

Statement following the hearing of the EU Commissioner-designate for Crisis Preparedness, Prevention and Equality

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At the EU Commissioner confirmation hearings today, Commissioner-designate for Crisis Preparedness, Prevention and Equality, Hadja Lahbib voiced a strong commitment towards protecting and advancing the rights of vulnerable groups, including LGBTI people. Here is ILGA-Europe's response.

ILGA-Europe have followed the hearing of the Commissioner-designate for Crisis Preparedness, Prevention and Equality Hadja Lahbib very closely, as her mission letter posed questions about the leadership, level of ambition and resources made available to ensure a strong EU Union of Equality and decisive EU action on the rights and equality of LGBTI people.

We are glad to have heard a strong commitment to the implementation of existing legislation regarding gender equality, gender based violence and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. Strong implementation is indeed needed, not only of EU directives, but also on key CJEU judgements that for the moment remain empty promises for LGBTI people and their families across the EU. We welcome Lahbib's commitment to the strengthened use of infringement procedures and fundamental rights conditionality in the distribution of EU funds. Moving forward, we will need to see the European Commission continue to be strong in its opposition to the ongoing backlash against the fundamental rights of LGBTI people that is growing in many EU member states.

But the level of ambition cannot stop there. The Commission needs to continue to be the key guardian of the Treaties and show strong leadership, also in light of shifting majorities in the Council, and work with member states to close the legal gaps in protection against discrimination and bias-motivated hate, as well as to make freedom of movement a reality for all. The Commission needs to continue to put fundamental rights violations, such as intersex genital mutilation and forced sterilisation, on the agenda of EU institutions and actively work with member states to ban them.

We welcome that the Commissioner-designate clearly set out that she will meet with LGBTI organisations representing the people on the ground to assess the first EU LGBTIQ strategy and discuss together what needs to be included in the follow-up strategy.

We have already shared our assessment of the next steps needed with the European Commission and are looking forward to meeting with the Commissioner, if and when she is confirmed, as soon as possible to discuss how to ensure real mainstreaming throughout all services in the European Commission, and what concrete actions and initiatives we need to see in the next EC LGBTIQ Equality strategy to ensure strong leadership as well as the necessary support and resources.

Next steps

The committees' chairs and political group coordinators will meet without delay to assess the performance and qualification of the Commissioner-designate. Based on the committee recommendations, the Conference of

Presidents (EP President Metsola and political group chairs) is set to conduct the final evaluation and declare the hearings closed on 21 November. Once the Conference of Presidents declares all hearings closed, the evaluation letters will be published.

The election by MEPs of the full college of Commissioners (by a majority of the votes cast, by roll-call) is currently scheduled to take place during the 25-28 November plenary session in Strasbourg.