



Education International
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ETUCE Statement on the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy for 2026-2030

Adopted by ETUCE Bureau on 16 June 2025

On 1 April 2025, the European Commission put forward a public consultation to prepare a future [2026-2030 LGBTIQ equality strategy](#) (later: Strategy). The aim is to build on the progress achieved through the [2020-2025 LGBTIQ equality strategy](#). It is intended for the strategy to include actions to: (i) protect LGBTIQ people from hate speech, hate crime and discrimination in all forms; (ii) build more welcoming European societies for LGBTIQ people and the organisations that represent them; (iii) promote the empowerment of LGBTIQ people and ensure equal opportunities in different areas of life, such as employment, education and health, across all EU regions (including rural and remote areas); (iv) uphold the rights of trans, intersex, non-binary people and rainbow families; and (v) foster collaboration with Member States, local authorities and international partners to uphold equality, while also mainstreaming LGBTIQ equality in all EU policies and funds.

The following Statement represents the views of ETUCE* and its member organisations regarding the renewed Strategy and key aspects of its implementation in the education sector:

1. ETUCE welcomes that the European Commission acknowledges the rise of anti-gender and anti-LGBTIQ narratives in the recent years and the lack of effective monitoring of how the existing legal and policy instruments are applied to combat hate speech, hate crime and discrimination. ETUCE notices with the concern that in several European countries and regions, **legal protections for LGBTIQ rights remain weak or non-existent**, of have even been withdrawn recently. According to the [ILGA Europe Annual Review 2025](#), hate crimes have reached record levels.
2. **In education especially**, discrimination, prejudice, and bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity continue to affect LGBTIQ students, teachers, and educational staff, both in and out of schools. Some education institutions fail to uphold or actively disregard the rights of LGBTIQ individuals, while generally across European systems of education, there is an **insufficient awareness within education institutions** of LGBTIQ-related terminology, concepts, and inclusive practices. ETUCE member organisations also report that **sexuality education and lessons on emotional well-being** face resistance in many regions, limiting students' access to inclusive and comprehensive information, with **parents and community actors** sometimes opposing the inclusion of diversity content related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the curriculum.
3. To address these challenges, ETUCE suggests to include in the Strategy the call for education authorities to ensure that **all education institutions mirror the diversity of society** and actively contribute to inclusive environments for LGBTIQ individuals by playing a leading



role in **preventing discrimination, promoting inclusion, and supporting visibility** of LGBTIQ students, teachers, and education personnel.

4. The education systems should promote knowledge, awareness, and understanding of LGBTIQ equality and challenge harmful stereotypes within the education sector. Member States should adopt concrete legislative and non-legislative measures to **tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying** in educational institutions through inclusive policies, targeted campaigns, and awareness-raising efforts.
5. ETUCE underlines the crucial importance of providing teachers, trainers and other education personnel with skills and resources to foster LGBTIQ-inclusive education through **initial training and continuous professional development**.
6. The Strategy should require from every Member State to have a **national legislation that protects sexual diversity and ensures its application within education curricula and policies**, as well as to promote open and respectful dialogue with education stakeholders who oppose teaching about gender and sexual diversity, in order to build understanding and reduce opposition.
7. Among all areas of life, **working life remains the most common space where discrimination is experienced**, the education sector being particularly affected. LGBTIQ teachers, academics, and education personnel often feel unsafe or uncomfortable disclosing their identity due to fear of discrimination or professional consequences. Education employers and authorities are directly responsible for ensuring **equal, safe, and welcoming workplaces**. ETUCE demands to include in the Strategy the **reference to the updated [European Multi-sectoral Social Partners Guidelines to prevent and tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work](#)**, recently negotiated by social partners in the public sector. Safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental worker's right and every worker—regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity — should be treated with dignity and respect and be fully protected from third-party violence and harassment.
8. Furthermore, **detailed actions plans and implementation monitoring mechanisms** need to be set in order to develop meaningful and effective inclusion of LGBTIQ persons. ETUCE calls on the European Commission and the Member States to define concrete targets, benchmarks and a timeframe, as well as to ensure clear responsibilities for the implementation of the strategy. Moreover, it is crucial that social partners are fully involved in the design, implementation and assessment of these action plans and monitoring mechanisms. ETUCE emphasises that effective implementation of the Strategy requires **meaningful social dialogue at all levels and regular consultation with education trade unions**.

**The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 127 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers in 51 countries of Europe. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of education trade unions.*