

# Being LGBT+ in the Czech Republic

*Experiences of LGBT+ people with prejudices, discrimination, harassment and hate violence*

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Ombudsman's research 2019

Summary in English



The Public Defender of Rights, together with the Prague Pride Association, conducted one of the largest surveys among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people in the Czech Republic. The outcome of the survey was shared on the 17th of May, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. The questionnaire was mainly focused on problems and obstacles that many LGBT+ people have faced in the past five years, how society accepts them, what social stereotypes and prejudices they have encountered and also on their experience with discrimination and harassment.

A total of 2249 respondents have participated in the research, including 1981 lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people. Men and women were represented roughly equally (46% each), trans people, or people with transgender or trans sex past experiences to a lesser extent. The age structure was dominated by young people under 25. Based on sexuality, the gays represented the majority of respondents (43%), followed by lesbians (24%) and bisexuals (21%).

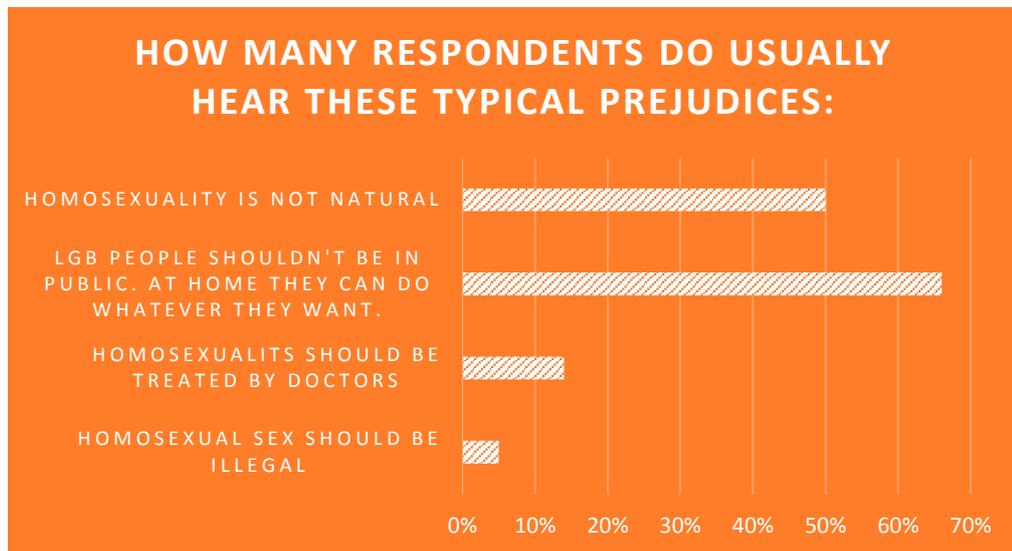
## What did the Ombudsman find out?

- Gays and lesbians consider the issue of same sex couples sharing their lives together. **The possibility of getting married and raising children as the most fundamental cause.** Making marriage available to same sex couples has a massive support among LGBT+ community with up to 93 % of those interviewed. 96 % of respondents also expressed beliefs that making marriage and adoptions available to same sex couples would mean a significant improvement in the life and status of a queer individual.



- Overall, the LGBT+ community tends to **recognize that their position in the Czech Republic is rather satisfactory**, however not without any problems. They still have to face prejudice, insults and threats. Routinely, they face odd behavioural encounters (people watch them in public, treat them less politely), opinions that they should not be publicly displaying their sexual orientation and prejudice, that homosexuality is unnatural.

- **More than a third of respondents have experienced discrimination in the last five years, which is 3 times higher than the general population.**



- **The vast majority of them, up to 91%, did not address these incidents in any way.** The reason behind staying silent would often be that these were **trivial incidents that were not worth the hustle of dealing with them**, combined with **overall scepticism** and the belief that **reporting these counts of discrimination would not change anything.**
- Most often, LGBT+ people have to face **discrimination or bullying in school or on their daily jobs.**
- **Nearly a quarter of respondents said they often experienced negative attitudes towards LGBT+ people at work.** 11 % of respondents have experienced discrimination or harassment at work in the past five years.
- Typically, **at school**, there are various manifestations of **ridicule, threats and bullying between the classmates.** However, according to the responders, there were even some instances, where the ridiculing and grossly offensive behaviour came **from the school staff.**
- **More than a half of the respondents have encountered harassment in the last 5 years (insults, ridicule),** which is slightly more than the Czech Republic's FRA research in 2012.

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MY TEACHER TOLD ME THAT HOMOSEXUALITY IS A DISEASE, SO I ASKED HIM, SINCE IT IS A DISEASE, HOW SHOULD IT BE TREATED. HE TOLD ME THAT THERE IS NO REMEDY, EXCEPT FOR SHOOTING MYSELF.

