

## Position Paper on Intercultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue

---

### 1. Introduction

IGLYO's Strategic Plan 2011-2013 places Intercultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue (ICIRD) among the organization's core focus areas. This document formulates IGLYO's position on promoting and mediating ICIRD between its member organizations and different religious/cultural institutions, networks, organizations, groups and experts.

The Position Paper on ICIRD is based on the principles of IGLYO's 2011-2013 Strategic Plan and the work the organization has done in this field since 2006.

The document outlines the course, which IGLYO, as an umbrella of LGBTQ youth and student organizations, should follow when promoting ICIRD. The paper also proposes recommendations to members on how to promote better advocacy work in this area.

The paper seeks to set IGLYO's course for ICIRD, but it cannot provide a detailed road map. Its recommendations, if relevant, should be reviewed and adapted by IGLYO's member organizations in constructing ICIRD between LGBTQ youth and other stakeholders.

This is the first time IGLYO issue a position paper on ICIRD, attempting to structure its work in this specific area. The long-term objective of this document is to help IGLYO's member organizations, friends and young LGBTQ activists shape and adopt effective policies to create alliances among different cultural and religious institutions, organizations, networks, groups and individuals.

The Position Paper consists of the following parts:

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Background information about IGLYO’s work in the field of ICIRD .....	2
3. Intercultural Dialogue .....	7
a. Defining Intercultural Dialogue	
b. Ethnic LGBTQ groups	
c. Linguistic LGBTQ groups	
4. Inter-Religious Dialogue .....	11
a. Defining Inter-Religious Dialogue	
b. Christianity and LGBTQ	
c. Islam and LGBTQ	
d. Judaism and LGBTQ	
e. LGBTQ-Friendly Religious Organizations and Fellowships	
5. Recommendations .....	20
6. Terminology .....	22
7. References .....	26

## 2. Background information about IGLYO's work in the field of ICIRD

IGLYO's vision is a world where we, young people in all our diversity, are able to express and define our own sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions without fear of judgment, violence or hatred, so that we are able to participate without limitation in our lives, our communities and our societies without barriers and can rise to our full potential, enjoying respect, celebration and positive recognition.<sup>1</sup>

As an LGBTQ youth and student organization with an international profile, IGLYO actively promotes intercultural and inter-religious dialogue through its daily work with members, friends and young LGBTQ activists from around the world.

Despite the multitude of problems LGBTQ youth and students from different background face, IGLYO has always emphasized the importance of dialogue as a way to move forward and find solutions.

Being a Europe-based organization, IGLYO attempts to promote through its members the European social model of diversity and equality. Yet, formal equality is not always sufficient and promoting effective equality could, in some cases, necessitate adoption of specific measures that are coherent with the principle of non-discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

Living in multicultural environment, LGBTQ young people often face multiple discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, ethnicity, race, religion/belief and culture. Therefore, IGLYO believes it is highly important to include the cultural and religious component into the agenda of organizations, networks, groups and experts working on LGBTQ youth issues.

To raise the well-being of LGBTQ young people, it is crucial to ensure that governments, human rights watchdogs and civil society promote awareness and understanding of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, as well as ensure integration and the cohesion of young LGBTQ people with different ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds into mainstream society.

---

<sup>1</sup> IGLYO's Strategic Plan 2011-2013

<http://www.iglyo.com/images/stories/iglyo/iglyo%20strategic%20plan%202011-2013.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper_en.asp)

To achieve this goal, IGLYO and its member organisations should promote effective advocacy work and promote a long-lasting dialogue between LGBTQ youth and cultural/religious institutions, organizations, networks, initiative groups and experts.

In the past five years, IGLYO organized and attended a number of events on ICIRD. These events aimed at promoting intercultural learning and understanding, as well as fostering dialogue between LGBTQ youth and students and faith-based communities.

### **October 2007, Germany, Berlin – Workshop “All Different, All Equal”**

The Workshop was organized by the German campaign committee and was meant to be the official closing of the ADAE campaign<sup>3</sup> in Germany. There were workshops aimed at regional NGO activists and the main focus was on the establishment of intercultural dialogue.

