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Thematic Fiche: Education and LGBTIQ Diversity

ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education

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Thematic Fiche: Education and LGBTIQ Diversity

ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education

edited by Barry van Driel

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Introduction

The focus of this Thematic Fiche is sexual diversity. We use the abbreviation LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) throughout the text, though many international organisations, NGOs and researchers may use slightly different, but closely related, abbreviations. As much as possible, we have used their own abbreviations when referring to their own documents.

This Thematic Fiche was produced by the members of the ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education. The Working Group operated within the context of the 2018-2020 mandate[1] and comprised representatives from Member States and Candidate countries, as well as from relevant EU agencies, stakeholder associations, social partners and international organisations. The Working Group was coordinated by DG EAC of the European Commission, supported by two consultants from Ecorys.[2]

The Thematic Fiche addresses one of the four sub-topics covered under Theme 2 of the Working Group's mandate: Promote inclusive education for all learners, and in particular: (a) promoting safe and supportive learning environments; and (b) using evidence to show the importance of an inclusive climate in learning settings in order to create a sense of belonging and improve the well-being of learners.

The first version of the Thematic Fiche was prepared in the autumn of 2020 and the main content was presented during an online Working Group meeting that took place on 18 November 2020.

This Fiche presents definitions, previous work of the European Commission and other relevant international organisations, key research and impact evidence, as well a brief mention of several (policy and applied) practices presently being implemented across Europe. Working Group members contributed to the present version of this fiche by suggesting additional challenges, inspiring practices and key issues.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et2020_mandates_2018-2020_final.pdf
[2] Barry van Driel and Vicki Donlevy

Key abbreviations and definitions

Key abbreviations

The following abbreviations, which are used throughout this Fiche, are briefly defined below. Many different abbreviations are used when referring to sexual diversity. The most common are:

- LGBTIQ = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer
- LGBTI = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
- LGBTQ = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer
- LGBTI+ = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and other sexuality, sex and gender diverse

Key definitions

The following concepts that are used throughout this Thematic Fiche are briefly defined below. These definitions have been taken from ILGA, the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.[3]

- **Bisexual**: when a person is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of more than one sex.

- **Coming-out**: the process of revealing the identification of a lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex person. Outing: when a person's identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex person is revealed without consent. "Being in the closet": a situation where someone has decided not to be open about his or her sexual orientation (lesbian, gay man, bisexual), gender identity/expression (trans person) and/or sex (intersex person).

- **Gay**: a person who feels sexual and/or emotional desire exclusively or predominantly for persons of her or his own sex.

- **Gender identity**: refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body.

- **Heteronormativity**: Reference to cultural and social practices where men and women are being led into believing and behaving as if heterosexuality were the only conceivable sexuality. It also implies the positioning of heterosexuality as the only way of being "normal" and as the key source of social reward.

- **Homophobia**: the fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred toward homosexuality.

[3] For the definitions below and further definitions, see: https://ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/ilga-europe_glossary_final_170714_www.pdf. These definitions closely resemble those used by UNESCO (see: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244756

- **Homosexual**: People are classified as homosexual on the basis of their gender and the gender of their sexual partner(s). When the partner's gender is the same as the individual's, then the person is categorised as homosexual. ILGA recommends to use the terms lesbian and gay men instead of homosexual people.

- **Intersex:** a term that relates to a range of physical traits or variations that lie between stereotypical ideals of male and female. Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male. Many forms of intersex exist; it is a spectrum or umbrella term, rather than a single category.

- **Queer**: has become an academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual - includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans. For many LGBTIQ persons, the term "queer" has negative connotations as it was traditionally an abusive term, however many LGBTIQ persons are now comfortable with the term and have "reclaimed" it as a symbol of pride.

- **Sexual orientation**: refers to each person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender.

- **Transgender**: refers to those trans people who live permanently in their preferred gender. Until recently, this term was also the primary umbrella term referring to all trans people, but this use is now losing favour to the term 'trans'. which is perceived to be more inclusive of all trans communities. The UNESCO definition notes that Transgender people may be heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.

- **Transsexual**: refers to people who identify entirely with the gender role opposite to the sex assigned to at birth and seeks to live permanently in the preferred gender role. This often goes along with strong rejection of their physical primary and secondary sex characteristics and wish to align their body with their preferred gender. Transsexual people might intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment treatment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery).

Rationale for action

Globally, attitudes towards LGBTIQ individuals and communities have become more accepting, though at a different rate, while some countries have become less accepting.[4] This is also the case in the EU.[5] According to a 2016 report by ILGA, progress with respect to removing discriminatory barriers towards LGBTIQ individuals through policy and legislation has been quite mixed in recent years. There have been some major policy gains in certain countries, while other countries have slipped backwards towards more intolerance.[6] In a 2019 report, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics had most likely increased on the whole in the EU: 43% of LGBT people declared that they felt discriminated against in 2019, as compared to 37% in 2012.[7] [8]

Multiple studies show confirm that LGBTIQ youth indicate they do not feel comfortable being open about their identity. The Fundamental Rights Agency found in a 2012 study that many LGBT[9] youth hide their identity or avoid locations because of fear, while others experience discrimination and even violence for being LGBT.[10] About a quarter of LGBT identified individuals claimed that they had been subjected to attacks or had been threatened.[11]

Exclusion of LGBTIQ individuals is also exacerbated by heteronormativity and heteronormative norms (that heterosexual behaviour is the only 'normal' and even 'preferred' social behaviour). Such norms can be found in the curriculum (either blatant or subtle or completely invisible), institutional routines, in school activities and also at the policy level.[12] They strengthen the belief among LGBTIQ youth that they do not belong and are not accepted by society. A consequence of exclusionary practices, bullying and lack of support is school disengagement but also high attempted suicide and actual suicide rates.[13]

Suicide and attempted suicide are serious issues among LGBTIQ youth. These rates tend to be underreported in many countries because of shame and taboos. Nevertheless, in the Netherlands reported suicide rates among LGBTIQ youth are 4.5 times higher than among heterosexual youth (Kuyper, 2015b). Some eight percent of surveyed youth indicated that they had attempted suicide in the past and almost half indicated they have thought about committing suicide (Kooiman, 2012). Such thoughts and actions can be attributed primarily to negative treatment by peers at school, and to a lesser extent to rejection by family members and strangers.[14] The figures in Belgium are even more concerning. A study in Flanders (Missiaen & Seynaeve, 2016) revealed that 65.2% of LGBTIQ and 80.3% of trans persons reported that they had thought about suicide at least once in their life. Slightly more than a quarter (26.5%) of the respondents had already attempted suicide at least once.

[4] See: https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-divide-on-homosexuality-persists/
[5] For examples of historical timelines regarding changes in degree of acceptance relating to LGBTIQ persons, including in education, see: https://www.hollandalumni.nl/medias/editor/files/sexual-diversity-in-the-netherlands.pdf; https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/LGBTQ-History-Timeline-References.pdf; https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/history-of-lgbtq-timeline/
[6] See: http://ilga.org/downloads/02_ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2016_ENG_WEB_150516.pdf
[7] See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en
[8] Though there is no perfect relationship between *feeling discriminated against*, and *actually being discriminated against*, it is a good indicator.
[9] FRA uses the abbreviation LGBT
[10] See: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/eu-lgbt-survey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-survey-main
[11] http://fra.europa.eu/en/event/2013/presenting-findings-largest-ever-lgbt-hate-crime-and-discrimination-survey
[12] See: Roseneil, S. et al (2013) Changing Landscapes of Heteronormativity: The Regulation and Normalization of Same-Sex Sexualities in Europe. Social Politics 20, 22, 165-199
[13] http://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/ilga-europe_lgbt_youth_suicide_final.pdf
[14] See e.g. https://www.welingelichtekringen.nl/wetenschap/143916/homopesten-en-suicide-bij-jongeren.html

Policy changes in society and changes in school climate make a difference in terms of mental health related issues and suicide rates among LGBTIQ youth. The adoption of policies and laws that discriminate against LGBTIQ persons has been associated with negative impacts on the physical and mental health of LGBTIQ youth and higher attempted suicide and actual suicide rates. Drug use and depression also increase significantly, for instance. The opposite has been found to take place when laws and policies become more accepting of LGBTIQ persons. Suicide rates decrease and the physical and mental health of LGBTIQ persons improve.[15] There is further evidence that school climate impacts suicide rates among LGBTIQ youth. A study by Hatzenbeuhler et al. (2014) in the United States shows that LGBTIQ youth living in states and cities with more protective school climates reported fewer past-year suicidal thoughts than those living in states and cities with less protective climates. These researchers also found that sexual orientation disparities regarding suicidal thoughts were nearly eliminated in states and cities with the most protective school climates. Research in Denmark and Sweden shows that suicide rates and attempted suicide rates among LGBTIQ persons fall as stigma around homosexuality fades.[16]

Along similar lines, Bachmann and Simon (2014) have shown that there is a relationship between victimisation and well-being among gay men and that this is mediated by a perceived lack of social recognition.

