



Press Release
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Equal Rights for LGBTI People in Hong Kong

On 28 November, the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Consulate General of Germany co-organised the international conference “*LGBTI Rights and Freedom of Religion in Hong Kong and the European Union*” with the support of the Equal Opportunities Commission. Religious and civil society experts from Ireland, The Netherlands, Germany, Taiwan and Hong Kong discussed issues faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex people (LGBTI) in Hong Kong and the European Union (EU). The discussion focused on how to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and how to create acceptance for diversity, in particular among religious communities.

Carmen Cano, Head of the EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao said:

“Discrimination is never right and those who defend equality must do so for all. If Hong Kong aims to continue to be 'Asia's World City' and attract foreign talents, it needs to tackle discrimination against LGBTI people. [...] LGBTI people deserve the same rights as all other individuals — no new human rights are created for them and none should be denied to them. It is simply about equality and the respect of diversity.”

A report commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission and released in 2016 revealed that over half of Hong Kong's population (55.7%) supports legislation to protect LGBTI people from discrimination¹. Among 18-24 year olds, support for anti-discrimination against LGBTI people reaches 91.8%. Despite this public support, LGBTI people in Hong Kong do not have access to equal education or employment opportunities and face problems accessing healthcare. Hong Kong has comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation on the grounds of gender, race, and disability, but it does not on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status.

The Director of CUHK's Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies Professor Fanny Cheung acknowledged the need to better engage those who do not support full protection of LGBTI rights:

“We are aware of concerns, focusing on religion and family values, as well as freedom of expression. [...] To gain a better understanding, we need to remain open minded. [...] We need to learn to live with people who are different from one another – and celebrate diversity.”

German Deputy Consul General Karsten Tietz shared European experiences on LGBTI acceptance by religious groups: *“The European experience shows that faith does not require discrimination. Many churches in fact support the rights of LGBTI [...] LGBTI rights are indeed human rights and not rights exclusive to an individual group of society, therefore they are not special privileges for the LGBTI community”.*

The conference built on Hong Kong's 1st international LGBTI conference held in August 2014 and co-organised by the European Union, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

¹ <http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/upload/ResearchReport/20161251750293418312.pdf>