

Sexual Orientation Discrimination in

Vilnius 2002

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Foreword

In the early summer of 2001 a project team consisting of four ILGA-Europe members in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, supported by ILGA-Europe, published the results of an OSI funded project “Documenting and Reporting Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Accession Countries”. These results consisted of four reports setting out the findings of research into sexual orientation discrimination in these countries. They are being used to persuade national politicians and the EU institutions to take action to combat sexual orientation discrimination.

In June 2001, on the occasion of a hearing in the European Parliament on sexual orientation discrimination in the accession countries, the project partners met in Brussels to review the project, with the objective of applying any lessons learned in a second phase covering other accession countries. At a further meeting with representatives of ILGA-Europe member organisations, it was agreed to go ahead with a second phase of the project, covering Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovakia.

In July – September 2002 the Baltic Anti-discrimination project partners Lithuanian Gay League (LGL), Latvian Gay Support Group (GAG) and Estonian Association for Lesbians and Bisexual Women (EALBW) focused on research into discrimination based on sexual orientation in the region.

All three reports produced by the project acknowledge the hostility, prejudice and systemic exclusions that are all too often the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the Baltics.

These reports will not answer any precise *scientific* questions about the extent of discrimination in a particular country. But they tell us of the experiences of the particular group of people who answered the questionnaire. This information proved quite sufficient to demonstrate that in each of the three Baltic countries concerned sexual orientation discrimination is **a human rights issue and a serious social problem that requires government action.**

Chapter 1

Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Lithuania

by Eduardas Platovas
and Vladimir Simonko

Summary of findings

Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation amounts to unacceptable exclusion of lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Lithuania. The findings of the survey show, that majority of the respondents are afraid of being singled out for different treatment merely because of their sexual orientation. 67% of all respondents hide their sexual orientation from their parents. Concealment of sexual orientation is even higher in the public life of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals (89% of respondents) and in their workplace (88% of respondents).

The findings of the survey have left us in no doubt that violence and harassment are particularly important issues for lesbians, gays and bisexuals. One of every two respondents had experienced some form of violence or harassment because of their sexual orientation, and one in three had suffered harassment in the workplace.

The victims of serious violent attacks or harassment are afraid to disclose their orientation to the police to avoid discrimination. Only 15% of harassed respondents reported the incidents to the police officers. This fact raises great concern about the prevailing mistrust of the police institution by sexual minorities and strongly suggests the emerging need for more sensitive human rights protection body.

Discriminatory treatment in the workplace, various spheres of service, religious institutions and even in the family have lead as many as 63% of the respondents to consider emigration as the main option to improve their lives as lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals. This result alone illustrates the scope of the negative impact of discrimination. Only practical action of the Government on equality and diversity can help to reduce the costs of this damaging effect on Lithuania's lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens.

Main recommendations

The Lithuanian Parliament must enable already adopted general anti-discrimination provisions (including ban on sexual orientation discrimination) of the new Criminal Code from January 1, 2003.

The Lithuanian Government must introduce new comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation covering employment, social protection, social security, healthcare, education, access to and supply of goods and services, housing and immigration.

The legislation should oblige to expand the mandate of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman with a duty to assist individual victims of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Ombudsman should have the power to investigate and pursue suspected cases of discrimination. The Ombudsman should conduct surveys and studies and publish reports and recommendations.

The legislation should provide independent legal standing for organisations with a legitimate interest in the promotion of equality to challenge discrimination.

Any body exercising a public function, whether at the local, regional or national level should be under duty to promote equality, irrespective of sexual orientation at every stage of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

The Ministry of Social Affairs should initiate and safeguard Lithuania's immediate participation in the open EU Action Programme to Combat Discrimination (till 2006).

The Government should mainstream anti-discriminatory policies and practices (including equal treatment and non-discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation) by adopting and implementing National Programme to Combat Discrimination (2003-2008).

Funding should be provided to support the establishment of National Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community Center and the projects of community organisations.

Introduction

This report is aimed at national, local and regional authorities, equal treatment bodies, non-governmental organisations, social research institutions and the media. By providing concrete evidence of the existence of sexual orientation discrimination, the need to combat it, we call to develop effective legislation and to establish equal treatment body, which will have a real impact in removing unfair discrimination in Lithuania.

It is not the purpose of the report to provide *scientific* research into the extent, pattern, causes and consequences of discrimination. The main element of research, the questionnaire, did not give statistically accurate results, because sample size is rather small (185 returned questionnaires) and it is virtually impossible to obtain a random sample of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents. Homophobia and prejudice of the society force lesbians, gays and bisexuals to conceal their identity in everyday life.

Majority of the respondents to this survey also hide their sexual orientation from strangers to avoid unfavourable treatment. But they are relatively open about it in the local lesbian and gay scene. Therefore the questionnaires were distributed in openly lesbian and gay meeting places in Vilnius and Kaunas. Significant number of respondents in other regions of Lithuania was reached by publication of the questionnaire on the website www.gay.lt. Members of LGL and subscribers to our newsletter received the questionnaire by post. The survey covered violence and harassment, discrimination at work (including harassment), health services, other services, emigration, discrimination in the family, and by religious authorities.

Background to survey

Public attitudes and media still marginalize lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Lithuania. The international research on human values confirmed that Lithuania had the lowest index on acceptance of homosexuality in Europe in 1991. In 2000 it went up from 1, 4 to 1, 9 (in scale of 10 points) but is still amongst the lowest together with Latvia and Romania. Ten years ago as many as 87% of respondents did not wish to live in the neighbourhood with homosexual people. Unfor-

tunately, this non-rational fear is still reflected in 68% of Lithuanian respondents today.

Moreover, lesbians, gays and bisexuals experience problems in family. Research in 2002 found that 47% of heterosexual respondents would try to change the sexuality of their lesbian daughters or gay sons. Only 28% of respondents would accept their homosexual children.

Recent national opinion poll on human rights reveals that the absolute majority of respondents believe that human rights are quite frequently violated in Lithuania. However, only 13 from 1079 respondents consider that the rights of sexual minorities should be better protected.

Military service is a particularly crucial area in which homophobia is influential. Research in one of Lithuania's battalions confirmed that only 2 of 184 soldiers would agree to take service with homosexuals.

Negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men are extremely strong among older nationalist Catholic citizens. Unfortunately, this outlook is reflected in the policies of social institutions, particularly education and health services, which for the most part, deny the very existence of lesbians and gay men in this society.

Responding to a question regarding the status of homosexuals in Lithuania at the April 1994 Council of Europe meeting, President Algirdas Brazauskas said: "Lithuania has a lot of problems, and the problem of homosexuality is not very big." He promised to deal with problems of gay people with the respect to international practice. Later he told a *Diena* journalist that "It was the most difficult and unpleasant question I had to answer." He has not made a statement on the issue since. Acting President Valdas Adamkus continues the ten years long tradition of ignorance towards lesbian and gay citizens by denying speaking about our problems in public.

President Valdas Adamkus received credentials of the new Australian Ambassador to Lithuania Stephen Brady, who introduced in the ceremony his boyfriend, an architect, Peter Steven in April 1999. This was an unprecedented move in Lithuanian diplomatic history.

According to the press, Adamkus was not shocked by the “open demonstration of sexual orientation”, although, foreign envoys to Lithuania used to bring their wives to the ceremony of handing ambassadorial credentials until now. “The president does not care who is accompanying the ambassador”, presidential spokeswoman said.

This “scandal” revealed the scope of homophobia among the Members of Parliament. Christian Democrats proposed to boycott the Australian Ambassador. Right wing nationalists labelled him as “pederast” and “pervert” in their interview to Russian television channel. No Member of Parliament supported the gay ambassador by challenging these public insults.

Discrimination by the state is still practised in the criminal law. Article 122 of the Criminal Code maintains a discriminatory age of consent for gays at 18.

Actions by the state to combat sexual orientation discrimination include adopted anti-discrimination provisions in the new Criminal Code and Labour Code to be enforced from 2003.

Results of survey

Sample Characteristics

The research sample consists of 185 respondents; out of which 30% are women and 70% are men. 52% of all men in the sample identify as gay, while 18% identify as bisexual. 18% of women respondents indicated that they are lesbians, 12% stated that they are bisexual.

Table 1.1 Sexual Identity

	Responses	Percent
Gay	95	52
Lesbian	34	18
Bisexual Men	34	18
Bisexual Women	22	12
Total	185	100

Table 1.2 Age Ratios

	Responses	Percent
Under 18	11	6
18-25	97	53
26-40	67	36
41-50	6	3
Over 50	4	2
Total	185	100

With regard to the age ratios of the respondents, 89% are 18 to 40 years old, with the highest representation (53%) among the 18 to 25 year old respondents.

Concealment of Sexual Orientation

It is important to note that 67% of all respondents hide their sexual orientation from their parents. Fear of exposure is reflected in both sides. Another research in 2002 found that as many as 47% of heterosexual respondents would try to change the sexuality of their lesbi-

an daughters or gay sons. Only 28% of respondents would accept their homosexual children.

Table 1.3 Parents' Awareness of Child's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	58	33
Do not know	119	67
Total	177	100
Not answered	8	

Coming out to family members and other relatives is usually important for the positive integration of sexuality. However, 64% of respondents are also afraid to come out to their brothers and sisters. Only 15% of respondents are open about their sexuality with other relatives. Such secretiveness frequently affects the response of peers and may result in further social isolation and unhappiness.

Table 1.4 Siblings' Awareness of Respondent's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	64	36
Do not know	112	64
Total	176	100
Not answered	9	

Table 1.5 Other Relatives' Awareness of Respondent's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	27	15
Do not know	148	85
Total	175	100
Not answered	10	

Social stigmatization is particularly damaging to *young* lesbians, gays and bisexuals because of the importance of peer acceptance. Another recent research found that 15 – 29 year old male respondents form the majority of those who would try to change the homosexuality of their friends. Our research reveals that only 17% of respondents under 25 years of age came out to their heterosexual friends.

Table 1.6 Heterosexual Friends' Awareness of Respondent's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	36	20
Some know	108	58
Do not know	40	22
Total	184	100
Not answered	1	

Violence and Harassment

The problem of violence against lesbians, gays and bisexuals has been recently highlighted in surveys of LGB people in several applicant countries. For example, every sixth respondent in Slovakia has been attacked physically. Every fifth respondent in Poland has experienced violence. Unfortunately, in Lithuania every third or fourth respondent (27%) has been a victim of at least one violent attack due to sexual orientation.

