

FRA Press Release

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Wrong and outdated views towards LGBT people endanger their fundamental rights

In some Member States, doctors still view homosexuality as a disease and transsexuality as a mental disorder, according to findings from a new report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Such negative views of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people in society, among professional groups and policy makers hampers efforts to counter discrimination and hate crime. In the first-ever comparative survey across 19 Member States of the views of public officials, health officials, teachers and police officers, the positive impact of EU initiatives were largely acknowledged. However, they also recognised the lack of information and professional training about the needs of LGBT people prevents them from acting to help counter the discrimination LGBT people continually face.

"LGBT people have the same rights to education, to healthcare and to be treated equally as everyone else. They too have the right to live their life in dignity, free from fear and discrimination," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). *"FRA's latest findings reveal how some doctors still wrongly believe that homosexuality is a disease. They underscore the need for the EU and its Member States to empower public officials to act on their duty to deliver high quality service to help end the suffering many LGBT people experience."*

FRA spoke to the professional groups best placed to identify the barriers and drivers in implementing fundamental rights policies on the ground. Some of the key findings that emerged that can be found in the '[Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people](#)' report include:

- Society can be hostile view towards LGBT people and professionals can harbour prejudices, such as believing that homosexuality is a disease that can be caught. This points to the need for **more positive EU and national awareness-raising campaigns**, such as in the [EU's list of actions](#) to improve respect for LGBT people and their rights.
- All professional groups have low levels of awareness and knowledge about LGBT needs. This underlines the importance of **professional training**, and **civil society partnerships and cooperation** to help counter prejudice, especially towards trans people in healthcare, and better deliver the same high level of service that most other people enjoy.
- The lack of objective information, particularly in schools, can result in bullying and prejudice in later life, and force LGBT youths to hide their sexual orientation/ gender identity. Member States should work with



education authorities and schools to formulate targeted campaigns to **help make schools a safer and friendlier place for LGBT people.**

- LGBT hate crime often goes unrecognised, unreported and unrecorded. Member States should make more efforts to ensure the laws **guarding against hate crime** are properly enacted, and that greater efforts are made to improve LGBT hate crime reporting which should be recorded.

The report surveyed public officials, doctors, teachers and police officers about which laws and policies work and which do not, and why, when it comes to protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT people. A [comprehensive EU-wide overview of LGBT-relevant laws and policies](#) can be found in a FRA report launched in December 2015. This report also looks at the problems intersex people face.

The findings complement the results from FRA's ground-breaking [EU LGBT survey](#) which revealed large-scale fear and discrimination among LGBT people across the EU. The full dataset from the survey will be available later this year.

To read the report, see: [Professionally speaking: challenges to achieving equality for LGBT people.](#)

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Notes to editors:

- The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides evidence-based advice to EU and national decision makers, thereby contributing to more informed and better targeted debates and policies on fundamental rights.
- For more on FRA's [LGBTI work](#) see the FRA website.
- The findings are based on interviews with over 1000 public officials, and law enforcement, education and healthcare professionals in 19 EU Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom in 2013.
- On 28-29 April in Amsterdam, a meeting of FRA's working party on improving reporting and recording of hate crime in the EU, will also look specifically at hate crime committed against LGBTI people.