Overview of youth discrimination in the European Union

Report 2015

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Report

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1. **Context**

The right to equal treatment is one of the founding principles of the European Union and a fundamental right of all people[1]. It is not only referred to in the Lisbon Treaty itself, but also in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is now established as a formal source of EU law. Whether through obligations established under EU law or through international Conventions[2] under the auspices of the UN[3] and the Council of Europe[4], Member States are also individually committed to achieving equality and combatting discrimination.

At EU level, action has been taken through a grounds based approach focusing on specific grounds of discrimination and specific sectors. Starting with gender equality in the employment sector, the EU has broadened protection to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, race and ethnic origin. This protection is primarily in the employment field, but for race and gender it goes beyond this sector. To close the gaps in protection, in 2008 the European Commission adopted a proposed Directive on equal treatment[5] outside of the area of employment which would cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability.

Progress in the field within Member States of the EU has also been significant though highly variable according to each Member State, according to the ground of discrimination and the sector. That progress has undoubtedly been assisted through a prolonged period of relative peace, coupled with EU enlargement and economic prosperity. Yet, with the onset of the economic crisis, some argue these values are under pressure. Where economic success and growth is prioritised, there are concerns that this is being achieved, or risks being achieved, at the cost of fundamental rights, including equality.

Despite the work to date, discrimination continues to be a significant issue. For example, in 2012, 17% of Europeans (that is 85 million people) reported that they have personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the 12 months prior to the survey and discrimination is perceived as widespread by more than half of the population[6].

Those belonging to sexual (28% of respondents) or ethnic minorities (27% of respondents) are more likely to experience discrimination than the rest of the population[7]. Evidence suggests that young people belonging to specific minority groups are particularly vulnerable, facing discrimination on the ground of their young age on the one hand, and a personal characteristic, such as sexual orientation, gender identity or ethnicity, on the other. For example, the 2013

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[1] Treaty on European Union, Article 6(3); Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 21.
[2] E.g. European Convention on Human Rights, Article 14 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 26.
[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2; Charter of the United Nations, Articles 1(3), 55(c) and 56.
[4] European Social Charter, Article 20 and Article E in Part V.
[5] European Union, Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, (2000).
[6] European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 393, Discrimination in the EU in 2012 (2012), p. 12.
[7] European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 393, Discrimination in the EU in 2012 (2012), p. 12.

Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA) survey on LGBT[8] discrimination revealed that more people aged 18-24 (EU average - 57%) have personally experienced discrimination or harassment on the ground of sexual orientation than people aged 25-39 (EU average – 45%[9]).

Discrimination itself occurs in many forms from the direct discrimination of a member of staff refusing to serve someone because of their religious background or their sexual orientation, through to indirect forms of discrimination that may arise without intent. Discrimination can affect people in a range of ways from minor annoyance, through to devastating impacts which affect the well-being and life chances of the individuals concerned.

These wider effects can be observed, for instance, in lower educational achievement and employment rates of people from ethnic minorities and the rate of suicides and school drop-outs among young victims of homophobic bullying.

It is because of these impacts that equality is widely recognised as one of the foundations of successful, democratic societies. Such societies are not only economically vibrant, but also cohesive, supportive, just and safe at the level of the individual, of the family, of the community and of the region. A failure to address inequality limits the achievement of these aims, destabilises our societies and undermines the Union's social cohesion and economic interests[10].

2. Objectives

This report focuses on two areas of discrimination from the perspective of young people (broadly speaking those aged between 15 and 25 years) – namely on discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Whilst in recent years these forms of discrimination have been the subject of discussion, the specific situation of young persons from these groups has been less well examined. Yet age discrimination is prevalent and often occurs in conjunction with discrimination on other grounds.

At the same time, the youth of today are facing unprecedented economic difficulties both in terms of obtaining employment, but also in terms of the level of wages, the extent of job security and the broader impacts this has on their social inclusion and poverty.

This is why Member States and the EU have so strongly prioritised action at the strategic and practical level (from EU2020 targets to Employment summits and youth guarantees) to get young people into work and to ensure they have sufficient education and training. Yet such action may fail to take into account the individual experiences and needs of young people. The discrimination that certain groups face from the earliest of ages, throughout their education and into adulthood and employment, can have a lifetime impact on their well-being

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[8] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.

[9] FRA, 'Survey data explorer - LGBT Survey', (2012).