In her dissertation on the experiences of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals of homophobic hate crime, Swedish criminologist Eva Tiby describes how approximately 25 % of the respondents in her large study had been victims of such crimes. Around 20 % of those victimised had also been subject to harassment in the work place.

Our findings also reflect strong evidence of the systemic inappropriate treatment of lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens.

Table 2.1 Violent Attacks

	Responses	Percent
Yes	45	27
No	119	73
Total	164	100
Not answered	21	

Table 2.2 Number of Violent Attacks

	Responses
One	21
Two	13
Three or more	14
Total	41

The majority of direct attacks identified by respondents of our survey resulted into physical harm. Most often, homophobia appears to have played a central role in the attacks on lesbians, gays and bisexuals by unknown perpetrators. It must also be acknowledged, however, that very often the perpetrator was an acquaintance or a neighbour.

Table 2.3 Perpetrators of Attacks

	Responses
Unknown	16
Acquaintance	11
Neighbour	7
Family member	4
Co-worker	3
Fellow student	3
Policeman	3
Other	6
Total	53

Several examples of homophobic hate crimes:

(Gay, between 26-40 years old). Two men raided a gay bar in Vilnius with a gun. They tied down one client with a torn off telephone wire and repeatedly burned his forehead with a cigarette. They robbed him as well as two bartenders and two clients shouting anti-gay insults and threatening to set a fire and get rid of “stinky pederasts”.

(Lesbian, between 18-25 years old). I was plunged into a car on the street by the man I barely know and had to suffer physical and mental violence for two days. I do not wish to remember these things; I think that many of us had such kind of experience...

(Gay, between 26-40 years old). I was attacked in the gay bar in Klaipeda where I work as a bartender. The last customer tied me up with a belt after the closing of the bar and my wrists were severely knifed. He took my money, mobile telephone and the cash from the register. When I reported to the police, he claimed that I had sexually harassed him.

(Gay, between 18-25 years old). A policeman beat me. He did not like that we were kissing with my boyfriend in public place.

It is deeply disappointing that in some of reported cases family members, co-workers, fellow students and even police officers subjected the respondents to abuse. Indeed, we have never heard a clear signal from police authorities that homophobic abuse will not be tolerated in Lithuania.

One of the consequences of this climate of prejudice is that people whose rights have been violated are silenced, either because they do not feel able to report the assault or because the police choose to deal with complaints in a humiliating manner. Therefore, it is unsurprising that only one-third of all attacked respondents contended that they reported the incident to the police. Furthermore, police officers responded supportively in only 15% of the incidents reported, while their reaction was hostile in 39% of other cases.

Clearly, harassment is a particularly important issue for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in Lithuania. More than half (52%) of re-

spondents said they had been harassed because of their sexual orientation. That in itself is an important alarm bell.

Table 2.4 Have you been harassed because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	82	52
No	77	48
Total	159	100
Not answered	26	

Table 2.5 Number of Cases of Harassment

	Responses
One	16
Two	8
Three or more	58
Total	82

Out of 82 respondents, who said they had been harassed, a significant number of three quarters (58 persons) reported three or more cases of harassment. The most common form of harassment directly experienced by the respondents is homophobic verbal bullying (67 cases). Other less frequently occurring but equally influential forms of harassment are threats (12 cases), hate mail (5 cases), blackmail (4 cases), graffiti (2 cases) and vandalism (1 case).

Most frequently, the respondents have identified the harasser as an acquaintance (31 cases) or a fellow student (19 cases). Frequently the examples of harassment relate to an unknown person (6 cases), a family member (9 cases), a co-worker (8 cases), a neighbour (7 cases), or other person (12 cases).

Some examples of harassment:

(Gay, between 26-40 years old). A group of teenagers in my neighbourhood threatened to beat me and damage my car. They usually bully me verbally on the street.

(Gay, between 26-40 years old). I usually receive some humiliating letters via e-mail when my personal advertisements are published on the Internet.

(Lesbian, between 26-40 years old). Our neighbour has harassed my partner and me with death threats for one year. Finally, he knifed the tires of our car and was caught by the policemen passing the scene by accident. He was sentenced only for damaging our property, but not for harassing us ...

(Gay, between 26-40 years old). I frequently receive anti-gay threats and insults on the telephone line of the gay club I work for. The unknown callers use blackmailing to demand for money.

(Gay, between 18-25 years old). My fellow student bullies me verbally at the university and in other public places whenever he meets me. Usually he does it in the company of his friends. He shouts ugly words known to the most of gays...

(Lesbian, between 18-25 years old). I used to find handwritten hate messages in my mailbox. My neighbours and strangers shout insults at me whenever I appear in the courtyard of my home.

(Gay, between 18-25 years old). When I was 16, I had to pay 20 litas for the guys in my neighbourhood. I had to bribe them to escape beating, because they call me "pedik" (faggot).

Exposure is essential for the occurrence of harassment based on sexual orientation, especially on a direct and personal level. If no one knows or suspects that you are gay or lesbian or bisexual, you will not suffer discrimination or harassment because of your sexual orientation. As the results below demonstrate, the majority of respondents choose actions to avoid violence and harassment. However, it is likely that in the future more lesbians, gays and bisexuals will be open about their sexuality and therefore will become visible targets for harassment and violence.

Table 2.6 Do you avoid kissing or holding hands in public with same-sex partners?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	110	63
Sometimes	44	26
No	20	11
Total	174	100
Not answered	11	

Table 2.7 Do you avoid telling people who are not friends or family about your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	109	64
Sometimes	42	24
No	20	12
Total	171	100
Not answered	14	

Discrimination at Work

A person's sexual orientation generally has no bearing whatsoever on their ability or suitability to do their job. Nonetheless, open or suspected gays, lesbians and bisexuals are frequently subjected to unfair treatment in the workplace on the basis of their sexual orientation.

In a Dutch 1998 study, the most important conclusion was that homosexuality was certainly an issue in work life situations. The way in which gays and lesbians experienced their work consistently differed from that of heterosexuals. Whenever differences arose, the work experience of homosexual employees was virtually always more negative than that of their heterosexual colleagues. The differences in experience relate to a variety of factors, e. g. to what extent you feel that you are being informed of the work organisation, the relationships with colleagues and bosses, social support at work, being

able to be yourself at work, job-satisfaction and self-esteem, health problems etc.

Our survey reveals that respondents in Lithuania run high risk when they are open about their homosexuality or bisexuality at work and therefore a significant majority of them (88%) choose to be silent in all or some jobs to avoid a negative effect on their careers. Only 15% of respondents are open about their sexual orientation in their current jobs.

Table 3.1 Have you ever felt necessary to hide or keep quiet about your sexual orientation at work?

	Responses	Percent
In all jobs	88	55
In some jobs	53	33
No	19	12
Total	160	100
Not answered	25	

Table 3.2 If you are employed, do you hide your sexual orientation in your current job?

	Responses	Percent
From everyone	81	53
From some people	49	32
No	22	15
Total	152	100
Not answered	33	

76 respondents consider it to be most dangerous to reveal their sexual orientation to their employers or superiors. 62 respondents reported that they hide their sexual orientation from their coworkers, 38 from their clients, and 12 from their customers.

Having to hide one's sexual preference at workplace is discriminatory, because it can have a negative psychological effect that will undoubtedly contribute to more stress at work.

However, a significant number of respondents had experienced not only hidden, but also a direct discrimination. 4% of respondents claim that at some point they were refused a job appointment due to their sexual orientation, and additional 9% of respondents are suspicious about it. 2% of respondents were refused job advancement or promotion due to their sexual orientation. An additional 4% of respondents have a suspicion that it was due to their sexual preference.

Table 3.3 Discrimination in Hiring on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Yes	6	4
I suspect so	15	9
No	138	87
Total	159	100
Not answered	26	

Table 3.4 Refusal of Job Advancement or Promotion

	Responses	Percent
Yes	3	2
I suspect so	6	4
No	137	94
Total	146	100
Not answered	39	

Having in mind that only 15% of respondents are open about their sexual orientation in the workplace, it is alarming that 4% of respondents had faced threatened dismissal due to sexual preference. A further 6% reported that they had been fired or were forced to leave their job because of their sexual orientation. These figures strongly indicate that a significant number of open or suspected lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are subjected to unfair discrimination at the workplace. Clearly, this reflects a need for change in homophobic climate of working life in Lithuania.

Table 3.5 Warning about Being Fired from Job or Demoted from Current Position

	Responses	Percent
Yes	6	4
No	141	96
Total	147	100
Not answered	38	

Table 3.6 Being Fired from Job Due to Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Yes	9	6
No	132	94
Total	141	100
Not answered	44	

Finally, working lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are also vulnerable to harassment. One in three respondents (or 31%) had suffered harassment in the workplace. The most common forms of harassment were jokes or teasing. Relatively often the respondents had to face aggressive questions and homophobic abuse.

Table 3.7 Harassment in Workplace

	Responses	Percent
Yes	44	31
No	100	69
Total	144	100
Not answered	41	

Table 3.8 Forms of Harassment in Workplace

	Responses
Jokes or teasing	29
Aggressive questions	17
Homophobic abuse	10
Sexual harassment	6
Threats	1
Other	2
Total	65

Discrimination in Various Spheres of Service

4% of respondents had experienced discrimination in healthcare services. The individual experiences of discrimination included homophobic statements and actions by healthcare workers. In one case, a gynecologist refused to treat a lesbian patient because of her "incompetence in lesbian issues". In another case, an urologist was teasing a gay man. Naturally, majority of respondents (64%) conceal their sexual orientation to avoid inappropriate treatment by healthcare professionals.

Table 4.1 Do you conceal your sexual orientation when using the health services to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	100	64
No	57	36
Total	157	100
Not answered	28	

Table 4.2 Discrimination in Healthcare on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Yes	7	4
No	156	96
Total	163	100
Not answered	22	

4% of respondents faced a range of discriminations and harassments in the area of housing. Once again, majority of respondents conceal their sexual orientation when seeking accommodation.

Table 4.3 Discrimination in Housing on the Basis of Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Yes	6	4
No	150	96
Total	156	100
Not answered	29	

Table 4.4 Concealed Sexual Orientation in Interaction with Neighbours, Landlors, etc.

	Responses	Percent
Yes	125	79
No	34	21
Total	159	100
Not answered	26	

Bars, clubs, restaurants and hotels were identified as the most common sites of discrimination. 23% of respondents had experienced discrimination in a diverse range of services. Only 13% of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in our survey reported that they are open about their sexual preference in such places as bars, restaurants or hotels.