With respect to addressing the impact of exclusion and rejection of LGBTIQ persons, several particular challenges for inclusion policies relating to LGBTIQ individuals relate to the following: (1) Unlike other groups that face exclusion and discrimination, many LGBTIQ individuals cannot find support among parents or family members. Also, teachers can harbour biases; (2) religious leaders and religious institutions, and in some cases governments, frequently promulgate anti-LGBTIQ views; (3) LGBTIQ-related programmes and policies that promote inclusion and tackle bullying, almost all focus on the secondary school level. It has been found that exclusionary behaviour and even suicides can take place as early as the first classes in primary school. Many school students also develop their first impressions of LGBTIQ individuals in their primary school years. Nevertheless, implementing policies related to teaching about LGBTIQ related issues at the primary school level remain challenging due to societal resistance.[17]

In terms of exclusion, violence and discrimination, some LGBTIQ youth have been found to be more at risk than others. LGBTIQ youth with disabilities report high rates of harassment and are more likely to be bullied or harassed than students without disabilities. Also, LGBTIQ students with disabilities are more likely to be disciplined in school and to drop out of school, compared to LGBTIQ students without disabilities.[18] The European Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 (2020) notes that 'EU citizens with a migrant background often face direct or indirect discrimination as well as racism …… in their daily lives at school……. Such discrimination can be based solely on their migrant background, but may be exacerbated due to their ethnic or racial origin as well as their religion or belief. LGBTIQ migrants and migrants with disabilities can also face multiple forms of discrimination' (p. 7).

[15] See e.g. https://nl.qaz.wiki/wiki/Suicide_among_LGBT_youth
[16] See: https://www.euronews.com/2019/11/14/suicide-rates-fall-among-lgbt-community-in-sweden-denmark
[17] See: https://www.coc.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/LGBTI-Childrens-rights-ENG.pdf
[18] https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/news-insight/news/disabled-young-people-identify-lgbt-bullied-and-silenced-our-schools

Societal attitudes

A June 2020 publication by the reputable Pew Research group confirmed that deep divisions in Europe exist regarding attitudes towards homosexuality. The following table indicates how study participants responded when asked whether they thought "homosexuality should/should not be accepted by society'.[19]

Country	Should not be accepted	Should be accepted
Sweden	5%	94%
Netherlands	8%	92%
Spain	10%	89%
France	11%	86%
Germany	11%	86%
Poland	42%	47%
Slovakia	46%	44%
Bulgaria	48%	32%
Lithuania	45%	28%

This study *does* show that, even in the more LGBTIQ-unfriendly countries, the younger generation is far more accepting than older generations.[20] It does remain unclear from the findings to what extent, and in what way, changes in the way young people are educated has impacted these attitudes, or the extent to which policy changes had an impact. Other trends in the Pew Study were that the better educated, women and less religious tend to be more accepting.[21] Attitude changes across the last two decades show an unclear pattern, with some countries becoming more and others less accepting. The authors of the study did not offer reasons for the disparities.

A 2019 Eurobarometer 2019[22], which polled more than 27,000 EU citizens on the social acceptance of LGBTIQ people across the EU, and also focused on perceptions of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity found similar patterns. On the whole, the findings suggested that there had been progress in terms of acceptance, with for instance 72% of Europeans saying there was nothing wrong in a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex, 69% saying same-sex marriage should be allowed, and 59% agreeing that transgender persons should be able to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity. However, in countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and

[19] https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-divide-on-homosexuality-persists/
[20] For instance, in Poland, 37% of those in the age group 50+, 57% in the age group 30-49 and 65% in the age group 18-29 thought that homosexuality should be accepted by society. For Slovakia, these figures were 27%, 54% and 61%, respectively.
[21] A study by Herek (2002) confirms the gender divide: male pupils and teachers had a more negative perspective on homosexuality than females.
[22] https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/search/discrimination/surveyKy/2251

Slovakia, more than 50% of respondents did not believe that LGBTIQ people should have the same rights as heterosexuals.[23]

A recent study by De Witte, Iterbeke and Holz (2019) provides more information about the educational realm. The authors looked at teacher and pupil attitudes (within secondary education) towards homosexuality in five EU countries, the UK and Turkey.[24] The research looked at attitude shifts between 2013 and 2017. In all countries, a higher percentage of students in 2017 indicated they received more accurate sex education than those queried in 2013.[25] The results also showed that a positive trend could be observed in terms of acceptance of LGBTIQ individuals in the EU but that in some EU countries the general climate towards homosexuality was reversing within this particular population. Not surprisingly, teacher attitudes more or less mirrored student attitudes. The authors note that for teachers:

> in Poland and Turkey the general perspective of teachers on homosexuality is significantly more negative compared to Belgium (reference category), whereas in Germany, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands teachers feel more comfortable with homosexuals. Male teachers seem to have a more negative perspective on equality of homosexuals (p.485) …….and that the results suggest that pupils who tend to have a slightly more negative perspective on the equality of homosexuals are less comfortable with homosexuality than teachers (p.486).

The impact of COVID

Most recently, in her announcement of the new LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025.[26] , during her State of the Union Address, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, noted that COVID had also impacted the LGBTIQ community. She stated that: "confinement restrictions have locked many LGBTIQ people, young and old, into hostile environments where they might be at risk of violence or heightened levels of anxiety or deeper depression…Widespread fake news has even blamed LGBTIQ people for the spread of the virus." (p.1).

The COVID pandemic has been identified by multiple sources as exacerbating the unsafety of LGBTIQ persons. Though schools can be unsafe spaces for some LGBTI youth (e.g. bullying)[27], ILGA-Europe has found that confinement measures have put LGBTIQ people at a higher risk of domestic violence or abuse, since young people cannot attend school.[28] As a result of school closures, many young people lost access to friends, peers and supportive adults. A study requested by the FEMM committee of the European Parliament, and published in September 2020, reveals that LGBTIQ youth reported losing their supportive network at school due to school closures and quarantine.[29] The study also points to evidence from 23 countries across Europe and Central Asia that during COVID there has been increased domestic violence aimed at LGBTIQ persons, evidenced by greater volumes of calls to LGBTIQ hotlines.[30] The World Economic Forum has also come to similar conclusions and notes that for

[23] For a further info and analysis see: https://www.statista.com/chart/19500/gay-rights/; https://www.ilga-europe.org/resources/news/latest-news/eurobarometer-report-lgbti-acceptance-not-full-picture
[24] The study included Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Spain, Poland, Hungary and Turkey
[25] There was too little info on teacher attitudes to be conclusive
[26] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2068
[27] See e.g. https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/2020/full_annual_review.pdf; https://www.iglyo.com/eu-lgbti-survey-iglyo-press-release/
[28] https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/COVID19%E2%80%89%20_Impact%20LGBTI%20people.pdf
[29] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/658227/IPOL_STU(2020)658227_EN.pdf
[30] Also, many young people do not reveal their sexual orientation to their parents, since they might not be accepting. A 2018 World Bank study showed that 60% of LGBTIQ youth in Southwestern Europe hide their sexual orientation from both of their parents (or legal guardians). See: http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/123651538514203449/pdf/130420-REPLACEMENT-PUBLIC-FINAL-WEB-Life-on-the-Margins-Survey-Results-of-the-Experiences-of-LGBTI-People-in-Southeastern-Europe.pdf

many young LGBTIQ persons, school might be their one safe space and source of affirming community.[31]

Though, in general, the inability to access a support network at school has been shown to harm LGBTIQ young people, it has been argued that this is especially the case for young people who are not 'out'. For those who are 'out' at home and have families that accept their sexual orientation, school closures can represent a welcome reprieve from an unwelcoming and sometimes hostile environment.[32]

NGO's such as Rutgers have noted that due to school closures in 2020 sexuality education received less or no attention. Concerns have also been expressed that sexual diversity education will be less of a priority after schools are reopened since there will be more emphasis on catching up on missed exam material.[33]

[31] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/the-coronavirus-has-shrunk-lgbtq-youths-safe-spaces/
[32] https://www.newamerica.org/weekly/lgbtq-students-school-closures-can-mean-loss-critical-safe-space/
[33] See: https://www.rutgers.international/covid-19-pandemic-puts-sexual-health-and-rights-under-pressure

Key myths and misconceptions

The educational challenges associated with creating safe learning environments for LGBTIQ youth, and teaching about LGBTIQ issues, can be manifold. One key challenge relates to the many myths and misconceptions that exist regarding LGBTIQ individuals. Educators often face such societal myths and misconceptions in their work. A few key myths and misconceptions are addressed below.

