

## LGBTI Unit

Unit for the interests of lesbians, gays,  
bisexuals, transgender and intersex people



## The Rainbow City of Berlin

**An estimated 250,000 lesbians, gays and bisexuals live in Berlin. Of those, around 40,000 are over the age of 65. Around 80,000 are young people aged between 12 and 27. In addition there are transgender and intersex people, the numbers of whom cannot be estimated.**

In Berlin, there are around 13,000 registered civil partnerships in total<sup>1</sup>. Throughout Germany there are approximately 8,000 rainbow families with 12,000 children.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with its constitution and the German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), Berlin is committed to equal treatment and the equality of people of different sexual identities and lifestyles. A variety of topics are associated with this mission. They form the framework for the LGBTI Unit of the State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS) in the Senate Department for Labour, Integration and Women's Issues.

1 See Statistical Information System Berlin-Brandenburg: Details from the residents' registration statistics; census date 31.12.2013.

2 Same gender cohabitation with children according to Microcensus 2013.

## LGBTI Unit

With the establishment of the **Unit for Same-sex Lifestyles (ggLw)** in 1989, the first government body in Germany was created to work for the interests of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI). Since then, the Unit has gained a reputation for taking up issues that are significant in the life situations of LGBTI and are important in terms of the need for political action.

This involves providing information for the Senate and parliament, working on legislation and regulations and, for example, supporting legal developments at federal level through the Bundesrat. The Unit develops concepts and campaigns. It initiates and moderates the dialogue between the administration and civic society. It runs events and publishes brochures on relevant topic areas.

Since 2007, the Unit has been part of the **State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS)**. Since then, the cross-characteristic approach has facilitated close collaboration between groups potentially affected by discrimination in advocating basic and human rights. Differences within the LGBTI communities – in relation to age, disability or ethnic origin, for example – are perceived, and respect for diversity is regarded as a sign of quality in the work of the Unit and the projects it promotes.

## Roles of the LGBTI Unit

- **Supporting emancipation** of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people,
- **breaking down discrimination** and
- **promoting acceptance** of diverse sexual identities and lifestyles.

The Unit also implements initiatives and funds projects run by non-governmental organisations in all three areas.

In 2014, the Unit was renamed as the **Unit for the Interests of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex People** – in short: **the LGBTI Unit**. Thus, the name also reflects the fact that the Unit works in the interests of all these groups of people who find themselves in a variety of legal and social situations. The various interests have equal status alongside one another and at the same time are closely linked by the objective of achieving self-determination and acceptance of sexual and gender diversity.

## Supporting emancipation

Sexual identity is an important part of personality. Those who differ from the majority as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender or intersex people have to work out in a very specific way how they can live out their own identity with selfdetermination.

LGBTI people can find information, share experiences, seek advice and support in Berlin on topics such as coming out, partnership, love and sexuality, the desire to have children, discrimination, experience of violence and other issues.

In this context, the state of Berlin funds non-governmental organisations that run projects for psycho-social support and empowerment of LGBTI. The specific life situations and needs of various target groups are being taken into account in the ongoing development of the support offered.

**Sexual identity** is an umbrella term for gender identity and sexual orientation. Gender identity is comprised of physical and social gender (gender role) and is based on one's own perception of gender. A person's sexual orientation may be homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual.

## Breaking down discrimination

Incidents of discrimination and acts of violence motivated by homophobia and transphobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex people (LSBTI) that are directed specifically at their personality happen on a daily basis. Many crimes go unreported and there is a large number of unrecorded cases.

The Unit funds projects in the fields of antiviolence work, victim protection and advice, and advice in instances of discrimination on the grounds of sexual identity. It works closely with the LGBT contacts in the Berlin police and the Berlin state prosecutor's office. The aim is to break down discrimination and violence, to ensure that there are services for victims suitable for the target groups, to increase willingness to report crimes and to throw light on this area. The Unit also commissions academic studies and expert reports in order to improve the knowledge base.



**Homophobia** is dislike, hatred of and hostility towards homosexual people and their lifestyles. It can also affect bisexual people.

**Transphobia** denotes the same derogatory attitudes towards transgender people. It is directed against the expression of gender identity, gender roles and even against physical appearance. Intersex people are also affected by this. Homophobia and transphobia are frequently closely associated with sexism and racism.

## Promoting acceptance

Promoting acceptance of sexual and gender diversity is a further task of the LGBTI Unit. It funds projects that focus on sensitisation, organises events and training courses for civic society and public administration, develops concepts and campaigns, publishes materials for information and to raise awareness, and regularly shares experiences with other cities and states.

The LGBTI Unit is very well connected at the federal level and at European and international levels and represents Berlin within the Rainbow Cities Network (RCN).

# “Berlin supports selfdetermination and acceptance of sexual diversity” initiative (ISV)

In 2009, the Berlin parliament passed the first action plan to promote acceptance of sexual and gender diversity and to fight homophobia and transphobia in Germany, the **“Berlin supports selfdetermination and acceptance of sexual diversity!” initiative**. Since 2010, the Berlin Senate has been implementing initiatives and developing them further. Various Senate administrative departments and stakeholders in civic society are involved. Overall coordination of the initiatives is managed by the LGBTI Unit.

**B E R L I N** S U P P O R T S  
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