

About the seminar

The Group of the Party of European Socialists (PES Group) in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), in cooperation with **Rainbow Rose** is organising a seminar entitled "I am what I am: Promoting LGBTI rights in Europe".

The seminar, aims to raise awareness about striking divergences in the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in different EU Member States. It will foster the exchange of best practices at local and regional level in terms of LGBTI-friendly measures and will discuss their contribution towards effectively fighting discrimination against LGBTI people and taking forward social progress.

The context

Equality is one of the founding values of the EU and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is prohibited. However, we are a long way away from equal treatment throughout the EU of LGBTI people, who still face multiple forms of discrimination.

Despite considerable advances in some EU Member States, social equality for LGBTI people remains an unattained goal. For example, the absence of equal civil recognition of same-sex relationships deprives them of a whole range of derived civil rights, such as rights to parenting and adoption as well as of social security and fiscal rights. At the same time, it limits access to public services such as social housing or health services.

Although equality of civil rights is a matter addressed at national level, the delivery of related services is dealt with at local and regional level, and this is where progressive politicians can make a difference. The same holds true when it comes to breaking stereotypes about LGBTI people through education and fighting hate crime. This is essential for changing regressive mindsets and promoting social inclusion.