[10] European Commission, Impact Assessment, COM(2008) 426 final, Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, (2008).

and prosperity. This discrimination not only affects young people's access to education and employment, but it also affects the quality of that education and employment. It is thus not sufficient to simply aim to increase levels of education and employment, but must also increase its quality. Improved quality of education and employment requires an inclusive environment. This can be reached through e.g. training of teachers, creation of youth networks, as well as awareness-raising on rights and perspectives of these vulnerable groups. Only through such an approach can economic and social success be truly achieved.

Whilst the focus of this report is on ethnicity, this ground of discrimination is closely linked and even intertwined with religious discrimination. Religious discrimination will be specifically tackled in a separate upcoming report by the Commission.

This report focuses generally on ethnic minorities. The complexity of integration of Roma is not specifically addressed as this has been subject of other recent publications.[11] However, it needs to be highlighted that the Roma are some of the most vulnerable amongst ethnic minorities throughout the European Union, and many of the youth identifying as Roma face specific challenges in accessing education and employment.

3. Inclusive, safe and supporting environment in education

KEY FINDINGS

- **LGBTI[12] youths and youths from ethnic and racial minorities experience high levels of discrimination, bullying, harassment, violence and isolation in educational settings.**

- **Students belonging to these groups are often discriminated by other pupils and teachers.**

- **School policies and educational materials help to perpetuate discriminatory attitudes.**

- **Discrimination against young people can affect their health and well-being, future career prospects and levels of poverty and social exclusion.**

3.1. Discrimination in educational establishments

Childhood, adolescence and the transition to adulthood is a fundamental period for all of us in our development. During this period much of our time is spent in

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[11] For further reading on Roma youth, see for instance the Commission "Report on discrimination of Roma children in education"

[12] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.

education, whether in compulsory schooling, or subsequently in higher education such as universities and vocational institutes.

The education we receive and the experiences we have in these establishments help shape our perceptions of the world, the way we interact with others and help determine our careers and well-being. For many, this is a time of positive learning. Yet for others, their experiences and the way they are treated by peers, teachers and institutions as a whole can be devastating, seriously and negatively affecting their health and future prospects. This can particularly be the case for young LGBTI persons, or those who are still in the process of discovering themselves. Equally, people from different ethnic or racial groups, as well as those from specific religious groups, can experience a range of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The types of discrimination that such youths experience may often be of a similar nature even though the root causes and the reactions to such discrimination may well differ. Thus whether because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or their racial/ ethnic origin, young people are teased, ridiculed, name called, put in fear, physically harmed and made to feel isolated. Such harassment and bullying also takes place purely based on assumptions about the person, irrespective of their actual sexual orientation, gender identity or ethnic origin.

The education materials used in schools, the focus of lesson plans and the policies of schools can also act to isolate and alienate individuals. With respect to education materials, these can often fail to reflect the diversity of the society they represent. Thus maths problems may only refer to mothers and fathers, text books may only have pictures of white Europeans, or lessons may fail to recognise the role that other nationalities and migrants have had on the development of a country. The lack of recognition of each of these groups within the institutional framework contributes to the isolation and invisibility of young people from those groups, and can ultimately encourage distrust and discrimination by others. It can also been seen that even where references are made for example to homosexuality these are not always done in a helpful way (e.g. negative facts being used to 'put you off') with a 2001 UK study showing that 59% of respondents felt this was the case[13].

Worryingly, for all groups, prejudices and discrimination are exhibited, not just by students, but also by teachers through for example insults, threatening behaviour, threats of bad marks, and insults about parents[14]. As one survey respondent commented 'the most damaging stuff was homophobia from teachers in the school[15]'.

Specific racially motivated discrimination

With respect to racial discrimination, according to the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), migrant children and other ethnic minority children are often

[13] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe', (2006).

[14] See for example, ENAR Shadow Report, Hieronymus, A., Fögen, I., 'Racism and related discriminatory practices in Germany', (2011-2012).

[15] IGLYO, Formby Sheffield Hallam University, 'The impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment', (2013).

placed in different schools, in special needs schools, or in separate classrooms. A level of 'ghettoisation' also occurs in some Member States where certain schools have pupils from a predominantly migrant or non-national background (linked to a range of issues including housing segregation and discrimination in admission criteria[16]). National reports produced by ENAR also consistently show difficulties with respect to the provision of education in the language of minority groups.

