

Human Rights and intersex people

POSITIVES

- » Legislative changes in some European countries to recognise intersex people and combat discrimination
- » Emerging national jurisprudence challenging human rights violations of intersex people
- » Pioneering work to raise awareness by intersex and LGBTI NGOs, equality bodies and other national human rights structures
- » Emerging progressive views among some health practitioners on the harm caused by unnecessary medical interventions
- » Increasing attention given to the human rights of intersex people by European and international organisations

CONCERNS

- » Unnecessary medical and surgical treatment to “normalise” the sex of intersex infants without fully informed consent
- » Intersex people’s right to physical integrity and ability to develop their gender identity not respected
- » Invisibility: low public awareness of existence of intersex persons (some of whom were called “hermaphrodites” in the past) and their human rights problems
- » Difficulties in accessing medical records
- » Male-female binary interpretation of society results in stigmatisation and social exclusion
- » Intersex conditions still classified as pathologies
- » Medical interventions on intersex fetuses
- » Medicalisation of intersex people hampers their right to attain the highest possible level of health
- » Birth registration procedures and medical pressure to conform put an overwhelming burden on parents of intersex babies to make quick decisions
- » International sports bodies apply discriminatory sex-verification procedures

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Stop unnecessary medical treatment and surgery of intersex people without their consent
- » Respect intersex persons’ right not to undergo sex assignment treatment
- » Review medical classifications which pathologise intersex people
- » Improve law and policy to facilitate the legal recognition of intersex individuals on official documents, respecting their right to self-determination
- » Ensure that national equal treatment and hate crime legislation protects intersex people
- » Give intersex people full access to their medical records
- » More in-depth research needed to adequately address discrimination and other violations of intersex people’s human rights
- » Raise public awareness and improve professional training about the problems encountered by intersex people
- » Involve intersex people in the development of measures to address the problems
- » Improve counselling of intersex children and their parents
- » Facilitate intersex people’s access to justice and investigate and acknowledge past human rights violations