1) Being LGBTIQ is a choice or phase

This misconception relates especially to adolescents. LGBTIQ youth are often labelled "misguided" and "confused" for feeling and/or experiencing (sexual) attraction to someone of the same sex, both sexes, or for identifying with a gender different than the one assigned to them at birth (see e.g., Ziomek-Diagle et al., 2007). Decades of research has shown that being an LGBTIQ individual is not a choice (see e.g. Burton and Lothwell, 2012).

2) Children are innocent and unaware of gender and sexuality

Dominant discourses of childhood have positioned sexuality as largely irrelevant to children's lives. Multiple researchers (see e.g. Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Robinson and Davies, 2014) have noted that childhood innocence, in the sense that children are unaware of gender and sexuality, is a myth. Children are aware of their own gender and gender roles as early as two years of age. By extension, children already come to school with ideas about how boys and girls should behave and this by extension is intertwined with sexuality as normative gender roles assume heterosexuality.

3) Being LGBTIQ causes mental illness

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association is generally regarded as the authority for psychiatric diagnoses. Homosexuality was removed from its list of mental disorders in 1973 and declared that homosexuality is as healthy as heterosexuality. The World Health Organisation's ICD-9 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems) also listed homosexuality as a mental illness in 1977. This was removed from the ICD-10, endorsed by the Forty-Third World Health Assembly in 1990. Though correlations have been found between, for instance, indices of depression and anxiety, on the one hand, and LGBTIQ individuals, on the other, this has been found to be largely due to the lack of acceptance of LGBTIQ individuals by their peers, families, teachers and society in general. Summarising a recent UK study (Guardian Newspaper, 2018) into depression among LGBTIQ youth, it is noted that LGBTIQ individuals, as they progress through adolescence face a range of stressors …such as discrimination, stigmatisation, feelings of loneliness, social isolation, shame or fear or rejection, including at home or at school. The National Health Service in the UK also connects LGBTIQ mental health issues to LGBTIQ people's 'experience of discrimination, homophobia, bullying, social isolation or rejection because of their sexuality'.[34]

4) LGBTIQ feelings and behaviour are unnatural

This myth connects, among other things, to the belief that sexual relationships are formed for the procreation of children only. A recent study led by Andrea Ganna (Ganna et al. 2019) at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory group (Institute of Molecular Medicine in Finland) examined multiple large-scale data sets. The evidence clearly reinforced the understanding that same sex sexual behaviour was simply a natural part of human diversity in terms of humans as a species.

[34] See: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-issues-if-you-are-gay-lesbian-or-bisexual/

5) LGBTIQ-related issues should not be taught in school – it is not relevant to the curriculum

The belief that schools should not be teaching about sexuality is related to traditional views of what should taught and not taught in schools. Sexuality education, especially education about LGBTIQ issues, is seen, in such a view, as undesirable and even dangerous. The European Parliament, in 2013, noted, however, that 'sexuality education is a critical area of education and social policy'.[35] The Council of Europe, while noting parental, religious and political resistance to sexuality education, notes that 'sexuality is an integral part of human life' and that 'children and young people have the right to receive reliable, science-based and comprehensive information about it' and that there is 'overwhelming evidence that comprehensive sexuality education benefits children and society as a whole'. The Council of Europe goes on to state that 'sexuality education must include information that is relevant to them (LGBTIQ persons), scientifically accurate and age appropriate. This means helping children to understand sexual orientation and gender identity and dispelling common myths and stereotypes about LGBTI persons.'[36]

Further specific challenges that present barriers to talking about LGBTIQ issues in schools stem from the following general perspectives: (1) Religious and/or cultural beliefs that clash with non-heterosexual orientations, (2) Talking about LGBTIQ issues means talking about sex and that to talk about sex is to 'promote' it (see: van Driel and Kahn, 2012).

[35] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/462515/IPOL-FEMM_NT(2013)462515_EN.pdf The same policy document also notes that sexuality education is mandatory by law in nearly all the countries of the European Union.
[36] https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/comprehensive-sexuality-education-protects-children-and-helps-build-a-safer-inclusive-society

Work conducted by the European Commission and other international organisations

Sexual orientation is now recognised in EU law as a ground of discrimination. Given the importance of international organisations in shaping EU law, policies and the discussion around LGBTIQ issues, this Thematic Fiche devotes a relatively large amount of attention to their efforts. Most of these efforts have been very recent.

European Commission

The European Commission has been very active in addressing discrimination against LGBTIQ persons, improving the social acceptance of LGBTIQ persons and enforcing EU legislation. In terms of legislation, the priority of the Commission has to ensure that EU legislation and policy fully comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights, including Article 21, which contains a general prohibition of discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The European Commission put forward, in December 2015, its 'List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality'[37] with the aim of tackling discrimination against LGBTIQ persons in the EU. The actions outlined covered all main policy areas; effectively aiming to mainstream LGBTIQ equality. The policy areas included: non-discrimination, education, employment, health, free movement, asylum, hate speech/hate crime, enlargement and foreign policy. Raising awareness about the rights of LGBTIQ persons and bullying at schools was a special focus. More specifically, the Commission committed itself to: "support Member States through the organisation of a best practice exchange on LGBTI anti-discrimination actions in education and homo and transphobic school bullying, safe school environments and diversity lessons at school in the context of the tolerance and diversity policy development" (section IV, no p. number). The Council adopted the first ever conclusions on LGBTIQ equality in June 2016, requiring the European Commission to annually report on the implementation of the list of actions.[38] Shortly thereafter, the first annual report on the implementation of the List of Actions was published in February 2017.[39]

In 2016 the 'We All Share the Same Dreams' campaign was launched.[40] The campaign features LGBTIQ and straight people sharing the same dreams. The objectives of the campaign were to: (1) increase the social acceptance of LGBTIQ people and help to combat and prevent discrimination; (2) promote positive messages about LGBTIQ equality and increase the number of 'straight allies' and multipliers in the promotion of LGBTIQ equality among the EU population; and (3) increase visibility of how the European Commission is promoting the rights of LGBTIQ people.

On the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia 2018, The European Commission disseminated promotional materials, projected the Rainbow flag on its headquarters building, and the European Commission stated its commitment to stand against discrimination and to promote LGBTIQ equality and inclusion.

[37] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/lgbti-actionlist-dg-just_en.pdf
[38] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/16/epsco-conclusions-lgbti-equality/
[39] See (also for a list of all actions 2015-2019): https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025/list-actions-advance-lgbti-equality-2015-2019_en
[40] https://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/shareyourdream_factsheet_en.pdf

Furthermore, the European Commission participates in the IDAHOT Forum (the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia on May 17)[41], as well as human rights events that are part of larger Pride initiatives.

Most recently, in November 2020 the European Commission presented its LGBTIQ[42] equality strategy 2020-2025.[43] The strategy, announced by President von der Leyen, represented the first-ever EU Strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) equality. In addition to identifying discrimination of LGBTIQ persons as a cause for concern President von der Leyen, in her State of the Union notes that: "Discrimination is often multidimensional and only an intersectional approach can pave the way to sustainable and respectful changes in society". The LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025 sets out a series of targeted actions around four main pillars, focused on: tackling discrimination; ensuring safety; building inclusive societies; and leading the call for LGBTIQ equality around the world. In terms of educational provisions the strategy mentions that:

> The Commission will support the fostering of best practice exchanges between Member States and experts on ensuring safe and inclusive education for all children, young people and adults. For instance, a new expert group[44] developing proposals on strategies for creating supportive learning environments for groups at risk of underachievement and for supporting wellbeing at school, will address gender stereotypes in education, bullying and sexual harassment. In addition, the Commission's upcoming comprehensive Strategy for the rights of the child, will ensure indiscriminate access to rights, protection and services also for LGBTIQ children. Promoting a more inclusive education is in the interests of all students and citizens, and it helps to combatting stereotypes and to building a fairer society for all. (p.8)

The European Commission has also committed itself to tackling discrimination and promoting equality for transgender people in particular. To further this objective, the European Commission's department responsible for justice, consumer rights and gender equality (DG Justice and Consumers) commissioned and supervised a recent study on trans people. The study, published in 2020, and entitled *Legal Recognition in the EU: The journeys of trans people towards full equality*[45] involved interviews with more than 1000 trans identified people. The research focused on the position and experiences of trans people in education, employment and later life, as well as their interactions with Legal Gender Recognition (LGR) procedures and their experiences of coming out.