Specific LGBT motivated discrimination

With respect to LGBT youths, the heteronormative environment often leads them to hide or disguise their sexual orientation (47% always hide their sexual orientation based on the FRA Survey). Young trans-gender people can find school particularly difficult due to peer pressure to conform to gender norms[17]. They also have particular concerns relating to safety, bathroom and health care access, and proper gender designation on their records. Secondary school environments are often more difficult for young trans-people because of the greater peer pressure to conform to gender norms, as well as the almost complete lack of knowledge about transgender issues[18].

This negative environment experienced by LGBT youths results in the majority thinking that 'coming out would endanger their physical and emotional well-being[19]'.

> **LGBTI youths are especially vulnerable due to additional age-specific reasons such as**
> **a)** economic as well as emotional dependence on parents and adults in general;
> **b)** lack of positive role models;
> **c)** "heterosexist socialisation" (through which they learn that "non-heterosexuality leads to marginalisation");
> **d)** Rejection by friends and family;
> **e)** School culture in general (lack of education and communication on LGBT issues, of teachers' and parents' training and of representation in school curricula as well as failure to acknowledge **bullying in school as a problem**).

Statistics on the extent of discrimination and victimisation

Whilst EU wide statistics specifically focused on discrimination in schools is scarce, a range of studies show that discrimination is prevalent.

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[16] Eg ENAR Shadow Report, Benedi Lahuerta S., 'Racism and related discriminatory practices in Spain', (2011-2012).
[17] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe' (2006).
[18] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe' (2006), p. 31.
[19] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe' (2006), p. 31.

With respect to LGBT victimisation, a major survey carried out by the FRA has shown that 29% of respondents had often experienced negative comments or conduct at school because of them being L, G, B or T with a further **10%** who had always experienced it. The fact that **47%** of 18-24 year olds always hid the fact that they were LGB or T at school, (**only 13%** stated they had never done so whilst only 34% of 25-39 year olds did so) makes the extent of victimisation all the more shocking. Moreover, 22% of respondents said that they felt discriminated against by school or university personnel (within the last 12 months).

When looking at violence statistics, in general 32% of respondents had been physically or sexually attacked or threatened in the last five years with over half feeling it was based on their sexual orientation.

Significantly, 30% of respondents said that the most serious incident of harassment occurred at school/university with over two-thirds stating this was due to their sexual orientation. This matches research from the UK which showed that 40% of all violent attacks on lesbians and gays under 18 took place in schools[20].

With respect to racial and ethnic discrimination, data relevant to schools is scarce. The FRA's research[21] has shown generally that between 16% and 32% of Roma, persons of African origin and Jewish people felt they had been victims of racially motivated assaults, threats or serious harassment (depending on the Member State where the crime occurred). For the other groups surveyed (North African, Turkish, CEE, Russian, and Ex-Yugoslav), the average rates ranged from 3-9%. This compares with the 2012 Eurobarometer[22], which found that 27% of Europeans who say they belong to an ethnic minority group reported feeling discriminated against on the grounds of ethnic origin in the previous 12 months.

With respect to victimisation in schools, a study of 12 EU Member States found that around 26% of the respondents had experienced incidents of discrimination in educational facilities (ranging from 8% in Ireland to 59% in the UK[23]). To put this into perspective, based on government rules for schools to monitor race issues in the UK, it was found that almost 88, 000 cases were recorded between 2007 and 2011[24]. In the Netherlands it was found that 20% of respondents had experienced discriminatory incidents[25].

3.2.   The Impact of discrimination on youths

Discrimination against young people can have significant and long term impacts affecting their health and well-being, future career prospects and levels of poverty and social exclusion.

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[20] Mason-Palmer, 1996, as per 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe', (2006).

[21] FRA Brief, 'Crimes motivated by hatred and prejudice in the EU', (2013).

[22] European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 393, Discrimination in the EU in 2012 (2012).

[23] European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), 'Migrants' experiences of racism and xenophobia in 12 EU Member States – Pilot Study', (2006).

[24] BBC, 'More than 87,000 racist incidents recorded in schools', (2013).

[25] Hamidi L., 'Racism and related discriminatory practices in the Netherlands', (2011-2012).