### **November 2007, Hungary, Budapest – Study Session “Creating Dialogues Between LGBTQ youth and Faith Based Communities”**

The main outcome of the week were 9 projects created by participants, aimed at building bridges between LGBTQ and faith-based communities at local, national, or international levels. The projects were put into action with IGLYO’s support. Participants also came up with a set of key points for interfaith dialogue when promoting human rights, which would come to constitute the basis for IGLYO’s stance on dialogue.

### **December 2008 – The IGLYO/ILGA-Europe Age Project: Report on the Intergenerational Dialogue within the LGBTQ Community**

The joint IGLYO / ILGA-Europe – Age Project was an important initiative in raising awareness about how strands of identity – in particular sexual orientation, gender identity and age – interlock. As a result, at the core of this project is an underlying conviction of the importance of and need for a ‘multiplicity of identity’ approach.

---

<sup>3</sup> All Different – All Equal Campaign

Between mid-2006 and early 2008, the Council of Europe organized the European Youth Campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation “all different- all equal” in cooperation in cooperation with its member states, the European Commission, numerous youth organizations all over Europe and many governmental and civil society partners.

The Age Project also represents a further example of the fruitful collaboration between IGLYO and other regional equality networks.

### **February 2009, France, Strasbourg - Study Session: “Intercultural and Ethnic Diversity within LGBTQ Youth Communities”**

The event offered a safe and accepting environment for participants to explore new dimensions of cultural diversity within the LGBTQ community. Its main objective was to sensitize the participants on issues of ethnicity, race, culture, religion, tradition and mechanisms of exclusion within the LGBTQ community that result out of those issues.

### **July 2009, Amsterdam, the Netherlands – International Conference “This is Who We are” on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IGLYO**

The event focused on best practices for LGBTQ youth relating to the Yogyakarta Principles - the application of human rights in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. For the first time, IGLYO created a global dialogue to explore the potential for future cooperation between LGBTQ youth activists in different regions of the world. IGLYO worked on this international project with the support of local partner COC Amsterdam, and international partner the Youth Coalition.

On the occasion of IGLYO’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Alex Muller, former IGLYO Board member and a self-taught photographer from Germany, created portraits of 15 activists from all over the world. The work mainly focuses on local and international activism around LGBTQ rights and health.

### **February 2011 – IGLYO’s Intercultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue (ICIRD) Working Group was set up**

The aims of the Working Group are as follows:

- Undertake collective advocacy to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue among IGLYO’s members and LGBTQ youth at the national/regional and international levels
- Set up alliances with international multicultural networks, religious organizations and LGBTQ watchdogs
- Bring IGLYO’s members and friends together to share and exchange ideas, experience and best practice in the field of ICIRD.



- Encourage an effective dialogue between civil society and LGBTQ youth to be able to promote anti-discrimination and anti-racism at the national/regional/international levels

### 3. Intercultural Dialogue

#### a. Defining Intercultural Dialogue

*Intercultural dialogue* can be understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world.<sup>4</sup>

Article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights obligates each UN State party to respect and ensure to all persons within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in the Covenant without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Article 26 not only entitles all persons to equality before the law as well as equal protection of the law but also prohibits any discrimination under the law and guarantees to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.<sup>5</sup>

Living in heteronormative societies with high level of homo//lesbo/bi/trans/queer and intersexphobia, LGBTQ young people are most vulnerable to multiple discrimination on grounds of SOGIE<sup>6</sup>, as well as cultural, racial, ethnic, national and religious origin.

One aspect that makes intercultural dialogue important for young LGBTQ people is that dialogue is an ongoing process. All young people are in a process of figuring out how to exist in a multicultural society, and they will choose to express different aspects of their identity in different ways as they grow. The ability to engage in dialogue on intercultural issues can help young LGBTQ people living in all parts of

---

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper_en.asp)

<sup>5</sup> UN General Comment No. 18: Non-discrimination: 10.11.1989. CCPR General Comment No. 18. (General Comments)

<http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/3888b0541f8501c9c12563ed004b8d0e?Opendocument>

<sup>6</sup> Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression

the world improve their ability to deal with a more open and more complex, cultural environment. What's more important, intercultural dialogue can give them an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a diverse and dynamic society that respects human dignity and diversity. Therefore, IGLYO believes it is necessary to promote the intercultural dialogue through intercultural competence. Promotion of intercultural competences is important as it can help society understand the core value of cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, sexual and gender diversity.