The key findings of the study were: (1) most transgender persons become aware of transgender identity before the age of 18, so awareness takes place during the school period; (2) most hide their identity due to fear, anxiety and discomfort, a fear of bullying and a lack of support; (3) though there is limited trans-phobic research, indications are that a high percentage report being bullied, harassed and experiencing violence, as well as a general non-acceptance by peers; (4) there is a lack of inclusive education. Though there is presently more focus in schools on identity issues than in past, there is a reported nonexistence of information in schools on trans identities; (5) many trans persons report an inability to use basic hygiene facilities in schools; (6) Non-acceptance and bullying can lead to school

[41] IDAHOT represents an annual event aimed at decision makers, the media, the public, opinion leaders and local authorities to the situation faced by lesbian, gay, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people and all those who do not conform to majority sexual and gender norms. The date was chosen in commemoration of the World Health Organisation's decision to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 1990. See: https://equineteurope.org/2018/international-day-against-homophobia-transphobia-and-biphobia-idahot-2018/
[42] The use of the abbreviation LGBTIQ represents a shift in terminology at the European Commission level.
[43] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2068
[44] This expert group is an initiative included in the Communication on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (COM(2020)625 final).
[45] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7341d588-ddd8-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

disengagement and Early School Leaving (ESL), especially if other mental health or disability issues play a role; and (7) the majority of positive experiences tend to relate to interactions with individual teachers and peers.

UNESCO

In 2011, UNESCO convened the first ever UN international consultation on homophobic bullying in educational institutions. UNESCO sees such bullying as needing to be addressed as part of wider efforts to prevent school-related violence and gender-based violence.[46] Their work on preventing and addressing homophobic and transphobic violence in educational settings is part of UNESCO's mandate to ensure learning environments are safe, inclusive and supportive for all, and are part of UNESCO's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2019 publication entitled *Bringing it Out in the Open: Monitoring school violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in national and international surveys* presents the results of a study with an analysis of the most recent data on the nature, scope and impact of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression and of current action. The publication also aims to provide education sector stakeholders with a framework for planning and implementing effective responses to violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression as part of wider efforts to prevent and address violence in schools.

The main conclusions of this study, which had a global focus, were:

(1) A significant proportion of LGBTIQ students experience homophobic and transphobic violence in school.

(2) Students who are not LGBTIQ but are perceived not to conform to gender norms are also targets.

(3) School-related homophobic and transphobic violence affects students' education, employment prospects and well-being. Students targeted are more likely to feel unsafe in school, miss classes or drop out.

(4) Students who experience homophobic and transphobic violence may achieve poorer academic results than their peers.

(5) Homophobic and transphobic violence has adverse effects on mental health including increased risk of anxiety, fear, stress, loneliness, loss of confidence, low self-esteem, self-harm, depression and suicide, which also adversely affect learning. (p.14)

The report notes further that in Europe the most prevalent form of homophobic and transphobic violence reported is psychological violence, and that even in countries like the Netherlands, Finland, Norway and Belgium, bullying of LGBTIQ students is quite prevalent.[47]

[46] https://en.unesco.org/news/out-open-unesco-takes-school-related-homophobic-and-transphobic-violence. In 2011, UNESCO issued the co-called 'Rio Statement on Homophobic Bullying and Education for All, highlighting widespread violence and systemic discrimination and stigma against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. This statement highlighted negative educational outcomes due to violence and called upon all governments to live up to their responsibility to provide universal access to a highquality education by eliminating the barriers created by homophobia and transphobia, including the unacceptable and devastating prevalence of anti-LGBTI bias and violence in elementary, secondary and tertiary levels and settings of education. See: https://www.belongto.org/rio-statement-homophobic-bullying-education/

[47] In the Netherlands, 23% of school students reported being bullied at school, using data from 2010-2014, In Norway, this figure was 46%, using data from 2015, while in Belgium 56% of LGBT students reported that they experienced

UNESCO emphasises in this 2019 publication that the education sector has an important responsibility to provide safe and inclusive learning environments for all students, including LGBTIQ students. UNESCO notes that addressing homophobic and transphobic violence in schools is critical to promote effective learning and to meet human rights commitments. UNESCO also notes that effective education sector responses to homophobic and transphobic violence require a comprehensive approach, which includes all of the following: 'effective policies, relevant curricula and training materials, training and support for staff, support for students and families, information and strategic partnerships and monitoring and evaluation. It also includes both preventing and responding to violence, involves all relevant stakeholders and is implemented at national and sub-national levels' (p.15).

Council of Europe (CoE)

The Council of Europe has a special Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit.[48] This Unit works on several human rights challenges based on the mandate given to it by the Committee of Ministers. In particular, it provides technical support and expertise to Member States, upon request, through cooperation activities aiming at improving the legal and institutional frameworks, builds capacity of administration staff and law enforcement, but also promotes the sharing of good practices and raises awareness. The work around LGBTIQ addresses several issues, ranging from legal gender recognition to homophobic and transphobic hate crime, homophobic and transphobic bullying, and multiple discrimination.

In 2010, Recommendation CM/Rec(2010) from the Committee of Ministers to Member States relating to measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity[49] called on Member States to "take appropriate legislative and other measures, addressed to educational staff and pupils, to ensure that the right to education can be effectively enjoyed without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity". This recommendation also called for appropriate measures to be taken "at all levels to promote mutual tolerance and respect in schools, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. This should include providing objective information with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, for instance in school curricula and educational materials, and providing pupils and students with the necessary information, protection and support to enable them to live in accordance with their sexual orientation and gender identity". Resolution 2097 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe[50], from 2016, called on Member States to "ensure access by LGBTIQ children to quality education by promoting respect and inclusion of LGBTIQ persons and the dissemination of objective information about issues concerning sexual orientation and gender identity, and by introducing measures to address homophobic and transphobic bullying".

The Report *Safe at School*, produced by the Council of Europe Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE) Unit, in collaboration with UNESCO, provides a comprehensive overview of European and International legislation applicable to education and LGBTIQ issues.[51] The report focuses on violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or sex characteristics (referred to as SOGIESC-based violence). The Council of Europe notes that during the last decade there has been a notable increase in the education sector's acknowledgement and recognition of SOGIESC-based violence, including

homophobic or transphobic violence at school at least once, using data from 2013 (p.43). Approximately half of LGBTI students in the Netherlands preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at school (p. 45)

[48] https://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi; https://rm.coe.int/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-unit-s-work-since-2014-inf/168093754e

[49] https://www.coe.int/en/web/sogi/rec-2010-5

[50] http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=22510&lang=en

[51] https://rm.coe.int/prems-125718-gbr-2575-safe-at-school-a4-web/16809024f5

efforts to prevent and address it, but that these responses have remained unsystematic and vary greatly in their scope (p.10).

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

FRA has published multiple reports focusing on LGBTIQ issues in the last decade:

(1) Publication: *Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2016[52]

The Fundamental Rights Agency notes in this 2016 publication that the situation of LGBTIQ persons in the EU is no longer a marginalised issue but a recognised human rights concern. The report notes that the fundamental rights of LGBTIQ persons are often not respected across the EU. The report examines the drivers and barriers encountered by public officials, teachers, doctors, nurses and law enforcement officers in 19 EU Member States and analysed their views and experiences. With respect to the domain of education, The FRA places the issue of LGBTIQ rights in the Framework of The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the non-discrimination provision in Article 2 of the convention, obliging state parties to ensure that all human beings below the age of 18 enjoy all the rights set forth in the convention without discrimination, including on the basis of adolescents' sexual orientation.

Key findings (see p.37) in the report include (many of these points have been copied verbatim because of their relevance and clarity):

1. Education professionals emphasise that discrimination against students and staff on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is widespread.

2. LGBT students often choose to remain invisible to avoid becoming targets.

3. Objective information about sexual orientation and gender identity rarely appears in school curricula or educational activities.

4. With one exception, all education professionals interviewed say they received no training about LGBT issues as part of their standard specialised professional education.

5. Some respondents indicated that there are certain positive initiatives in education to support diversity and respect for LGBT people.

6. Education professionals underline the importance of leadership within educational institutions to make schools and universities a safe space for LGBT students

7. Education professionals often face particular difficulties with families and local communities who are prejudiced, or lack awareness about LGBT issues, sometimes fuelled by negative media reporting.

