



Global Unions Solidarity Charter – LGBTI Workers

The Global Unions are independent trade union organisations, established to defend and further the economic and social interests of workers and their trade unions. Combined, we represent over 200 million workers around the world. We stand for the defence of democracy and peace and are opposed to any discrimination based on gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, ethnicity, beliefs, or against racialised communities. Discrimination in any form is damaging and harmful to the whole union movement.

The global labour movement stands with LGBTI people all over the world and we will continue working to ensure all workplaces are free from discrimination and harassment.

Global Unions use the acronym of LGBTI for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. We also employ this acronym to include all expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity^[1].

We recognise the need for a solidarity charter for LGBTI workers who frequently experience forms of violence, harassment, discrimination and exclusion in society in general, and, in particular, throughout the employment cycle: from education, to access to employment, conditions of work and security of employment. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has found LGBTI workers experience a high level of bullying and harassment in the workplace because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. 69 countries in the world criminalise same-sex relationships, and 5 have the death penalty as punishment. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) even where legal protection is in place, the reality is that many LGBTI workers still face considerable discrimination at work. Far too often, employers freely discriminate if they believe a person to be LGBTI or deny them benefits such as parental leave, pensions and health care schemes.

Trade unions are powerful organisations for change – we will advocate for LGBTI people, and Global Unions will work to influence laws and regulations to ensure protection for LGBTI people where there are no such legal protections.

This is our Charter: a basis for standing in solidarity with LGBTI workers who are our union and family members and friends.

^[1] Global Unions accept that definitions of the acronym LGBTI are continuously changing and modernising. We also accept that LGBTI is not used in all contexts and in many communities' definitions of people in same sex relationships or non-gender binary people can be different.



The Charter

Understanding local contexts and working with LGBTI communities to promote solidarity

Global unions will ensure that contextual sensitivities are recognised in building solidarity with LGBTI communities, local LGBTI organisations, or if there are none, human rights organisations that work on LGBTI issues, with a view to identifying how best the trade union movement can help support and stand in solidarity with LGBTI workers. We recognise that the LGBTI community is not homogeneous and research in many countries shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals have different experiences in the workplace.

Discrimination against LGBTI is also compounded by the intersectionality of different types of discrimination such as age, disability, ethnicity, among others.

When promoting LGBTI rights and solidarity actions, Global Unions will continue to take all relevant steps to protect a diverse group of workers, including LGBTI workers, to address income inequality and unfair treatment on the job, especially in high-risk contexts where there are extreme risks for LGBTI people.

Global Unions as Allies

Global Unions recognise the need to be allies to LGBTI workers. The term ‘ally’ is a widely accepted term for people who may not identify as LGBTI but are committed to defend and promote the rights supportive of LGBTI people and seek to counter LGBTI discrimination.

- We will challenge unacceptable institutional behaviours or intolerance towards LGBTI workers;
- We will be visible in our support for anti-discrimination campaigns on LGBTI rights;
- We will use our position in society to stand up for LGBTI workers, as we do for all marginalised workers;
- We will listen to LGBTI workers’ experiences to educate ourselves and our members.

Global Unions as Advocates

Trade unions have the power to influence the communities we organise. Global Unions will either advocate publicly or privately for the rights of LGBTI workers, depending on the local community and context.

Global Unions will work with government bodies and affiliated unions around the world to ensure appropriate non-discrimination legislation also explicitly covers LGBTI workers.



Global Unions will also endeavour to work with the multinational corporations we engage with to ensure there are non-discrimination measures in place to protect LGBTI workers within supply chains, and to negotiate specific LGBTI non-discrimination clauses into global framework agreements.

Creating partnerships with local or national LGBTI or other suitable organisations will enable Global Unions to provide support where appropriate for boycott actions.

Global Unions will also use our formal status within intergovernmental bodies to advance the rights of LGBTI workers.

Solidarity Within Our Structures

Global Unions will work with affiliates to create decent workplaces and union environments for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, in which LGBTI workers are free to be who they are and encourage action that will bring about greater equality for all the communities.

Global Unions will assist any affiliate wanting to engage further on the issue of LGBTI rights and provide the necessary tools to help them build inclusivity of LGBTI workers. This includes LGBTI rights training and the inclusion of non-discrimination language for LGBTI workers in collective bargaining agreements to create more inclusive work environments.

We will continue to build a stronger and more inclusive trade union movement, at all levels, LGBTI workers' rights are trade union rights.