IGLYO also stresses the importance of fighting social exclusion and social segregation of LGBTQ young minorities, refugees, migrants, as well as culturally, socially, linguistically and politically marginalized groups in mono-ethnic and mono-religious countries.

This paper gives a general definition and understanding of three major competence areas (ethnic, linguistic, cultural) of intercultural dialogue between LGBTQ groups. The document presents some concepts that need to be defined in this area, generally following the terminology developed by the Council of Europe and other international institutions such as United Nations.

IGLYO believe the basis of mutuality and dignity can become that solidifying ground which can add to the range of inter-linguistic competences and assist dealing with bettering well-being and socialization of LGBTQ young individuals among their peers. Cooperative fight against intolerance by LGBTQ youth and students within their community by themselves will foster a culture of understanding among members of different linguistic communities, which can be further advanced to a broader level.

#### b. Ethnic LGBTQ groups

The cultural norms and beliefs of an ethnic group can have a significant impact on an LGBTQ person's feelings about his or her sexual orientation or gender identity. Although an LGBTQ orientation conflicts with mainstream cultural values, it may be just as, or even more, unacceptable in some ethnic minority groups. Some families see LGBTQ behaviour as arising from a decadent Western society and as a rebellion against the family and traditional beliefs, instead of as a part of a person's identity. LGBTQ behavior is difficult for family and friends to understand. The family's

concern to maintain dignity and not to lose face pressures the LGBTQ person to remain in the closet and consequently stay invisible.

Some LGBTQ individuals of ethnic minority groups feel alienated from their ethnic community and turn to the LGBTQ community for support and validation. However, LGBTQ people from minority ethnic communities might find themselves doubly excluded from both their ethnic community and simultaneously excluded from the mainstream LGBTQ community, which is often driven by white, upper-middle class males. Young people might have certain roles in the family, and must re-enter the closet when interacting with family members, at the same time silencing their personal struggles within the ethnic community when engaging with other LGBTQ people in the wider community.

### c. Linguistic LGBTQ groups

Linguistic diversity existing among various LGBTQ groups sometimes determines tension and lack of understanding among community members whose paths considerably diverge when the contrary is required. One's linguistic identity is as important as their LGBTQ essence. However, linguistic boundaries within the LGBTQ communities estrange lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth and students from the common problems those face together. Thus, language becomes a barrier to conducting intercultural conversations among our groups.

There are numbers of various LGBTQ groups who live within same cultures, state borders or regions and who speak different languages, which becomes a determinant factor of their miscommunication. Even though their uniting peculiarity is the common or similar identity they have to protect from encroachment every day, their linguistic differences become a serious obstacle on the way of cooperation and mutual understanding with their likes of other linguistic backgrounds.

Switching priorities and getting closer to the needs of various LGBTQ groups with different linguistic background is to be viewed as a possibility rather than a drawback in promoting a culture of respect, acceptance and mutual understanding among their representatives. This would help to avoid stereotyping individuals, to develop curiosity and openness to otherness and discover other cultures within the broader LGBTQ youth and student community. Commonness in dealing with identical or similar issues is the uniting factor that might lead to interaction among

LGBTQ individuals of different linguistic origins. Furthermore, by overcoming linguistic divisions and uniting under LGBTQ commonness can then lead to building more bridges between linguistic communities.

## 4. Inter-Religious Dialogue

### a. Defining Inter-Religious Dialogue

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is one of the foundations of democratic society and protected by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This freedom is one of the most vital elements referring to the identity of believers and their conception of life, as it is also for atheists, agnostics, skeptics and the unconcerned. While guaranteeing this freedom, Article 9 does allow that the manifestations of expression of this freedom can be restricted under defined conditions.

The freedom of religion must not derogate the other freedoms enshrined in the human rights instrument.<sup>7</sup>

While a few religious communities accept LGBTQ people and support them, most authoritative bodies and doctrines of the world's largest religions generally view them negatively. This can range from quietly discouragement, explicitly forbidding same-sex sexual practices or sex/gender reassignment among adherents, actively opposing social acceptance of LGBT identities, to execution of people engaging in homosexual acts while tolerating sex/gender reassignment in specific cases.

