

# **Impact of Anti-Gender Opposition on TGD and LGBTQI Movements**

## **Europe\* Report**

**\* (excluding Eastern Europe and the Caucasus)**

**2023**



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This publication is a regional report that is part of a larger report entitled "[Global Report on the Impact of Anti-Gender Opposition on TGD and LGBTQI Movements](#)". The Global Report is a comprehensive study on the impact of anti-gender (AG) opposition on the human rights of trans, gender-diverse, and LGBTQI individuals worldwide. This regional report focuses specifically on the impact of AG opposition in the Europe (excluding Eastern Europe and the Caucasus) region.

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## About GATE

**GATE is an international advocacy organization working towards justice and equality for trans, gender diverse and intersex communities.** Rooted in our movements, we work collaboratively with strategic partners at the global level to provide knowledge, resources and access to international institutions and processes. Our vision is a world free from human rights violations based on gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Our strategy is to transform the landscape of global advocacy, knowledge creation and resource distribution through critical inclusion of trans, gender diverse and intersex movements at all levels of political, legal, and socio-economic processes.

**Find out more about GATE by visiting [www.gate.ngo](http://www.gate.ngo)**

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# Glossary

## **AG**

Anti-gender: The anti-gender movement is an international movement which opposes what it refers to as “gender ideology”, “gender theory”, or “genderism” (Kováts, Eszter, 2016)

## **BIPOC**

Black, Indigenous and People of Color

## **Centrist**

Someone who supports the center of the range of political opinions

## **Far-Right**

Includes “persons or groups who hold extreme nationalist, xenophobic, racist, religious fundamentalist, or other reactionary views”

## **Gender-Critical**

Believing that sex is a fact of biology that cannot be changed, and doubting the idea of gender identity (a person’s feeling of being male, female, or another identity, especially when this is different from the sex they were assigned at birth)

## **Left-Wing**

Political parties, groups or people who believe that wealth and power should be shared among all parts of society

## **LGBTQI**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and Intersex

**LGR**

Legal gender recognition

**Mixed**

The group's ideological stances are not homogenous; they are mixed between left-wing and right-wing stances

**PWDs**

Persons with disabilities

**Right-Wing**

Political parties, groups or people that have traditional opinions, and who believe in low taxes, the private ownership of property and industry, and less aid to the poor

**TGD**

Trans and gender diverse

**TGDI**

Trans, gender diverse, and intersex

**Trans-Exclusionary Radical "Feminists" / TERFs**

A radical wing of feminism that rejects the assertion that trans women are women, the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces, and trans rights. (The word "Feminists" has been placed in quotation marks to highlight how the TERF movement does not subscribe to the generally accepted definition of feminism, which is a movement primarily about gender equality).

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# Analysis of Survey Data

## Introduction

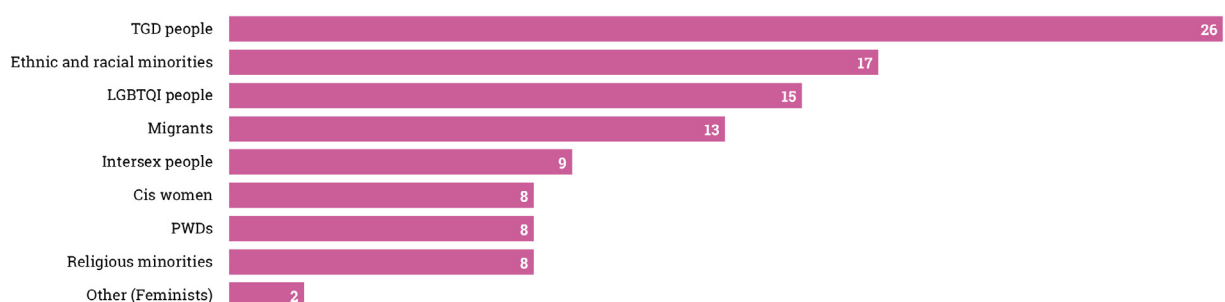
For a general introduction to the Survey completed by respondents, including positionality, data collection methods, and who took part in the Survey, please refer to the [Global Report](#).

The next few pages provide an analysis of the Survey data for the Europe (excluding Eastern Europe and the Caucasus) region, followed by a breakdown of the data by country. For an analysis of the data from the Eastern Europe region, please view the [Eastern Europe and Central Asia Report](#).

## AG Actors

In the Europe region, some AG groups are in the government, with many AG groups being represented as political parties, and having seats in electable bodies (e.g. parliaments). Most of them are categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum but a significant number of these actors are right-wing in their ideological stances. A small number of AG groups are left-wing. The lack of proper investigation of alleged crimes committed by AG actors is a big challenge. In several contexts, governments and non-government AG actors have coordinated communication and governments support them with financially.