One of the two education targets established under the Europe 2020 Strategy is to reduce the rate of early school leaving below 10%. However, research and surveys clearly show that discrimination increases the likelihood that young people will drop out of school early. With respect to youths from ethnic groups, in 2012 the early school leaving rate of young people born abroad was on average more than double the rate of natives (25.4% in contrast to 11.5% for natives). Some countries showed very high gaps with foreign born young people being at least three times more likely to leave early, compared to natives[26].

With respect to LGBT youths, data is not disaggregated in the EU Semester process based on sexual orientation. However, national research has indicated that LGBT discrimination was a decisive factor for leaving school for between 5 and 10% of respondents[27].

Beyond leaving school early, discrimination has a wide range of impacts with LGBT youths reporting that they had changed school because of discrimination (13%) missed class more than once (49%), struggled to concentrate (69%), chose not to participate in questions or class discussions (62%), achieved lower results in school (57%) and did not feel they acquired the skills they should have done[28]. Young people from an ethnic background face similar difficulties with reports showing for example that in Germany, twice the number pupils with an ethnic migrant background achieved the lowest competency level of non-migrant background pupils. Similarly, in Luxembourg, only 20% of foreign national students successfully pass their final secondary exams, which is attributed to the high proportion of placements in 'special' schools or being pushed towards a vocational education instead.

A wealth of evidence also points to the extensive negative effects on young people's health and well-being as a direct result of discrimination and bullying. Studies show that experience of bullying is a key factor in predicting whether a respondent to the survey (of same sex attracted men) had attempted suicide. Respondents who were bullied were also more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health problem, been referred for professional help, have lower self-esteem, have self-harmed and considered suicide[29].

Moreover, LGBT youths tend to have lower physical health arising from greater use of alcohol, drug and/ or tobacco use and due to self-medication[30]. For LGBT youths, bullying and direct discrimination is reported to have a significant impact, and living in a disapproving environment can result in LGBT youths experiencing 'profound isolation and fear of discovery, which interferes with achieving the main developmental tasks [...] related to self-esteem, identity and

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[26] European Commission, 'Europe 2020 Target: Early School Leavers from Education and Training', (2012).

[27] Mayock P., et al, 'Supporting LGBT Lives: A study of the mental health and well-being of LGBT people', (2009); and ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe' (2006).

[28] IGLYO, Formby Sheffield Hallam University, 'The impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment', (2013).

[29] McNamee H., 'Out on your own. An examination of the Mental Health of Young Same-Sex Attracted Men. Belfast', (2006).

[30] IGLYO, Formby Sheffield Hallam University, 'The impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment', (2013).

intimacy[31]'. The situation is further exacerbated where there is a lack of support within the family due to their own negative perceptions of LGBT people.

The impacts due to race discrimination follow a very similar trend with studies showing the links between racism and high rates and risks of anxiety, depression, psychological distress, delinquent behaviour, and poorer physical well-being[32]. These factors, together with a lack of role models and/ or appropriate support, combined with the potential for conflict with friends and family can influence education achievement and therefore future job prospects.

3.3. Inclusive approaches to developing education systems

Effective, long term change in educational environments to eliminate discrimination and create inclusive environments which celebrate diversity, cannot be achieved through single, short term, or piece meal actions. As UNESCO has elaborated, a human rights' based approach to education is required which incorporates, at all stages of the development of education systems, an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach. Both the European Commission and the European Council have drawn similar conclusions on the necessity for comprehensive approaches which also cater to individual needs[33].

Those efforts must be targeted at ensuring that non-discrimination policies are in place, that all those responsible are trained in carrying them out and that they are enforced. Actions are also needed for raising public awareness on the benefits and importance of diversity and equality as well as for raising awareness amongst discriminated groups of their rights and how they may enforce them.

According to the OECD, three key policy areas can affect equity in education: the design of education systems, practices in and out of school, and how resources are allocated[34]. This means ensuring there is a supportive political and economic environment which provides adequate resources, development of cross-departmental structures, and engages with parents and wider society, prepares action plans and projects and implements commitments. At this earliest of stages, the importance of eliminating discrimination in schools must be recognised. For example, the Netherlands introduced in 2003 inclusion of social safety and safety of LGBT students in quality standards for schools. More broadly, Member States should formulate measures to tackle exclusion of LGBT and ethnic minority youths in their National Action Plans for social inclusion.