Taking into account that religious homo/bi/trans/queerphobia is persistent in almost all religious denominations, individual churches and congregations, it is always hard for LGBTQ people of faith to engage in dialogue with faith-based and religious institutions and face disdain, persecution, stigma and ignorance.

Very often LGBTQ people are forced to compartmentalize their identities, closeting themselves in a religious community and repressing religious expression within the LGBTQ community itself.

Welcoming the efforts of different faith-based organizations, networks, alliances, groups and individuals within different religious denominations to develop LGBTQ-

---

<sup>7</sup> The European Convention on Human Rights  
<http://www.hri.org/docs/ECHR50.html>

inclusive policies, IGLYO believes it is highly important to build up alliances within these groups and advocate for the full inclusion of LGBTQ young believers into the religious life. To achieve this goal, it is highly important to facilitate dialogue between LGBTQ religious communities and public authorities and sensitize them to elaborate effective policies combating faith-based repression and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. For this purpose, it is necessary to raise awareness about LGBTQ and religious issues within wider debates on local, national, regional and international levels with the intention to mainstream these issues.

Apart from the dialogue between public authorities and LGBTQ religious communities, which should be encouraged, there is also a need for dialogue between LGBTQ religious communities themselves (interreligious dialogue).

Interreligious dialogue can also contribute to a stronger consensus between LGBTQ communities and mainstream society and can be a strong tool fighting faith-based or religious homo/bi/trans/queerphobia.

This paper presents the beliefs of three monotheistic religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – on LGBTQ issues, as well as some of the main religions/faiths open to LGBTQ believers. This will help understand the main gaps and challenges limiting freedom of conscience or religion and promoting discrimination against LGBTQ people.

#### b. Christianity and LGBTQ

There are same sex relationships in every kind of cultural and religious society. But in different cultures and religious denominations, homosexual relations are differently perceived. The gradation is from sharp restriction and punishment to the positive reception. For example, Homo and bisexual acts were common in ancient Greece, homosexual relationships between men were neither shameful nor sinful, and in Sparta it was socially accepted. It is known that ancient Rome also welcomed gay marriages.

So, the formation of homosexuality and sex without marriage as sinful activity first appears in Judaism. It is explained with the opposition with oriental religious views on sexuality (The neighbour tribes of old Jews worshiped puberty and non-marital sexual practices were not prohibited in their culture.). After, all the Abraham,

monotheist religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) shared the negative attitude towards non-reproductive, non-marital sexual behaviour.

It is considered that Christianity from the very beginning was against homosexuality. Though, some of historians do not share this opinion. John Boswell in his work “Christianity, social tolerance and homosexuality” says that Catholic Europe did not reveal negative attitude towards homosexuality before the end of XII century. The negative attitude basically is formed in writings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Their writings prohibit all kind of non-reproductive sexual acts as unnatural and sinful. The influence of Church on social life and sexual life as well was very strong in middle ages. Therefore, homosexuals were not only perverts and sinners but were also blamed in heresy and betrayal. After secularization power of the church was shared by state, homosexuality was shifted from sin to the category of crime. Nowadays the perception of homosexuality is still the subject of debate within Christian denominations. Some of them have more inclusive views while in others it is strictly prohibited.

**The Orthodox Church** holds the opinion that sexuality in general is part of the fallen world. The celibacy and blessed marriage is the option to live the right way, thus it is exclusive to homosexuality.

According to **the Roman Catholic Church’s** understanding, sexual acts, by the nature are meant to be both punitive and procreative mirroring God’s inner Trinitarian life. Accordingly same sex unity is considered unnatural and sinful.

The Protestant church with its community based institution is originated within each country, thus its attitude towards LGBTQ issues varies also depending on the cultural background. Some communities demand their members to change their sexual orientation, others allow LGBTQ people as members but expect them to live in celibacy, do not bless unions and do not ordain. However, there are increasing congregations and churches that accept LGBTQ people, have LGBTQ ministers and bless unions, for example the Swedish and Norwegian Lutheran churches.