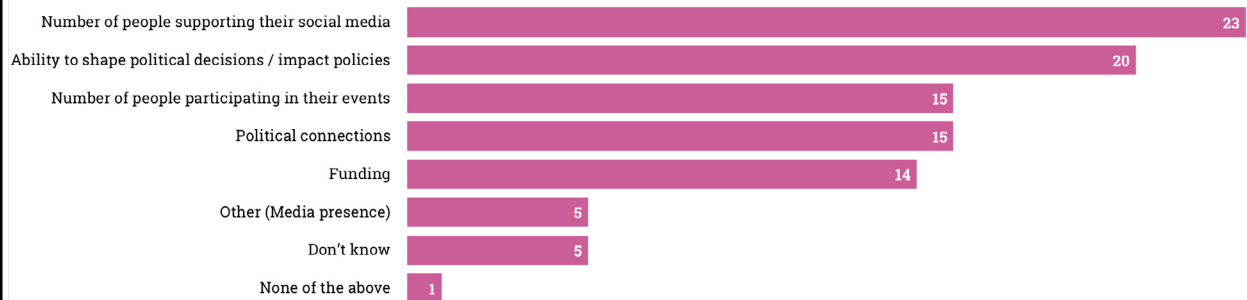
### AG groups have targeted the following groups in the past year:



AG actors focus on xenophobia, abortion, freedom of expression, “gender ideology”, sex education, “family values”, children, sports, and political correctness in public communication to spread and gain support for their agenda. In most cases, information about various AG actors’ coordination with each other is unknown by respondents. However, in many cases, respondents report that it is known that these groups coordinate with each other.

In the majority of cases, information about their engagement in violence directed at vulnerable groups is unknown, and in other contexts AG actors don’t engage in physical violence.

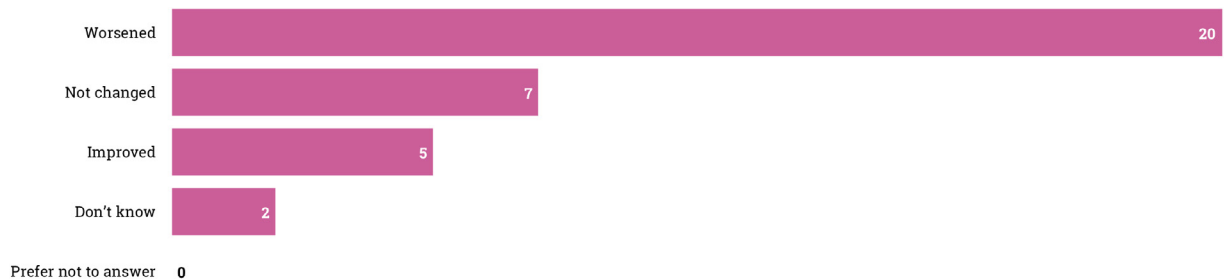
### In the past year, have these groups been growing stronger in terms of the following:



## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

In this environment, a significant number of the respondents believe that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year.

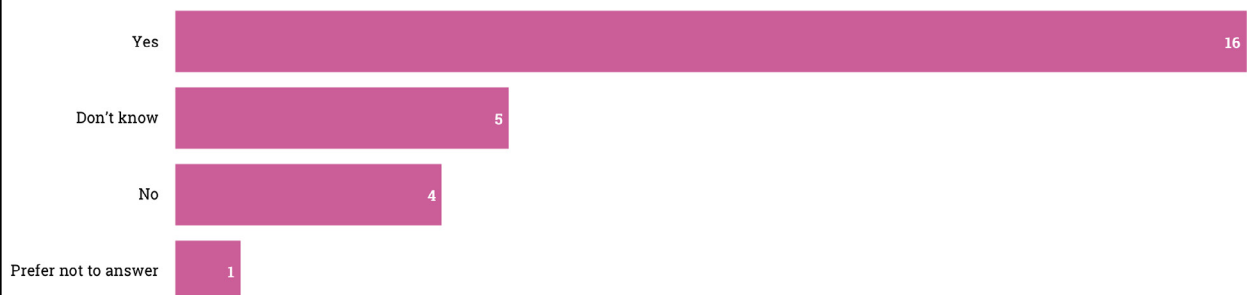
### In the past year, the situation for TGD groups has:





Respondents indicate that TGD and LGBTQI activists and their organizations/collectives receive verbal abuse, but that physical violence is extremely rare.

**In the past year, have you or your organization/collective experienced verbal attacks by AG groups or someone else as a result of AG narratives?**



**In the past year, have you or your organization/collective experienced physical attacks by AG groups or someone else as a result of AG narratives?**



In most of the cases of attacks experienced, the authorities were not notified.

Respondents report that threats are common and take place mostly on social networks.

Many respondents report that the impact of AG opposition was not felt in any significant way in their organizations/collectives in the last year. Respondents who indicate that there had been an impact report that AG opposition results in serious challenges to TGD/LGBTQI and wider human rights activism, with psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout being the leading issue experienced within activist groups. Besides stress, the three leading problems activists face are having less ability to implement long-term strategy and a need to modify strategy in order to respond to attacks, fewer community members accessing services, and limited access to funds. The full picture of challenges experienced by activist organizations and collectives is as follows:



In a significant number of contexts, in the past year, respondents report that AG actors managed to influence policies and legal developments impacting TGD communities.

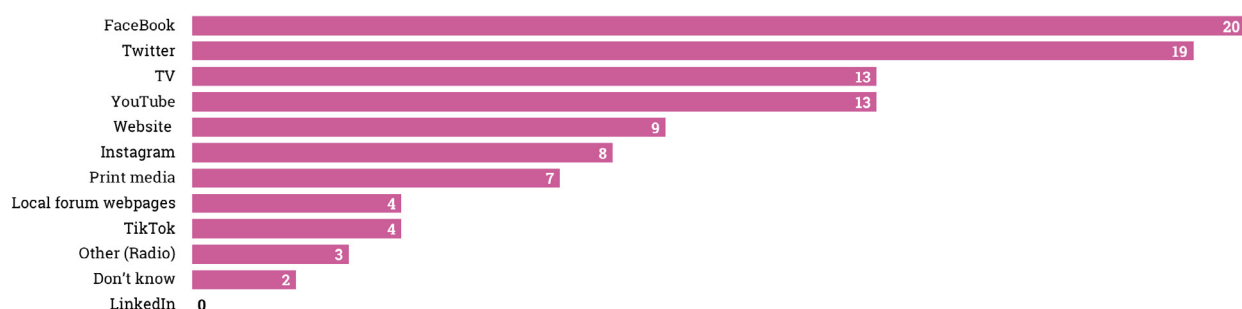
According to respondents, the main barriers to countering AG opposition in their contexts are a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, a lack of political will, and proper legislation, which they explain by indicating that, in many contexts, powerful AG actors are within governments.