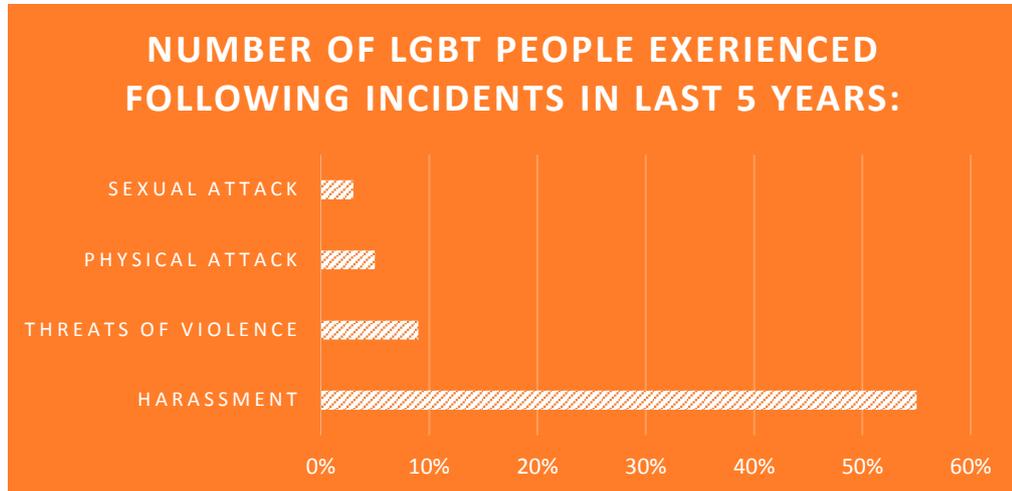
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ME AND MY PARTNER WERE COMMUTING BY THE METRO. WHEN IT WAS MY PARTNER'S STOP, WE KISSED GOODBYE. IN THE DOORWAY HE WAS VERBALLY ATTACKED BY A MAN WHO THEN TURNED TO ME AND TOSSED RUBBISH ACCOMPANYING HIS ACTION WITH THE WORDS "FUCKING FAG".

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- About one in ten respondents have also faced threats and almost the same share of physical or sexual assault. Harassment, threats or violence are usually committed by an **unknown adult in a public place** (street, square), making it difficult to address such incidents.



- **The vast majority of the LGBT+ citizens did not address these incidents and did not seek any help.** Even the most horrifying cases of attacks or threats were reported only by 13 % of the victims and when it comes to harassment, only 2 % of the victims came forward. In particular, about a fifth of the responders did not turn to the police because they did not feel like they could trust them, they were afraid of possible ridicule and their case would not be taken seriously.

## What needs to be changed?

The Ombudsman added some specific **recommendations** to various institutions on how to improve the situation of the LGBT community in the Czech Republic. These are recommendations in areas like private and family life of LGBT+ people, access to justice and effective legal protection, work and employment, education, health care, awareness within the LGBT+ community or behaviour of officials and police officers.

- Chamber of Deputies should **evaluate the importance, which the institution of marriage has in lives of gay and lesbian people and thoroughly consider the possibility of marriage for these couples.**
- **Trans people**, who want to change their gender in official documents, should **not be further forced to sterilization.** Some of them cannot or do not want to undergo the surgery for serious medical or personal reasons.
- When it comes to making the justice accessible to the LGBT+ community, the Ombudsman suggests that the Government and the Chamber of Deputies grants LGBT+ individuals the **same protection against hate crime as racial,**



**ethnic, national or religious groups** have. For example, in discriminatory disputes, **adjusting the burden of proof in such a way that it also occurs in the cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.**

- Employers should avoid harassment and have an **action plan in case sexual orientation or gender identity harassment occurs in the workplace.** The Ombudsman in this context also recommending, that the State Labor Inspection Office should **methodologically guide labor inspectorates in carrying out controls and investigation of discrimination against LGBT+ employees.**
- Educational institutions should be **mindful of the environment that they nurture their students in, rigorously investigating every suspicion of bullying and educate the pupils on sexual minorities.** The Ombudsman also suggest that the **topic of human sexuality and homophobia become a part of the compulsory pedagogical basis of teacher's education.**
- Competent associations (NGOs) should **ensure greater awareness of LGBT+ people about their rights and defence options.**
- The Ministry of the Interior and Police Presidium should make sure that the **issues of the LGBT+ community are not ridiculed, taken lightly or dealt with inappropriately (especially by officials and police officers).**

The complete research report is available in czech here:  
[www.ochrance.cz/diskriminace/vyzkum/](http://www.ochrance.cz/diskriminace/vyzkum/)