



trans* & gender diverse how are European

Parents' Manifesto

*Presented to the
Lisbon Parliament
23rd September 2022*

European Network of Parents (ENP)
together with
AGEDO, AMPGYL, AMPLOS, DRACHMA, IZADJI
from
Italy, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Serbia



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trans* & gender diverse children in Europe

**An ever increasing number of
trans* and gender diverse children and youth in Europe
are seeking recognition for their right
to self-determination &
to gender-affirming care.**

Introduction

In recent years, there has been “a paradigm shift” in approaches to caring for trans* youth (including health care and parenting practices), moving away from a reparative and pathologizing model toward an affirming approach to care¹. Trans* kids and adolescents have better health and social outcomes when strongly supported by their parents/caregivers. Parents/caregivers have begun to unite in associations and support groups to fight together for the rights of their children.

As parents and activists for the rights of trans* and gender-diverse children and youth, we have witnessed how these rights are often not guaranteed and are even trampled upon. The situation in the EU is uneven; some countries are adopting inclusive strategies faster than others with other countries actively opposing them.

¹ Keo-Meier and Ehrensaft, 2018; Pyne, 2014



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We believe that the European Union and other European institutions and UN bodies must take responsibility for the consequences of this lack of regard. This often leads to social isolation as well as school dropout with a high risk of severe psychological problems - depression, anxiety, eating disorder, self-harm - and even suicide.

Supporting trans* and gender- diverse children early in their lives, helps them in their personal development and growth as healthy adults. It can boost self-esteem and belonging. They can be themselves without restriction, criticism, or judgement.

International human rights standards consider equality and non-discrimination as basic principles.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights² states:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2 of the same Declaration adds:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex,

This implies the right to be protected against discrimination on various grounds, including sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Other Articles in the Declaration continue to reinforce these human rights.

² <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



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ENP, the European Network of Parents of LGBTI+ persons, is an umbrella organisation for Associations and informal groups of Parents of LGBTI+ persons across Europe. ENP gathers families that work towards a more inclusive society; families that recognize that every person should be treated with dignity and respect – free from any form of discrimination or oppression.

ENP's Project "Let's change the pace! – how are European trans* & gender diverse children doing?" - sponsored by the Erasmus+ programme, KA210-ADU-000034033, has involved many European Associations that work and advocate for the rights of trans* children and youth.

Representatives of these associations from Italy, Malta, Portugal, Serbia and Spain, as partners of the project, have met with other associations from Denmark, Iceland, UK and Italy to broaden the debate. Three webinars were held, each spread over a number of days. Parents shared stories, achievements, goals, fears, doubts, hopes as well as discussed policies aimed at the well-being of their trans* children.

Keeping clearly in mind that all youth is the future of our society and their growth is happening today, and can't be postponed to tomorrow, we have drawn up this Manifesto in which together we call upon ALL institutions including the European Union, the Council of Europe and the committees and bodies of the United Nations that are involved with Human Rights and Childhood Rights to join in our efforts to influence the European nations, with recommendations, campaigns and regulations.



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We ask to:

Clause 1

Recognise the right to gender self-determination of trans* children and youth and **safeguard** this right through sound legislation based on protocols recommended by international directives, **guaranteeing** the right of trans* children and youth to change their assigned gender and their legal name, given at birth, without the need for medical diagnosis, surgeries or procedures in court.

Clause 2

Request all member States to offer gender affirmation centres throughout the territories of each country in compliance with the “Right to Health” as also stated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the World Health Organisation.

Clause 3

Ensure that all trans* and gender diverse persons seeking gender affirmation medical support are treated in trans-specific age-appropriate environments, especially the young children; **increase** the number of paediatric facilities where children may receive support.



