

Going Beyond the Law

[Report, Inclusion and Equality, Employment](#)

ILGA-Europe's report examines the implementation of the 2000 EU employment equality directive and identifies further needed action to achieve greater equality for LGB people in employment.

The introduction in 2000 of the EU Directive prohibiting discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation represented an unexpected and much welcomed advance in the progress toward real equality for LGB people. The legislation offered the possibility of a transformation in the working life of lesbians, gays and bisexuals. No longer need they hide their sexual orientation or fear of harassment or discrimination. Such freedom would enable them to participate fully and openly and thus enjoy better social and professional relationships with their colleagues. Because of the new environment, they would better realise their career potential and bring home concrete benefits for their partners. Such was the promise. In this document we explore the extent to which we have realised that promise.

The document looks at the nature and extent of the legislation's provisions as well as its limitations and weaknesses. Some of the issues explored include: How effective can legislation be that relies on the determination and commitment of the person who is discriminated against coming forward to make the law active? Is it not better to prevent discrimination before it happens? How are potential victims of discrimination helped to make the law effective?

An important position taken in the discussions is that legislation is not enough. If equality for lesbians, gays and bisexuals is to become a reality in the workplace, then reacting to inequality is not going to do it. The focus has to be on measures and initiatives that actively promote equality. This requires a collective effort on the part of all stakeholders. Relying on the testimonials of lesbians, gays and bisexuals with first hand experience, as well as the good practice available, the document points to practical steps that can be taken to help realise the promise of equality in the workplace.

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