



European progressives together for LGBTIQ freedom cities and regions

Adopted by the PES Presidency of 25 June 2021

Combating inequality in the EU is a shared responsibility, requiring joint efforts and bold action at every level of government, and especially by local and regional authorities, which have a key role to play in this, being responsible for implementing EU legislation and fostering equality and diversity.

LGBTIQ persons everywhere in Europe should enjoy the freedom to live and publicly express their sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics without fear of intolerance, discrimination or persecution on those grounds.

In this spirit, the PES Presidency supports the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions and Rainbow Rose with this Declaration on LGBTIQ freedom cities and regions.

We condemn the institutional attacks of the Polish and Hungarian governments against LGBTIQ rights, which are in clear breach of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and every other form of discrimination against LGBTIQ persons across the EU. These acts are not only against the law. They are morally intolerable and give rise to extremism and pro discrimination movements.

We welcome the first ever EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, under the leadership of European Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli and the adopted European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2021 on the declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone.

We call on all European political forces at all levels of government to commit to public policies promoting and protecting LGBTIQ rights on the one hand, and explicitly sanctioning structural LGBTIQ discrimination mechanisms, including hate speech, on the other. This is a clear answer to the rising discrimination over Europe and an important sign of solidarity to the community. Local and regional authorities should actively promote best practices for equality and diversity, including in their internal human resources strategy, and also strongly support activists and NGOs active in this field

We commend on others to follow and join our fight to take resolute steps towards the recognition, protection and advancement of human rights of LGBTIQ people in Western Balkans as a crucial step in the EU accession process for the countries in the region, and considering that local LGBTIQ initiatives in fighting everyday discrimination and hate crime, are key to raising awareness and fostering compliance.

We call our progressive family to declare their cities and regions as LGBTIQ freedom cities and regions and to fly the Rainbow flag on the building of the respective municipalities/regions during Pride season and LGBTIQ relevant dates.

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The PES Presidency declares their unconditional support to the fight for freedom and equality of LGBTIQ people. All socialist, socialdemocratic and labour actors join forces to achieve this goal all over Europe.