

How can we help? A guidance document on the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on equal rights for intersex persons (CM/Rec(2025)7)
Prepared by ILGA-Europe and OII Europe
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In 2015, OII Europe and ILGA-Europe produced [Standing up for the human rights of intersex people – How can you help?](#) (hereinafter: Allies Toolkit).¹ The Allies Toolkit provides a critical framework for using and applying this guidance document; it is recommended reading for anyone interested in working on advancing intersex human rights in general, and the implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on equal rights for intersex persons more specifically (CM/Rec(2025)7).

About this document

The purpose of this guidance is to help LGBT, LGBTI, and human rights organisations build a community-led approach to the implementation of CM/Rec(2025)7, and is also relevant to policymakers and institutions. It gives basic background information on the Recommendation and structured guidance on how to support an intersex community-led approach to implementation. It is critical to ensure that implementation actions centre the voices, needs, and expertise of intersex activists and organisations.

Committee of Ministers Recommendation on equal rights for intersex persons (CM/Rec(2025)7)

[CM/Rec\(2025\)7](#) was adopted unanimously by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 07 October 2025. CM/Rec(2025)7 includes recommendations on protecting intersex human rights across all areas of life, including prohibition of non-consensual medical interventions; monitoring, accountability, and redress; asylum procedures; places of deprivation of liberty; hate crime and hate speech legislation; equality and non-discrimination in education and sport; healthcare; private and family life; data and research; training and awareness raising; empowerment of intersex communities; and international cooperation.

An [Explanatory memorandum](#) of the recommendation contains explanations of the various parts of the Recommendation and good practice examples. These documents are very thorough and cover all areas of life. Because of the extensive nature of CM/Rec(2025)7, there are many options for how to approach national-level implementation advocacy, and there will be no one-size-fits-all strategy across the 46 Council of Europe member States.

The adoption of CM/Rec(2025)7 also means that the Council of Europe has resources available to support the implementation on national level across Europe. The Council of Europe can provide targeted support through policy and legal avenues upon request from governments, as well as facilitate good practice exchanges, provide capacity building, and work with intersex organisations and civil society.

¹ The Allies Toolkit is additionally available in Bulgarian, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and Turkish here: <https://www.oiiurope.org/tag/allies-toolkit/>

Guidance for LGBT, LGBTI, and other human rights organisations

The first key question, whether your organisation has the explicit mandate to work on intersex issues or not, is if there are out and active intersex activists working in your country. If so, does your organisation have meaningful engagement with those activists?

The **critical first step** in implementation advocacy related to the CM/Rec(2025)7 is to hold a *priorities and strategy* meeting together with local intersex activists.

This *priorities and strategy* meeting should serve to bring the expertise of various actors together to create an implementation plan. Intersex activists and organisations are best able to identify the most urgent needs of

intersex people and communities in your country. Any implementation advocacy needs to be based on their direct knowledge and expertise. Many intersex activists and organisations in our region have only in the past decade started having access to government representatives. They may still face challenges, including limited resources and capacity, and this is where the support of LGBT, LGBTI, and human rights organisations can come into play.

We recommend that an initial planning meeting or series of meetings use an agenda like this:





- Introductions including discussion of various organisational mandates and capacities
- Mapping intersex community priorities and lessons learned so far from intersex activism
 - o What are the most urgent issues faced by intersex people in the country?
 - o What steps have already been taken towards these goals? What can be learned from past successes and failures?
- Mapping capacities regarding intersex-specific content
 - o It is useful to know which actors have expertise on intersex issues and to what extent. Take this opportunity to honestly reflect on how much intersex-specific expertise there is in the room and what kinds of training might be useful and necessary in order to bridge any eventual knowledge gaps.
- Priorities analysis based on the current political context
 - o What actions have already been taken to attempt to address the priority issues? How did those processes go? What lessons can be learned from past attempts?
 - o What are the concrete advocacy steps that would be needed to fully address each priority issue?
 - Break these down as much as possible to small concrete steps. For example, if a priority issue is to ensure intersex-inclusive comprehensive sex education in schools, before attempting to work with the Ministry of Education, it would

What to do if there are no intersex activists working in your country

In the situation where there are no intersex activists working in your country, or if you are not sure that there are any, it is crucial to reach out to OII Europe and ILGA-Europe to ensure that intersex voices are represented – even if they are not local. It may be that our networks include activists that you do not know from your country, and if not, intersex activists from neighbouring countries or from the regional level will be able to provide input in identifying *priorities and strategies* in lieu of local activists. It is strongly advised *not to move ahead with advocacy related to the CM/Rec(2025)7* without direct involvement from intersex activists.

be useful to have a mapping of the state of affairs first, and then to produce a short report of this mapping, potentially bringing in testimonials of intersex persons about the impact of the current sex education curriculum. That analysis could then form the basis for an advocacy process with the Ministry of Education.