## Role of the Media

According to respondents, AG groups in Europe engage in the creation and spread of fake and harmful news relating to TGD communities, using FaceBook, Twitter, and TV to spread their narratives.

### Media channels used most by AG groups in the past year



In most cases, social media posts by AG groups and actors are reported to social media platforms, but reports are ignored most of the time and content rarely gets taken down. Respondents' experiences show that social media platforms are the main sources of AG opposition, including mobilization, and these platforms enable transphobic hate to spread by not sufficiently implementing rules and removing false and misleading information or other activities from their platforms.

### In my experience, social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization



**In my experience, social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned**



What follows is a breakdown of the data from the Europe (excluding Eastern Europe) region by country.

# Denmark

## AG Actors

While AG actors are present in Denmark, the nature of their organizing or funding is unknown to the respondent. AG actors target TGDI communities and use parenthood, family, and “being trans as being the result of confusion” as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda. AG actors are categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum. AG actors have influence over the Danish government, according to the respondent:

“Government invites such people for discussion.”

The respondent does not know whether these groups engage in violence directed at vulnerable groups.

According to the respondent, AG actors have been growing stronger in the past year in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and participating in their events, and in their improved political connections.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent believes that the human rights situation for TGD communities has been worsened in the past year.

No additional information was reported by the respondent in the Survey.

# Germany

## AG Actors

According to respondents, AG actors are present in Germany, with some AG members being part of the government. 1 Respondent, however, states that

“The current government is predominantly pro-trans. To our knowledge, none of the current government representatives is part of anti-trans associations.”

Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) was one of the parties named as an AG actor. AFD currently has 81 seats in the parliament (out of 736). The Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) was also reported as having some anti-trans attitudes. Information regarding the funding of AG actors is not known by the respondents. AG actors are mostly categorized as right-wing or mixed on the political ideology spectrum.

AG actors target ethnic and racial minorities, religious minorities, migrants, TGD people and the wider LGBTQI community, PWDs, low-income people, and the unemployed.

The narratives used to spread and gain support for the AG agenda revolve around issues such as those described in the following feedback from respondents:

“The way gender is expressed in the German language, Gender Neutral bathrooms, changes of sex marker and first name, ‘freedom of speech’, transition of children and adolescents, stopping to take in refugees, islamophobia, promotion of heterosexual nuclear families.”

“Questioning Validity of trans\* peoples lives, villainising trans\* people, suggesting that there is a trans\* agenda, suggesting that trans\* people are dangerous in context of safe spaces for women or children, suggesting that transitioning is a form of harm.”

“Self-ID (new legislation regarding LGR) has become a big issue that anti-trans actors have started to focus on. Freedom of science is linked as a topic with these discussions (e.g. defiance of the binary gender system is based on “biological” evidence).”

Respondents indicate that various AG actors coordinate with each other:

“Usually [their] public statements refer to each other or use very similar rhetoric, this is true for the Alternative für Deutschland, EMMA, CDU/CSU and especially other transphobic feminist/LGB outlets.”

“There has been the attempt to dominate public discourse with negative information about trans people by publishing a book collectively. It was called *Transsexualism: a pamphlet*” (original title: *Transexualität - Eine Streitschrift*). The book was published by Alice Schwarzer (publisher of the magazine EMMA) and Chantal Louis, - A collaborative trans negative newspaper article was published in the German newspaper ‘WELT’.”

Respondents report that sometimes alleged crimes committed by AG actors are not investigated fully.

Respondents indicate that these actors are becoming stronger in terms of the number of people supporting their social media, and in their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies. AG groups are also growing, as respondents report a rise in the number of people participating in AG events, an increase in their funding and political connections, and their ability to push their perspective in the media.

Respondents report that AG actors have been strongly opposing progressive policies over the last year, including an easier legal gender recognition policy. According to respondents, AG actors spread false information about TGD communities.

Respondents believe that the main barrier to counteracting AG opposition is the lack of proper legislation and the general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, followed by the lack of political will.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Respondents were split in their assessment of whether the TGD rights situation has been improving or worsening in the past year, with an equal number of respondents answering “improved”, “not changed”, and “worsened”. Similar results were seen when analyzing only those respondents who had indicated their affiliation with a TGD organization.

According to respondents, verbal attacks happen frequently:

“In the course of these events around the postponed talk at one university, the house of an outspoken trans activists was attacked. Attacks on prides appear to be more frequent. There were also attacks by TERF groups on prides. Single trans and gender diverse people have been more frequently attacked and harassed comparing 2021 to 2020.”

4 Respondents report that they or the organizations they are affiliated with have experienced verbal attacks in the past year. Mostly, such attacks remain in the social media realm. A respondent reports one near physical conflict:

“A small group of TERF’s tried to capture the Dyke March in Hamburg this year but failed to do so because we have made preparation for a case like this. We laid down on the floor and the political awareness team of the state and the Police were asking them to leave the March. They did not stop their chanting of transphobic stuff, so they got delegated by the police outside of our event. the Dyke March was saved thanks to the Hamburg Police and the Political awareness team.”