8. Teachers and headmasters interviewed note the importance of EU anti-discrimination legislation and legal provisions tackling hate crime, as well as cooperation with LGBT NGOs and the personal commitment of education professionals, as key to protecting and promoting effectively the fundamental rights of LGBT persons in educational settings.

[52] This publication followed the 2014 study entitled: EU 'LGBT survey European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey' https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-eu-lgbt-survey-main-results_tk3113640enc_1.pdf

(2) Publication: *A long way to go for LGBTI equality*

In May 2020, FRA published its survey findings on LGBTIQ persons in the EU, North Macedonia and Serbia.[53] Some 140,000 people were interviewed. The report builds on the agency's earlier work on LGBTIQ persons in the EU. The findings showed only limited progress between 2012 and 2019, though more people were open about being LGBTIQ in 2020. The findings confirmed many conclusions from 2016 and indicated that schools continue to be an unsafe space for many LGBTIQ students. The majority of respondents aged 15 to 17 had experienced discrimination in some area of life (53%), while some 45 % felt discriminated against at school. It was also found that experiences differ significantly across Member States. On a positive note, some 60% of adolescent LGBTIQ respondents aged 15 to 17 indicated that they had heard or seen someone support, protect or promote the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex persons in school settings. One in three said that their school education at some point addressed LGBTIQ issues positively or in a neutral and balanced way. In contrast, only one in twelve respondents aged 55 and older stated that this was the case when they were at school. Another positive development, according to FRA, was that a lower share of young LGBT respondents aged 18- 24 concealed being LGBTIQ at school. This dropped from 47% in 2012 to 41% in 2019. The report also pointed to 'intersectional discrimination', implying being discriminated against for multiple reasons. Some (40%) who had an immigrant background indicated that ethnic origin or immigrant background was an additional ground for discrimination (in addition to being LGBTIQ), while more than a third of respondents (36 %) who identified themselves as persons with disabilities indicated that disability was as an additional ground for discrimination.

[53] https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/professionally-speaking-challenges-achieving-equality-lgbt-people; https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf

Key research evidence on combatting intolerance towards LGBTIQ individuals and communities – teaching for and about LGBTIQ persons

The evidence regarding to what extent EU Member States take education about LGBTIQ related issues seriously is mixed. The Council of Europe (CoE) notes that a significant number of EU Member States have taken steps to promote LGBTIQ inclusion in education, though UNESCO mentions research by IGLYO that less than half (21) of Council of Europe Member States have national or regional action plans to explicitly prevent and address school-based bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.[54] The IGLYO Inclusive Education Index from 2018 shows that only 3 EU Member States have mandated that LGBTIQ issues be addressed in teacher education (Malta, France, Sweden).[55]

Further evidence of an incomplete picture is offered by the CoE report *Safe at School,* which reveals that in the decade from 2007 to 2017, full comprehensive responses to combat LGBTIQ violence were found to exist in only six member States.[56] However, the report states that: (a) education sectors in 32 member States had enacted laws or policies on sexual orientation in education; (b) 24 member States had adopted laws or policies on gender identity/expression in education, (c) education sectors in 26 member States had curricula featuring sexual and gender diversity; and (d) education sectors in 24 member States had provided, or were starting to provide training or support on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression to teachers and other staff.

If any conclusion can be drawn from the above-mentioned findings, it is that gains have been made at the policy level, but that much more work needs to be done.

Regarding solutions, the *Safe at School* report notes that the most promising responses to violence against LGBTIQ persons are:

> comprehensive responses comprising six mutually-supportive components: 1. National and school-level policies to prevent and address SOGIESC[57]-based violence 2. Curricula and learning materials supportive of diversity 3. Support and training for educational staff, especially teachers 4. Support for students 5. Partnerships with civil society, in part to inform about SOGIESC-based violence 6. Monitoring violence and evaluating responses. (p.10)

Such responses include those that can be considered both 'teaching for' LGBTQ learners and 'teaching about' LGBTIQ persons. Teaching 'for and about' are closely interconnected yet require a slightly different analytical lens. Teaching *for* LGBTIQ persons refers primarily to creating learning environments that are LGBTIQ friendly. Learning about LGBTIQ persons refers to teaching about LGBTIQ issues in the curriculum (e.g. through sexuality education).

Teaching for LGBTIQ learners

School students who are seen as gender non-conforming, including those who are (or are perceived as) LGBTIQ, are more at risk of school violence and bullying than those who fit into traditional gender norms.[58] LGBTIQ adolescents face unique developmental challenges related to coping with environments that often pathologize their sexual and/or gender identities. They

[54] https://en.unesco.org/news/progress-towards-lgbti-inclusion-education-europe
[55] https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EI-map-and-table-April-2018-WEB.pdf; see also in: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7341d588-ddd8-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[56] Belgium (regionally), Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
[57] SOGIESC stands for sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or sex characteristics
[58] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483

experience daily environmental stresses resulting from homophobic, heterosexist, and transphobic messages they hear in schools and their communities (e.g. Shilo & Mor, 2014). These adolescents come to learn that who they are and what they feel is frequently not accepted by others, leading to them often concealing these feelings and identities for fear of rejection and abuse (Ziomek-Diagle et al., 2007).

The importance of creating safe spaces as a first priority for LGBTIQ learners in schools has been emphasised in multiple research studies, and also by international organisations.[59] A Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey from 2016 (FRA, 2016) notes that, according to interviews with educational professionals in various EU Member States, the overall situation of LGBTIQ persons has improved in the EU but that 'the harassment of young LGBTI learners in educational settings continues to persist, including verbal abuse, cyber bullying and physical violence. The professionals interviewed reported that homophobic verbal abuse is very common in schools. (p.39). The report further notes that: '71 % of LGB people thought that the implementation of measures in schools would allow them to be more comfortable living as a LGB person. For trans people, the figure was 64%' (p.38).

Sadowski (2016) has detailed how the 'safe school approach' for LGBTIQ students developed because of the verbal and physical harassment students often face on a daily basis in school, and the host of negative consequences this has for a person's academic, health, and mental health. He points to the evidence that strengthening a school's capacity to protect LGBTIQ youth lowers rates of victimisation and generates a much higher incidence of teacher intervention when students are targeted by their peers. He notes, however, that creating safe spaces for LGBTIQ youth in too often considered as sufficient to meet the needs of these LGBTIQ students. He argues that educators and policymakers need to move beyond a 'safe' space approach and create schools that affirm LGBTIQ students and integrate respect for LGBTIQ identities through multiple aspects of school life.

The earlier cited 2016 FRA study points out that teachers frequently lack the basic knowledge and willingness to teach about LGBTIQ issues (FRA, 2016), while the 2020 FRA study (FRA, 2020) reveals that 10% of respondents indicated that 10% of teachers addressed LGBTIQ issues negatively, while 47% indicated teachers in their schools never addressed this issue at all. The LGBTQI Inclusive Education Report[60], published by IGLYO[61], in 2018 also points to the lack of training among school staff:

> Most current data suggests that people experience negative comments because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity and expression at school, and there is often little or no representation of LGBTQI people within the school curricula…most school staff are not adequately trained to prevent or address discrimination on these grounds and, therefore, do not feel confident to tackle it (p.9).

In general, teachers in many countries have expressed the urgent need to be trained about LGBTIQ issues, and express that they feel uncertain about how raise the topic (see e.g. Dankmeijer, 2014). To address such a need, ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, has committed itself to strengthen the rights of LGBTIQ persons.[62] Special attention is devoted to combating homophobia and transphobia in the education sector. ETUCE also supports its member organisations and education staff in their activities in this

[59] See e.g. Sadowski, 2016: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1123878.pdf
[60] https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LGBTQI-Inclusive-Education-Report-Preview.pdf
[61] IGLYO is a well-established youth development and leadership organisation that builds LGBTQI youth activists, ensuring LGBTQI young people are present and heard and making schools safe, inclusive and supportive of LGBTQI learners. See: https://www.iglyo.com/
[62] https://www.csee-etuce.org/en/policy-issues/equal-opportunities/65-lgbti

field. Also, ETUCE's global umbrella organisation, Education International, works to support the rights of its LGBTIQ members.

Some teachers and school staff are themselves LGBTIQ. It has been documented that teachers and school staff who are known or suspected of being LGBT can face significant employment repercussions (i.e. being fired or reassigned) and social marginalisation and harassment from parents, colleagues and students (see e.g. Ferfolja, 2009; Macgillivray, 2008; Dykes and Delport, 2016).