Those efforts need to be supported through sufficient managerial, human and financial resources to analyse, organise and provide education supported by both a robust legislative framework and education policies aimed at realising the right

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[31] FrankowskI B., et al, 'Sexual Orientation and Adolescents', (2004).

[32] A range of research can be found Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 'Racism and its links to the health of children and young people', (2014).

[33] European Council, Council Conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimensions of education and training (2010/C 135/02) (2010); and European Commission Communication, Commission Communication COM (2012) 669 on Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes, (2012).

[34] OECD Policy Brief, 'Ten Steps to Equity in Education', (2008), p.5.

to quality education for every child, taking into account all aspects of a child's educational and developmental needs.

Importantly, in many school systems resources are not allocated equitably. While disadvantaged schools tend to have smaller classes, they also tend to be more likely to suffer from teacher shortages, and shortages or inadequacy of educational materials and physical infrastructure, than advantaged schools (on average across OECD countries). In general, schools with more socio-economically disadvantaged students tend to have lower-quality resources than schools with more advantaged students[35].

Infrastructure should create learning environments and opportunities for the education of every child. Provision of quality schools, teachers, books and equipment is a fundamental prerequisite of education, together with an inclusive national curriculum. The provision of infrastructure needs to be flexible, inclusive, sensitive and respectful of the different circumstances of children, particularly the most marginalised. This can be particularly difficult with respect to issues of sexual orientation, but to fail to address these issues, to ignore them and LGBT youths will perpetuate their isolation and the harm it causes.

To this end Italy, for example, has carried out a range of projects to raise awareness of LGBT issues[36], to train teachers and develop manuals on diversity education. Similarly, other countries have produced a range of teaching aids on diversity and LGBT issues. From the perspective of race and ethnic issues, much of the focus has been on the development of language skills and appointment of more appropriately qualified teachers. However, this approach should be combined with a greater focus on encouraging acceptance of diversity and understanding different cultural values.

It is particularly important for teachers to have had the appropriate training to effectively handle discrimination issues. With such training, moments of conflict can be turned into teaching opportunities allowing students space to discuss and discover diversity issues[37]. Moreover, students can be empowered and supported through the establishment of diversity clubs or gay-straight alliances which are school clubs that allow people from specific groups, as well as others not from that group, to come together in a safe environment, to engage in student-driven advocacy or 'just hang-out'.

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[35] OECD Policy Brief, PISA in Focus (No.44) 'How is equity in resource allocation related to student performance?' (2014), p.2.
[36] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe', (2006)..
[37] Pasque P., et al, 'Pedagogical Approaches to Student Racial Conflict in the Classroom', Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, (2013).

4. Inclusive, safe and supporting environment at work

> **KEY FINDINGS**
>
> - **LGBT youths and youths from ethnic and racial minorities continue to face discrimination in the workplace with discrimination extending beyond bullying to issues relating to salaries, promotion and job retention.**
>
> - **Discrimination and non-inclusive environments at the workplace (for LGBT youths) affect their well-being as well as their productivity, creativity and general effectiveness.**

In the aftermath of the economic crisis, unemployment has risen across the EU. In August 2014, Eurostat estimated that 24.642 million men and women in the EU were unemployed. Moreover, the economic crisis has severely hit the young. The youth unemployment rate has taken an upward trend, ending on 23.1 % at the end of 2013[38]. One of the primary focuses of the EU has therefore been on getting the young into work, resulting in a wide range of policy actions.

However, for the most part, discrimination against young people in the workplace does not appear to be researched differently or separately to those over the age of 24. Hence, regardless of the concerns for the inclusion of the young people into the labour force, not too much data has been made available to help better understand the trends in the youth unemployment and its cross-section with the personal characteristics of sexual orientation, gender identity, race or ethnicity.

While focus necessarily remains on getting the young back into the labour market, non-discrimination and well-being of youths in the European labour market is a key element to building smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the EU. When young people fall victim to multiple discrimination, it not only damages their opportunities of finding work, but it also has serious repercussions on their experiences in the workplace, their prospects within a company, their sense of self-worth and their mental health. This ultimately has an impact on productivity and competitiveness of the companies themselves.

4.1. Discrimination in the workplace

As with educational establishments, for many LGBT and ethnic minority youths, the workplace can be a place of torment and frustration. There they may face bullying and harassment through insults, jokes, being put in fear and physical injury. Their progress, in terms of promotion can be slowed or prevented and ultimately they can lose their jobs because of their personal characteristics. For LGBT people, they must also make the decision whether to hide their sexual orientation, with many choosing to do so.