The General Attorney’s Internet Office has been alerted to such attacks. One respondent says that their reported case was investigated and all persons were held responsible.

None of the respondents report any physical attacks in the past year, while 2 report receiving threats on social media. 1 Respondent reports that their organization is currently involved in a lawsuit instigated by AG groups.



Respondents report that the biggest challenge faced by them and their affiliated organizations/collectives in counteracting AG opposition is the psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board. Some respondents also report legal threats and/or proceedings being a challenge. A few respondents also report limited opportunities to involve allies, limited access to funds, fewer community members accessing services, internal conflicts, and staff leaving their positions.

## Role of the Media

FaceBook, Twitter, YouTube, print media, Instagram, TV, websites, and TikTok are the main communication channels used by AG actors. While their content gets reported to social media platform, the content rarely gets taken down.

Respondents agree (2 fully and 4 somewhat) that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization. All 6 respondents fully agree that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Italy

## AG Actors

The respondent reports that AG groups in Italy are government actors, with some members of AG groups being in government, and that the government and AG groups have coordinated communication. Moreover, the government rarely investigates alleged crimes committed by AG groups and supports AG groups financially. AG groups are represented as political parties: Forza Nuova, Il Popolo della Famiglia, Fratelli d'Italia, and Lega. AG groups have a large presence in Italy's parliament and receive funding, the details of which are unknown by the respondent.

According to the respondent, AG actors attack ethnic and racial minorities, cis women, religious minorities, migrants, PWDs, and LGBTQI/TGDI groups. They tend to use "gender ideology" in schools, defense of the "traditional family", defense of "traditional values and Catholic morality", migration, xenophobia, abortion, and political correctness as main discursive topics to spread and raise support for their agenda.

The respondent categorizes AG groups as mixed on the political ideology spectrum. Whether they coordinate actions with each other or engage in violence directed at vulnerable groups is not known to the respondent.

The respondent indicates that in the past year, AG groups have become stronger in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media, an increase in their funding, media presence, political connections, and their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies.

The respondent names lack of adequate legislation, lack of political will, and powerful AG actors within the government as the main barriers to counteracting AG opposition.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent reports that in the past year, the human rights situation relating to TGD groups has worsened:

“TGD groups are increasing in visibility but also the aggressions against them and the violence of these aggressions are increasing.”

The respondent also reports that verbal attacks happen frequently:

“Continuous comments, although not direct against my organization in particular, in which our work (trans childhood and adolescence) is denigrated and lied about in social, on TV, in the press ... with total impunity.”

The authorities were not notified in these cases. Physical attacks or threats were not reported by the respondent in the Survey.

Due to AG opposition, the organization affiliated with the respondent has experienced the following: the need to stop operations temporarily or permanently, limited opportunities to engage partners in activities, fewer community members accessing services, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, and threats and/or legal proceedings. The respondent says,

“Many members of our organization live in silence and refuse to give visibility to their circumstances for fear of reprisals. Two adoptive mothers of our association feared losing custody of their children for giving them affirmative support.”

The respondent indicates that AG groups have managed to influence policies:

“In the Senate, they were prevented from passing the amendment to a law that would have classified gender-based crimes against LGBTQI+ people and against PWDs as hate crimes.”

## Role of the Media

AG groups in Italy engage in the creation and spread of false information about TGD communities. They use TV, print media, local forum webpages, FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and webpages to communicate with audiences. While their social media posts are reported to social media platforms, the content is not taken down. The respondent somewhat agrees that social media platforms are the primary medium for AG mobilization, and fully agrees that social media platforms do not sufficiently enforce their rules to prevent the spread of harmful and/or false news and/or the planning of violent actions.

The respondent reports that TGD-related human rights posts have been blocked by FaceBook, by being labeled as “political”.

# Malta

## AG Actors

According to the respondent, in terms of AG groups and their relation to the government, that the

“Current government is quite LGBTIQ friendly, however, it does get delayed in enacting new legislation by the pressure that these groups put on.”

The respondent indicates that some AG actors are very small parties that have up until now had very little chance of having any elected representatives. They don't have any seats in the parliament, and they don't receive any funding. They target migrants and TGD/LGBTQI communities and use abortion and trans rights as the main discursive topics in spreading and gaining support for their agenda. The respondent writes:

“The two biggest issues that they target right now are abortion and trans people. A lot of them are influenced by American conservatism, and these are issues that are quite popular there as well.”

The respondent categorizes AG groups as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum. Information about their coordination efforts is not known. According to the respondent, AG groups have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media, and in their ability to shape political decisions / impact policies.

“Pretty much all of these groups use religion as their main driving force (mostly Catholic but there are some other Christian groups), and religious people who feel they are not represented by other groups and political parties anymore are becoming more drawn to them, at least on social media and their views on anything that they deem leftist or liberal.”

While AG actors have not been able to influence any substantial policy regarding the human rights of TGD communities, the respondent reports that

“the Equality Bill (which includes non-discrimination in the provision of services among other things) which has been promised by the government for several years, now has been completely stuck, because these groups and other religious groups have been stalling and delaying it.”

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent indicates that overall, in the past year, the human rights situation for LGBTQI and TGD communities has not changed.