Significantly, 87% conceal their sexual orientation in such places at least sometimes in order to avoid discrimination.

Table 4.5 Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation in Other Spheres of Service

	Responses	Percent
Yes	37	23
No	121	77
Total	158	100
Not answered	27	

Table 4.6 Closeted Sexual Orientation in Other Spheres of Service

	Responses	Percent
Yes	85	56
Sometimes	46	31
No	20	13
Total	151	100
Not answered	34	

Discrimination in Religious Institutions

4% of respondents had experienced discrimination in religious institutions. In one case, a gay man was expelled from the Baptist church after being a member for 8 years when other adherents disclosed his sexual orientation. In some other cases, the respondents felt humiliated when Catholic priests referred to homosexual acts as “terribly sinful” during confession.

Table 5.1 Number of Respondents with Religious Affiliation

	Responses	Percent
Yes	50	30
No	117	70
Total	167	100
Not answered	18	

Table 5.2 Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation in Religious Institutions

	Responses	Percent
Yes	5	4
No	127	96
Total	132	100

Discrimination in the Family

As mentioned above, majority of respondents hide their sexual orientation from their parents and siblings. Even though, lesbians, gays and bisexuals experience recurrent problems in the family. 25% of respondents reported such discrimination. The forms of discrimination to be challenged are offensive and humiliating treatment, behaviour monitored, eviction from home, various prohibitions and threats and even forced medical treatment. Moreover, 8 respondents had been victims of violence in the family.

Table 6.1 Discrimination on Basis of Sexual Discrimination in Family

	Responses	Percent
Yes	42	25
No	126	75
Total	168	100
Not answered	17	

Table 6.2 Forms of Discrimination in Family

	Responses
Offensive, humiliating treatment	19
Behaviour monitored	11
Eviction from home	8
Threats	6
Prohibitions	4
Forced medical treatment	3
Other	6

Emigration as a Response to Discrimination

Table 7.1 If it were practical for you to emigrate, would you do so?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	124	73
No	46	27
Total	170	100
Not answered	15	

Table 7.2 Sexual Orientation as a Key Factor in Considering Emigration

	Responses	Percent
Yes	76	63
No	45	37
Total	121	100

Discriminatory treatment in the workplace, various spheres of service, religious institutions and even in the family have lead as many as 63% of the respondents to consider emigration as the main option to improve their lives as lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals. This result alone illustrates the scope of the negative impact of discrimination. It is likely, that lesbians, gays and bisexuals in Lithuania experience so much discrimination that they would be willing to give up family and friends in order to escape it.

Chapter 2

Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Latvia

by Ainars Locmelis

Introduction

This research of discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people in Latvia is the first research of its kind. People in Latvia have so far been aware of just a few isolated instances of discrimination against individuals that is based on sexual orientation, and so many people got the impression that this problem does not exist in the country at a level that would require particular attention or new legislation.

Attempts by public organisations to achieve changes in the law so as to improve the legal rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in Latvia have been unsuccessful. One argument that has been presented by opponents in this area is that there have been no studies about the way in which gay and bisexual people face discrimination, how often such discrimination takes place and whether discrimination exists at all.

This research offers responses to a great many questions, demonstrating that gay and bisexual people in Latvia face discrimination in a wide variety of aspects of everyday life. It also provides an answer to the question of why people choose to suffer humiliation, intolerance and hatred instead of standing up for their rights. Here we see how cruel and intolerant Latvia's society can be.

In total 194 homosexual and bisexual people took part in this survey. 46 were women and 148 men. Results of the survey demonstrate that 19% have been victims of a violent attack once or more than once. 40.2% have experienced harassment because of their sexual orientation and 17% have experienced harassment because of their sexual orientation at the work place. The fact that 52% would like to emigrate from the country indicates that discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexual exists in Latvia. 75% from those willing to leave the country indicated they would do it because of existing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

It is not important whether someone who faces discrimination is homosexual, heterosexual, black or white. It is not important to know whether 100 or 100, 000 people face discrimination. Each indivi-

dual has the right to enjoy a full life, irrespective of the way in which that individual is different from others.

Research methodology

This research is based on a questionnaire, which asked respondents to state their age, gender and sexual identity. Questions were asked about discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in such areas as physical violence and harassment, discrimination in the workplace, discrimination in health care and other services, discrimination in the military, discrimination in church, discrimination in the family and with respect to emigration. The questionnaire was anonymous, although respondents were given an opportunity to provide contact information – an address, a phone number or an E-mail address. This research can be characterised as participatory. Activists who distributed the questionnaire are members of the LGB community, and they also filled out the survey. The questionnaire was distributed in print form through personal contacts or by mail. It was also available on the Internet at the gay and lesbian portal www.gay.lv. Most respondents at the time of this research were people who more or less openly associate themselves with the LGB minority. The research by necessity excluded gay men, lesbians and bisexual women and men who do not frequent physical or virtual spaces that are designated for the LGB minority or who have no contacts with the Gay Support Group in Latvia.

Background to survey

In 1999, the Homosexuality Information Centre commissioned the Baltic Data House to conduct a survey of public opinions about the issue of homosexuality. The survey included two questions, and it covered 461 people from all around Latvia. 63% of respondents said that they agree with the idea that people with a homosexual orientation deserve equal rights in society, while 53% said that two adult homosexuals with long-term relations should have the right to win legal recognition of those relationships. These results were a great surprise, and they surely indicate a growth in tolerance in Latvia.

There are many people in Latvia who are tolerant toward gays, lesbians and bisexuals, yes, but there are also intolerant people, as well as laws, which ignore the rights of homosexual people. Latvia's gay and lesbian organisations have tried on several occasions to achieve legal amendments that would improve the legal rights of gays and lesbians, banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The Commission on Human Rights and Public Affairs of the Latvian parliament, the Saeima, however, has rejected all such draft legislation.

The first draft law would have amended the Latvian criminal law to say that sexual orientation is one of the factors against which there can be no discrimination. The draft law was rejected, with the commission announcing that it could not put together an endless list of indicators against which discrimination would be prohibited, adding that the law currently says that discrimination against "other" indicators is banned, and these "other" indicators also include sexual orientation. Supporters of the legislation were also told that there had been only one known instance of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation at that point in Latvia, and the commission could not amend the law just because of one person.

In 1999, the Latvian Human Rights Bureau, which is a government institution, submitted to the same parliamentary commission a draft law that had been prepared by the Homosexuality Information Centre and that would permit the registration of same-gender partnerships. This draft law, too, was rejected.

In 1999, the Latvian Justice Ministry drafted a new labour law for Latvia, including therein a ban on job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as European Union standards demand. Once again, however, the law went before the Commission on Human Rights and Public Affairs. The words "sexual orientation" were stricken, and when the law was adopted in June 2001, discrimination in the job market on the basis of an individual's sexual orientation was not banned.

It should go without saying, of course, that the role of a parliamentary human rights commission should include the defence of the rights of homosexuals, but in Latvia the commission has acted in

quite the opposite way, putting up roadblocks against any initiative that might improve the rights of gays and lesbians.

In October 2001, appearing at a conference called “Implementing Human Rights in Latvia”, the chairman of the Commission on Human Rights and Public Affairs, Antons Seiksts, announced that the raising of homosexual issues is not a positive thing in any way, because it leads to animalistic hatred among members of the parliament.

In November of the same year, three members of the Saeima - Juris Vidins, Peteris Tabuns and Janis Leja – disseminated an announcement in which they stated their views about gays. Tabuns, it might be added, is the secretary of the human rights commission in the Saeima, while Vidins is a member of the panel. Here is a quote from their statement:

“We categorically object to the idea that the unlimited spread of pederasty, pornography, drug addiction and alcoholism should be seen as an achievement in the field of human rights. Pederasty is and has always been a departure from normal human development, and so this phenomenon leads to pity and sorrow, but it does not deserve any support or any facilitation of its development through a popularisation of this abnormal behaviour in the mass media, schools and various public organisations. The claim that tolerance against these spiritual cripples is a sign of a civilised and modern 21st century society is absurd. We support healthy thinking among the younger generation, and this allows us to hope that the share of our society which has been affected by the degeneration of the people’s consciousness will undergo moral healing and spiritual rebirth.”

Other MPs and government ministers have expressed similar views on homosexuals.

In 1999, the Latvian Defence Ministry wrote to the Homosexuality Information Centre to say that any citizen, irrespective of his or her sexual orientation, is free to serve in the Latvian armed forces, adding that no questions are posed to draftees or volunteers about this matter. In January 2000, however, Defence Ministry Girts Kristovskis had this to say in an interview:

“I have received no complaint of homosexuality in the armed forces. We are thinking about ways in which to create a healthy environment in the army. The main thing is that commanders and instructors must have the correct sexual orientation. Sure, people may say, ‘Don’t offend sexual minorities, we were born that way!’ but as far as I’m concerned, homosexuality is a perversion. It’s based on the principle of ‘I’ve tried everything else, so let me try this’. Children aren’t born homosexual; they are influenced and turned into homosexuals.”

The issue of gay rights is perceived by many Latvian politicians with sarcasm or hatred, and so it is no wonder that gays and lesbians in Latvia are mentioned only twice in the law – in Article 35 of the Civil Law, which says that marriage between same-gender couples is prohibited, and in the articles of the criminal law which refer to sexual crimes.

Recommendations

Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation

- To amend articles of the Criminal Law, which provide criminal liability for discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity and religious belief, with a criminal liability for discrimination, violence, hate incitement and humiliation on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- To amend anti-discrimination article of the Labour Law with a prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Legal recognition of same-sex relationships

There are three possible models for the legal recognition of same-sex partnerships. Each model requires introduction of different legal institutions and provides various level of the legal protection for same-sex couples:

- Allowing same-sex couples to marry would provide highest level of legal protection for same-sex couples. In this case same-sex

couple had all the rights, duties and protections as opposite sex couples that are married.

- Introduction of an institution of registered partnership would significantly improve legal situation for same-sex couples. Introduction of the institution of registered partnership would allow same-sex partner to register their partnerships, enjoy most of rights, duties and protections provided for the married opposite sex partners. Same-sex partners would be able to dissolve their partnerships.
- Minimal level of protection for same-sex couples can be provided by the legal recognition of *de-facto* cohabiting same-sex couples. This would require certain conditions for the couples to be eligible for defined legal rights and protection, for example minimal term of cohabitation and joint residency. It would also be required to identify what rights, duties and protections are provided for cohabiting same-sex couples.