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Clause 4

Ensure that treatments (puberty blockers and hormone replacement therapy) are prescribed respecting guidelines recommended by international directives. Timing is extremely important in regard to puberty blockers.³

Clause 5

Explore & Respect the varying needs of each individual. There is no “one size fits all”! The specific needs for gender affirming medical interventions should be identified on a case-by-case basis and addressed in a timely manner so that children and adolescents can live their best lives. This is recommended by the World Professional

³ As expressed in the new Standard of Care 7 by Wpath “Two goals justify intervention with puberty suppressing hormones: (i) their use gives adolescents more time to explore their gender nonconformity and other developmental issues; and (ii) their use may facilitate transition by preventing the development of sex characteristics that are difficult or impossible to reverse if adolescents continue on to pursue sex reassignment. “Adolescents may be eligible for puberty suppressing hormones as soon as pubertal changes have begun. In order for adolescents and their parents to make an informed decision about pubertal delay, it is recommended that adolescents experience the onset of puberty to at least Tanner Stage 2” As far as hormone therapy is concerned Standard of Care by Wpath suggest: “Adolescents may be eligible to begin feminising/masculinizing hormone therapy, preferably with parental consent. In many countries, 16-year-olds are legal adults for medical decision-making and do not require parental consent. Ideally, treatment decisions should be made among the adolescent, the family, and the treatment team”





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Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH).⁴

Clause 6

Ban any form of conversion therapy attempting to change an individual's gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation to align it with heterosexual and cisgender norms. All persons should live their inner gender and sexuality freely, without condemnation or restrictions.

Clause 7

Protect trans* children and adolescents in their daily lives from all phobias, violence, hate speech, bullying and harm through sound policies and laws by promoting gender-neutral educational and family environments and a culture of diversity and inclusion in all spheres of life.

⁴ EUPATH, WPATH Statement regarding Medical Affirming Treatment including Puberty Blockers for Transgender Adolescents. As professional medical organizations, the European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH), and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), as well as the other signatories to this statement, all have serious concerns about this ruling and wish to express that although treatment for young transgender adolescents involves uncertainties, as is the case in many fields involving young people, several studies demonstrate the clear mental health benefit of gender-affirming medical treatment (including puberty blockers). Withholding such treatment is harmful and carries potential life-long social, psychological and medical consequences. https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/Public%20Policies/2020/FINAL%20Statement%20Regarding%20Informed%20Consent%20Court%20Case_Dec%2016%202020.docx.pdf?t=1608225376



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Clause 8

Request all member States to include gender identity, its affirmation and its protection as part of the curricula in all educational institutions. **Provide** study modules and continuous professional development on this subject to all those working with young people. Schools need to include teaching materials that celebrate diversity.

Clause 9

Promote a non-gender-stereotyped vision of life. Toys and books need to move away from gender stereotypes, and represent and celebrate diversity. By campaigning in favour of a less stereotyped society, society itself becomes more inclusive.

Clause 10

Establish alliances with strategic actors (NGOs, professionals, academic institutions, community-based organisations and the media) that provide vital services and support, and **engage** in bridge-building and dialogue with public institutions to get these on board, as this is necessary to create synergies and enhance outcomes with visible and positive impacts.

Clause 11

Unite efforts to positively influence other countries' governments, with the support of the European Commission, the Council of Europe



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and the United Nations Human Rights bodies, and if this fails, **support** the imposition of sanctions bearing in mind that the European countries are part of the whole European environment that should enable freedom, diversity, inclusiveness as fundamental pillars of every citizen's growth pathway.

Clause 12

Ensure that all States have the necessary legislation to recognise and safeguard trans* and gender diverse children and youth, while further ensuring that the law is implemented and supported by sanctions and timely enforcement.

As parents organised in NGOs, we will:

- **Make** our voices heard and disseminate knowledge.
- **Support** families in their journey.
- **Share** our experiences so that society can learn from our stories that will be updated with new facts about life in different social, cultural, religious and political contexts.
- **Collaborate** with other national and international NGOs to put pressure where needed.
- **Build bridges** and set up communication channels with decision-makers at all levels of power.



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- **Ask for support** - financial and otherwise - to continue to provide vital services and support to individuals facing challenges with which we can empathise. NGOs have a more substantial ground-level impact.



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And as a conclusion:

We call upon you, policy makers and important stakeholders, to put forward bold actions that can play a key role in transforming the lives of trans* children and youth in Europe.

Together we will seek to:

Grow:	let's coordinate large-scale action across multiple sectors by mobilising key stakeholders, parents' organisations and activists.
Nourish:	with real testimonials, latest research and data, to feed the ever new solutions needed in each country and context.
Reward:	the best practices to celebrate these countries' pathways, showing the positive impact on the wellbeing of trans* children and youth.



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**It is with the utmost urgency
that we send a strong message
to have clear and sound legislation
in all EU countries.**

LET'S CHANGE THE PACE!



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