



LGBT+ Communities and Inclusive Policies: What are the Key Challenges in Paris?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this policy brief is to assess how the City of Paris is positioned regarding the implementation of inclusive policies and initiatives that respond to the needs of the local LGBT community. In recent years, Paris has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting LGBT residents as well as visitors, with the ambition of becoming “the capital of LGBT tourism and inclusion”. By signing in 2015 the “*Charte d’Engagement LGBT*”, the City of Paris has confirmed its intention to fight discrimination and homophobia within its institutions. Furthermore, by joining the Rainbow Cities Network, Paris has also committed to actively participate in the support of LGBTI communities internationally. These strong actions show the will of Paris to fight against the discrimination of the LGBT population, although there is of

course still room for further improvement along with the necessity to face the diverging opinions of some groups within the society. In fact, while overall recognition of LGBT rights and needs has increased in France in recent years, the promulgation of new laws aimed at enhancing equality and inclusion of LGBT citizens has led to major opposition, giving rise to demonstrations and opposition movements.

The objective of this policy brief is therefore to explore both the challenges that the City of Paris faces in the development of more inclusive policies for the LGBT community and potential ways in which it could take action to fully answer to the needs and concerns of an increasingly multicultural and dynamic LGBT population.

RÉSUMÉ

Le but de ce “policy brief” est de déterminer comment la Ville de Paris se positionne vis-à-vis de la mise en place de politiques inclusives et d’initiatives qui répondent aux besoins de la communauté LGBT à l’échelle locale. En effet, ces dernières années, Paris a démontré sa volonté de soutenir tant les résidents que les visiteurs LGBT, avec l’ambition de devenir « la capitale du tourisme LGBT et de l’inclusion ». En

signant en 2015 la «Charte d’Engagement LGBT», la Ville de Paris a confirmé son intention de combattre, au sein de son administration, les discriminations et l’homophobie. De plus, en rejoignant le ‘Rainbow Cities Network’, Paris s’est également engagée à participer activement au soutien des communautés LGBT à l’échelle internationale. Ces actions fortes soulignent une volonté réelle et



affirmée sur la scène internationale de positionner Paris dans la lutte contre la discrimination des communautés LGBT. Cependant, une large marge de progression subsiste, tout comme la nécessité de faire face aux opinions divergentes et souvent stigmatisantes de certains groupes sociaux. En effet, bien que, globalement, la reconnaissance des droits des communautés LGBT ait fait des progrès en France ces dernières années, la promulgation de nouvelles lois visant à renforcer l'égalité et l'inclusion des citoyens LGBT a conduit à une opposition très forte de certaines franges de la société, qui se sont organisées dans un mouvement d'opposition de grande ampleur.

Par conséquent, l'objectif de ce 'policy brief' est d'explorer en premier lieu les défis auxquels la ville de Paris fait face dans le développement de politiques plus inclusives à l'encontre de la communauté LGBT. Dans un second temps, le document explore les modes d'action et engagements que Paris pourrait adopter pour répondre pleinement aux besoins et préoccupations d'une population LGBT de plus en plus multiculturelle et dynamique, et affirmer son statut de ville inclusive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a platform to discuss a Friendly LGBT+ Code of Conduct with enterprises and organisations.
2. Carry out workshops and/or trainings on LGBT+ issues for local professionals.
3. Inform about the existing services, NGOs and initiatives for the LGBT+ community in secondary schools and universities.
4. Develop a support platform for LGBT+ community with different cultural backgrounds and other minority backgrounds.
5. Organise roundtables and debates about the less visible minorities within the LGBT+ community.
6. Create a special support system for LGBT+ refugees.
7. Introduce a specialised body in the Department of Public prosecution for homophobic and transphobic crime.
8. Develop informal workshops for children to supply educational tools to fight prejudice and social discrimination and to increase acceptance of diversity.