AG actors engage in verbal attacks, and the respondent says that:

“Most of these things happen through social media and are mostly related to children, such as being accused of influencing children to become transgender, sexualizing them, and overall “doing the devil’s work”, to scare their followers away from the work that we do. They also spread a lot of misinformation about our organization such as who our members are, what our agenda is, etc. In previous years, the leader of such a group had already lost a defamation court case against us, and nowadays they seem to be more aware of how to not explicitly break the law again.”

These attacks were not coordinated with other AG groups and were not reported to authorities:

“I believe we didn’t receive attacks on us that merited reporting, however, we have helped other people open cases with the police force and there have been investigations however I am not sure about the outcomes.”

The respondent did not report any physical attacks or threats in the Survey.

## Role of the Media

According to the respondent, AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false and harmful information relating to TGD communities through TV, FaceBook, and YouTube. While their posts have been reported to social media platforms, the content was rarely taken down. The respondent fully agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned. While the human rights-related posts on TGD communities don't get blocked, as has been the case in other countries in and outside of the region, social media platforms will remove posts made by TGD organizations because they're seen as "political":

"FaceBook especially makes it very difficult for us to pay for sponsored posts because of the topic."

# Netherlands

## AG Actors

According to the respondents, AG actors are present as individuals and political parties, with some right-wing groups being in the parliament and others trying to win seats. The nature and the source of their funding is mostly not made public, or is hidden, but some information known by respondents indicates that some AG actors receive funding from right-wing think-tanks based in the USA.

AG actors target ethnic and racial minorities, cis women, religious minorities, migrants, PWDs, and LGBTQI people, especially the BIPOC TGD community. They use xenophobia, trans minors, and gender-affirming healthcare as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda. They are categorized as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum. Information about coordination among various AG actors is unknown by the respondents.

AG actors have called for violence against minorities, some of which has materialized. As a respondent writes,

“Here AGM groups are mostly very much fringe. The influence of their discourse though is strong in public opinion.”

According to respondents, in the past year AG actors have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media, the number of people participating in their events, an increase in their funding, and their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies.

In terms of the main barriers to countering AG opposition, respondents name a lack of political will, a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, and AG groups being difficult to identify.



## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Both respondents believe that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year. Verbal attacks happen occasionally. 1 Respondent indicates that they received verbal attacks from TERF and other gender-critical groups when their organization supported the progressive LGR proposal. According to respondents, physical attacks or threats do not take place in the Netherlands.

Respondents state that they and their organizations experienced the following as a result of AG opposition in the past year: being forced to cancel events, fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, fewer community members accessing services, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, and internal conflicts.

Respondents believe that AG actors have not been able to influence any policy in the past year relating to TGD communities.

## Role of the Media

AG actors engage in the creation and spread of fake information regarding TGD communities and use FaceBook, Twitter, TV, print media, YouTube, and websites to communicate with their target audiences. None of the respondents recall reporting their content. 1 Respondent fully and 1 somewhat agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization. Both respondents fully agree that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

1 Respondent mentions that their TGD-related human rights posts are regularly reported and taken down, and their account regularly gets suspended.

# Norway

## AG Actors

According to the respondents, AG actors are present in Norway. A few politicians in government are well-connected with some AG groups, while other politicians are not active members but still participate in AG movement activities. Respondents name The Christian Democrats (Kristelig Folkeparti), The Progress Party, and segments of The Centre Party (Senterpartiet) as AG actors, as well as several politicians. Respondents indicate that some of the AG groups receive membership payments, and others receive public funding. Respondents categorize AG actors as mixed on the political ideology spectrum.

AG actors target ethnic and racial minorities, cis women, religious minorities, migrants, PWDs, and LGBTQI people and they use freedom of speech, abortion, sex education, sex work, “family values”, migration, political correctness, freedom of expression, the “trans lobby”, and trans people’s participation in sports as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda. A respondent says that,

“The Centre Party’s local party at Nesodden have ranking members that also are involved with Women’s Declaration International Norway, and other ‘feminist’ anti-gender groups, and also openly meet and participate with conservative Christian groups like ‘Foreldrenettverket’. They also openly meet with conspiracy theorists and anti-state activists like Kari Angeliqve Jaquesson.”

The same respondent writes,

“Nordisk Motstandsbevegelse, the Nazi group, has previously threatened and demonstrated against Pride and “The Gay Lobby”. It has yet to be confirmed whether the terrorist (Zaniar Matapour) behind the recent shooting at a gay club in Oslo is connected to any groups.”

Respondents report that in the last year, AG actors have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and the number of people participating in their events, in terms of increases in funding, and political connections. According to a respondent:

“The leader of Women’s Declaration International Norway has become an international celebrity and is held in high regard by the alt-right for being investigated by the police for harassment and transphobia towards a trans woman.”

One of the respondents notes that the Survey was unable to fully capture the peculiarities of AG opposition in Norway:

“The survey at this point to not cater to the nuances of anti-gender work in a Norwegian context, as actors might not appear to be connected to anti-gender groups but still platform their agenda and members, or for example how they continuously write articles, create fake news and target specific open trans people, but not as a group, but as a ‘worried parent’ or ‘Biologist’ or ‘Biotechnologist’. Other actors have also created several groups just to seem like they have the support of more people. Or they have created groups with specifically planned names to seem like they represent a whole group of people. Like for example the anti-gender group ‘Lesbian Feminists’ uses their name strategically to appear to be speaking on the behalf of all lesbian feminists. Example: ‘Lesbian Feminists are of the opinion that trans women pose a risk to us.’