Legal equality for lesbian and gay parents and children of lesbian and gay parents

To allow joint adoption by same-sex partners.

- If one partner in same-sex couple has a child, to allow the second partner, who is not a biological parent of the child, to establish legal relation with his/her partner's child.
- Eliminate the practice when person's homosexuality is the only reason to refuse this person to adopt a child or to limit this person's access to his/her child if the child lives with a biological parent.
- To allow single women including lesbians to obtain state funded artificial insemination services

Results of survey

Sample characteristics

The research sample consisted of 194 respondents, of whom 23.7% are women, and 76.3% are men. A total of 85.1% of the men in the sample self-identified as being gay, while 14.9% identified them as being bisexual. In the case of female respondents, 69.6% identified themselves as lesbian, while 30.4% self-identified as bisexuals (see Table 2).

Table 1: Proportion of Men and Women

	Responses	Percent
Women	46	23.7
Men	148	76.3
Total	194	100

Table 2: Sexual Self-Identification

	Responses	Percent
Gay	126	65.0
Lesbian	32	16.5
Bisexual Man	22	11.3
Bisexual Woman	14	7.2
Total	194	100

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the age of respondents. The majority (51%) were aged 26 to 40, while 42.3% were aged 18 to 25.

Table 3: Age Ratios

	Responses	Percent
Under 18	4	2.1
18 - 25	82	42.3
26 - 40	99	51.0
41 - 50	7	3.6
51 - 60	0	0.0
Over 60	2	1.0
Total	194	100

Concealment of Sexual Orientation

More than one-half of all respondents (51%) hide their sexual orientation from their parents. The remaining 49% said that their parents are aware of their homosexual or bisexual orientation.

Table 4: Parental Awareness of a Child's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	95	49
Do not know	99	51
Total	194	100

Table 5 shows us that gays, lesbians and bisexuals trust their brothers and sisters a bit less than they do their parents. In only 38.1% of cases do brothers and/or sisters know about the respondent's sexual orientation.

Table 5: Awareness of Brothers/Sisters of the Respondent's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	74	38.1
Do not know	120	61.9
Total	194	100

Homosexual and bisexual respondents have even less faith in other relatives.

Table 6: Awareness of Other Relatives of the Respondent's Sexual Orientation

	Responses	Percent
Know	53	27.3
Do not know	141	72.7
Total	194	100

Respondents displayed the greatest amount of trust in their heterosexual friends – 88.2% of respondents said that one or more friends are aware of their homosexual or bisexual orientation.

Table 7: Awareness of Heterosexual Friends

	Responses	Percent
Know	63	32.5
Some know	108	55.7
None know	23	11.8
Total	194	100

Violence and Harassment

Violence is the most vicious form of homophobia. The next table shows that 19% of respondents have experienced violent attacks as a result of their sexual orientation at some point in their lives.

Table 8: Violent Attacks

	Responses	Percent
Yes	37	19
No	157	81
Total	194	100

Interestingly enough, a substantial majority of those respondents who have encountered violence against themselves 13 (35.1%) have expe-

rienced such attacks more than once, while 14 (37.9%) reported three or more attacks in their past.

Table 9: Number of Violent Attacks

	Responses	Percent
One	10	27.0
Two	13	35.1
Three or more	14	37.9
Total	37	100

In most instances (51.4%), the attack came from someone whom the respondent did not know. There are countries in which gays, lesbians and bisexuals often encounter violence at the hands of the police, but no such instance was reported in this survey.

Table 10: Perpetrators of Attacks

	Responses	Percent
Family member	1	2.7
Co-worker	1	2.7
Fellow student	6	16.2
Acquaintance	1	2.7
Neighbour	1	2.7
Police	0	0.0
Unknown	19	51.4
Other	8	21.6
Total	37	100

Table 11 addresses the kinds of violence that respondents experienced.

Table 11: Form of Violent Attacks

	Responses	Percent
Beaten up	10	27.0
Hit, punched or kicked	13	35.1
Assaulted with weapon	3	8.1
Other	11	29.8
Total	37	100

The results also tell us that only in five of these instances did the victim go to the police, and two of the respondents who did so say that they did not tell the police that sexual orientation was the cause of the violence. In two cases the police displayed a neutral approach to the victim, while in three cases the attitude was hostile. Some respondents said that they did not report the violence to the police because they feared that the police would also demonstrate intolerance if the victims were to declare that they are homosexual or bisexual. Several victims did not report the violence to the police for fear that this would attract the attention of the mass media, thus forcing the victim to “come out”.

Selected Cases of Violence

- Bisexual woman, under 18: One of my classmates asked me this question: “Why are you looking at your classmate’s legs? Are you a lesbian? If so, I’m going to hit you”. I could not take that, and I ran away. Later everyone called me names and tried to hit me.
- Bisexual man, 18-25: Several young men were walking down the street, and one of them said that I look like a gay. Right away, another one hit me very hard in the head.
- Lesbian, 18-25: My girlfriend and I got an anonymous call from someone who said that we would be shot and that our child would be killed. I didn’t go to the police because I was afraid of scandal. The mass media might find out, and I might lose my job.
- Gay man, 26-40: I was at a party once where a guy found out that I’m gay, and he came up and punched me so hard that he knocked out a tooth. Others were shocked, but they didn’t react, because they

just thought that the attacker had drunk too much. I did not report the incident to the police, because it is my experience that the police in particular have a nasty and humiliating attitude toward gays.

- Gay man, 26-40: I was beaten up by a group of people. The police showed up, but they behaved as though I had been the one who was guilty. My attackers and I were taken to the police headquarters of the Latgale District of Riga, and they didn't even let me wash the blood off of my face. The police let the attackers go, without even finding out who they were. The attitude toward me was very humiliating. It was as if I was a criminal, not a victim.

- Gay man, 26-40: My neighbour sprayed tear gas into my eyes in our stairwell. I called the police, but the police first of all asked why my boyfriend was in my apartment, because the lease was only in my name. The neighbour was not punished because the police told me that they had no right to enter his apartment to question him.

- Lesbian, 26-40: At that time I didn't have a permanent residence permit in Latvia. I lived in a dormitory, and two of my roommates learned that I am a lesbian. They tied me to a chair, called me names, punched and kicked me in the stomach and spat in my face. That continued for approximately an hour. Then they called the police and reported that I was in Latvia illegally and that I was a lesbian. I was taken to the police and told that I had 24 hours to get out of Latvia. They said that they never wanted to see me again.

Harassment

Far more respondents have encountered harassment than violence. A total of 40.2% of respondents said that they have suffered harassment over their sexual orientation.

Table 12: Harassment

	Responses	Percent
Yes	78	40.2
No	116	59.8
Total	194	100

As we can see in Table 13, 88.5% of those respondents who have encountered harassment have suffered it more than once.

Table 13: Number of Cases of Harassment

	Responses	Percent
One	9	11.5
Two	12	15.4
Three or more	57	73.1
Total	78	100

No respondent reported harassment at the hands of a family member, while five said that they have been harassed by the police.

Table 14: Harassers

	Responses	Percent
Family member	0	0.0
Co-worker	12	15.4
Fellow student	14	18.0
Neighbour	4	5.1
Police	5	6.4
Unknown	17	21.8
Other	26	33.3
Total	78	100

Verbal abuse was cited as the most frequent form of harassment. Of all respondents who have encountered harassment, 60.2% suffered from verbal abuse.

Table 15: Form of Harassment

	Responses	Percent
Verbal abuse	47	60.2
Graffiti	2	2.6
Vandalism	1	1.3
Hate mail	3	3.8
Threats	6	7.7
Blackmail	7	9.0
Other	12	15.4
Total	78	100

Even fewer victims of harassment than victims of violence went to the police with their complaint - just three of the 78 respondents who reported having encountered harassment. In one of these cases, the police had a neutral attitude toward the victim, while in two other cases the attitude was hostile. In four cases, respondents sought help from other, unidentified institutions. Three of these institutions had a neutral attitude, while one had a hostile attitude.

Seven respondents said that they did not report the harassment to the police because they did not believe that the police would do anything but laugh at them.

Selected Cases of Harassment

- Gay man, 26-40: In the street where I live, everyone in the surrounding buildings knows that I'm gay. When I come home, I hear obscenities and threats of physical violence almost every day, both from children and from adults. Once I called the police, but the police officers weren't convinced that I wasn't to blame. One asked me, "Perhaps they have such an attitude toward you because you have sexually harassed them?" I know now that the police do not want to help in such instances.

- Lesbian, under 18: A female friend told me that she would no longer be my friend because I'm a lesbian. Later she made offensive remarks about me.
- Gay man, 26-40: Offensive short messages were sent to my mobile phone.
- Gay man, 26-40: The harassment continued for several years. My fellow students suspected that I'm gay, and almost every day I had to listen to rude jokes about gays. The leadership of the educational institution also told such jokes, helping to spread the view that gays are a part of the lower stratum in society.
- Lesbian, 26-40: At the store where I used to work, many visitors refused to drink coffee that I was selling just because I'm a lesbian.
- Gay man, 18-25: A female friend told me that she knows too much about me, and so I should never talk back to her.

Table 16: Do you avoid kissing or holding hands in public with same-gender partners?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	109	56.2
Sometimes	67	34.5
No	18	9.3
Total	194	100

Only 9.3% of respondents do not refrain from public kisses or hand-holding with a same-gender partner. Other respondents either avoid such displays altogether, or engage in them only sometimes.

In previous tables we talked about the extent to which gays, lesbians and bisexuals entrust their parents, siblings and friends with information about their sexual orientation. Table 17 shows that only 9.8% do not avoid talking about their sexual orientation with people who are neither friends nor family members.

Table 17: Do you avoid telling people who are not friends or family about your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	141	72.7
Sometimes	34	17.5
No	19	9.8
Total	194	100

Discrimination at Work

Table 18 shows that five respondents (2.6%) have lost a job because of their sexual orientation. Here we must take into account that most respondents in this survey said that they keep quiet about their sexual orientation when it comes to people who are not close friends or relatives. This presumably includes most employers.

Table 18: Have you ever been denied a job because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	5	2.6
I suspect so	11	5.7
No	178	91.7
Total	194	100

A total of 95.4% of respondents have never been refused a promotion at work because of their sexual orientation, while 4.1% suspect that this has happened, and only one respondent is convinced that the promotion was lost because of sexual orientation.