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INTRODUCTION

In October 2016, the UN Conference Habitat III took place in Quito, Ecuador, to elaborate on the 11th SDG “Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”. The outcome of the conference was the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, a document that is meant to influence global urban policy towards more inclusive and sustainable cities. However, although several countries pushed for including LGBT+ people in the list of vulnerable groups, requiring special protection and anti-discrimination policies, LGBT+ rights were eventually not taken into account in the New Urban Agenda due to the opposition of 17 countries. Today, LGBT people are often discriminated

against in their society because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and because of this they tend to suffer a well-being deficit, especially in dimensions such as family life, education, health and economic outcomes. This shows the urgency of recognition and action on the question of LGBT+ rights not only at the international level but at the local level as well, with strong engagement and initiative from cities all over the world.

*“The LGBTQ community is constantly marginalised and Habitat III is no exception”
- Javier Jileta*

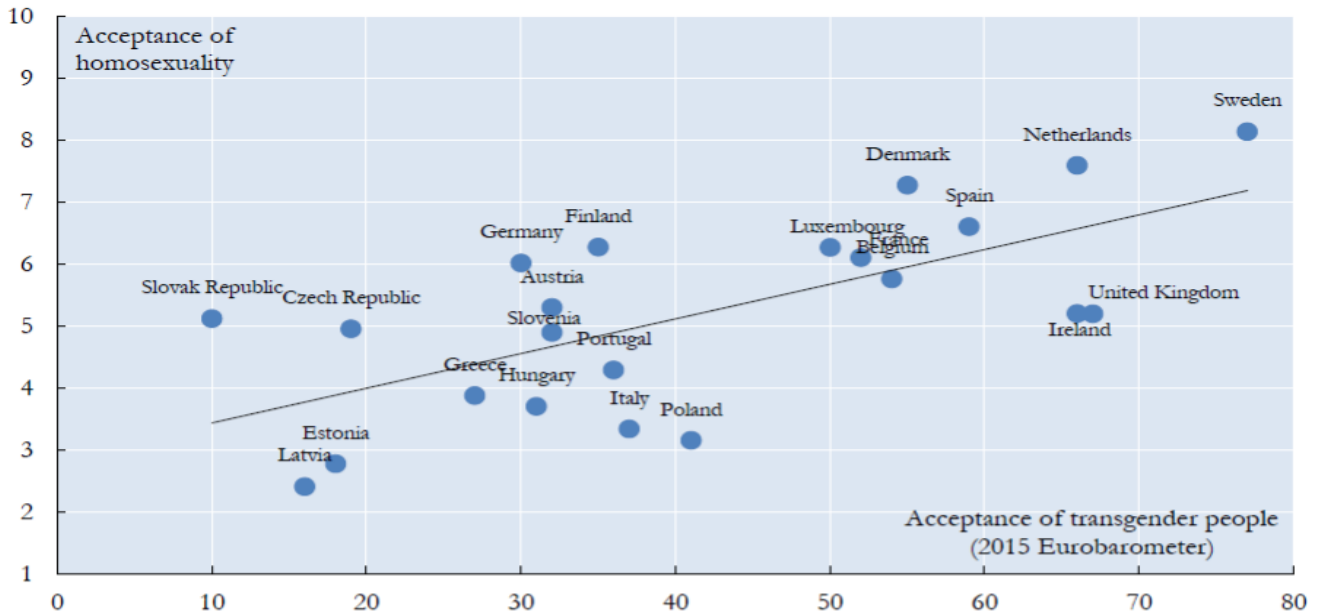
LGBT+ RIGHTS AND ACCEPTANCE IN FRANCE

There are two main dimensions to consider when discussing LGBT+ communities’ inclusion at the national level: their acceptance by society, namely the degree of discrimination they are subject to, and the recognition

of their rights by national laws. Compared to other European countries, France registers levels of acceptance that are above the average, both for homosexuals and transgender people (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Acceptance of homosexuality in score from 0 to 10 (2001-2014) and acceptance of transgender people (% of respondents) based on the 2015 Eurobarometer, in OECD countries



