

Ten things unions can do to promote LGBT equality in the workplace

- 1 Raise **awareness** in your trade union that sexual orientation is one of the non discrimination grounds protected under EU law, and that LGBT rights must therefore be explicitly addressed in the framework of your trade union agenda.
- 2 Make sure that there is a **clear commitment** from the senior levels of your union on LGBT equality.
- 3 Draw up **specific policies on LGBT** workplace rights and ensure that LGBT issues are explicit and visible within your union's equality policies. This could include specific policies on addressing workplace bullying and harassment.
- 4 Make it a goal to **organise** and **recruit** LGBT people into your union. This also means increasing the visibility and participation of LGBT members at all levels of the union.
- 5 Set up a LGBT trade union **network** and group in your union to bring together LGBT members so that they can help the union to develop policies, procedures and practices on equality.
- 6 Provide resources for a **newsletter**, **email list** and **web site** to raise awareness of your union's role in promoting LGBT equality. Hold **seminars**, **workshops** and **conferences** on LGBT issues to give visibility to your union's work in this area.
- 7 **Mainstream LGBT** equality issues into all areas of your union's work so that it is progressed through your decision-making bodies and in **collective bargaining**.
- 8 Ensure that LGBT rights and equality are included in your union's **education and training** programmes. Ensure that trade union representatives and negotiators are trained on LGBT rights.
- 9 Make LGBT workplace issues a part of equality policies that can be discussed **with employers**. Improving the working lives of LGBT workers can only be achieved by working with employers to tackle discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
- 10 Work in partnership with LGBT community organisations and **NGOs** and hold joint campaigns and community based events.

For more info on LGBT rights in your union please contact:

This leaflet is the outcome of the EC funded project "Extending Equality" that the ETUC carried out in partnership with the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA-Europe) in 2008. For more information on this project see the Report "Extending Equality: Trade Union Actions to organise and promote equal rights, respect and dignity for workers regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity", available in English and in French on the ETUC website: www.etuc.org/a/5244.

ETUC

Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5
B-1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 (0)2 2240411
Fax: +32 (0)2 2240454/5
E-mail: etuc@etuc.org
Website: www.etuc.org



Extending Equality

Trade Unions in Action!

Organising and promoting
Equal Rights, Respect and Dignity
for LGBT workers



ETUC present at Europride, Stockholm 2008



With the support of the European Commission

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)



ETUC commits to fighting DISCRIMINATION based on sexual orientation and gender identity

The **ETUC** is at the forefront in defending human rights, trade union rights and equality for all workers. This commitment also includes equal treatment, respect and dignity for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans-gendered workers (LGBT).

The EU provides for a legal framework to protect workers that are discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Two Directives are already binding in all EU Member States: the Framework Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation (2000/78/EC) – which covers the ground of sexual orientation – and the Directive on the principle of equal treatment of men and women in employment (2006/54/EC) which prohibits discrimination against transgenders. While an effective set of laws against discrimination is an essential tool to help stamp out unfair treatment, on their own, **laws are not enough.**

Research has shown that there is little knowledge or awareness throughout Europe – including in trade unions – that sexual orientation is one of the non-discrimination grounds recognised at EU level.

The ETUC at its congress in **Seville** in May 2007 adopted a 4 year **Action Programme**, in which it commits itself:

- ↑ to invest in awareness raising activities on these issues;
- ↑ to take more effective action on prejudices that may be present in trade unions and among their members;
- ↑ to step up its actions and activities to encourage an exchange of experiences and best practices which promote diversity and non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in trade unions and in the workplace.

Equality on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity has in recent years become a priority for many trade unions.

LGBT trade union activists, often working in collaboration with NGOs, have been stressing that LGBT rights are trade union rights and that it is critically important that LGBT equality issues are dealt with in the workplace.

Discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation and gender identity can take many forms...

Often LGBT people...

- ⊖ experience a REFUSAL of employment and dismissal, as well as discrimination in access to employment, training and promotion;
- ⊖ are often INVISIBLE and fear 'coming out' in case they are discriminated against in areas such as promotion, career development and access to training etc. This can also result in SELF-EXCLUSION, whereby a LGBT person may avoid certain jobs or employment for fear of discrimination;
- ⊖ suffer homophobic bullying and harassment acts (for instance when a manager or a colleague asks unreasonable things of a worker, or where there is abuse of a verbal or physical nature, or where the dignity of a LGBT person is violated through intimidating, hostile or offensive behaviour).
- ⊖ do NOT enjoy the same BENEFITS as heterosexuals: for instance paternity and parental leave, relocation expenses, caring for a sick partner or bereavement leave, educational or other benefits for employees and their families, goods and services provided free of charge or at a discount, survivors pension schemes or benefits from life insurance, and health-care insurance for employees and their families.

For all these reasons, trade unions should extend their actions on equality and non- discrimination to LGBT workers!

LGBT rights are trade union rights because...



...LGBT rights are HUMAN RIGHTS and these are central to trade union activities; it is impossible today for trade unions to ignore these issues;



Recruiting and organising LGBT workers helps to make UNIONS STRONG and representative of all of their members and workers;



Discrimination against LGBT workers is NOT DIFFERENT from discrimination against other groups (on grounds of age, race, handicap, sex, religion);



All workers have the right to be PROTECTED against discrimination;



LGBT people are often invisible in the workplace and their rights may be denied them. Unions have a role to play to SUPPORT these workers.