### c. Islam and LGBTQ

The beliefs of Muslims on LGBTQ-issues cannot be easily summarized, because so much depends on how individual Muslims interpret the Holy Quran and other theological sources. Many Muslims, however, have very negative ideas about LGBTQ

people. They consider same-sex acts to be sinful, and many believe that having a gay or lesbian sexual orientation is unnatural.

The Quran does not give clear answers on whether or not homosexuality is forbidden in Islam. There are certain texts that can be interpreted that way, but then also, there are other texts that say this behaviour should not be punished. In general, most people believe that homosexuality is not allowed in Islam. A sexual relationship can only exist between a woman and a man in their marriage, and serves only reproduction.

The Sharia Law, applied in several Arabic countries puts great punishments on homosexual behaviour, from imprisonment to physical punishment to death sentence. Many LGBTQ Muslims flee their communities and seek asylum in Western countries.

In Western countries, Muslim communities can not apply Sharia Law, so most LGBTQ Muslims live a safer life in the Western world. However, they still face rejection from their families and friends. They are pressured to get married and if they don't step into their traditional roles, they can be abandoned by their families.

Therefore, many young LGBTQ Muslims live double lives. They do get married and fulfil their traditional duties, but at the same time live a secret life as LGBTQ. For these people coming in is more important than coming out. Finding others in the same situation, finding places to go out, to meet others is more important than telling their friends and family they are gay.

Young LGBTQ Muslims have multiple emotions regarding their sexual orientation. Many of them suffer from shame and guilt, towards their families for letting them down, but also towards Allah. Some do believe that Allah does not approve their behaviour and therefore they are afraid that they will be punished in their afterlife. Others however, believe that their life and behaviour is something between themselves and Allah, they believe that if Allah created them that way there can't be anything wrong about that. But still, for most Muslims it's a continuous struggle to find a balance in living as a good Muslim and experience their personal freedom and self-realization.

Although mainstream Islam officially condemns homosexuality, there is a growing movement of progressive-minded young LGBTQ Muslims, especially in the Western world, who see Islam as an evolving religion that must adapt to modern-day society.

It is within this movement that LGBTQI grass-roots organizations and NGOs work to enlighten the Muslims and outside world that Islam is a religion of tolerance and not hate, and that Allah (God) loves His creations, no matter what their sexual orientations might be.”

#### d. Judaism and LGBTQ

Among the 14-odd million Jews living around the world, there are three major and some other established denominations.

The **Orthodox Judaism**, usually regarded as the historical continuation of traditional Judaism, clearly forbids sexual intercourse between same-sex partners. It foresees a stricter approach towards relations between men than between women since the former are forbidden by the Torah, while the latter are banned only by the late rabbi restrictions. In almost all Orthodox Jewish communities homosexuality is a taboo. It is considered a threat to family institution which is the cornerstone of the Jewish religious life.

The **Conservative Judaism** welcomes to some extent all sexual orientations, supports decriminalization of homosexual relations between consenting adults and backs laws protecting gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people from discrimination. However, women, gays and lesbians are not considered admissible candidates for the rabbinate.

The **Reform Judaism**, the biggest and the most influential denomination in the USA, approves of the point that in the light of today’s scientific data regarding nature of homosexuality as a biologically conditioned sexual orientation there is a need of more liberal and tolerant interpretation of the Jewish law. The Reform religious authorities have revised and updated traditional orthodox views on all aspects of the Jewish law, including homosexuality.

The **Reconstructivist Judaism** is a rather small and very liberal movement. It considers homosexuality as a natural expression of human sexuality and invites gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people to join Reconstructivist communities and fully participate in all aspects of community’s life. The Reconstructivist rabbi college (yeshiva) admits gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people to its rabbi and cantor educational programs equally with heterosexuals. The Reconstructivist Rabbi Association encourages its members to

hold same-sex marriage ceremonies; however, it does not impose its members to do so, thus leaving the right to make a decision to each rabbi's personal discretion.

The **Secular Jews**, a small group within the Judaism, unites in itself the European culture and secular lifestyle of the non-religious Jews who observe Jewish traditions and customs. Sexual orientation and gender identity is considered everyone's personal business. The biggest support of homosexuality within Judaism is noticed outside Israel, especially in the USA, where several millions of Jewish believers live. Nevertheless, even condemnation of same-sex relations by the Orthodox Jewish wing does not influence the on-going processes taking place in the legal field in Israel at the moment.