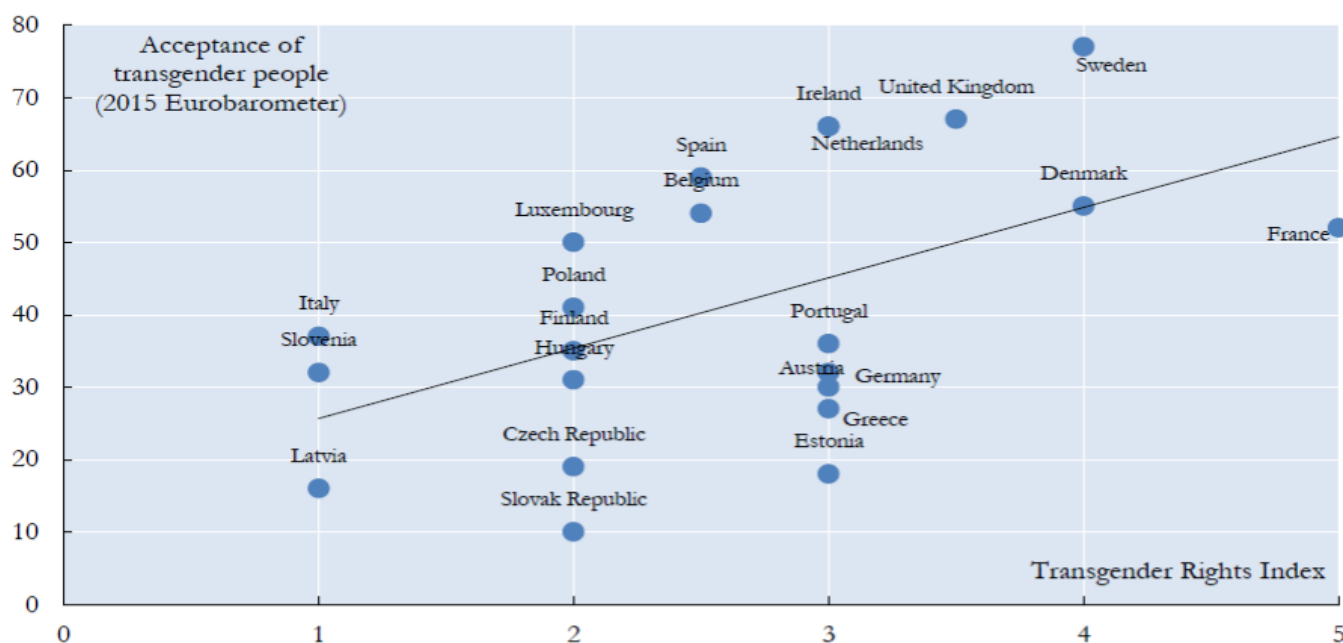
Source: "LGBTI in OECD Countries: A Review" (2017)

This relatively high degree of acceptance is reflected by an increasing recognition of LGBT+ rights by French laws, which culminated in the legalization of same-sex marriages and adoption of children by same-sex couples in 2013 (called Taubira Law). As far as transsexualism is concerned, despite its status as a mental health disorder being abolished only in 2010,

since then its acceptance and legal recognition by the French population have significantly improved. In fact, according to the Transgender Rights Index of 2016 (**Figure 2**), France is now the European country which registers the highest score when looking at anti-discrimination policies and ease of changing legal gender classification.



Figure 2. Acceptance of transgender people in OECD countries (% of respondents) based on the 2015 Eurobarometer and Transgender Rights Index (score 0-59 as of 2016)



Source: "LGBTI in OECD Countries: A Review" (2017)

However, notwithstanding the relatively positive statistical results, there is still a significant part of the French population that is against same-sex marriages and adoption of children by same-sex couples. These people usually come from the most traditional parts of society and they firmly believe in the traditional notion of family and its composition (see challenge 8 below). In fact, after the promulgation of the

Taubira law in 2013, this faction animated the debate and created a movement called '*La Manif pour tous*', not only to demonstrate their disapproval of the law but also to defend their traditional family values. Though they describe themselves as secular, this movement is generally linked to the French Christian Church and to right-wing extremists.

