

Workshop on Developing narratives to counter homophobic and transphobic attacks by the anti-gender movements

8 February 2019 | Strasbourg
Venue: Agora building | Room: G5

In recent years, various religious and conservative groups have organised to dismantle decades of progress in women's rights, gender equality and LGBTI Equality with misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic narratives in order to restore what they consider to be the "natural order". These narratives are fake narratives. In many countries in Europe and Latin-America, this movement has turned the term "gender" into a buzzword to project fear of women's autonomy and transgender legal recognition, the end of traditional values and the "destruction of the family" with, for instance, legislation protecting the rights of same-sex relations, as well as, in some cases, threats to national identity. They reject the wide notion of gender and justify discrimination against women and LGBTI community, normalise patriarchy, violence, (hetero)sexism, homophobia and transphobia and incite hatred of "the other". In short, this movement rejects fundamental principles of human rights and impedes progress in the realisation of gender and SOGI equality. The Istanbul Convention is particularly targeted by the anti-gender movement because it promotes the idea of women as equal to men in all spheres of life, particularly in the family, and because it recognises gender diversity. On this ground, the detractors of the Istanbul Convention have spread false narratives incorrectly suggesting that State parties to the Convention would be forced to introduce legislation on same-sex partnerships, while this issue falls completely out of its scope.

Well-resourced and co-ordinated across borders, the anti-gender movements are seeking influence in international decision-making bodies in Europe and beyond. They have already secured critical positions within many Member States, sometimes represented among members of parliaments. A coherent response must therefore be formulated to prevent the backsliding of human rights standards.

With this workshop, the SOGI Unit from the Council of Europe, together with relevant stakeholders, would like to start to work on an argumentaire with clear, coherent and simple narratives to counter back homophobic and transphobic attacks.

Agenda

Friday 8 February

- 10.00-10.15 Introduction by SOGI Unit
- 10.15-11.15 Keynote presentation: Sara Garbagnoli* – “*The anti-gender movements and campaigns: a critical overview*”
- Discussion
- 11.15-11.30 Coffee-break
- 11.30-12.00 “*Emergence of a pan-European lesbian movement in the midst of the anti-gender crusades*”, European Lesbian* Conference
- 12.00-12.45 Building coherent and effective narratives on SOGI Equality: small groups work
- 12.45-14.00 Lunch
- 14.00-15.45 Building coherent and effective narratives on SOGI Equality: group work (cont.), presentation and discussion
- 15.45-16.45 Building an argumentaire – next steps: plenary group (with the participation of Katrin Hugendubel, Advocacy Director - ILGA-Europe via video-call).
- 16.45-17.00 Recommendations/conclusions and closing

* Feminist and sociologist, Sara Garbagnoli is a PhD candidate at Université Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle. Her research interests lie at the intersections of feminist theory, discourse analysis and the sociology of social movements. She is the author with Massimo Prearo of *La croisade « anti-gender ». Du Vatican aux Manif pour Tous* (Textuel 2017). Recent publications include “Italy as a Lighthouse. Anti-gender protests between the ‘anthropological question’ and national identity” in D. Paternotte and R. Kuhar (edited by), *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe. Mobilizing Against Equality* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).