Teaching about LGBTIQ persons

School textbooks on educational subjects such as history, biology, psychology and foreign languages have been criticised for fostering a gendered and sexualised, i.e. a heteronormative, world view (see e.g. Erlman 2015). De Groof (2015) found that exposure to positive examples of gender-atypical individuals who lead successful lives helps school students adhere to less traditional gender role attitudes. Other studies show that after using teaching materials that counter gender norms, all students (also heterosexual students) report hearing fewer homo- and transphobic slurs. LGBTIQ learners report feeling safer at school, and experience less victimisation, feel less inclined to miss school and experience greater acceptance from their peers (Kosciw et al., 2016; Snapp et al., 2015).

School level approaches to LGBTIQ issues

In general, schools have been found to play a significant role in reducing sexual prejudice among school aged youth (see e.g. Pelleriaux, 2003). Van Driel and Kahn (2012) note that this might depend on the kind of education that takes place regarding LGBTIQ issues. Not all education is equally effective. They have identified a number of school-based approaches relating education about sexual diversity issues (p.177). The following overview is a reworked version of their initial overview:

- **Avoidance.** In the short term, avoidance appears to be the easiest way of dealing with a controversial issue such as LGBTI. The reasoning is rather simple: pretend that such identities do not exist and therefore the subject can be avoided. Sexual diversity then remains invisible. Other arguments along these lines are that schools should be teaching the basics of reading, writing and math, not teaching about provocative social issues, or 'promoting sex'.

- **Condemnation.** Especially religious schools that base their teachings on scripture are more likely to discuss homosexuality as immoral and sinful behaviour. However negative images of LGBTIQ identified individuals can be found in both public and private schools, often surfacing in textbooks and literature, sometimes reinforced by staff and students.

- **Marginalisation.** Seeing LGBTIQ issues as unimportant or rare (so devote as little attention as possible to it).

- **Separation:** Treating LGBTIQ issues separate from broader discussions of sexual behaviour and love relationships and treating homophobia as unconnected to other forms of intolerance such as sexism or racism.

- **Compartmentalisation.** LGBTIQ issues are tackled in one subject area such as sex education or teachers rely on what is written in a textbook, usually with little discussion. The alternative is to work across subject areas, bringing in for instance literature and film to deepen the discussions.

- **A-historical versus historical approach.** Only focusing on the situation today versus understanding that there is a long history of persecution (human rights violations) of the LGBTIQ community (and other minority communities). A broader historical approach would also present positive examples from the past (e.g. timeline of LGBTIQ human rights gains and LGBTIQ social movements).

- **Local versus global.** Seeing the issue as only local or global instead of recognising both as being important.

- **Whole school approach.** Whole school approaches start with an inclusive school ethos, but also include after school activities, an inclusive curriculum, (action) research, exhibitions, gay-straight alliances, (anti-bullying) campaigns, guest speakers and specific school policies to protect LGBTIQ students and teachers (often within a broader human rights context). Whole school approaches demand significant resources but can have a more profound impact.

- **Whole community approach.** Bringing the community into the school and the school into the community (e.g. service learning). It is difficult to influence student attitudes when the outside community and parents adhere to an intolerant belief system and even promote homophobia. Such approaches can be effective but are also quite challenging and carry the risk of a backlash (especially in more conservative communities).

A report by ILGYO confirms that whole-school approaches to prevent and address homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and interphobic bullying are highly effective. Such approaches, according to ILGY, entail the implementation of (1) national policies or action plans, (2) inclusive curricula and learning materials, (3) training for educational staff, (4) support for students and families, (5) partnerships with civil society organisations and (6) monitoring of discrimination and evaluating the executed measures. Following this framework, IGLYO and OBESSU have produced inclusive education guidelines, first in 2006 and then revised in 2015.[63] They set out the minimum standards that should be met to ensure education is safe, inclusive and supportive of all LGBTIQ learners (see p.11).

Another key issue when teaching about LGBTIQ related issues in school settings relates to the age when students should initially be confronted with sexual diversity issues. Though most programmes and curricula can be found in secondary schools, De Palma and Jennett (2010) describe the 'No Outsiders' project in the UK, which addresses homophobia at the primary school age. They cite various evidence that points to the need to address this phenomenon early on. For instance, they cite data from Childline, a child protection helpline, that "60% of the young people who called to talk about sexual orientation, homophobia or homophobic bullying were 12 to 15, and 6% were 11 or under." (p.18). Several European countries have taken policy measures in this direction. For instance, the Irish National Action Plan on Bullying, which refers explicitly to homophobic and transphobic bullying, mandates all 4,000 primary and post-primary schools nationwide to prevent and address homophobic and transphobic bullying.[64] The Council of Europe also points to the Hafnarfjörður municipality in Iceland, which commissioned a national LGBTIQ organisation to train teachers and staff in primary schools. Sexual and gender diversity was also included in Iceland as part of sexuality education in upper primary schools.

[63] https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LGBTQI-Inclusive-Education-Report-Preview.pdf
[64] See: https://rm.coe.int/prems-125718-gbr-2575-safe-at-school-a4-web/16809024f5, p.36

Key messages from Working Group members relating to LGBTIQ persons and issues in education-related settings[65]

Key messages primarily at the (national) policy making level

1. Non-discrimination policies need to be put in place that are clear, consistent, and comprehensive. Policies should be evidence-based and they should protect and affirm students' sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression (among other characteristics).
2. Policies should encourage whole school approaches to LGBTIQ inclusion.
3. Teaching about sexual diversity should start before secondary school. Policies and appropriate teacher education need to be put in place to make this possible.
4. Mechanisms need to be in place to support LGBTIQ-identified teachers in their daily work.
5. Indicators and mechanisms should be put in place to help monitor the prevalence of violence in school settings (related to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression). Clear strategies and actions to address incidences of bullying, intimidation and violence need to be developed and supported.
6. Put indicators in place to monitor indications of school disengagement and early school leaving among LGBTIQ youth.
7. Policy makers should take initiatives to identify best practices relating to teaching both *for* and *about* LGBTIQ youth, and to further disseminate these practices to educators at all levels.
8. Policy makers should support research into the efficacy of initiatives and programmes meant to promote LGBTIQ inclusion.
9. Incentives should be put in place for schools to invite LGBTIQ role models into the school to educate students, teaching staff and also other key stakeholders.
10. Schools should be encouraged to participate in international, national and local campaigns aimed at promoting LGBTIQ inclusion.
11. Clearly identify the intended outcomes of actions taken by schools to promote LGBTIQ inclusion and help schools monitor these outcomes.
12. Ensure that all students affected by bullying, intimidation and violence have adequate recourse to protection, support and redress.
13. (School) policies and programmes should pay special attention to the situation of transgender students, since they often face even more hostile school climates than other LGBTIQ students. Such policies should also pay special attention to LGBTIQ students who might face multiple discrimination (due to for instance disability, culture, ethnicity, etc.).

[65] The Council of Europe has also developed recommendations. See for CoE: https://rm.coe.int/prems-125718-gbr-2575-safe-at-school-a4-web/16809024f5, p.53

Key messages primarily at the school level

1. Schools should make LGBTIQ inclusion part of the school's general ethos of respect and inclusion. Policy makers should take the necessary steps to encourage this. The school's mission statement and vision should be welcoming of LGBTIQ students.
2. The ability of schools to create a safe space for all students, including LGBTIQ students, should be monitored and evaluated through self-evaluation and by competent authorities.
3. Anti-bullying initiatives by schools need to have provisions that protect LGBTIQ students (and teachers).
4. After-school activities, such as student clubs focusing on human rights, should be encouraged. The creation of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) can serve as an example.
5. Student initiatives to promote LGBTIQ inclusiveness should be actively supported by school staff and by policy makers at all levels.

Key recommendations primarily at the teacher education level

1. Pre-service and in-service education for teachers should teach them to better recognise the warning signs and different manifestations of exclusion and bullying that targets LGBTIQ learners.
2. Teachers should be provided with opportunities in grow their competences relating to both teaching about LGBTIQ related issues and also providing a safe school learning environment for LGBTIQ learners, so that these students feel accepted and welcome. This can be done through professional development courses and providing appropriate resources.
3. LGBTIQ issues need to be explicitly addressed in teacher education programmes and all future teachers should gain insight into these issues.

Key messages primarily at curriculum level

1. School textbooks and other educational information need to become more LGBTIQ inclusive, especially in subject areas such as citizenship education, health, sex education, history and literature. The curricula should be factual and non-judgmental when referring to topical matter related to sexual and gender diversity.
2. LGBTIQ related issues should be integrated and normalised in all educational materials. This is best done in collaboration with educational material developers.

