lived realities, support institutional change, and respond to the needs of all communities — including those at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, disability, migration, and class.

