

**Faulty survey instrument and data informs Fundamental Rights Agency event:
“Tackling Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination. Next steps in EU and
Member State policy making” in Brussels, Tuesday 28th October 2014.**

Core Issues Trust wishes to raise concern that the EU LGBT Survey, which is being used as the basis for a request to EU member states to define policy tackling discrimination against the LGBT minority, has greatly exaggerated results. Following the attempt to justify the Lunacek Resolution (in February 2014) the survey's results are invoked at the Fundamental Rights Agency's event on Tuesday 28th October 2014 at the European Union in Brussels. The survey's "Results at a Glance" site fails to properly define the survey's population group, that is, who its participants were and how the data were collected. The survey asks respondents if they have felt discriminated against at any time during the survey period in question, "the last 12 months", because they were homosexual. 47% said "yes" throughout the EU as a whole. There was some variation throughout the EU, the lowest was the Netherlands at 30% and the highest was Lithuania at 61%. The result for the UK was 44%.

However, a recent analysis (Chakraborty et al¹) based on Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England, 2007 asked the same question. The results of the EU LGBT survey bear absolutely no relation to this survey carried out in England where only 4.9% of respondents answered "yes". That is 4.9% compared with 44%. Something is seriously wrong.

It is important to note that the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey was not targeted at homosexuals. It was a survey of the general population, asking about various mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder. Sexual orientation was included as one of the variables, and when asked about discrimination, they were also asked if it had occurred on the basis of age, gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, and physical or mental health. It was therefore likely to embrace ordinary homosexuals and not just activists. The sample size is large enough to achieve statistical significance (overall n = 7403, non-heterosexual n = 650) and raise serious concerns at the difference between the two findings.

By contrast, the EU Study was specifically concerned with LGBT issues and was therefore likely to attract a disproportionate number of activists who see it as an opportunity to advance their cause. The "Results at a Glance" document says nothing about how the survey was promoted, it just says it was an "online survey". Was it advertised mainly in gay clubs and bars where activists congregate, or was it advertised more generally to the wider population? In addition to checking boxes, participants were invited to give examples of discrimination and at the top of page 17 there is a quote from someone who obviously sees discrimination and homophobia everywhere:

"I had an experience at work in terms of discrimination: a colleague told me he respected me but thought I was abnormal ... in a few words, my sexual orientation was against nature in his opinion." (Italy, lesbian, 28)

If homophobia is so widely defined it is likely that the survey will reflect inflated results. Such a vague approach to data gathering cannot safely be used for the basis of EU policy and strategy. Resolutions from this meeting, based on this data as it is articulated in this survey could mean that people will be criminalised just for expressing their sincerely held view that homosexuality is unnatural.

Core Issues Trust recommends that the survey designers give urgent attention to this faulty instrument, which, rather than surveying a randomised sample is more a political petition from a self-selecting population. We further request that researchers explain the disparities between the findings of this EU survey and the Chakraborty survey. We request that clear and reasonable definitions of 'homophobia' and 'discrimination' be provided, and that a set of standards about how these should be measured, and how future survey sample groups will be identified, and how data will be collected, be clarified. The current data set is unacceptable as a basis of policy and strategy.

Dr M R Davidson, Director: **Core Issues Trust, UK.**

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¹ Chakraborty, King et al, *Mental health of the non-heterosexual population of England*, British Journal of Psychiatry, 2011; 198:143ff