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PRESS RELEASE

European wide survey highlights discrimination and harassment against LGBT people

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has welcomed the publication today of a European Union wide report on the extent of discrimination and victimisation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has published the results of the largest LGBT hate crime and discrimination survey ever conducted. Over 93,000 people from all 27 member states took part and the Equality Commission supported FRA's work through encouraging the involvement of participants in Northern Ireland.



“This survey shows that LGBT people across Europe face obstacles to the enjoyment of their fundamental rights”, Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission said. “A large number of the respondents cited instances of discrimination, particularly in employment and education; and many have also been victims of violence and harassment, frequently in public places.”

Almost half (47%) of all respondents across Europe said they felt personally discriminated against or harassed because of their sexual orientation during the year of the survey. The percentage in the UK was 44%.

The context of such discriminatory treatment varied, with discrimination in employment being cited by 20% throughout Europe (19% in the UK); whereas 91% of respondents had encountered negative conduct towards LGBT children in school (95% in the UK).

In the report, the FRA says that the results show a relationship between respondents' perceptions about the level of offensive language about LGBT people by politicians and their own feelings of discrimination or harassment. In countries where the majority said such offensive language by politicians was rare, fewer than half said they had encountered discrimination or harassment.

Of those who had felt discriminated against at work or when looking for a job in the past year, just 10% had reported the matter to any authority, though more than half of them said their country had a law forbidding such discrimination.

The Equality Commission's most recent equality awareness survey in Northern Ireland – Do You Mean Me?, published in June 2012 – showed that about half of the LGB people surveyed told us they had experienced discrimination and 20% reported it.

“This survey highlights that there is a need, across Europe, to combat prejudice and hostility which, in too many cases, leads to discrimination and fuels hatred.” Evelyn Collins said. “The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland carries out extensive work for and with people in the LGBT community. We have recently introduced a new micro-site online - So Me - to increase levels of engagement and communication and provide advice and guidance to employers and service providers as well as conducting research and promotion on key issues.

[European Union LGBT Survey - resource webpage>](#)