Respondents name the following as barriers to counteracting AG opposition: lack of proper legislation, a lack of political will, powerful AG actors within the government, a lack of interest/actions from international organizations, and a general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

1 Respondent believes that the human rights situation for TGD communities in Norway has not changed and 1 respondent believes that it has worsened. In Respondents recall several incidents in the past year of experiencing verbal attacks from AG groups, or someone else as a result of AG narratives. The incidents were reported to the local police, who opened cases most of the time. These incidents are still under investigation.

Respondents also recall physical attacks, including the [Oslo Shooting](#). Information about these activities being coordinated with other AG actors is not known. These cases have been reported and are still under investigation.

1 Respondent also mentions threats used by AG actors:

“Video in social media encourage violence and murder towards gay people. Shared between radical Islamists on social media before the shooting.”

The respondent affiliated with an organization reports experiencing the following challenges as the result of AG opposition: the need to stop operations temporarily or permanently, need to cancel events, limited opportunities to involve allies in activities, need to relocate staff/board/volunteers due to threats, less ability to implement long-term strategy and a need to modify strategy in order to respond to attacks, fewer community members accessing services, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, internal conflicts, staff/volunteers/board leaving their positions, and legal threats and/or proceedings.

Respondents report that AG groups have not been able to have any significant influence over policies in Norway in the past year. However, access to gender-affirming healthcare was mentioned as one of the areas where AG actors have had influence. The details and outcome of this influence was not specified.

## Role of the Media

1 Respondent reports that AG actors engage in the creation and spread of fake news relating to TGD communities, using TV, print media, local forum websites, FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, and webpages to communicate with their target audiences. Their content gets reported on social media and sometimes gets taken down. 1 Respondent fully and 1 somewhat agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization. 1 Respondent fully agrees and 1 somewhat disagrees that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Portugal

## AG Actors

Respondents report that some AG groups are in the government and some in several parties, and that their alleged crimes and wrongful actions are rarely investigated. Chega and Alternativa Democratica Nacional (AND) were named as parties with AG actors. Chega has 11 seats in the parliament, while AND has none.

The respondents report that AG actors and groups target ethnic and racial minorities, migrants, and LGBTQI/TGDI communities, and use “family issues”, abortion, racism, and “children’s protection from harmful education” as their main discursive points in spreading and gaining support for their agenda. Respondents categorize actors as right-wing on the political ideology spectrum. Information about their coordination is not known.

According to respondents, in the past year, AG groups have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and participating in their events, as well as having more space in public opinion platforms.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

Both respondents believe that the human rights situation for TGD groups has worsened in the past year. AG actors engage in verbal attacks. A respondent reports that

“Comments on social media, counter-campaigns relating to gender issues with presence in both digital and print are present.”

“Columnists and opinion makers have the light on online journals and write about trans issues, mostly depreciating, making fun, mocking, joking, stating that is dangerous, that its ideology.... (Expresso journal, PUBLICO journal, others).”

Respondents do not know whether these actions are coordinated between various AG actors. These attacks have not been reported to authorities. Physical violence or threats were not reported in the Survey.

According to 1 respondent, challenges resulting from AG opposition are psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board, less ability to implement long-term strategy, and a need to modify strategy to respond to attacks were reported as challenges resulting from AG opposition. 1 Respondent reports no organizational challenges resulting from AG opposition.

1 Respondent points out that AG actors have been able to influence TGD issues in sports. General failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness, lack of proper legislation, and lack of political will were named as the main barriers to counteracting AG opposition.

## Role of the Media

Respondents report that AG groups create and spread false and harmful information about TGD communities, using FaceBook, Instagram, and Twitter to communicate with audiences. While their posts were reported to social media platforms, the content was not taken down. Both respondents somewhat agree that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and fully agree that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Spain

## AG Actors

Respondents report that some AG actors in Spain are in the government, and that the government does not efficiently investigate alleged crimes committed by AG groups. The Spanish Feminist Party and the VOX party were named as AG political parties. Information about their funding is unknown to respondents. Respondents indicate that AG actors target migrants, TGD communities, and religious minorities, and use sex education, sex work, gender self-determination, transmisogyny, LGR without medicalization, and inclusion of trans women in sports as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda. These groups are either mixed or right-wing in terms of their political ideologies. AG groups have been growing in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media, and in their ability to shape political decisions and impact policies in the past year.

Respondents name powerful AG actors within the government and the general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness as the main challenges to countering AG opposition.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent affiliated with a registered organization believes that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year, while the other respondent believes that it has improved. AG actors engage in verbal attacks, as a respondent explains:

“Primarily online, specifically on Twitter. There is a rising trend of verbal attacks on people who state to disagree with TERF postulates.”

Physical violence or threats by AG actors were not reported in the Survey.

The respondent affiliated with the organization reports the following as a result of AG opposition: fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, as well as limited access to funds.

## Role of the Media

AG actors engage in the creation and spread of false information about TGD communities and use TV, print media, FaceBook, Instagram, and Twitter to communicate with audiences. While their harmful posts do get reported on social media platforms, content rarely gets taken down. Both respondents agree that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, and that the social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.



# Switzerland

## AG Actors

The respondent reports that some members of AG groups are in the government, and some AG actors are far-right parties, but whether they have seats in the parliament or not is unknown to the respondent. The respondent believes that they don't receive any funding. AG actors primarily target TGD communities:

“They say that trans youth are a myth and they need conversion-like therapy. Psychotherapists who support trans rights are activists and they should be banned from practice. They also target trans women as male predators or autogynephilia.”