Key messages primarily at the community level

1. Cross-sectoral collaboration is needed between policy makers in education, and for instance health and welfare to arrive at comprehensive approaches to LGBTIQ inclusion.
2. Wherever possible, the local community should be involved in initiatives to promote LGBTIQ inclusion. At the very least, families need to have access to accurate information and support if needed, and communication channels need to be established and maintained.
3. Policies need to be put in place that encourage schools, educational authorities and parents to collaborate with local (or even national and international) NGOs that have insight into LGBTIQ related issues.

Inspirational practices

Selected national policies

Multiple EU Member States have taken policy steps to protect LGBTIQ persons from discrimination and to promote respect.[66] These also include measures and policies in the educational realm. Several are mentioned below.

France

In 2020, France launched a new National Action Plan for Equal Rights, against hatred and anti-LGBT+ discrimination 2020-2023.[67] This very comprehensive Action Plan contains 42 concrete actions and is based on four areas: 'recognition of the rights of LGBT+ people; strengthening their access to rights; combating anti-LGBT+ hatred and improving the daily life of LGBT+ people'. Special attention will be paid to the most invisible people including lesbians, bi, trans, and intersex, as well as LGBT+ living with HIV and LGBT+ seniors. In the educational realm, the action plan addresses the curriculum (both teaching about and for LGBT+ persons), and will promote more visibility for LGBT+ persons, pre-service and in-service teacher education initiatives, as well as the development of a guide on the reception of trans pupils and students intended for all staff involved in schools and Higher Education.

Netherlands

In 2012, the Dutch Parliament made sexual diversity education mandatory in all schools (primary education and the first years of secondary education) by adding this theme to the Core Goals of Education.[68] The Safety at School Act from 2015 is an Action Plan issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science that explicitly mentions sexual diversity (LGBTIQ). Its aim is to encourage schools to tackle bullying and to provide a safe environment for all learners and staff members.[69] The Action Plan states that schools are required to implement a security plan, which should include (among other measures) a contact point to report bullying, the monitoring of the well-being and sense of safety of all learners, and the creation of a database with the interventions in this regard. Since 2016, the Inspectorate of Education has monitored how sexual diversity is being taught in schools. In April 2017, the Dutch Parliament ruled that there would be sanctions for schools that did not comply with sexual diversity education guidelines. A study by the Inspection from 2016 showed that sexual diversity education was insufficiently secured, opportunities to address or educate about this matter remained unused, and that it was unclear to what extent schools covered the topic effectively. The report[70] concluded that what students learned about sexual diversity could vary greatly because schools were given considerable discretion regarding implementation. The study also reported that one in five schools were not educating students about sexual diversity at all.

[66] See e.g. https://rm.coe.int/discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-in/16807b76e8, p 48; see also IGLYO's comprehensive overview: https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LGBTQI-Inclusive-Education-Report-Preview.pdf

[67] https://www.gouvernement.fr/plan-national-d-actions-pour-l-egalite-contre-la-haine-et-les-discriminations-anti-lgbt-2020-2023

[68] See: https://www.onderwijsraad.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2012/09/28/aanpassing-kerndoelen-seksualiteit-en-seksuele-diversiteit

[69] See: https://www.education-index.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LGBTQI-Inclusive-Education-Report-Preview.pdf, p. 121

[70] https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/documenten/publicaties/2016/06/01/rapport-omgaan-met-seksualiteit-en-seksuele-diversiteit

Ireland

In Ireland, specific references to homophobic and transphobic bullying are a requirement under the guidelines of the Department of Education's Action Plan on Bullying.[71] The Action Plan includes specific actions to tackle identity-based bullying in schools. The Irish schools inspectorate plays a key role in monitoring curricular provision of mandatory programmes. The LGBT+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020[72] is three-year action-oriented strategy aimed at creating school environments that are spaces where LGBTI+ young people can feel included, respected and safe. The strategy also aims to improve the capacity of schools to engage in anti-LGBTI+bullying initiatives. Government support is given to the *StandUp campaign*,[73] which is an annual event that aims to highlight the need to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. In addition, the Department of Education guidelines highlight the need for specific measures to be taken to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. Irish Authorities have further supported the resource pack "Being LGBT in School",[74] developed by the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), intended for Post-Primary Schools to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and support LGBT Students as part of the implementation of the Action Plan on Bullying.

Germany

The German Action Plan against Racism[75] contains multiple measures to combat homophobia and transphobia. The Action Plan addresses homophobia and transphobia within the context of preventing and combating other forms of group-focused enmity. It offers a cross-sectional perspective that takes the diversity of LGBTIQ into account and also pays attention to multiple discrimination. Furthermore, the German Ministry for Family Affairs funds a competence network against homo- and transphobia.[76] The network unites several NGOs working on LGBTIQ related issues. Various German States have also taken policy initiatives to support LGBTIQ persons. For instance, the Baden-Württemberg authorities have developed an education plan that includes a brochure and flyer that argue for social diversity and a recognition of all sexual orientations.[77]

Portugal

Portugal is one of 17 countries in the OECD that has been identified and having the most legal protections for sexual and gender minorities.[78] The Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality supports studies, initiatives and public campaigns that support LGBTIQ persons, including combating bullying at schools. Sexuality education is compulsory and there is a specific focus on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. There are provisions for in-service teacher education to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

[71] https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Bullying-Procedures/Bullying-Information-for-Parents-and-Students.html
[72] https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/29267/1/LGBTIYouthStrategy.pdf
[73] https://www.belongto.org/professionals/standup/
[74] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Being-LGBT-in-School.pdf
[75] https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/2018/nap-en.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4
[76] https://www.selbstverstaendlich-vielfalt.de/
[77] https://www.gew.de/gleichstellung/gender-diversity/lsbti/
[78] http://www.oecd.org/portugal/OECD-LGBTI-2020-Over-The-Rainbow-PORTUGAL.pdf

Malta

In September 2018, Malta adopted an LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022, which includes some 50 measures aimed at promoting and safeguarding equality for LGBTIQ persons. Between 2013 and 2019, the Maltese Government took a number of initiatives aimed at addressing inequalities in legislation and policy affecting LGBTIQ persons. These include Trans, Gender Variant & Intersex Students in School Policy provisions[79], such as: training for National Student Support Service professionals; addressing bullying behaviour, including homophobic and transphobic bullying; LGBTIQ inclusive books in schools; an intra-curricular and whole school approach to LGBTIQ inclusion; the development of a teacher training module provided through the Institute for Education; the development of a training module to be provided through the University of Malta; *a Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion* and *A National Inclusive Education Framework* which are both inclusive of LGBTIQ issues. Furthermore, the Maltese Directorate for Education has an anti-bullying unit that deals with homophobic and transphobic bullying, and its anti-bullying policy specifies that schools should refer very serious cases to it.

Sweden

Sweden has taken many steps at the national and more local level to promote acceptance of LGBTIQ persons in and through education. At the national level, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation has been banned since 1987 and on the basis of gender identity and expression since 2009. In recent years, the policy and practice of school-based sex education have adopted an inclusion approach, with a focus on social justice and rights for individuals and group, as well as anti-discrimination (see e.g. Bengtsson and Bolander, 2019). LGBTIQ issues have been extensively integrated into the curriculum at a young age. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor) has created the multilingual website Youmo.[80] The site Youmo.se takes a sexual rights based approach and is aimed at young persons of school age, from 13 to 20 years of age, and provides information on body, sex and health. There is also information about equality, rights and well-being. There is a special section on ''sexual orientation an LGBTQ'. At the more local level, the city of Stockholm has funded special lessons in primary and high schools since 2016 to promote and broaden the acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils.[81]

Further inspirational practices

Collaboration between national and local authorities, and civil society organisations

The Council of Europe (CoE) has emphasised the importance of efforts that involve collaboration between national and local authorities, and civil society organisations such as LGBTIQ NGOs, trade unions, youth groups, parent groups and faith groups.[82] The CoE highlights multiple efforts, such as those by the Flemish Ministry of Education in Belgium, which consults civil society (including LGBTIQ organisations, youth and student organisations, and representatives from schools and from the ministry) through an anti-bullying platform to explore how the education sector could better respond to SOGIE-based violence. The Ministry also funds several NGOs to develop training materials and courses for teachers, and guide schools to become more inclusive.

