

Transgender Europe (TGEU) Statement on DSM/ICD-Revision

TGEU urges that any revision of the DSM and the ICD must be carried out with full compliance to the Yogyakarta Principles.

The Steering Committee of Transgender Europe (TGEU) lends its support to the joint statement of May 28, 2008 issued by the US-American organizations National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), the Transgender Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), the Transgender Law Center (TLC) and the Transgender Youth Family Allies (TYFA). After meeting with the American Psychological Association (APA), these four groups reported that "[they] are confident that a fair, unbiased review of current knowledge can result in a DSM-V that can move society toward a more rational and humane understanding of transgender people." DSM is the "Diagnostic and Statistic Manual" published by the APA. The review process will go on for several years, and the APA welcomes suggestions from lay persons as well as mental health professionals in this process.

Transgender Europe expressed in its press release after the 2nd European Transgender Council in Berlin:

"Despite much scientific controversy, forms of transgender continue to be listed in the DSM IV of the APA, just as homosexuality once was, and in the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) of the World Health Organization (WHO) as psychological disorders. DSM and ICD are guideline manuals used in healthcare to standardise the definitions of what constitutes mental illness. Transgender Europe emphatically refuses this pathologisation and will assist the next reformulation of the DSM in a critical manner."

We, the Steering Committee, are firmly of the conviction that the stigmatization, which in part is grounded in the mistaken assumption that gender variance is prima facie a medical disorder, is discriminatory. Furthermore, we cite the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Principle 18:

"No person may be forced to undergo any form of medical or psychological treatment, procedure, testing or be confined to a medical facility, based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Notwithstanding any classifications to the contrary, a person's sexual orientation and gender identity are not, in and of themselves, medical conditions and are not to be treated, cured or suppressed."

A number of national governments and international bodies have passed resolutions in support of these principles: the European Parliament (EP), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization of American States (OAS).

Any revision of the DSM and the ICD must be carried out with full compliance to the Yogyakarta Principles.