

EU Guidelines on LGBTI: key tool to promote human rights worldwide

MEPs denounced the persecution of same-sex orientation persons outside the EU and urged a better implementation of the EU Guidelines on human rights of LGBTI, on Monday.

European Parliament (25.09.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2wTYzrh> – The Subcommittee on Human Rights hosted a public hearing on the human rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) persons outside the EU and the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Monday afternoon.

“Sexual orientation and gender identity are in essence an individual choice, which should under no circumstances be subject to any legal codification or discriminatory practices”, said the Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Pier Antonio PANZERI (S&D, IT). “Unfortunately, more than 72 countries worldwide still criminalise homosexuality with at least five applying the death penalty”, he added.

MEPs discussed with a wide range of experts the status of consensual same-sex relations worldwide. They called for an end to violence and all forms of discrimination against the LGBTI community in Chechnya and urged the Russian authorities to respect human dignity and urgently conduct investigations on the cases reported.

DRÖI Members welcomed the recent commitment of the Tunisian government to guarantee the protection of human rights of LGBTI persons. Members committed themselves to raising the LGBTI situation in their future meetings with their counterparts. They stressed the need to repeal laws such as article 230 which are not in line with the rule of law and individuals rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

Filling in the gap between words and actions

How the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBTI people should better promote and protect the human rights of LGBTI persons was the core of the second panel discussion.

“These Guidelines are a great instrument”, stated Alexander Hammelburg from the Federation of Dutch Associations for Integration of Homosexuality (COC). Members agreed that the European Union could make a significant difference for LGBTI people across the world through the engagement on the ground of the EU Delegations.

In last year’s Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, MEPs called on the European Commission and the EEAS to start working on a proper and active implementation of the guidelines. In this regard, Daina Ruduša from ILGA-Europe identified some recommendations such as better engaging with civil society organisations, training EU Delegation staff or leading by example.

MEPs agreed with Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of State, that the EU and the United States should strengthen their cooperation on the multilateral level, in particular by supporting the mandate of a UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. They agreed to work hand in hand on the swift appointment of a new independent expert after the recent and regrettable resignation of Vitit Muntarbhorn.

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