#### e. LGBTQ-Friendly Religious Organizations and Fellowships

Below is a list of certain organizations, fellowships and segregations that welcome and affirm people regardless their SOGIE.

#### **Baptist**

##### Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

Welcomes and affirms all persons without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity, and who have joined together to advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within Baptist communities of faith.

#### **Buddhist**

##### Gay Buddhist Fellowship

Supports Buddhist practices in the gay community and brings together the diverse Buddhist traditions to address the spiritual concerns of gay men.

#### **Catholic**

##### DignityUSA

Works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.

#### **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

##### Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance

Organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and affirming members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with a prophetic voice calling for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Church.

## **Episcopal**

### Integrity

Fostering the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Episcopal Church, using integrity as the leading grass roots voice.

## **Evangelical**

### Evangelicals Concerned

Encourages and affirms lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Christians in their faith.

## **Hindu (Vaishnavas)**

The Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association educates Vaishnavas, Hindus and the public in general about the "third sex" as described in Vedic literatures.

## **Jewish**

### World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews: Keshet Ga'avah

The worldwide voice of LGBT Jews seeking to support, inspire, and strengthen local groups; foster a sense of community among diverse individuals and organizations; and achieve equality and security for LGBT Jews worldwide.

## **Lutheran**

### Lutherans Concerned

embody, inspire, and support the acceptance and full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, their families, friends and allies, within the Lutheran communion and its ecumenical and global partners.

## **Metropolitan Community Church**

### Metropolitan Community Church

Founded in and reaching beyond the gay and lesbian communities and seeking the integration of spirituality and sexuality.

## **Muslim**

### Al-Fatiha Foundation

Dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning, those exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity, and their allies, families and friends. Al-Fatiha promotes the progressive Islamic notions of peace, equality and justice.

### **Presbyterian**

#### More Light Presbyterians

Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

### **Quaker (Religious Society of Friends)**

#### Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns

A North American Quaker faith community that affirms God in all people; learning that radical inclusion and radical love bring further light to Quaker testimony and life.

### **Seventh-day Adventist**

#### Seventh-day Adventist Kinship

Devoted to the spiritual, emotional, social and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered.

### **Unitarian**

#### Unitarian Universalism

Office of the Unitarian Universalist Association dedicated to fighting oppression against bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people.

### **United Church of Christ**

#### The UCC Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns

Provides support and sanctuary to all our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender sisters and brothers, their families and friends; advocates for their full inclusion in church and society; and brings Christ's affirming message of love and justice for all people.

### **United Methodist**

Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Concerns

Pursues full inclusion in the Church through respect, love, justice and mercy for all.

**Unity**

Association of Unity Churches

Teaches the practical application in everyday life of the principles of Truth taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ, leading to health, prosperity, happiness, and peace of mind.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on its past work and strategic objectives in the field of ICIRD, IGLYO should implement the following general recommendations and guidelines in order to develop policy orientations for its future actions:

- Continue to promote intercultural dialogue through its members and represent the interests of LGBTQ youth, in accordance with IGLYO's strategic plan and in partnership with international and/or pan-European organizations and networks such as UNITED for International Action, ENAR, UNESO, Platform for Intercultural Europe, Culture Action Europe and others.
- Actively advocate against xenophobia and racism, as well as homo/lesbo/bi/trans/queer and intersex-phobia and human rights violations against LGBTQ youth and students with different religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Actively promote non-formal SOGIE and human rights education to be taken into consideration of intercultural, inter-religious needs of young people.

Develop documentation about LGBTQI people in accordance to intercultural and Inter-religious needs of young people

- Sensitize member organizations to work on cross-cultural and intercultural issues and establish dialogue with public authorities, local/regional/international organizations and experts working on ICIRD
- Carry out research to assess the needs and encourage participation of underrepresented LGBTQ youth groups (migrants, asylum seekers, sex workers, refugees, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic minorities) in LGBTQ youth groups in the LGBTQ organisations and communities.
- Continue building the capacity of members in the field of ICIRD by organizing study sessions, conferences, discussions etc.
- Actively campaign and advocate against faith-based homo/bi/transphobia by collaborating with international and pan-European LGBTQ-friendly religious networks, institutions and organization, as well as public authorities, media and civil society.

