



The Coalition Against Hate Crime
C/O The Irish Council for Civil Liberties
First Floor,
Castleriver House,
14/15 Parliament Street,
Dublin
D02 FW60

June 19th, 2023

I am contacting you today on behalf of the Coalition Against Hate Crime (CAHC) in advance of Tuesday's statements on LGBTI+ equality in the Dáil.

Our Coalition has been troubled in recent weeks by attempts to misconstrue or distort the nature and purpose of this legislation and, in particular to use the debate as an opportunity to attack the LGBTI+ community and transgender people in particular.

According to ILGA Europe, last year was the most violent year for LGBTI+ people in Europe in a decade. Additionally, in the last number of years, the LGBTI+ community in Ireland has faced an increase in violent intimidation, up to and including incitement to hatred.

In light of all of this and in the face of these deliberate mischaracterisations during discussions of this legislation, it is worth recalling some factual information.

As of 2023, Ireland is one of the only EU states without hate crime legislation. International and regional standards require states to prohibit hate crime by law.

In 2022, 585 hate crimes were reported to the Gardaí, up by 30% on 2021. Many more went unreported and undiscussed.

Research in Ireland tells us that:

- 75% of LGBTI+ people in Ireland have been verbally abused due to being a member of the LGBTI+ community;
- One in three have been threatened with physical violence due to being a member of the LGBTI+ community;
- One in five have been punched, hit or physically attacked in public due to being a member of the LGBTI+ community;
- One in six members of the LGBTI+ community have experienced sexual violence.

Prevention of violence against LGBTI+ people was identified as the most important issue for LGBTI+ people in the NXF Burning Issues report. We know that LGBTI+ victims of hate crime are 12 times more likely to experience acute distress when targeted on account of their identity.

Finally, it is clear that some politicians are trying to use the passage of this legislation to import toxic "culture war" type discussion into Irish political discourse. While we welcome healthy and robust debate on the detail of this legislation, the discussion should not stray into the areas of conspiracy, disinformation and false narratives.

We believe that everyone has the right to freedom of expression but inciting hatred has a real world impact on people's safety and must be prohibited in line with human rights law and standards.

Our Coalition remains united in our call for its passage and for the critical role it can play in protecting not only the LGBTI+ community, but all minoritised individuals and groups who find themselves the victims of crimes, motivated by hate and prejudice.

We urge you to please set out your support for this Bill and to call on Government to commit to an action plan to combat hate in our society. This must include:

- Training for everyone working in the criminal justice system on the operation of the Hate Crime Bill;
- More community Gardaí who build up trust with affected communities;
- Improved monitoring, reporting and data collection;
- Better victim support;
- New measures to end online hate;
- A national awareness campaign;
- Addressing the root causes of hate with targeted education programmes.

We refer you to the briefings you will have received from us in advance of the second stage debate on the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022.

We are encouraging you to use the opportunity afforded by Tuesday's debate to re-iterate your party or group's support for this much needed legislation.

Yours sincerely,

The Coalition Against Hate Crime

The Coalition Against Hate Crime Ireland is made of 23 civil society organisations, including organisations representing communities commonly targeted by hate crime and hate speech in Ireland:

Age Action Ireland,

BelongTo,

Doras,

Dublin LGBTQ+ Pride,

Immigrant Council of Ireland,

Inclusion Ireland,

Independent Living Movement Ireland,

Intersex Ireland,

International Council of International Students,

Irish Council for Civil Liberties,

Irish Network Against Racism,

Irish Traveller Movement,

LGBT Ireland,

LGBT Travellers,

Nasc - Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre,

National LGBT Federation,

National Traveller Women's Forum,

National Women's Council,

National Youth Council of Ireland,

Outhouse -LGBTQ+ Centre,

Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre,

Sports Against Racism Ireland,

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)

