

Press Release

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"Transgender persons should have their human rights fully respected" says Commissioner Hammarberg

Strasbourg, 29.07.2009 - "Council of Europe member states should do more to stop transphobia and discrimination against transgender people. The situation of transgender persons has long been ignored and neglected, although the problems they face are very real and often specific to this group alone. They experience a high degree of discrimination and intolerance in all fields of life, as well as outright violence. Transgender persons have been the victims of brutal hate crimes, including murder, in some European countries" said the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, publishing today an expert [Issue Paper](#) on "Human rights and gender identity."

The Issue Paper makes the point that agreed international human rights standards, such as the right to life, physical integrity and the right to health care, apply equally to all people, including transgender persons. Likewise, they have the right to be protected against discrimination on the labour market.

The Commissioner's document also describes positive steps which have been taken in some countries in order to protect the rights of transgender people. However, transphobia as well as genuine ignorance in this area are widespread. The Issue Paper recommends that Member states of the Council of Europe take further action to prevent discrimination, including through training of health personnel. The Issue Paper also maintains that it should not be necessary to undergo sterilisation or other medical treatment as a compulsory requirement for a person's gender identity to be recognised.

The Issue Paper on "Human rights and gender identity" is launched on 29 July 2009 at 13.30 in Copenhagen during the World Outgames 2nd International Conference on LGBT Human Rights. The Commissioner will be the key note speaker during the final plenary session which starts at 15.30.

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