PARISIAN CONTEXT

Paris is the French city with the highest rate of same-sex marriages and civil partnerships. According to INSEE

statistics same-sex couples represent only 3.5% of marriages and civil partnerships in France. In Paris this



percentage goes up to 11%. However, despite the large number of same-sex partnerships and civil marriages there is a part of the population that is reluctant to accept their legality. As in the rest of France, in Paris, there was also a rise of demonstrations after the promulgation of the Taubira Law in 2013 led by 'La Manif pour tous'. Moreover, leaders from far-right wing parties, like Marine Le Pen of the National Front, have also taken part in these demonstrations, which are usually led by right-wing extremists. Other protests have occurred in Paris against such laws. For example, in 2013 a far-right historian committed suicide in Notre Dame cathedral, leaving behind messages in which he denounced gay marriage.

This shows that Paris' intention to become an inclusive and "LGBT+

friendly" city will not be an easy challenge, as it will need to simultaneously face a vocal opposition. Furthermore, due to the refugee crisis, Paris is now responding to an influx of refugees who are hosted in refugee shelters around the city and count some LGBT+ individuals among their members. The situation of LGBT+ refugees in reception centres is often delicate, especially because the majority of the migrants come from cultures where homosexuality and transexuality are still considered taboos, which further increases their vulnerability. This raises the need for the City of Paris to design policies for an LGBT+ population which is becoming increasingly multicultural and which has particular needs.

LGBT+ POLICIES IN PARIS

Paris is at the forefront of the promotion of LGBT+ rights in France and demonstrates increasing engagement and commitment in the fight against LGBT+ discrimination. To maintain this status, the French capital has recently become part of the global Rainbow Cities Network, which aims at exchanging experiences and good practices between cities in order to promote LGBT+ inclusion and visibility. As part of this network, Paris publishes annual briefings on its policies regarding the LGBT+ community in

which the city states that its goals are *"respect, dignity, visibility, equality and safety for LGBT people, in all spheres of life, fighting homophobic crime and discrimination in all areas of social life, promoting acceptance within Paris administration and society and the development of the Paris action plan against discrimination including explicitly LGBT-phobia"*.

To better understand the position of Paris at the decision-making level, HDRI carried out an interview with Philippe



Lasnier, Paris' City Hall representative for LGBT+ issues. He pointed out that the Paris City Council works closely with various groups in civil society that are focused on LGBT+ rights, such as *l'Inter-LGBT*, *le Centre LGBT Paris-IdF* and *SOS homophobie*, providing them with funding and consulting them on policy matters. It also supports the organisation of LGBT events, such as the yearly LGBT Pride and supports visibility by naming public spaces after important icons for the LGBT+ community such as Bruno Lenoir and Jean Diot. Paris also has various projects focused on improving the understanding of the LGBT+ community. The city collects statistics about same-sex marriage and has committed to funding an archive centre to store documents on the LGBT+ community, in cooperation with civil society organisations.

In terms of education, it is also mentioned in Paris' brief for the Rainbow Network that the city aims at promoting acceptance for young LGBT+ people in education and to prevent bullying. However, most of the policy agenda for education is decided on a national level, so the municipal government would only have limited capacity to address these issues. The municipality of Paris has also adopted an agreement for non-discrimination, equal rights and respect for lesbian, gay and transgender municipal employees, as part of the NGO *L'autre Cercle's* charter.

A large upcoming event reinforcing the position of Paris as an "LGBT friendly" city and its strong commitment for more LGBT+ inclusion is the Gay Games, taking place in August 2018.

Box 1. Paris Gay Games 2018: A celebration of diversity.