- Facilitate dialogue within different LGBTQ religious youth groups to ensure religious diversity.
- Monitor, record and report on cases of discrimination on grounds of SOGIE, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion/faith with an intersectional perspective to ensure full inclusion of LGBTQ youth into mainstream society.
- Work to fight religious phobia within the LGBTQ community and promote respect for these groups

## 6. Terminology

**Advocacy** – the practice of advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcomes. More specifically, advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make or have responsibility for implementing policy decisions. As such, the word ‘advocacy’ is quite pliable and is used variously to suit organizational agendas. It is understood in terms of the work an organization does and the fundamental mission of the organization.

**Biphobia** – the fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred toward bisexuality and bisexual people (*see “Bisexual”*). The phobia may exist among heterosexuals, gay men, lesbians, or by bisexuals themselves, and is often related to multiple negative stereotypes of bisexuals center on the belief that bisexuality does not exist and on the generalization that bisexuals are promiscuous.

**Bisexual** – when a person is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of more than one sex

**Civil society** is composed of the totality of voluntary social relationships, civic and social organizations, and institutions that form the basis of a functioning society, as distinct from the force-backed structures of a state (regardless of that state's political system) and the commercial institutions of the market

**Council of Europe** – Europe’s oldest political organization, founded in 1949. It groups together 47 countries. The Council of Europe headquarters are in Strasbourg, France.

**Gay** – a person who feels sexual and/or emotional desire exclusively or predominantly for persons of her or his own sex. The term has however been misused to cover all gay men and lesbians (and sometimes even bisexuals). This has been widely discussed, and *gay* should therefore only be used when it is referring to men who are emotionally and/or sexually attracted to other men. If the intention is to cover all without intentionally excluding any sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, then it is recommendable not to use only the term *gay*, and instead use *LGBTI* (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people)

**Heteronormativity** – the reference to cultural and social practices where men and women is being led into believing and behaving as if heterosexuality were the only conceivable sexuality. It also implies the positioning of heterosexuality as the only way of being “normal” and as the key source of social reward.

**Homophobia** – the fear, unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred toward homosexuality. Homophobia can appear in various ways:

*Internalised Homophobia* – when lesbian, gay men and bisexual people are considering and accepting heterosexuality as the correct way of being and living.

*Institutionalised Homophobia* – when governments and authorities are acting against equality for LGB people. This can be hate speech from public elected persons, ban on pride events and other forms of discrimination of LGB people.

**Culture** – values and behaviour systems, which allow groups of people to make sense of the world.

***Intercultural dialogue*** – an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world.

***Integration*** (social integration, inclusion) – a two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life.

***Inter-religious and inter-faith dialogue*** – cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions (i.e., “faiths”) and spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels, with the aim of deriving a common ground in belief through a concentration on similarities between faiths, understanding of values, and commitment to the world. It is distinct from syncretism or alternative religion, in that dialogue often involves promoting understanding between different religions to increase acceptance of others, rather than to synthesize new beliefs.

**Intersectionality** – the understanding that inequalities and oppression are cross cutting across different identity categories, and that social identities have multiple dimensions; for instance, sexual orientation and gender identity are constituted differently in relation to a number of other social subjectivities, such as age, ethnicity, region or country of origin.

**Lesbian** – a woman who is sexually and emotionally attracted to women.

**Mainstreaming** – the practice of defining and implementing policies that are inclusive of all minority or vulnerable populations.

**Religion** – a system of belief, often involving faith and worship.

**Multiculturalism** (like assimilationism) – a specific policy approach (see section 3), whereas the terms cultural diversity and multiculturality denote the empirical fact that different cultures exist and may interact within a given space and social organization.

**Public authorities** include the national government and political and administrative bodies at the central, regional and local levels. The term also covers town councils or other local authority bodies, as well as natural or legal persons under private law who perform public functions or exercise administrative authority.

