

# After Amsterdam – Sexual Orientation and the European Union

[Report, Inclusion and Equality, Anti-discrimination, European Union](#)

This guide, published in 1999, focuses on the implications of the Amsterdam Treaty in relation to sexual orientation discrimination. It is available in 6 languages.

The Treaty of Amsterdam, which came into force on 1 May 1999, marks a significant milestone for lesbians and gay men in the European Union. The changes introduced by the Treaty include a new clause, Article 13, which covers discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, together with sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability and age. This is the first time that any express reference to discrimination on grounds other than sex or nationality has appeared in the Treaties. It follows extensive campaigning by non-governmental organisations, including ILGA-Europe.

Article 13 ends any doubt about whether the Community has the legal competence to adopt legislation and policies to address discrimination on the grounds listed within it. The debate is now about what action can and should be taken. But what does Article 13 mean? What are the implications of the new Treaty? What opportunities does it offer for concrete action on discrimination?

ILGA-Europe has produced this guide as a contribution to that debate and to promoting wider participation in it. The guide focuses on the implications of the Amsterdam Treaty in relation to sexual orientation and discrimination. It is not possible within the scope of this guide to provide a detailed examination of the implications of the Treaty in relation to the other grounds of discrimination listed in Article 13, although they are all of direct relevance to lesbians and gay men.

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