[79] https://www.ohchr.org › SocioCultural › States › Malta
[80] https://www.youmo.se/en/om-youmo/om-youmo/
[81] https://www.thelocal.se/20150827/stockholm-schools-to-add-lgbt-to-curriculum
[82] See: https://rm.coe.int/prems-125718-gbr-2575-safe-at-school-a4-web/16809024f5, p. 46

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gay%E2%80%93straight_alliance)

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) are student-led, school-based clubs that aim to provide a safe environment in the school context for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTIQ) students, as well as their straight allies.[83] Though GSA's originated in the United States, they have gained a foothold in countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany and Belgium.[84] GSAs are associated with positive social academic and health outcomes for LGBTIQ students and have demonstrated to have benefits students attend school and beyond. The most beneficial aspect of GSAs is that they provide direct support to LGBTIQ members and helps create a support network for LGBTIQ students by connecting them. They have also been shown to provide LGBTIQ students with a sense of identity within their school, improved self-esteem, and even provide students with courage and support to come out to their families and peers. The presence of GSAs has also been associated with the improvement of school climate in general, led to the school community being more informed more informed and respectful of LGBTIQ issues.

Stand Up Awareness Week (Ireland)
(https://www.belongto.org/professionals/standup)

Stand Up Awareness Week represents a week[85] when second-level schools, youth services, and Youthreach Centres in Ireland develop actions against homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. The week is organised by the national organisation 'BeLonG To Youth Services'. The week provides an opportunity for schools to look at how they can become more safe and supportive places for LGBTI students.[86] BeLonG To Youth Services also offers training for teachers, as well as various levels of support, including support groups for parents.

Gay and School (Netherlands)
(https://www.gayandschool.nl)

Gay & School is part of 'Stichting School en Veiligheid' (School and Safety Foundation) in the Netherlands. Authorities in the Netherlands encourage teachers to devote more attention to LGBTIQ issues. Since December 2012 Dutch schools have been required to devote attention in both primary and secondary education to sexuality and sexual diversity. Workshops help teachers gain competences they need to effectively address negative attitudes and behaviours that commonly surround LGBTIQ issues. Furthermore, workshops on gender provide insight into gender diversity and the often complex relationships between gender, identity and sexual orientation. Mind Mix is a project that includes workshops for teachers throughout the Netherlands on a range of issues relating to LGBTIQ issues. Teachers are provided with insights into the causes of intolerance and the workshops empower teachers to gain the competences needed to address various reactions of school students.

[83] https://europepmc.org/article/PMC/3217265
[84] The first GSA in Belgium was established 2014, in a school in Brugge (http://www.holebi.info/phpnews/kortnews.php?action=fullnews&id=14970)
[85] The most recent Stand Up Awareness week took place from November 16th-20th, 2020
[86] https://www.belongto.org/professionals/standup/

Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Schools
(https://www.hombat.eu/about)

This project, which ran from 2017-2019, involved partners from Greece, Cyprus and Lithuania. The Project aimed to (1) contribute to the prevention and combating of homophobia and transphobia (HT) in educational environments; (2) promote and strengthen the prevention of HT bullying in schools and build the capacities of teachers and school advisors on preventing and addressing HT bullying; (3) Enhance multi-actor cooperation & exchange on combating HT bullying in schools; and (4) support prevention through counter narratives development & promotion. The main outputs included: 3 national surveys, policy recommendations, educational curriculum for school advisors/professionals and for teachers, 46 training seminars, workshops, an online learning platform, 7 cooperation events, 6,000 leaflets, 3 info days, 6 social media videos, a website, and a final conference.

The SENSE-project (Sexual Diversity in Social Domain Vocational Training)
(https://www.efvet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EfVET_MagDec2018_m.pdf)

The Sense Project, supported by the Dutch Erasmus+ authority included partners from the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and Greece, as well as the EFVET (European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training). The project ran from January 2019 until December 2020. The goal of this project was to improve job opportunities of VET students in the social domain by improving their skills to deal with diversity in general and with sexual LGBTIQ diversity specifically. The aim for VET teachers was to improve their skills to educate students about LGBTIQ issues. For VET managers the aim was to encourage them to include sexual diversity in the curriculum and school policy.

Stonewall school visits (UK)
(https://www.stonewall.org.uk/school-college-role-models)

Stonewall aims to empower LGBTIQ persons to be their authentic selves, enabling them to realise and achieve their full potential. One of Stonewall's key activities is to present LGBTIQ young people with positive role models through 'School Role Model Visits'. These visits are intended for schools and colleges. The speakers who visit schools are volunteers with different backgrounds, different jobs and life experiences. They visit schools to tell their story about growing up as an LGBTIQ person. The visits usually follow a set sequence: the visit tends to start with the role model addressing an assembly; then role models talk about their experiences growing up and being LGBTIQ, followed by a Q & A session. Sessions normally last about one hour.

ILGYLO and ILGA (International NGOs)
(https://www.iglyo.com, https://ilga.org)

IGLA (The International Lesbian, Gay, Trans and Intersex Association) came into existence in 1978 and now has 1675 member organisations in 163 countries. IGLYO (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth and Student Organisation) was created in 1984. The majority of European countries have member organisations in IGLYO. Both organisations are professional International NGO's that provide professional support and information to LGBTIQ communities, policy makers, educators, etc. They work with schools and educational institutions, and organise activities, campaigns and conferences. They often advise International Organisations such as the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Furthermore, their websites are rich with educational resources.

Diversity Role Models (UK)

(https://www.diversityrolemodels.org)

Diversity Role Models is an NGO that works to create safe spaces where young people can explore difference and consider their role in creating a world where all feel accepted. Workshops for school students feature LGBT+ or ally role models who speak openly about their lived experiences, building young people's empathy so they can understand the (often unintended) impact of their language and actions. This NGO supplements this by training school governors, staff, and parents/carers.

Human Education - Responsible Society (Croatia)

(https://www.hood.hr/o-projektu)

'Human Education-Responsible Society' was a project implemented by several NGOs in Croatia, including the Lesbian Organisation of Rijeka "LORI", the Association for Human Rights and Civic Participation "PaRiter", SOS Rijeka - Center for Nonviolence and Human Rights and the Center for Women studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka. The project took place from March 2018 to December 2019[87]. The general goal of the project was to improve the knowledge and skills of students at the University of Rijeka for active civic action in the field of gender equality and related human rights in the form of building a more humane and just society. The approach involved the implementation of a service-learning programme in the area of gender equality and LGBTIQ human rights at the University of Rijeka. Students could participate in five different mentoring programmes that covered the topics of combating homo/bi/transphobia in the education, gender-based violence, domestic violence and comprehensive sexual education.

Mainstreaming LGBTIQ in textbooks: Nordhoff publishers (Netherlands)

In August 2010, the largest publisher of schoolbooks in the Netherlands, Nordhoff, decided to include examples of GLBT couples in a variety of math examples and problems, in assignments and in general discussions in a variety of subjects.[88] This has been referred to as a 'mainstreaming approach'.[89] This first took place in digital materials. Homosexuality had already been discussed in Dutch biology and history lessons, but textbooks did not include examples of GLBT couples when discussing more general themes. It is was usually dad and mom who shopped together for groceries (already reflecting a certain amount of gender equality in the country). Many examples now include either two men or two women shopping together (as couples). In an interview with Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (2010), the Director of Nordhoff, Frans Grijzenhout emphasised that schoolbooks should reflect modern reality.

[87] The project partners were: Lesbian Organization of Rijeka "LORI", the Association for Human Rights and Civic Participation "PaRiter", SOS Rijeka - Center for Nonviolence and Human Rights and the Center for Women studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka.
[88] See e.g.: Also: https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/noordhoff-zet-homostellen-ook-in-zijn-taal-en-rekenboeken~bcd47155/
[89] See: https://rm.coe.int/discrimination-on-grounds-of-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-in/16807b76e8, p.48

Trans Day of Remembrance

(https://transrespect.org/en/tmm-update-tdor-2020)

The International Trans Day of Remembrance (TDoR) started in 1999 in the United States, but is now also commemorated in Europe, (the European Commission has also called attention to this, among others)[90]. It is held every year on 20 November. International Trans Day of Remembrance is a day on which those trans and gender-diverse people who have been victims of homicide are remembered. In 2020, 11 trans people were murdered in Europe; 50% were migrants. In schools, it has been for instance Gay-Straight Alliances that have taken the initiative to organise events such as candlelight vigils/marches, discussion forums with school officials, teach-ins, poetry events, art and photography displays and movie screenings.[91]

[90] See e.g. https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=607521; https://copenhagen2021.com/transgender-day-of-remembrance-activities/; https://www.doorbraak.eu/20-november-amsterdam-transgender-day-of-remembrance/
[91] https://gsanetwork.org/resources/transgender-day-of-remembrance/

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