

# Responding to the anti-gender movement

[Report, Anti-gender Movement, anti-trans, Strategic Communications](#)

In the last few years ILGA-Europe worked on various fronts to better understand the anti-gender movement and its impact on public discourse and the lives and rights of LGBTI communities.

Conservative and religious actors are collaborating nationally and transnationally against **so-called ‘gender ideology’**. Often referred to as the **‘anti-gender movement’**, it is a growing coalition of conservative and religious forces, spreading hateful discourses to wedge public opinion, often targeting LGBTI people and their human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, sexual education, and gender studies. In some countries the discourse has led to mobilisation against significant national reforms.

Discourse about so-called ‘gender ideology’ is present in a large and growing number of European countries and due to social media and digital tools, these concepts and communication strategies travel fast. Despite some remarkable successes, it has so far been challenging for the LGBTI movement to respond effectively and to develop our own narratives to counter attacks. Developing [new narratives](#), [framing](#) and [testing](#) our messages are crucial skills to succeed.

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## Background

In the last few years ILGA-Europe worked on various fronts to better understand the anti-gender movement and its impact on public discourse and the lives and rights of LGBTI communities. We collected research, monitored country situations, talked with activists, allies and researchers to better understand the phenomenon and its implications. We have worked closely [with member organisations](#) in responding and resisting to attacks through [our advocacy work](#) but also contributing to [build the movement’s capacity](#) in this area.

In January 2019 ILGA-Europe hosted the workshop for LGBTI activists [“Responding to the anti-gender movement: The rhetoric of the opposition, our movement’s capacities and ways to build our narratives”](#). The workshop aimed at sharing the information and experience gathered, and to discuss how to better tackle the anti-gender movement, not only through local and national strategies, but also through collaborative international efforts.

The results of this event were presented in June 2019 in the course of the webinar *Lessons learned from the “Responding to anti-gender” workshop*.

**If you are an LGBTI activist and you wish to receive the recording of the webinar please contact Svetlana Zakharova, ILGA-Europe’s Senior Programmes Officer: [svetlana@ilga-europe.org](mailto:svetlana@ilga-europe.org).**

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## Research

In the course of the [workshop](#) activists identified frames that have been used so far and that they were planning to use again in the future tactics. Therefore the group decided to develop research to better understand the actual impact of these frames and the mental models around anti-gender discourse.

### Objectives of the research

- Improve understanding of mental models around anti-gender discourse
- Test possible narratives, frames, messages to respond effectively
- Move from assumptions to systematic research.
- Analyse discourse outside capitals including in small cities
- Train members on the use of research and message testing
- Develop cooperation between LGBTI organisations and research agencies
- Provide members with a set of customised framing recommendations

### **Results of the research**

The research project consisted in 3 focus groups in 4 countries and the main lessons learned were presented in the course of a webinar *Testing narratives to respond to the anti-gender discourse: Results of the project* that was held in December 2019.

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