**Queer** – has become an academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual - includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans. Queer theory is challenging heteronormative social norms concerning gender and sexuality, and claims that gender roles are social constructions. For many LGBTI persons, the term "queer" has negative connotations as it was traditionally an abusive term, however many LGBTI persons are now comfortable with the term and have "reclaimed" it as a symbol of pride.

**Religious denomination** – a subgroup within a religion that operates under a common name, tradition, and identity. The term describes various Christian Denominations (for example, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicanism and the many varieties of Protestantism). The term also describes the four branches of Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist) and describes the two main branches of Islam (Sunni and Shia). In Hinduism the major deity or philosophical belief

identifies a denomination, which also typically has distinct cultural and religious practices. The major denominations include Shivaism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism and Smartism.

**Transgender** – refers to those trans people who live permanently in their preferred gender, without necessarily needing to undergo any medical intervention/s. Until recently, this term was also the primary umbrella term referring to all trans people, but this use is now losing favour to the term ‘trans’ which is perceived to be more inclusive of all trans communities. ILGA-Europe is using the wider inclusive term *trans* in its work.

**Transphobia** – refers to negative cultural and personal beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviors based on prejudice, disgust, fear and/or hatred of trans people or against variations of gender identity and gender expression. Institutional transphobia manifests itself through legal sanctions, pathologization and inexistent/inadequate mechanisms to counter violence and discrimination. Social transphobia manifests itself in the forms of physical and other forms of violence, hate speech, discrimination, threats, marginalization, social exclusion eroticization, ridicule and insults.

## 7. References

Islam and homosexuality. Omar Nahas. Amsterdam, Bulaaq, 2001

<http://www.islamawareness.net/Homosexuality/>

<http://www.hrc.org/issues/5007.htm>

IGLYO's Strategic Plan 2011-2013

<http://www.iglyo.com/images/stories/iglyo/iglyo%20strategic%20plan%202011-2013.pdf>

The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper_en.asp)

The European Convention on Human Rights

<http://www.hri.org/docs/ECHR50.html>

Final Declaration of the European Conference on 'The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue', San Marino, 23 and 24 April 2007

<http://www.coe.int/dialogue>

Greenberg, Steven, Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition. University of Wisconsin Press, 2004

<http://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/2576.htm>

Homosexuality in Orthodox Judaism. Rabbi Dr Nachum Amsel

[http://www.lookstein.org/resources/homosexuality\\_amsel.pdf](http://www.lookstein.org/resources/homosexuality_amsel.pdf)

Jewish Mosaic: The National Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity

<http://www.jewishmosaic.org/>

Judaism and the Modern Attitude to Homosexuality. Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm

<http://www.jonahweb.org/sections.php?secl=90>

The World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews

<http://www.glbtejews.org/>

IGLYO #4 on... Religion. December 2007

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans-Friendly Churches by Ramon Johnson

<http://gaylife.about.com/od/religion/a/gaychurch.htm>

Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1994, Vol. 62

<http://www.ucm.es/info/rqtr/biblioteca/Lesbianas%20y%20Salud/eithic%20minority%20lesbians%20and%20gay%20mental%20health%20issues.pdf>

Equality Network, Scotland

<http://www.equality-network.org/minorityethniclgbt>

Stonewall: The lesbian, gay and bisexual charity

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

Aghdgomelashvili Eka "Sin, Crime, Illness, Norm", Me magazine N 11

Boswell, J, (1980). Christianity, social tolerance and homosexuality. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Hoffman, R. (1980) Some cultural aspects of Greek male homosexuality. Journal of homosexuality, 5, 217-226

Karlen, A.(1980). Homosexuality in history, INJ.Marmor (Ed.),Homosexual behavior. New York

List of Christian denominational positions on homosexuality

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Christian\\_denominational\\_positions\\_on\\_homosexuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominational_positions_on_homosexuality)

Defining National Minorities, Old Criteria and New Minorities

<http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/esc-lectures/Tanase.htm>

The ILGA-Europe Glossary

[http://www.ILGA-](http://www.ILGA-Europe.org/home/publications/reports_and_other_materials/ilga_europe_glossary)

[Europe.org/home/publications/reports\\_and\\_other\\_materials/ilga\\_europe\\_glossary](http://www.ILGA-Europe.org/home/publications/reports_and_other_materials/ilga_europe_glossary)