MEDIA RELEASE

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Members of European Parliament call for trans and intersex inclusive Roadmap

The LGBT Intergroup and the European Greens held a seminar on “Trans and Intersex People: Challenges for EU Law” on September 26th 2012 at the European Parliament with the presentation of a new Thematic Study on Trans and Intersex Discrimination.

The legal study proofs blatant lack of protection and recognition of trans and Intersex people under EU Law. It’s for the first time that intersex issues have been addressed in a European Commission study. Civil society and Members of Parliament call for the EU to become a Trans Champion and introduce an LGBT Roadmap.

Co-author Silvan Agius presented the study on Trans and Intersex Discrimination painting a bleak picture for trans and intersex people in the EU. Effective Legal protection against discrimination is lacking on European and national level. Trans and Intersex people fall between the cracks of a strict societal norm that only recognizes men and women. Negative attitudes towards trans and intersex people are directly related to the importance placed on a gender binary. Nevertheless he pointed out some progressive development on EU level and also within member states.

Transgender Europe’s Policy Officer Richard Köhler emphasized that the study proves the lack of effective protection and shows that measures undertaken by EU institutions have not been enough to boost trans equality. The human rights network demands that all trans people are to be protected by EU Gender Equality Legislation and that existing and future legislation needs to interpret the ground of “Sex” to also cover “Gender Identity” and “Gender Expression”. Discrimination against trans people is rampant in all EU countries. Trans people are amongst the first be dismissed or pushed into lower paying jobs. Therefore, employment equality measures should specifically target trans people and employers. He also highlighted that many trans people are not able to access their EU rights because of inadequate gender recognition legislation on the national level. Forced sterilization, forced divorce, mandatory psychological treatment and real-life-experience are required in most EU
countries to legally change name and gender. Therefore, Gender recognition laws need to be assessed on whether they are compatible with existing EU law.

Dan Ghattas from Organisation Intersex International – Germany welcomed the study as being first legal analysis including also intersex people. OII considers intersex to be anyone who is born with a body that is not considered typical according to the norms in effect for standard male or female.

Elanore Saduskaite from the European Commission expressed great content with the quality of the study. She announced more research to be underway complementing the picture on how trans people experience victimization and discrimination. For the first time, the authoritative Discrimination Eurobarometer will also measure the general perception regarding trans people in all 27 EU countries.

Finnish Ombudswoman Pirkko Mäkinen called on the explicit inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in EU law. Her own country discusses currently to expand gender Equality legislation to explicitly cover also Gender Identity and Gender Expression. Similar to the UK, public institutions would then pro-actively promote trans equality.

About 70 people attended the 2 hours seminar proving the prominence and importance of the subject. Members of the European Parliament called for an LGBTI Roadmap that would ensure that progress is made for trans and intersex people.

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Trans (or Transgender) people includes those people who have a gender identity which is different to the gender assigned at birth.

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 (which may involve, if freely chosen, modifications of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerism.
Gender expression - refers to people's manifestation of their gender identity, and the one that is perceived by others. Typically, people seek to make their gender expression or presentation match their gender identity, irrespective of the sex that they were assigned at birth.

(Yogyakarta Principles: http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm)

Transgender Europe – TGEU is a European not-for-profit, umbrella organization, which works towards the full equality and inclusion of all trans people in Europe.


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