Overall, AG actors were categorized as mixed on the political ideology spectrum. According to the respondent, Swiss AG groups have connections and branches in other French-speaking countries (for example, Belgium and France).

The respondent indicates that AG groups have not engaged in physical violence directed at vulnerable groups. According to the respondent, these groups have been becoming stronger in terms of the number of people supporting them on social media and participating in their events, an increase in their political connections, and their ability to shape political decisions / impact policies.

The respondent names the following as the main barriers to counteracting AG opposition: lack of proper legislation, lack of political will, and lack of interest/ actions from international organizations.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

The respondent believes that the human rights situation for TGD groups has worsened in the past year. The respondent reports verbal attacks by AG groups:

“It’s in the media; they say that we are activists and that we just want to ‘transform’ kids.”

Physical attacks or threats were not reported in the Survey. The respondent reports that the organization they are affiliated with has experienced fewer community members accessing services, and psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout experienced by staff/volunteers/board as a result of AG opposition. The respondent doesn’t believe that AG actors have been able to influence any policy relating to TGD communities in the past year.

## Role of the Media

AG actors create and spread false and harmful information about TGD communities and use TV, print media, FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter, and websites as their communication platforms. The respondent fully agrees that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization and that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# United Kingdom (UK)

## AG Actors

Some respondents refrained from answering the question about whether AG groups exist in the UK or selected “not applicable”, but 1 respondent states that

“The ruling conservative party has several senior ministers who are openly committed to anti gender campaigns.”

Respondents state that AG groups receive funding, but that this information is not accessible, or is hidden. However, 1 Respondent says that AG groups receive,

“Millions of pounds – often through crowdfunders (the money is thought to come from the international anti-gender movement), from rich celebrities, but also some have received grant funding from the National Lottery and other funders that typically fund charitable work.”

AG actors target TGD groups, intersex groups, migrant, PWDs, cis women, and ethnic and racial minorities, and they use freedom of speech, sex education, trans women in sports, women’s / single sex spaces, and “erasure of sex” as their main discursive topics to spread and gain support for their agenda:

“Up until recently it had been around ‘sex based rights’, freedom of speech and ‘protecting children’. However, it is becoming more broadly an attack on ‘woke culture’ and we have recently seen increasing focus on sex education but also things like Drag Queen Story Time.”

Respondents categorize AG actors as mixed or left-wing on the political ideology spectrum. AG actors coordinate with each other. 1 Respondent states that

“LGB Alliance / Womens Place UK / Fair Play for Women / Sex Matters / Transgender Trend all cross-pollinate social media activities.”

Another respondent states that

“‘gender critical’ pseudo-feminist groups like ‘Sex matters’ have combined with pro conversion therapy groups like Genspect, and attended religious right wing events like Family Education Trust’s annual conference.”

This respondent provided [this link](#) as a source.

1 Respondent indicates coordination between AG groups, stating that

“Anti-abortion organisations have definitely co-ordinated with transphobic organisers – for example, Christian Concern.”

AG groups engage in violence or incitement of violence:

“Physical violence has been relatively limited and largely stochastic. A trans woman was subject to a far-right arson attack in 2019, the arsonist had been reposting gender-critical news stories. More recently in 2021 /2022, escalations in relatively mild physical violence towards both cisgender and trans women have increased at protests by some more radical anti-trans protesters. The escalating anti-gender rhetoric driven by so-called gender-critical groups has also given rise to interest from far-right groups with terrorist links like Patriotic Alternative who have run a recent campaign against Drag Queen Story Hour.”

Another respondent says,

“There has been incitement to violence. There have been physical altercations when trans allies and trans people have counter-protested transphobic rallies – these are often portrayed as ‘violent trans activists’ but typically it has been self-defense.”

Respondents indicate that AG groups have been growing in terms of their ability to shape political decisions / impact policies, the strengthening of their political connections, and an increase in their financial capacities. Respondents also state that the number of people supporting their social media and participating in their events is growing.

Respondents indicate that the following were the biggest obstacles to counteracting AG opposition: lack of political will, and government siding with AG actors, with some AG actors being in the government. They report that the media climate, lack of proper legislation, and lack of police effectiveness were the second biggest obstacles.

## Impact on TGD/LGBTQI Communities

3 Out of 4 respondents report that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the UK in the past year. According to respondents, TGD activists and organizations did not experience any physical attacks or threats in the past year linked to AG opposition. However, they report that verbal attacks are common. 1 Respondent says that their organization was placed on the [Gender Mapper](#) map used by gender-critical groups to target TGD healthcare, even though this organization was not providing medical services.

All respondents indicate that the impact of AG opposition on their organizations has been, in descending order, psycho-emotional stress and/or burnout was experienced by staff/volunteers/board, fewer advocacy opportunities / limited ability to reach decision-makers, legal constraints, the need to stop operations temporarily, limited opportunities to involve allies, internal conflicts, and safety and security, even during online events.

Respondents report that AG actors have managed to remove trans women from participating in gender-appropriate sporting activities, including cycling, triathlons, Rugby, and swimming:

“Government is planning to eliminate trans-inclusive use of single-sex spaces. The government also appears to have been spurred into attacking trans healthcare although the results of this are yet to come to fruition.”

## Role of the Media

Respondents state that AG actors spread false news about TGD communities, using TV, print media, FaceBook, Twitter, YouTube, and websites to communicate with audiences. While respondents report AG social media posts to social media platforms, content only sometimes gets taken down:

“Depends on the platform – social media reporting sometimes gets things taken down, complaints about the media or press rarely achieve anything.”