The federation of the Gay Games is organizing its 10th edition of the LGBT and gay-friendly sports and cultural event known as the Gay Games in Paris. This event is open to all and it is seen as a model of social cohesion, mutual aid and sharing, valuing diversity, equality, and solidarity. It was born in the US in 1982 and since then it is organized every four years in a different city in the world.



CHALLENGES PERCEIVED BY THE PARISIAN LGBT+ COMMUNITY

Notwithstanding the implementation of these inclusive policies in the City of Paris, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed.

Several anonymous interviews were carried out with members of the LGBT+ community in Paris (n: 15 people). Even if the findings in these interviews cannot be taken as statistically significant they help to have an overall idea of how Parisian LGBT+ citizens feel, what they think about the inclusive policies that are being implemented and what challenges they face.

Ongoing discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity

Only two of the interviewees expressed that they have never experienced discrimination in their daily life on the grounds of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The rest (13/15) stated that discrimination has been present in different aspects of their lives. From this majority, a great number claimed that this discrimination took place in public spaces (7/15) as well as in the workplace (5/15).

Difficulties in accessing quality public services (medical services, police and legal services)

Besides discrimination, many difficulties regarding access to different types of services in Paris were mentioned by the interviewees (11/15). The main problem with access to services came from the direct interaction with the personnel providing those services and their lack of awareness about the LGBT+ community, their special needs and the

presence of homophobic comments. The majority of these difficulties were experienced in the medical sphere (primary healthcare and specialised healthcare) and with the police. Moreover, according to some of the participants, mechanisms to report discrimination against LGBT+ people and a strong legal protection against homophobic violence are missing.

“If you have anal sex, the doctor will look at you as if you had been doing something wrong”

Lack of visibility

Though some measures are being taken by the City Hall to increase the visibility of the LGBT+ community in Paris, some of the interviewees (4/15) claimed that they think that visibility activities need to be enhanced as well as the visibility of initiatives and services available to the community. They feel that this lack of visibility is indicative of the city's disregard for LGBT+ people.



Linked to the views of these participants the report *“Paris, ville phare de l’inclusion et de la diversité”* also states that visibility is missing for the LGBT+ initiatives.

Lack of intersectionality in the inclusive policies - multicultural inclusion

Some of the participants argued that the activities and policies implemented in Paris for the inclusiveness of the LGBT+ community were lacking intersectionality. Each person has different characteristics that create their personal identities and this issue should be taken into account. The different cultural backgrounds and other minority backgrounds need to be addressed within the LGBT+ inclusive policies as well.

“I feel like they are more equipped to deal with queer from white and Christian heritage backgrounds”

Need to enhance the tolerance and acceptance of diversity among children and youth (primary and secondary schools)

Many of the interviewees (8/15) agreed on the importance to do more in the educational sector in order to increase tolerance and acceptance of sexual diversity in primary and secondary schools. The introduction of these issues in the curriculum will help to reduce discrimination against LGBT+ people.

Lack of sensitisation, awareness and information services

Besides the need to enhance the measures taken in the education sector, participants stated that sensitisation and awareness activities for the rest of the population are missing or need to be reinforced. Moreover, information services for the community need to be increased and must be brought closer to the LGBT+ people.

“There should be more services available to the community, more information about it, and places where we can ask for help”

Failure to take into account the different needs within the LGBT+ community

Some of the interviewees were concerned about the failure of the existing policies to address the needs of the whole LGBT+ community equally, with homosexuals as the mainstream group and the rest indirectly benefiting from only some of the policies and initiatives in place.

Prevalence of strong traditional approach to gender and French Catholic cultural dimension

A part of the interviewed LGBT+ group thought that the prevalence of a strong traditional approach to gender and the influence of the French Catholic cultural dimension are limiting the full inclusion of the LGBT+ community.



