

To:

President Ursula von der Leyen

Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib

European Commission

Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200

1049 Brussels, Belgium

July 17, 2025

Subject: Delivery of petition signatures – Protect and advance the EU Anti-Discrimination Directive

Dear President von der Leyen and Commissioner Lahbib,

On behalf of AGE Platform Europe, EL*C, ENAR, ERGO Network, IGLYO, ILGA-Europe, OII Europe, TGEU, and the undersigned, we are writing to deliver over **33,000 petition signatures** collected from All Out members in the EU and around the world, united by one clear demand:

Reconsider the withdrawal of the proposed EU Directive on anti-discrimination, and work towards meaningful protection for all.

We express our deep concern regarding the European Commission's plan to withdraw the draft Directive on anti-discrimination without presenting a robust alternative. This step risks undermining the EU's founding values and leaves millions across the continent exposed to discrimination – particularly those facing barriers based on age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and intersecting forms of marginalisation.

For over 15 years, this Directive has represented a vital promise: a Europe where equality is not a privilege, but a right enjoyed in all areas of life. The near-consensus reached under the Belgian Presidency shows that progress is possible. This should encourage

the European Commission to maintain its ambition and, as guardian of the Treaties, uphold its responsibility to protect fundamental rights and actively support Member States in fulfilling their obligations to advance equality for all. Its withdrawal, at a moment when far-right and anti-equality forces are gaining momentum, sends a dangerous message that the EU is wavering in its commitment to a Union of Equality.

We are alarmed by the emergence of a fragmented legal landscape, where some groups and some countries benefit from stronger protections while others are left behind.

We urge the European Commission to:

- Decide not to withdraw the Directive on anti-discrimination.
- Should the withdrawal proceed, immediately present a comprehensive, ambitious alternative that addresses gaps in current protections.
- Engage in open and transparent consultation with civil society, Equality Bodies, EU Member States and the European Parliament to ensure that any new proposal strengthens, rather than weakens, protections for all.
- Take decisive steps to reaffirm and strengthen the EU's leadership in promoting and defending human rights for all.

The EU's international credibility and moral authority as a defender of human rights are at stake. Scrapping the proposed Directive without a clear and ambitious replacement would not only damage the EU's reputation, but would also abandon millions to continued and unchecked discrimination.

We call on you to act now – to protect equality, defend human rights, and ensure a future free from discrimination for all people in the European Union.

Please find enclosed the signatures and messages of support from citizens and civil society across Europe and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Katrin Hugendubel

Advocacy Director, ILGA-Europe

Ilaria Todde

Advocacy Director, EL*C



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



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