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[38] Eurostat, 'Unemployment statistics', data up to November 2014, (2014).

Discrimination faced by transgender persons at the workplace is particularly alarming and their levels of unemployment largely exceed those of the non-transgender population. The challenges are also due to the fact that the legal recognition and rights of transgender persons are often linked to specific medical and psychological obligatory requirements. Moreover, a report commissioned by the European Commission shows that negative attitudes towards transgender and intersex people are often directly correlated to the importance that societies place on the binary gender model, as well as the levels of gender stereotypes, sexism and gender inequalities that exist within it[39].

As with discrimination in educational establishments the statistics show that discrimination is prevalent. For example, according to the FRA, one in five (19 %) 18-24-year-olds employed in the 12 months preceding the survey stated that they personally felt discriminated against at work in the last year because they were LGBT. Notably, this figure gets progressively lower the older the age group, with only 11% of over 55-year-olds experiencing discrimination, thus indicating that LGBT youths are more likely to be exposed to discrimination in the workplace.

Of the respondents of the same survey who had a paid job at any time during the last five years, two thirds – including a majority in every country – had heard or seen negative comments or conduct towards a colleague perceived to be LGBT (67 %), whilst 67% of 18-24-year-olds had experienced a generally negative attitude towards LGBT people during their employment in the last five years.

Among respondents who had a paid job at any point during the five years preceding the survey, at least 7 in 10 transgender respondents had never or rarely been open about being LGBT at work in the five years before the survey. As many as 28 **%** had hidden or disguised that they were L,G,B or T at work during their employment in the last five years[40].

On the transgender specific questions, 34% of the respondents aged 18-24 avoided expressing their gender (or desired gender) through physical appearance and clothing out of fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed.

In a different survey[41] it was found that a large proportion (83%) of young LGBT people who had been in work had felt left out or isolated more than once. Overall, 61% felt that their experiences of bullying and discrimination meant that their career progression was restricted. This is also reflected in other research[42] where respondents reflected that they had been consistently excluded from meetings and discussions, resulting in that they felt like outsiders and were not getting involved in relationships as much.

These situations could be driven by the culture of a company, which in turn are often driven by gender norms of male machismo and female femininity. Discrimination could also arise from clients or staff from partnering

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[39] European Commission, Agius, S., Tobler, C., 'Trans and intersex people: Discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression', (2012).

[40] FRA, "EU LGBT survey European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey: Results at a glance", (2013), p 16-17.

[41] IGLYO, Formby Sheffield Hallam University, 'The impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying on education and employment', (2013).

[42] Guasp A., and J Balfour J., 'Peak Performance: Gay people and productivity', (2008).

organisations. The role of managers can be critically important in determining the experience of young LGBT workers – both positively and negatively, with some reporting that managers are often barriers to employers' initiatives to create an inclusive environment.

With respect to discrimination based on ethnic or racial grounds, according to ENAR research, labour market discrimination is considered as a major and widespread phenomenon, resulting in the disadvantage of certain groups throughout Europe. This can be seen in particular in Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain and the UK. In France, for example, 83% of the complaints received by SOS Racisme in 2012 were related to discrimination in the workplace. Whilst many of the forms of discrimination against ethnic minorities again follow the experiences of LGBT youths, a range of factors influence discrimination including national and local contexts, the legal status of the individual (migrant or national) education and skill levels of the individual etc. Moreover, in broad terms, this group of workers is more likely to be employed as unskilled workers compared to the majority of the population. This situation can often be coupled with having to work in precarious conditions which violate health and safety regulations.

Overall, the extent and nature of discrimination against both groups can have strong impacts on their well-being, productivity and career progression.

4.2. The Impact of discrimination

It has been claimed that discrimination of LGBT youths in education impacts their transition from school to the workplace, and their inclusion in the other spheres of life, while acceptance and support improves their well-being[43]. There is little detailed and comprehensive research and statistics, however, on the ways in which LGBT youths and young people from ethnic and racial minorities are affected by discrimination.

Nonetheless, as with discrimination in education, bullying and harassment in the workplace have noticeable psychological and health impacts, as well as impacts on the productivity of employees. A non-inclusive work environment has also been reported to negatively impact on individuals' creativity and innovation, their confidence and willingness to propose new ideas, their motivation to work, their loyalty towards the organisation and the likelihood they would stay. Where career progression is dependent on contacts and networks within an organisation, being LGBT and out was also seen to affect career prospects[44].