“The problem is the reluctance of presidents and governments on LGBT issues and their fear of the ‘Manif pour tous’”

Despite the number of challenges mentioned by the participants, the

majority of them (12/15) believe that they can have an influence on policy-making and can participate in the change to make Paris a more inclusive city for the LGBT+ community, respecting all types of diversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the current inclusive policies targeting the LGBT+ community implemented in Paris, the current Parisian context and the challenges faced by some Parisian LGBT+ citizens, the Human Development Research Initiative recommends the following:

1. Develop a platform to discuss a ‘Friendly LGBT+ Code of Conduct’ in partnership with Parisian enterprises and organisations.

There is a need to eliminate the situations of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace. The City of Paris should promote the creation of a platform where different enterprises and organisations in Paris can discuss and agree on a Friendly LGBT+ Code of Conduct to which they will be committed. This will help to fight against LGBT+ discrimination in the different enterprises, with advocacy organisations in Paris helping to identify those who are vulnerable and making recommendations to change relevant policies.

2. Carry out workshops/trainings on LGBT+ issues, needs and discrimination for local public professionals.

To strengthen access to quality public services, Paris City Hall should carry out workshops on LGBT+ issues to increase the awareness of the municipal staff (50,000 people) that have direct interactions with the population. They represent a variety of professions, including doctors, teachers, youth officers, police officers, administration officers and refugee shelter staff. Paris City Hall agents should receive training aimed at helping them identify and prevent all forms of discrimination.



3. Inform about the existing and available services, organisations and initiatives for the LGBT+ community in secondary schools.

An increase in the visibility of existing activities and services provided by LGBT+ organisations and the local administration is urgently needed to ensure their accessibility for the target group. Several workshops should be organised and developed in the different Parisian secondary schools to pursue this issue.

4. Develop a support platform for the LGBT+ community with different cultural backgrounds.

In order to reinforce the intersectionality of LGBT+ policies and to address the largest share of the population as possible while considering the rich cultural diversity of Paris, a support platform with different support services and activities should be developed by the City of Paris to reach citizens with different cultural backgrounds. These activities should be awareness campaigns as well as other services provided for the support and the advocacy of LGBT+ rights and inclusion. This would include the translation of documents, the facilitation of contact via digital and non-digital meeting points for LGBT+ youngsters with different cultural backgrounds and the provision of information about the legal situation for LGBT+ citizens in Paris to newly arrived immigrants.

5. Organise different roundtables and debates about the less visible minorities within the LGBT+ community.

There is a need to increase the inclusiveness and visibility of certain minorities within the LGBT+ community like lesbians, transsexuals and intersexuals. In order to pursue this issue, several roundtables and debates should be organized by the City of Paris in partnership with the different civil society organizations addressing these topics.

6. Create a special support system for LGBT+ refugees.

Because of their particular situation as a vulnerable group, LGBT+ refugees will need a special support system, which should include trainings for the staff working at the refugee shelters, about LGBT+ discrimination and about how to speak with the refugees to make them feel like they are now in a place where they are accepted as who they are. It should also include safe spaces in shelters where LGBT+ refugees can live in harmony without fear of rejection and discrimination, as well as funding for specialized centres for the empowerment of LGBT+ refugees.

7. Introduce a specialised body in the department of public prosecution for homophobic and transphobic crime.

In order to reinforce the legal protection and to fight against



discrimination and violence against the LGBT+ community, the local administration should introduce a specialised body in the department of public prosecution for homophobic and transphobic hate crime and strengthen the victims' support structure through funding.

8. Develop informal workshops for children to supply educational tools to fight prejudice and social discrimination and to increase acceptance of diversity.

There is a need to reduce the impact of the French Catholic cultural dimension

on the prevalence of conservative approaches to gender in children's prejudices. This can be done by carrying out informal workshops to provide educational tools to fight prejudice and social discrimination, with special attention to those connected with non-traditional families and to a gender-identity not complying with stereotypes and pre-set gender roles. This will increase the acceptance of diversity within this population.



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