Table 19: Have you ever been denied a promotion because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	1	0.5
I suspect so	8	4.1
No	185	95.4
Total	194	100

Table 20 shows that 18 (9.3%) of respondents have encountered attempts to sack them because of their sexual orientation.

Table 20: Have you ever faced attempted or threatened dismissal because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	18	9.3
No	176	90.7
Total	194	100

Of the 194 respondents, 13 (6.7%) reported having been dismissed from a job because of their sexual orientation.

Table 21: Have you ever been dismissed (or forced to resign) because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	13	6.7
No	181	93.3
Total	194	100

Some 17% of respondents said that they have encountered harassment at their place of employment. Table 22 shows that this harassment most often involved jokes or teasing.

Table 22: Have you ever been harassed at work because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	33	17
No	161	83
Total	194	100

Table 23: Form of harassment at work

	Responses	Percent
Physical violence	0	0.0
Threats	2	6.0
Aggressive questions	6	18.2
Homophobic abuse	9	27.3
Jokes or teasing	12	36.4
Sexual harassment	1	3.0
Other	3	9.1
Total	33	100

Only 1.5% of respondents say that there is never a need to hide one's sexual orientation at any place of employment. Another 58.3% feel that sexual orientation must be kept hidden in any job, while 40.2% think that sexual orientation must be hidden only in certain jobs.

Table 24: Have you ever felt it necessary to hide or keep quiet about your sexual orientation at work?

	Responses	Percent
In all jobs	113	58.3
In some jobs	78	40.2
No	3	1.5
Total	194	100

Only 21% of respondents do not hide their sexual orientation at work, 50.2% keep it completely secret, and 28.7% tell only certain people.

Table 25: If you are employed, do you hide your sexual orientation in your current job?

	Responses	Percent
Yes, from some people	52	28.7
Yes, from everyone	91	50.3
No	38	21.0
Total	181	100
Not answered	13	

Among the respondents who said that they do hide their sexual orientation from some or all people at work, 11.9% (17) said that they hide their sexual orientation from clients, 6.3% (9) from customers, 37.8% (54) from other employees, and fully 44% (63) from employers or superiors.

Selected cases of discrimination at work

- Gay man, 25-40: I was forced to leave a job at the police because I am homosexual. The National Human Rights Bureau, which is a government office, has declared that this was discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. I secretly tape-recorded all of my discussions with the police officials who asked me to resign voluntarily. Despite this fact, the police are still claiming that I resigned of my own volition. Even a few years on, when asked about this issue, the police representatives are lying. They keep up making new “reasons” for my departure.
- Bisexual man, 18-25: I have not experienced discrimination at work, but I have to say that there are a great many jobs to which I would not dare to apply, knowing that I would not be hired because of my sexual orientation.
- Gay man, 18-25: When my colleagues found out about my sexual orientation, they began to mock me and to tell rude jokes.
- Gay man, 26-40: I was forced to leave my job, but the official reason was a different one. I’m completely convinced that the real reason was my sexual orientation, but, sadly, I cannot prove that.

- Gay man, 26-40: I was sacked from my job at a government institution “to avoid a scandal over the fact that a gay man works there and so that the lives of all of the employees might be more peaceful”.
- Gay man, 26-40: I had a very responsible job, and then rumours began to spread about my sexual orientation. It was right at that time that I was sacked over a triviality. I think that the true reason was my sexual orientation.
- Bisexual woman, 26-40: I was not sacked from my job, but I was forced to resign because I found the moral pressure from my colleagues to be intolerable.
- Lesbian, 18-25: I had a real opportunity to get a promotion at work, but then a colleague listened in on my conversation with my girlfriend. Attitudes toward me changed, and the promotion went to an intern who had very little work experience.
- Lesbian, 25-40: I was threatened with dismissal from my job at the police because of my sexual orientation. Even when I signed up with the police, I had to fill out a questionnaire and state my sexual orientation.

Discrimination in the Armed Forces

Table 26: Have you ever served, or are you now serving in the armed forces?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	25	12.9
No	169	87.1
Total	194	100

Among all respondents, only 12.9% (25) have served or are serving in the armed forces of a country. One respondent said that officers were aware of his sexual orientation, while another three reported that their fellow soldiers were aware of this fact. Others said that no one in the army had any idea of their sexual orientation. Only one

of the 25 people who have been in the armed forces encountered discrimination there.

Public Services

Table 27: Have you ever experienced any discrimination because of your sexual orientation in the provision of health care services?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	12	6.2
No	182	93.8
Total	194	100

Table 28: Do you conceal your sexual orientation when receiving health care services to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	117	60.3
No	77	39.7
Total	194	100

Some 6.2% of respondents have encountered discrimination during the provision of medical services. Fully 60.3% keep quiet about their sexual orientation when receiving such services. Seven respondents said that an example of discrimination in medical services in Latvia is the fact that homosexuals are not allowed to be blood donors here.

Selected cases of discrimination in the provision of health care services

- Bisexual woman, 26-40: I wanted to donate blood, but when I wrote down on the questionnaire that I had had sexual relations with another woman, I was not allowed to donate blood and told that homosexual people in Latvia are not allowed to give blood.
- Bisexual man, 18-25: When I talked about health care problems which relate to intimate questions with health care

professionals, most begin to display a more negative attitude toward me.

Table 29: Have you ever had problems over accommodations because of your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	12	6.2
No	182	93.8
Total	194	100

Only 12 of the survey respondents said that they have encountered discrimination in the area of accommodations. Five said that they were refused a place of residents because of their sexual orientation, another two have experienced a landlord's harassment, and five others have had different kinds of problems.

Table 30 tells us that gays, lesbians and bisexuals do not usually trust their neighbours or their building owners when it comes to their sexual orientation - fully 93.3% of respondents do not tell such people about their orientation.

Table 30: Do you conceal your sexual orientation from neighbours or your landlord/landlady to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	181	93.3
No	13	6.7
Total	194	100

Selected cases of discrimination in housing

- Lesbian, 26-40: My neighbours began to gossip about suspicions that the woman with whom I was living in an apartment was not my sister and that we were both lesbians. The neighbours said that the other woman looked too manly.
- Gay man, 26-40: I have lived with another man for 22 years. I feel legally unprotected, because I have no legal right to be in his

apartment. If something were to happen to my friend, I would lose everything that we have accumulated over those 20 years.

- Gay man, 26-40: Usually the problem is that building owners do not want to rent an apartment to two men. They prefer either an individual person or a male-female couple. When my partner and I were renting an apartment, only one of us went to talk to the owner, and only one of us signed the documents for the lease. When the owner of the apartment comes around to collect the rent or to talk about something, my friend is forced to hide.

Table 31: Have you ever experienced incidents of discrimination in other areas of services such as bars, clubs, restaurants or hotels?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	49	25.3
No	145	74.7
Total	194	100

Table 32: Discrimination in other areas of services

	Responses	Percent
Bars	6	12.2
Clubs	28	57.1
Restaurants	2	4.1
Hotels	0	0.0
Other	13	26.6
Total	49	100

A total of 25.3% of respondents have encountered discrimination in other service sectors. Table 32 shows that discrimination has most frequently been experienced in clubs (28 of 49 respondents). No respondent cited discrimination at a hotel.

Some 45.9% of those who receive services always keep quiet about their sexual orientation. A total of 37.1% sometimes hush it up, while 17% are open about their sexual orientation.

Table 33: Do you conceal your sexual orientation in bars, clubs, restaurants and hotels to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	89	45.9
No	33	17.0
Sometimes	72	37.1
Total	194	100

Emigration

More than one-half of survey respondents (52.1%) would like to emigrate from Latvia. As Table 34 tells us, 75.2% of these people want to emigrate because they feel discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation. Another 24.8% would emigrate for other reasons.

Table 34: If it were practical for you to emigrate, would you do so?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	101	52.1
No	93	47.9
Total	194	100

Table 35: If "yes", would the level of discrimination against you in this country as an LGB person be a key factor in this decision?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	76	75.2
No	25	24.8
Total	101	100

Religion

A total of 37.6% of respondents reported themselves as being a “member of a religion”, with 60.3% of these people self-identifying as Lutherans.

Table 36: Are you or have you ever been a member of a religion?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	73	37.6
No	121	62.4
Total	194	100

Table 37: Religion

	Responses	Percent
Russian Orthodox	6	8.2
Lutheran	44	60.3
Baptist	4	5.5
Roman Catholic	18	24.6
Buddhist	1	1.4
Total	73	100

Table 38: Have you ever experienced specific acts of discrimination against you on the part of religious authorities or other adherents of this religion because of your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	21	21.4
No	77	78.6
Total	98	100

Of the 98 respondents to the last question, 21 said that they have felt discrimination from the leaders of their church or from other people who attend the church. Of the 73 people who answered the question in Table 37, only four said that the relevant religious institution is

aware of their sexual orientation. Another six said that this information was known to other adherents to the religious movement, while in the case of another 63 respondents, the church knows nothing at all about their sexual orientation.

A total of 11 respondents said that they had not experienced personal discrimination at church but that the attitudes of churches in Latvia vis-à-vis gay and lesbian people as such are examples of discrimination nonetheless.

Selected cases of discrimination in church

- Gay man, 26-40: The clergyman at my church doesn't like it when I wear an earring, so he makes various remarks, which have a subtext that hints at my sexual orientation.
- Lesbian, 26-40: My congregation wanted to switch my sexual orientation to the "right" one.
- Lesbian, 18-25: A religious organization wanted to "reform" me. I was asked to attend an interesting event in a small town in Latvia. They held me there for two days until I managed to escape. Representatives of religious organisations have visited me at work, and these people have used everything including blackmail to try to force me to attend discussions with them about my sexual orientation.
- Gay man, 26-40: I was not allowed to take Holy Communion because I am gay.
- Gay man, 26-40: I was fired from my job as a clergyman because I was "propagandising homosexuality". Despite the fact that some heterosexual clergymen were saying the same things, I was the only one to be sacked.
- Gay man, under 18: The priest called me a demon.
- Gay man, 26-40: The Lutheran church of [Latvian Lutheran archbishop] Janis Vanags has excommunicated myself and other gays (banned us from taking Holy Communion).

Discrimination within the Family

A total of 27.8% of respondents have encountered discrimination at home. As we can see in Table 40, this discrimination most often (in 40.7% of cases) is manifested through hostile or humiliating treatment. Only 3.7% of respondents said that they have been kicked out of their homes because of their sexual orientation, while another 3.7% have experienced attempts to force them into unwanted medical treatment.