Threats to cultural or religious belonging of youths can endanger the development of open and confident identities and undermine their potential[45]. For ethnic minority workers, where the nature of discrimination is similar in terms of bullying, exclusion from discussions etc., the impacts are similar to LGBT youths. For example, specific UK studies have shown low job satisfaction rates amongst nurses who face discrimination. In turn higher job satisfaction is

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[43] ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Takacs J., 'Social exclusion of young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe', (2006).

[44] Guasp A., and J Balfour J., 'Peak Performance: Gay people and productivity', (2008).

[45] Council of Europe, "Beyond Religious Differences, Conclusions of the Baku Youth Initiative", (2008).

associated with a lower intention to quit[46]. Race has also been found to have a direct effect on job performance evaluations, and career plateauing, the extent to which employees felt accepted in their organisations, and the degree of autonomy they felt they had.

Young people suffer from multiple discrimination in the labour market – based on their age and based on other individual characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity[47]. Overall, it can been seen that discrimination against those groups not only affects the health and social inclusion of young workers, but can also have an important impact on their salaries and long term career progression. Moreover, for companies themselves, the effect of not addressing discrimination is to reduce work place productivity, risk increasing absenteeism, having a higher turnover rate and either not recruiting the best staff, or losing high performing staff.

4.3. Eliminating discrimination in the workplace

The individual, cultural and institutional discrimination that exists in workplaces requires a comprehensive and participatory approach. This requires both reducing discrimination against individuals and increasing the social acceptance of groups not conforming to any perceived norms.

As a starting point, a comprehensive and effectively implemented legislative framework needs to be in place, which prohibits discrimination in employment. At EU level this is achieved through the Employment Equality Framework Directive[48] which prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, and race and ethnic origin respectively in the workplace and the Racial Equality Directive which also goes beyond employment[49]. The implementation of both these Directives has recently been assessed by the European Commission[50] with it finding that both Directives have been transposed into national laws in all 28 Member States.

A study shows that reasons for employers hesitating hiring younger workers were, amongst others: 'older people have the right skills, approach or energy', 'experience is important', 'younger people can't supervise/manage people older than themselves' and 'younger people are unlikely to be able to do the job'[51]. At the same time younger workers also suffer from stereotyping in the workplace, and are perceived as: irresponsible, unreliable, lacking skills, lacking knowledge of the world of work. Harassment, targeted at young people, has also been

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[47] European Youth Forum, 'Policy Paper on Youth Employment', (2014).
[48] European Union, Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, (2000).
[49] European Union, Council Directive 2000/43/ EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, (2000).
[50] European Commission Report, Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin ('Racial Equality Directive') and of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation ('Employment Equality Directive'), (2014).
[51] Metcalf H. and Meadows P.,"Second survey of employers'policies, practices and preferences relating to age, 2010". (2010), p. 70.

found to be a problem[52]. The problem is, thus, twofold. Young people are not given equal opportunity to access employment, and then once employed they do not enjoy treatment equal to other workers in the workplace.

The elimination of youth unemployment is an issue dealt with broadly across all the Member States. Thus, in Germany a specific programme aimed at helping young unemployed without vocational training to obtain a degree – the Search for later starters (*Spätstarter gesucht*) programme – was created towards raising the educational achievement of the young unemployed, in order to increase their chances of finding a job[53]. Similar schemes, introducing financial incentives for employers, encouraging youth employment, were introduced in France[54], Italy[55] and Greece[56], sometimes also followed by measures enforcing skills of young workers[57].

However, while plenty of measures can be identified towards overcoming the initial barrier, and getting young people into employment, when it comes to policies targeted towards eliminating discrimination in the workplace, the information, and presumably the action too, is scarce. Several countries with a strong civil society and trade unions have launched partnerships to develop guidance, manuals and training for employers. Thus in Germany, a campaign was launched aiming at awareness-raising towards removing stereotypes and combatting age discrimination[58].

