TGEU Welcomes Swedish Parliament's Historic Decision

In a world first, the Parliament in Sweden decided yesterday (21/03/18) to pay compensation to trans people who were forcibly sterilised. Under the country's former gender recognition law, which came into force in 1972, trans people had to be sterilised for their gender to be legally recognised. This grave human rights violation was not ended until 2013 when the Court of Appeal in Stockholm found it to be contrary to the Swedish constitution and European Convention on Human Rights.

"Heartfelt congratulations must go to the Swedish activists, including our member RSFL, who have worked tirelessly to hold their Government to account and seek recompense for the inhumane way trans people were treated. For those trans people who had their reproductive choices taken away, money cannot repair the damage done. It does however indicate the Swedish Government's admission that trans people deserve to be compensated for the harm they were caused. We encourage the Government to issue a formal public apology to all those trans people affected," comments Julia Ehrt, Transgender Europe (TGEU) Executive Director.

This decision should send a message to the 16 European countries who continue to force trans people to undergo sterilisation before they can be recognised as the gender they identify as. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in April 2017 that infertility requirements in gender recognition laws were contrary to the human rights of trans people and so all countries in Europe must reform such laws.

"Requiring trans people to give up their fertility so they can access the most basic of rights is a practice that must end. Those trans people who have already had their fertility choices taken away from them should be compensated for that loss and we hope that more Governments in Europe will follow Sweden's example," said Nathan Gale, TGEU's Health Officer.

Read RFSL's statement

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