Table 39: Have you ever experienced discrimination within the family?

	Responses	Percent
Yes	54	27.8
No	140	72.2
Total	194	100

Table 40: What form did the discrimination take?

	Responses	Percent
Offensive, humiliating treatment	22	40.7
Behaviour monitoring	15	27.8
Prohibitions	6	11.1
Medical treatment against one's will	2	3.7
Eviction from home	2	3.7
Other	7	13.0
Total	54	100

Chapter 3

Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Estonia

by Lillian Kotter

Summary of findings

A survey carried out in September 2002 reveals that there is high level of discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual people in Estonia. 12 per cent of the respondents have been victims to single or numerous violent attacks because of their sexual orientation, only 22 per cent of them reported the violence to the police. Police reaction was hostile in 25 per cent of these cases. 28 per cent of the respondents have been harassed because they were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Nearly two thirds of harassment cases took form of verbal abuse. Only 9 per cent of harassment cases were reported to the police or other authorities. At 40 per cent of these cases the reaction from the authorities was hostile.

Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation has occurred within the family (23 per cent of the respondents), in the armed forces (14 per cent), in religious institutions (12 per cent), at solving accommodation problems (6 per cent), in bars, clubs, hotels, etc. (7 per cent). And this is regardless to the fact that very often gays, lesbians and bisexual people conceal their sexual orientation: 55-65 per cent of the respondents hide their sexuality from their parents, 53-63 per cent from their siblings, 64-85 per cent from other relatives, 18-71 per cent from their heterosexual friends, 43-44 per cent from their neighbours and landlords. Most of those serving in the armed forces (71-98 per cent) or belonging to religious community (49-94 per cent) stay in the closet. 55-82 per cent of the respondents avoid demonstrating their affection towards their same-sex partner in public, 55-81 per cent avoid telling strange people about their sexual orientation.

Even though 58-81 per cent of the respondents keep quiet about their sexual orientation at work and 53-78 per cent do it even in their current job, 14 per cent of them have been harassed at work because of being known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. 1-10 per cent have been denied a job, 2-9 per cent have been denied promotion, 3-8 per cent have faced attempted or threatened dismissal and 1-6 per cent have been dismissed or forced to resign because of their known or suspected sexual orientation.

As the result of this 52 per cent of the respondents consider emigration, 58-60 per cent of them, i.e. 28 per cent of all respondents would see sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor in considering emigration from Estonia.

Main recommendations

The Government of Estonia should make a public commitment to promoting the inclusion and participation of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons in society, and combating their exclusion. This commitment should be implemented by means of a detailed strategy which should be developed in consultation with lesbian, gay and bisexual community organisations. It should include the following measures:

Prohibition of sexual orientation discrimination

Sexual orientation should be explicitly mentioned in all laws considering discrimination on various grounds, i.e. in the Constitution, in the Penal Code, etc.

Education

- The development of policies which ensure that same-sex relationships are addressed by the educational system in a fair and objective manner, and that lesbian, gay and bisexual persons are covered in all educational material which addresses the right to equal treatment of minorities and the dangers of intolerance.
- Specific instructions to teachers to cease treating homosexuality as a “personality disorder”.
- The development and promotion of anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies in schools, other education establishments and services to young people, such policies specifically to deal with homophobic bullying and harassment.

Police

- The development of a code of conduct and training designed to counter homophobic attitudes and behaviour, and to encourage the police to react positively when called upon for help lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

- Proper investigation of homophobic actions, and proportionate disciplinary response.
- Appointment of police officers to liaise with the lesbian, gay and bisexual community.
- Adoption of a diversity policy encouraging the recruitment of lesbian and gay police officers.
- A campaign specifically directed towards persuading lesbian, gay and bisexual victims of violent attacks and other homophobic hate crimes to report these crimes to the police.

Armed forces

- A code of conduct and training designed to counter homophobic attitudes and behaviour, and to ensure that the armed forces are a safe working and living environment for homosexuals.
- Proper investigation of homophobic actions, and proportionate disciplinary response.
- A clear statement by the military authorities that gay people are welcome to serve in the armed forces on equal terms with all other citizens.

Health service

- The withdrawal of all medical texts which still treat same-sex relationships as an illness or disorder.
- Training courses for medical students, and continuing professional education for doctors, to include material designed to combat outdated discriminatory perspectives, and to cover the genuine health needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- A code of conduct and training designed to counter homophobic attitudes and behaviour more generally, particularly among other health service employees, including nurses and auxiliary staff.

Support for lesbian, gay and bisexual human rights and community organisations

Recognition of the contribution which lesbian, gay and bisexual community organisations can make to the development of a society in which all citizens can live free from discrimination.

Provision for financial support for such organisations.

Legal recognition of same-sex relationships

The introduction of a legal framework for the recognition of same-sex relationships, granting the same rights as those available to heterosexual married and unmarried couples.

Parenting

Legal recognition of equal right to adoption for same-sex couples.

Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide relevant information on sexual orientation discrimination in Estonia. A questionnaire on discrimination of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Estonia was distributed in Tallinn: in two gay bars *X baar* and *G punkt*, in two gay clubs *Ring Club* and *Nightman*, in gay sauna *Club 69*, on two lesbian websites *Ladies First* and *Mea Culpa* and two gay websites *Sven Vaher Gay Web* and *Gay Estonia*, as well as posted to former newsletter mailing list of Estonian Association for Lesbians and Bisexual Women. Respondents are more or less open about their sexual orientation at least in gay and lesbian community. Most gays, lesbians and bisexuals living in the countryside or in smaller towns remain hidden and out of reach of interviewers.

The present survey also fully demonstrates the differences or similarities in sexual orientation discrimination among female and male respondents, and in some cases, among homosexuals and bisexuals as well as among different age groups.

437 questionnaires were filled in, 49 per cent were filled in the Internet. Nearly three quarters of paper questionnaires remained uncompleted. The questionnaire was translated from English into Estonian.

an. The number of respondents could have been higher if Russian translation was available. Number of potential respondents did not fill the questionnaire because they believed their experience of low or non-existing discrimination would not give appropriate contribution to the survey.

Background to survey

Soon after regaining its independence Estonia repealed its Soviet originated Penal Code 1 June 1992 whereby sexual acts between men were decriminalised. Ten years later, from September 1, 2002 totally new Penal Code was introduced where age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual sex is equal and there are no longer special articles on homosexuals. The list of discrimination grounds in anti-discrimination chapter does not include sexual orientation.

Estonian political parties have not formed their special point of view on sexual minorities, most of them ignore this part of society and this tendency seems to continue remain unchanged. Politicians express their personal opinions only which often tend to be quite conservative. The youth section of the Moderate Party (social democrats) is the only political party showing some interest in including sexual minorities' issues in its policy. Unfortunately this party lost many of its supporters during last local elections.

In a newspaper interview in 1993, the then Minister of the Interior, Lagle Parek (Pro Patria Union), said she was willing to legalise gay partnerships. When the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its Recommendation 1474 in support of lesbian and gay rights on 26 September 2000, Anti Liiv (Estonian Centre Party), an Estonian delegate to the Assembly, declared on his return to Tallinn that Estonia had to legalise marriage between two men or two women. At the same time, Kristiina Ojuland (Estonian Reform Party; present Foreign Minister), assured Estonian sexual minorities groups that she has always supported gay marriages.

In September 2002 present Minister of the Interior, Mart Rask (Reform Party) expressed in a TV interview his unwillingness to deal with gay marriages, assuring the public that he would not spend a single cent of Estonian taxpayers' money for this purpose. He also

declared that relationship between same sex partners was no concern of the state. Oddly enough, a number of the Reform Party (member of Liberal International) politicians as individuals have lately delivered arrogant and offensive remarks on sexual minorities. It is quite symptomatic that majority of homophobic attitudes have been expressed by male politicians: many international surveys have revealed that men tend to be more homophobic than women.

Public opinion has changed during last twelve years; there is greater tolerance and acceptance of alternative life-styles in general. Hate speech is rare in the media.

Homosexuality is still not dealt with adequately in education and is not presented as an equal alternative to the heterosexual life-style. The reason for this is basically that sexuality is not itself included in the curriculum. The majority of teachers are middle-aged or older and were educated in Soviet schools and universities. Nevertheless young gays and lesbians – at least in the capital city and the second biggest city Tartu – seem to be much more visible than the older generation was in its youth. Gay and lesbian studies are still a marginal subject at Estonian universities. Research is being done into the various aspects of homosexuality. Several students are interested in studies concerning homosexuality or sexual minorities. The main problem for them is lack of adequate professors and literature. Volunteers from lesbian and gay groups have provided advice to sex education teachers as well as supplying volunteers who then visit schools to provide information on homosexuality.

Opinion polls

In 1989, the first attempt was made in Estonia to find out the prevailing attitudes towards sexual minorities. The survey (published in 1990 by Ivika Nogel) was based on 180 questionnaires submitted to college students at the two largest higher education establishments in Tallinn. The average age of respondents was 22. 46 per cent of the respondents regarded homosexuality as a form of disease, whereas 35 per cent disagreed with this. About half considered homosexuality an unnatural form of sexuality, yet a third found it normal. 10 per cent of the students supported, while 74 per cent opposed the idea of

isolating male homosexuals from society, the corresponding figures for lesbians were 7 per cent and 83 per cent. About 22 per cent thought that homosexuals should be subjected to medical treatment; two-thirds disagreed. 60 per cent of female respondents agreed that both gays and lesbians should be considered normal people deserving no more attention than heterosexuals. Of the male respondents, roughly half agreed with this for gays; this rose to 62 per cent in relation to lesbians. An amazingly large proportion of students, 50 per cent, supported legal same-sex marriage; 28 per cent objected. Female students were slightly more permissive than male students and the same could be said of students of sciences when compared with students of humanities. Lesbians were generally better tolerated.

Long and detailed questionnaire was distributed in 1991-1993 among Estonian gays, lesbians and bisexuals. The questionnaire was translated from Finnish in 1990; it originally served as a basis for a wide survey on homosexuality in Finland of late 1980's. Estonian questionnaires remained unanalyzed until 2001 when Pille Pesti used them as empirical material in her bachelor thesis "Homosexual people and attitudes towards them". 114 out of 149 questionnaires were filled by men (76.5 per cent) and 35 by women (23.5 per cent). Majority (76 per cent) lived in bigger cities, 13 per cent in smaller towns and 8 per cent in the country. Nearly two thirds of female respondents were younger than 29, 59.6 per cent of male respondents were younger than 34. Pille Pesti analyzed 25 queries out of original 179. 37.1 per cent of female respondents had exclusively homosexual feelings and sexual behaviour of 31.4 per cent was exclusively homosexual. The same figures among male respondents were 48.2 and 52.6.