Specific initiatives, within the workplace, are necessary to ensure that laws are both monitored and enforced. This requires positive action to monitor employers' procedures, to carry out inspections and to follow up these up with appropriate action in terms of guidance, warnings and ultimately prosecution. Acas, a UK based organisation, published a guide for employers and employees on Age and the workplace[59], suggesting to the employers the introduction of positive measures and suggesting a framework for age monitoring in companies. The guide also provides guidance for employees who face discrimination in the workplace. Similarly, Stonewall, another UK NGO, has developed extensive guidance for employers on LGBT inclusive policies, and its Workplace Equality Index has had over 800 participated organisations over the last ten years, all of whom have committed to transforming their workplaces to make them a more inclusive environment for LGBT people. Stonewell has suggested ten areas in which employers should act to implement inclusive policies, including: recruitment and promotion; bullying and harassment; training; career

[52] Andrew Irving Associates, (2001); as per Metcalf H. and Meadows P.,"Second survey of employers'policies, practices and preferences relating to age, 2010", (2010), p. 3.

[53] Knowledge-based analysis and policy advice in the antidiscrimination field and the EU2020 Strategy Member State report: discrimination on the grounds of age in Germany, p. 15

[54] See Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue in France, « *What is the generation contract » (« Qu'est-ce que le contrat de génération*»).

[55] Network of socio-economic experts in the anti-discrimination field, 'Synthesis Report I - 2011 Older workers, discrimination and employment', (2011).

[56] Greece report, "Discrimination on the ground of age in Greece", see the 'Action Plan with targeted interventions for the enforcement of the employment and the entrepreneurship of the youth within the National Strategic Reference Framework' in Knowledge-based analysis and policy advice in the anti-discrimination field and the EU 2020 Strategy.

[57] Thus, the French employment scheme was enhanced by the introduction of professional training. See Law No 2014-288 of 5 March 2014 on professional training, employment and social democracy (*Loi n° 2014-288 du 5 mars 2014 relative à la formation professionnelle, à l'emploi et à la démocratie sociale*), (2014).

[58] German Anti-Discrimination Agency (*Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bun*des), Annual Theme : Age, (2012).

[59] ACAS publication,, "Age and the workplace, Putting the Equality Act 2010 and the removal of the default retirement age (DRA) 2011 into practice", (2014).

development; influencing suppliers; and supporting the local community. Both these sets of actions are universal and can easily be translated for other forms of discrimination.

There is, however, plenty more to be done in the struggle to eliminate age-based discrimination against young people in employment. One important element of the endeavour certainly being the promotion of intergenerational solidarity, which can boost progress, at the same time ensuring a mechanism for supporting mutually beneficial exchanges between the generations[60].

5. Conclusions

The situation of young people in today's climate of austerity is a particularly difficult one. Despite increasing numbers and levels of qualifications, unemployment amongst young people remains significant whilst the quality and security of the jobs they are able to retain often leaves much to be desired.

For those from particularly vulnerable groups such as LGBT youths and young people from racial or ethnic minorities, the situation is clearly worse. Their difficulties begin from the earliest of ages, within schools and universities and continue into employment – both in terms of finding work and in terms of work conditions.

Their experiences of discrimination have a life-time impact and can have terrible consequences for their health, self-esteem, participation and inclusion in society and for their wealth and career prospects. Discrimination sadly leads some to take their own lives.

Under the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU has taken significant steps to address the shortcomings of the EU's growth model. It has established targets and monitoring to create the conditions for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In this respect, it is of course essential that particular outcomes, such as the level of employment of the youth, or the reduction in early school leaving, are prioritised. These are all necessary elements of success for individuals and for priorities of smart and sustainable growth.

Yet it is essential that the quality of education and work, the quality of the experiences that young people have in these establishments is not underestimated, nor indeed forgotten. Combatting discrimination, achieving equality and inclusive environments is a fundamental aspect of successful economic and social policies.

To successfully achieve change in this area is not easy and requires long term planning and commitment. It requires comprehensive and integrated policies aimed at changing attitudes, raising awareness, empowering victims, and enforcing rules. The links between, and opportunities to co-ordinate, non-discrimination policies in education and in employment and issues of poverty and social inclusion, should continue to be developed to ensure coherence in equality actions across all sectors.

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[60] See OECD Ministerial Meeting on Social Policy, "Paying for the Past, Providing for the Future: Intergenerational Solidarity", (2011).

Through long-term strategic action, partnerships with communities, employers, educational institutions and individuals, however, equality can be achieved which will not only benefit societies, but move the EU and Member States closer to genuinely achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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