- Mapping existing relationships with policymaking
 - Which are the relevant policymakers, institutions or mechanisms to target in working towards implementation of a specific part of the recommendation? And to which of the target groups do those in the room have access to? What do those relationships look like? How much expertise do these policymakers have on intersex issues?
- What are the most politically viable advocacy processes right now?
 - Here it is useful to bring in analysis of public positions taken by policymakers as well as insider information from those who have worked with these policymakers on related issues. For example, if the Minister of Health is unwilling to meet with LGBT(I) organisations, this likely means that an attempt to develop healthcare guidelines for the care of intersex people is politically not viable at present.
 - This step can result in a mapping that combines priorities and viability:

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
POLITICALLY VIABLE	 Do First	 Plan
NOT VIABLE	 Strategise	 Postpone

- Mapping risk and threats
 - Taking note of the priorities-and-viability mapping, take the time to clarify the risks of advancing on actions in the short-term. What kinds of hostility might be faced? From whom? Are there alliances to build before attempting to start processes to better prepare for responding to anti-rights narratives?
- To work together towards the first actions, the next step is to map capacities.
 - It is likely that there are only a few, if any, intersex activists working in your country, and that their resources are very limited for advocacy. We recommend to work towards a simplified memorandum of understanding between LGBT/LGBTI/human rights organisations and intersex activists/organisations, which captures an honest reflection of (1) what kinds of actions will be needed to achieve the priorities, (2) how much time and energy intersex activists/organisations can contribute to the priority

processes (3) where intersex voices are crucial to be part of the individual actions and steps in the process, incl. being “in the room” (e.g. in political meetings) versus what kinds of actions can be taken and which conversations can be had with allied organisations via their existing formal or informal channels, and (4) how allied organisations can, via scaffolded involvement of intersex activists, support the capacity building of the intersex movement.

- Planning for resource mobilisation
 - Intersex organisations are significantly underfunded in Europe and globally, and meaningful participation of intersex activists/organisations in the implementation of the CM/Rec(2025)7 may require mobilisation of new resources or reallocation of existing ones.
 - Use this step to assess existing resources available, consider the resources that may be necessary to implement one or more of the priority advocacy actions, and brainstorm how to fundraise for (or fund) these.
 - It may be worth considering starting an intersex-led project inside of an LGBT/LGBTI/human rights organisation or having one of these organisations act as a fiscal sponsor for an unregistered or under-resourced intersex organisation to increase access to funding.
 - If joint fundraising or financing is envisioned, ensure that this is also reflected in the memorandum of understanding (next step).
- Formalising agreements
 - A memorandum of understanding will help everyone to know exactly who is empowered to do what and how resources will be managed and used. Depending on the capacities of everyone involved, this can be an informal document or something more formalised – the point is not so much that there be a formal document as that this process is used to build trust and process agreements.
 - A memorandum of understanding could contain agreements about (1) distribution and management of resources, (2) responsibilities for fundraising, (3) information sharing, (4) inclusion of specific persons or organisations in various conversations, (5) decision-making mechanisms, and/or (6) training processes to be undertaken, among other things.

Available resources

Both the Council of Europe and civil society (OII Europe and ILGA-Europe) are able to support implementation processes at the national level.

What the Council of Europe can provide

- Technical assistant to States, upon request
- Best practice guidance and exchanges
- Small grants, case-by-case

What ILGA-Europe and OII Europe can provide

- Case-by-case direct support
- Expert input – letters, testimony at hearings, meetings with policymakers
- Mobilising allied governments to engage bilaterally
- Capacity building for activists

ILGA-Europe is the European and Central Asia Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Intersex Association. ILGA-Europe is a membership-based organisation bringing together over 700 organisations from 54 European and Central Asian countries, making it an excellent platform for joint advocacy and movement development. As part of its mandate, ILGA-Europe both advocates for human rights and equality for LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia and strengthens the LGBTI movement throughout its capacity building programme, with a specific focus on protecting democracy and decreasing harm and violence against LGBTI persons.

Organisation Intersex International Europe (OII Europe) is the European intersex umbrella organisation with intersex-led member organisations in 22 European countries. OII Europe advocates for the protection of intersex people's human rights, raises awareness on intersex issues with policy makers, professionals and the general public, and supports the growth of the European intersex community together with its membership and allies.

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