72.5 per cent of the respondents concealed their homosexuality from their relatives, 68.5 per cent from their neighbours, 61.7 per cent from their mothers, 55 per cent from their fathers, 58.4 per cent from their colleagues, 45.6 per cent from their brothers and sisters. Only 33.6 per cent of the respondents hid their sexual orientation from their heterosexual friends. As the result of this 74.5 per cent of neighbours, 71.8 per cent of relatives, more than a half of parents, 42.3 per cent of the siblings, 61.7 per cent of colleagues and 32.9 per cent of heterosexual friends remained unaware of the respondents' sexual orientation.

12 per cent of the respondents had been discriminated or verbally abused at school because of their homosexuality. 2.9 per cent of female respondents and 0.9 per cent of male respondents have been refused a job because of their homosexuality. For 6.7 per cent of the respondents it has been a reason of dismissal or forced resignation. 14.7 per cent of women and 5.4 per cent of men have felt pressure from their superiors or co-workers. Neighbours of 2.9 per cent of female respondents and 12.3 per cent of male respondents have expressed their negative attitude towards their homosexuality. 5.8 per cent of women and 7.9 per cent of men admitted that their homosexuality had produced negative effect on solving accommodation problems.

12.1 per cent of the respondents had been discriminated by officials or in the court of law. 7.9 per cent of men had been convicted of their homosexuality. 2.9 per cent of women and 12.3 per cent have received medical treatment for their homosexuality. 46.7 per cent of those who were treated for problems connected to homosexuality and 72.7 per cent of those who were forced to receive treatment had negative experience with this. 2.9 per cent of women and 20.2 per cent of men have become victims of physical violence because of their sexual orientation. Only one quarter of them reported the case to the militia or police. 20.8 per cent of the respondents have been suggested to have a sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex in order to "change" their sexuality. 6.7 per cent have been raped or forced into a sexual intercourse by a person who knows about their homosexuality.

17.6 per cent of women and 39.8 per cent of men had temporarily felt they ought to have turned into heterosexual. 28.6 per cent of the respondents have seriously considered possibility to emigrate because of their homosexuality.

In 2000 Kadri Vahe carried out a survey (bachelor thesis completed in 2001) on attitudes towards gays and lesbians based on 271 questionnaires filled in Tallinn, the capital city. She used Hudson and Ricketts test to measure homophobia. According to this method it was found out that 44.6 per cent of the respondents were moderately homophobic, 29.5 per cent moderately non-homophobic, whereas 13.7 per cent of the respondents were highly homophobic and 7.4

per cent highly tolerant. In total 58.3 per cent of the respondents were more or less homophobic. Students, younger people and women were more tolerant.

72 per cent of the respondents regarded homosexuality as an individual feature that should be accepted, 10.7 per cent regarded it as a fashionable trend and 9.6 regarded it as a form of disease. 33 per cent of the respondents were in favour of gay marriages, 29 per cent were against them and 35.1 per cent had neutral position. 49.1 per cent opposed gay adoption rights, 28 per cent supported it and 22.1 per cent were indifferent.

As a part of her survey Kadri Vahe questioned 68 gay, lesbian and bisexual people in Tallinn. Only 5.9 per cent of the respondents did not consider homophobia a problem in current Estonia and 73.5 per cent found that attitudes towards sexual minorities should be changed. 44.6 per cent of the respondents admitted that because of their sexual orientation they had problems with their parents, 25 per cent had problems at work or at school. 89.7 per cent of the respondents have not been victims of physical violence because of their sexual orientation but 16.2 per cent had heard about cases with their friends or acquaintances. 17.6 per cent of the respondents had experienced harassment, 11.9 per cent had considered a suicide.

82.7 per cent of gay, lesbian and bisexual respondents said that too little attention has been paid to sexual minorities' issues; only 38.4 per cent of heterosexual respondents were of the same opinion. Half of the questioned lesbians, gays and bisexuals said they would marry their same sex partner, if only it was possible, 41.2 per cent of the respondents would use adoption right.

32.9 per cent of gay, lesbian and bisexual respondents are annoyed by homophobic attitudes of the church, 55.9 per cent feared that homophobia can cause certain social problems in Estonia.

Results of survey

Sample Characteristics

The research sample consists of 437 respondents, out which 68 per cent (295) are male and 32 per cent (142) female. Gender proportion remains close to the average of eight countries under survey. 38 per cent of female respondents and 28 per cent of male respondents are bisexual.

Table 1: Sexual identity

	Responses	Percent
Gay men	203	48
Lesbian women	87	21
Bisexual men	78	18
Bisexual women	53	13
Total	421	100
Not answered	16	

Largest age group among women is that of 18-25 years of age, among men that of 26-40 years.

Table 2: Age groups

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Under 18	19	4	1	6
18-25	172	39	52	34
26-40	194	44	38	47
41-50	42	10	6	11
51-60	6	2	2	1
Over 60	4	1	1	1
Total	437	100	100	100

Concealment of Sexual Orientation

Respondents' sexual orientation remains unseen for their family in most cases. Female respondents are much more open than men.

Heterosexual friends are usually well aware of their gay, lesbian and bisexual friends' sexual orientation. Women are more open to their heterosexual friends: only in 5 per cent of cases friends do not know that they are lesbians or bisexuals.

Table 3: Parents' awareness of respondent's sexual orientation

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Both parents know	137	35	45	30
Only mother/ father knows	41	10	13	9
Do not know	219	55	42	61
Total	397	100	100	100
Not answered	40			

Table 4: Siblings' awareness of respondent's sexual orientation

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
All know	136	37	49	31
Some of them know	39	10	12	10
Do not know	195	53	39	59
Total	370	100	100	100

Table 5: Other relatives' awareness of respondent's sexual orientation

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
All know	56	15	21	13
Some know	80	21	21	21
Do not know	237	64	58	66
Total	373	100	100	100
Not answered	64			

Table 6: Heterosexual friends' awareness of respondent's sexual orientation

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
All know	123	29	42	22
Some know	231	53	53	54
Do not know	78	18	5	24
Total	432	100	100	100

Violence and Harassment

12 per cent of the respondents have become victims of violent attacks because of their sexual orientation. This figure is the lowest compared to other survey countries: in Slovakia it is 15, in Latvia 19, in Poland 24, in Lithuania 27 and in Romania 30. Number of women assaulted because of their sexual orientation is considerably lower: only 8 per cent of all female respondents. It is also remarkable that male and female bisexuals are not as often attacked as gays and lesbians. It is striking among women: only 9 per cent of assaulted women are bisexual whereas they make up 38 per cent of all female respondents. 91 per cent of women attacked are under age of 18. Majority of men are attacked at somewhat older age.

The recurrence of violent attacks is at least two times lower in Estonia than in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Romania: only 19 per cent of the Estonian respondents have been assaulted three or more times, the figure in other countries is between 34 and 44.

Table 7: Violent attacks

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	52	12	8	14
No	378	88	92	86
Total	430	100	100	100

Not answered 7

Women: lesbian 91%, bisexual 9%. Age groups: <18 – 91%, 18-25 – 9%.

Men: gay 82%, bisexual 18%. Age groups: <18 - 2%, 18-25 - 42%, 26-40 - 46%, 41-50 – 10%.

Table 8: Number of violent attacks

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
One	28	54	64	51
Two	14	27	18	29
Three or more	10	19	18	20
Total	52	100	100	100

Table 9: Form of the violent attack

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Beaten up	25	29	33	29
Hit	30	35	27	31
Assaulted with a weapon	5	6	0	9
Other	26	30	40	31
Total	86	100	100	100

Nearly half of the perpetrators were unknown to the victim. Estonia is the only country of those under survey where attacks by the neighbours were not reported.

Table 10: Identity of the attacker

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Unknown	42	49	69	40
Acquaintance	14	16	8	20
Neighbour	0	0	0	0
Family member	4	5	8	7
Fellow student	9	10	15	9
Policeman	6	7	0	15
Other	11	13	0	9
Total	86	100	100	100

Vast majority (78 per cent) of violent attacks remained unreported and it is quite characteristic that at least one third of the respond-

ents were afraid to reveal their sexual orientation to the police and thus left the case unreported.

Table 11: Did you report the violence to the police?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	19	22	9	20
No	67	78	91	80
Total	86	100	100	100

Table 12: What reaction did you get from the police?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Neutral	12	75	100	75
Supporting	0	0	0	0
Hostile	4	25	0	25
Total	16	100	100	100
Not answered	3			

Table 13: Why you did not report the violence to the police?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Did not think it necessary	7	18	0	21
I was afraid to do so (= to come out)	13	33	40	32
I thought it did not make sense	9	23	0	26
I do not know why	1	3	20	0
Other	9	23	40	21
Total	39	100	100	100
Not answered	28			

As for harassment there are nearly no differences between female and male, homosexual and bisexual respondents. Only gay men were relatively more attacked than male bisexuals. The survey reveals that

Estonian lesbians, gays and bisexuals have much lower harassment rate. 28 per cent of the respondents have experienced harassment whereas in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia this number is between 40 and 54.

Table 14: Have you been harassed because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	122	28	29	28
No	307	72	71	72
Total	429	100	100	100
Not answered	8			

Women: lesbian 65%, bisexual 35%. Age groups: 18-25 – 51, 26-40 – 37%, 41-50 – 10%, 51-60 – 2%.

Men: Gay 83%, bisexual 17%. Age groups: <18 – 5%, 18-25 – 41%, 26-40 – 46%, 41-50 – 7%, 51-60 – 0%, >61 - 1%.