2 Respondents fully agree that social media platforms are the primary means for AG mobilization, while 1 respondent fully disagrees. All 4 respondents fully agree that social media platforms are not sufficiently enforcing their rules to prevent harmful and/or fake news from spreading and/or violent actions from being planned.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are based on the most common global trends revealed by the Survey.

The assessment from the majority of respondents that the human rights situation for TGD communities has worsened in the past year should be a cause for alarm for activists, policy-makers, and donors. This alarming reality that the Survey brings to light demands that there should be more of an investment in TGD activism in terms of creating more awareness and more critical knowledge about AG opposition.

Building on this knowledge, analyzing existing activist approaches would help to critically rethink activist strategies in order for them to be more effective. The efficacy of activist approaches and strategies ideally need to include other parties: there need to be more discussions and collaborations between donors, policy-makers, TGD activists, and other socially progressive actors in order to understand the factors contributing to the success of AG actors, and to develop joint strategies to counteract the growth and impact of the AG movement. For example, as AG actors are globally weaponizing concepts like “family values”, sex education, abortion, children’s protection, and “Western ideas”, more critical knowledge is needed to understand how these concepts can be reclaimed through redefining them outside of a cis-heteronormative lens. and how the public communication coming out of activist circles can be improved upon in order to counteract the skewed perceptions that these AG narratives create and foster.

Moreover, as AG actors have successfully managed to position TGD communities and their rights against the women’s/feminist agenda in several contexts, further specific knowledge needs to be created around this topic and more discussions between TGD and feminist movements need to take place in order to clarify that this is a false dichotomy manufactured by the AG movement, and that the principles, values, aims and goals that govern the TGD human rights movement are the same as those that underpin the feminist/women’s movement.

Another aspect that the Survey highlights is the leading challenge experienced by activists resulting from the AG opposition – that of the psycho-emotional well-being of activists. Political discussions at the highest level need to include an awareness of this challenge, as well as ways to prevent and/or mitigate it. Undoubtedly, donors need to invest more in the safety, security, and psycho-emotional well-being of activists. Without this investment, the tendency of activists to leave activism may grow, which would pose a serious threat to the TGD movements, and human rights activism in general.

Pursuant to this, the security and safety of activists and organizations need to be prioritized in funding models as well as in high-political discussions because, otherwise, a growing number of community members may no longer be able to access the services provided by TGD/LGBTQI organizations, which would leave these members in even more vulnerable situations, especially when it comes to life-saving services related to HIV, psycho-emotional support, and other medical, social, and legal assistances. For many, lack of access to these services means vulnerability and exposure to HIV and other health-related issues, homelessness, violence, incarceration, and even death.

Another issue highlighted by the Survey is that due to AG opposition, advocacy opportunities for TGD activists are becoming increasingly limited, and activists have less capacity to reach decision-makers themselves. Therefore, beyond the financial investment in advocacy, donor institutions themselves need to proactively invest in enabling and facilitating discussions between activists and decision-makers, as donors and other institutions have relatively more power to reach decision-makers.

Activists, donors, and policy-makers also need to invest more political attention and resources into international and national policies and legislation that tackle the disinformation and radicalization of the AG movement, as the Survey revealed the main barriers to counteracting AG opposition to be the lack of political will, lack of proper legislation, and general failure to hold perpetrators accountable / lack of police effectiveness,

Finally, as the Survey showed, social media is the main domain enabling AG discourses to flourish and mobilization to take place. Donors need to support activist communication efforts more and activists need to be more invested in effective public communication. This requires more knowledge and resources for effective messaging (including message testing), understanding social opinions and factors contributing to radicalization, and utilization of more diverse

communication channels. Most importantly, social media platforms need to be held accountable. More and more effective regulations and policies are needed to force social media platforms to enforce higher safety and ethics standards on their platforms, ensuring that they do not enable disinformation that leads to social conflict and violence. Due to the transnational nature of social media platforms, discussions and policy efforts targeted at them are needed at the international level.

## Summary of Recommendations

### Donors

1. In funding portfolios, prioritize projects aimed at:
  - a. producing more critical knowledge on AG opposition, factors contributing to radicalization, and effective strategies for counteracting it,
  - b. increasing the capacity of activists and organizations, as well as their safety, security, and well-being,
  - c. producing effective and wide-reaching communication,
  - d. building intersectional cross-movement alliances, and
  - e. tackling disinformation and radicalization.
2. Beyond funding advocacy projects, proactively leverage positions of power to facilitate discussions between activists and decision-makers.
3. Provide flexible funding to adequately respond to emerging issues and increase core funding opportunities.



## Decision-makers

1. Increase the participation of TGD communities in consultations for policy making – not only on issues that specifically impact TGD communities, but on all social issues.
2. Invest in understanding the factors contributing to anti-democratic radicalization, and conflicts operating in local contexts.
3. In consultation with various progressive/emancipatory and socially vulnerable groups, create or improve policies that address disinformation and anti-democratic radicalization.

## Activists

1. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in improving the understanding of the factors contributing to radicalization, the nature of AG opposition, and strategies on how to effectively counteract it.
2. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in effective communication, both in terms of the content and the channels to reach as many audiences as possible.
3. Mobilize new resources and invest the existing ones in the safety, security, and well-being of the staff, board, and volunteers of the organization.
4. Liaise with social media platforms or organizations who can provide support in reaching out to social media to address disinformation.
5. Focus energies on building alliances and solidarity with other socially progressive and emancipatory movements, especially among feminist groups.



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