Table 15: Number of cases of harassment

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
One	31	26	29	23
Two	21	17	15	19
Three or more	70	57	56	58
Total	122	100	100	100

Table 16: Forms of harassment

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Verbal abuse	182	64	58	53
Graffiti about you	6	2	2	4
Vandalism	9	3	0	6
Hate mail	14	5	6	8
Blackmail & threats	19	7	6	12
Other	53	19	28	17
Total	283	100	100	100

Table 17: What was the identity of the person who harassed you?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Acquaintance	84	30	27	25
Fellow student	37	13	12	14
Unknown person	91	33	43	34
Family member	17	6	6	8
Neighbour	14	5	2	5
Policeman	4	1	0	2
Other	33	12	10	12
Total	280	100	100	100

Table 18: Did you report the harassment to the police or other authorities?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	24	9	2	14
No	243	91	98	86
Total	267	100	100	100

Table 19: What reaction did you get from the police or authorities when you reported your case of harassment?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Hostile	9	40	0	33
Neutral	7	30	0	45
Supportive	7	30	100	22
Total	23	100	100	100
Not answered	1			

Gay and bisexual men conceal their sexual orientation in public and among strangers much more often than lesbians and bisexual women: 10 per cent of male respondents admit they do not avoid kissing or holding hands in public with their same-sex partner and 12 per cent do not avoid telling people who are not friends or family

about their sexual preferences. Same figures by women are 33 and 32.

Table 20: Do you avoid kissing or holding hands in public with same-sex partners/friends?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	234	55	29	68
Sometimes	116	27	38	22
No	74	18	33	10
Total	424	100	100	100
Not answered	15			

Table 21: Do you avoid telling people who are not friends or family about your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	232	55	39	63
Sometimes	110	26	29	24
No	80	19	32	13
Total	422	100	100	100
Not answered	15			

Discrimination at Work

Male respondents hide or keep quiet about their sexual orientation at work more often than female respondents do. In their current job women are open about their sexual orientation twice as often as gay men. Compared to Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia Estonian gays, lesbians and bisexuals are more open: 19 per cent of the respondents have never hidden their sexual orientation at work while the same figure in Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania and Poland is between 2 and 15.

Table 22: Have you ever felt it necessary to hide or keep quiet about your sexual orientation at work?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
In all jobs	244	58	46	64
In some jobs	95	23	31	19
No	79	19	23	17
Total	418	100	100	100
Not answered	19			

Table 23: Do you hide your sexual orientation in your current job?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
From everyone	220	53	40	59
From some people	106	25	27	25
No	91	22	33	16
Total	417	100	100	100
Not answered	20			

Table 24: If you hide your sexual orientation in your current job, from whom do you hide it?

	Percent	Women	Men
From customers	32	28	38
From coworkers	29	22	24
From employers or superiors	23	26	24
From some of all above mentioned	16	24	14
Total	100	100	100

Harassment rate at work is the same among female and male respondents, slight difference occurs at job and promotion denial and at attempted or threatened or actual dismissal. Among other countries under survey Estonia has the lowest harassment rate at work – 14 per cent of the respondents admit they have been harassed at work because they were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

The same figure in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia lies between 17 and 31.

Table 25: Have you ever been denied a job because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	4	1	1	1
I suspect so	40	9	6	11
No	381	90	93	88
Total	425	100	100	100
Not answered	12			

Table 26: Have you ever been denied promotion because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	7	2	1	2
I suspect so	31	7	3	10
No	384	91	96	88
Total	422	100	100	100
Not answered	15			

Table 27: Have you ever faced attempted or threatened dismissal because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	14	3	1	2
I suspect so	21	5	6	7
No	383	92	93	91
Total	418	100	100	100
Not answered	19			

Table 28: Have you ever been dismissed (or forced to resign) because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	6	1	1	1
I suspect so	20	5	1	7
No	390	94	98	92
Total	416	100	100	100
Not answered	21			

Table 29: Have you ever been harassed at work because you were known or suspected to be lesbian, gay or bisexual?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	57	14	14	14
No	362	86	86	86
Total	419	100	100	100
Not answered	18			

Table 30: Forms of harassment at work

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Physical violence	0	0	0	0
Jokes or teasing	32	38	34	40
Aggressive questions	12	14	18	11
Homophobic abuse	25	30	30	31
Sexual harassment	4	5	6	4
Threats	5	6	6	6
Other	6	7	6	8
Total	84	100	100	100

Discrimination in the Armed Forces

Although vast majority of men and women serving in the armed forces conceal their sexual orientation it serves as grounds for their discrimination by 14 per cent of the respondents.

Table 31: Have you served, or are you serving in the Armed Forces?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	98	23	3	34
No	323	77	97	66
Total	421	100	100	100
Not answered	16			

Table 32: Have you experienced any discrimination in the armed forces because of your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	14	14	25	14
No	84	86	75	86
Total	98	100	100	100

Men: 18-25 – 23%, 26-40 – 54%, 41-50 – 23%. 15% in the Soviet Army.

Table 33: Did you conceal your sexual orientation?

	Percent	Women	Men
Yes, from everybody	71	75	71
Yes, from officers	3	25	5
Yes, from co-soldiers	6	0	3
Yes, partly from all above mentioned	18	0	19
No, from nobody	2	0	2
Total	100	100	100

Discrimination in Various Spheres of Service

More than a half of those respondents who have used health services conceal thereby their sexual orientation to avoid discrimination. Nearly two thirds of female respondents and 43 per cent of male respondents make no secret of it. 100 per cent of them have never experienced any discrimination in the provision of health services. Two gay men out of 437 respondents have complained that they were refused to become blood donors. That is the lowest rate among countries under survey: in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia this figure is between 84 and 96.

Table 34: Do you conceal your sexual orientation when using the health services to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	170	49	36	57
No	176	51	64	43
Total	346	100	100	100

I have not used health services 71
 Not answered 20

11% of female respondents and 20% of male respondents said that they had never used health services.

Table 35: Have you ever experienced any discrimination because of your sexual orientation in the provision of health services?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	2	0	0	1
No	315	100	100	99
Total	317	100	100	100

I have not used health services 94
 Not answered 26

16% of female respondents and 26% of male respondents mentioned at this point that they had never used health services.

The biggest gap between figures of Estonia and other countries under survey occur in solving accommodation problems and in other areas of service like bars, clubs, hotels, etc. Estonians are much more open about their sexuality in these areas and women even more so: 43 per cent of the respondents (56 per cent of women and 36 per cent of men) do not conceal their sexual orientation from neighbours and landlords and 35 per cent do not do it in bars, clubs, hotels, etc. (46 per cent of women and 29 per cent of men). These figures are much lower in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia: in the first case between 7 and 25 and in the second case between 13 and 25.

Table 36: Have you ever had problems over accommodation because of your sexual orientation?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	16	6	1	7
No	266	94	99	93
Total	282	100	100	100

I have not had problems over accommodation 133
 Not answered 22

29% of female respondents and 34% of male respondents said that they had never had problems over accommodation.

Table 37: Do you conceal your sexual orientation from neighbours, landlord/landlady to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	232	56	42	63
Partly	2	1	2	1
No	176	43	56	36
Total	410	100	100	100

I have not had problems over accommodation 4
 Not answered 23

Table 38: Have you ever experienced incidents of discrimination in other areas of service?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	29	7	6	7
No	388	93	94	93
Total	417	100	100	100
Not answered	20			

Table 39: Where did discrimination occur?

	Percent	Women	Men
Bar	48	44	48
Club	28	31	26
Hotel	12	6	15
Other	12	19	11
Total	100	100	100

Table 40: Do you conceal your sexual orientation in these places to avoid discrimination?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	142	35	19	43
Sometimes	124	30	35	28
No	145	35	46	29
Total	411	100	100	100
Not answered	26			

Discrimination in Religious Institutions

Table 41: Number of respondents with religion affiliation

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	107	26	30	24
No	310	74	70	76
Total	417	100	100	100
Not answered	20			

Table 42: Which religion and branch of that religion do you belong?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Lutheran	31	29	33	26
Russian Orthodox	11	10	10	11
Catholic	4	4	2	5
Other Christian	16	15	14	17
Affiliation unspecified and other	45	42	41	41
Total	107	100	100	100

Table 43: Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in religious institutions

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	12	12	10	15
No	89	88	90	85
Total	101	100	100	100
Not answered	6			

Table 44: Do you conceal your sexual orientation from other people in your religion?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes, from everybody	52	49	44	53
Yes, from some of them	48	45	54	41
No, from nobody	7	6	2	6
Total	107	100	100	100

Discrimination in the Family

There is one area where women are more discriminated against than men because of their sexual orientation – family. 31 per cent of female respondents and 19 per cent of male respondents appear to have been discriminated against in their families. Forms of discrimination remain to be quite similar though.

Table 45: Have you experienced discrimination within the family?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	96	23	31	19
No	319	77	69	81
Total	415	100	100	100
Not answered	22			

Table 46: Forms of discrimination in family

	Percent	Women	Men
Offensive, humiliating treatment	33	35	33
Behaviour monitored	17	17	20
Eviction from home	8	3	9
Threats	12	12	12
Prohibitions	16	18	13
Attempt of forced medical treatment	6	5	6
Other	8	10	7
Total	100	100	100

Emigration as Response to Discrimination

Due to relatively bigger discrimination rate it is quite natural that men would consider emigration more often than women: 55 and 44 per cent of the respondents respectively. It is also easy to understand why only half of those women and 58 per cent of men would regard sexual orientation discrimination as key factor for considering emigration.

More than a half of the respondents in Estonia, Latvia and Poland and three quarters of the respondents in Lithuania and Slovakia would consider emigration. Of those 58 per cent in Estonia, 63 per cent in Lithuania, 64 per cent in Poland, 75 per cent in Latvia and 77 per cent in Slovakia would regard sexual orientation discrimination as key factor in their decision to emigrate.

Table 47: If it were practical for you to emigrate, would you do so?

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	214	52	44	55
Do not know	4	1	1	1
No	196	47	55	44
Total	414	100	100	100

Table 48: Sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor in considering emigration

	Responses	Percent	Women	Men
Yes	116	58	49	58
Partly	4	2	2	2
No	79	40	49	40
Total	199	100	100	100
Not answered	15			

In total, 116 of 414 respondents (28 per cent) would consider sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor in considering emigration from Estonia.

27 per cent of female respondents who found it practical to emigrate were bisexual and 63 per cent lesbian. 23 per cent of male respondents who found it practical to emigrate were bisexual and 77 per cent were gay.

30 per cent of female respondents who regarded sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor considering emigration were bisexual and 70 per cent lesbian. 18 per cent of male respondents who regarded sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor considering emigration were bisexual and 82 per cent gay.

33 per cent of bisexual women would consider emigration, 45 per cent of them would regard sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor. 53 per cent of lesbians would consider emigration, 44 per cent of them would regard sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor.

47 per cent of bisexual men would consider emigration, 44 per cent of them would regard sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor. 59 per cent of gay men would consider emigration, 64 per cent of them would regard sexual orientation discrimination as a key factor for this.

LGB Organisations

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