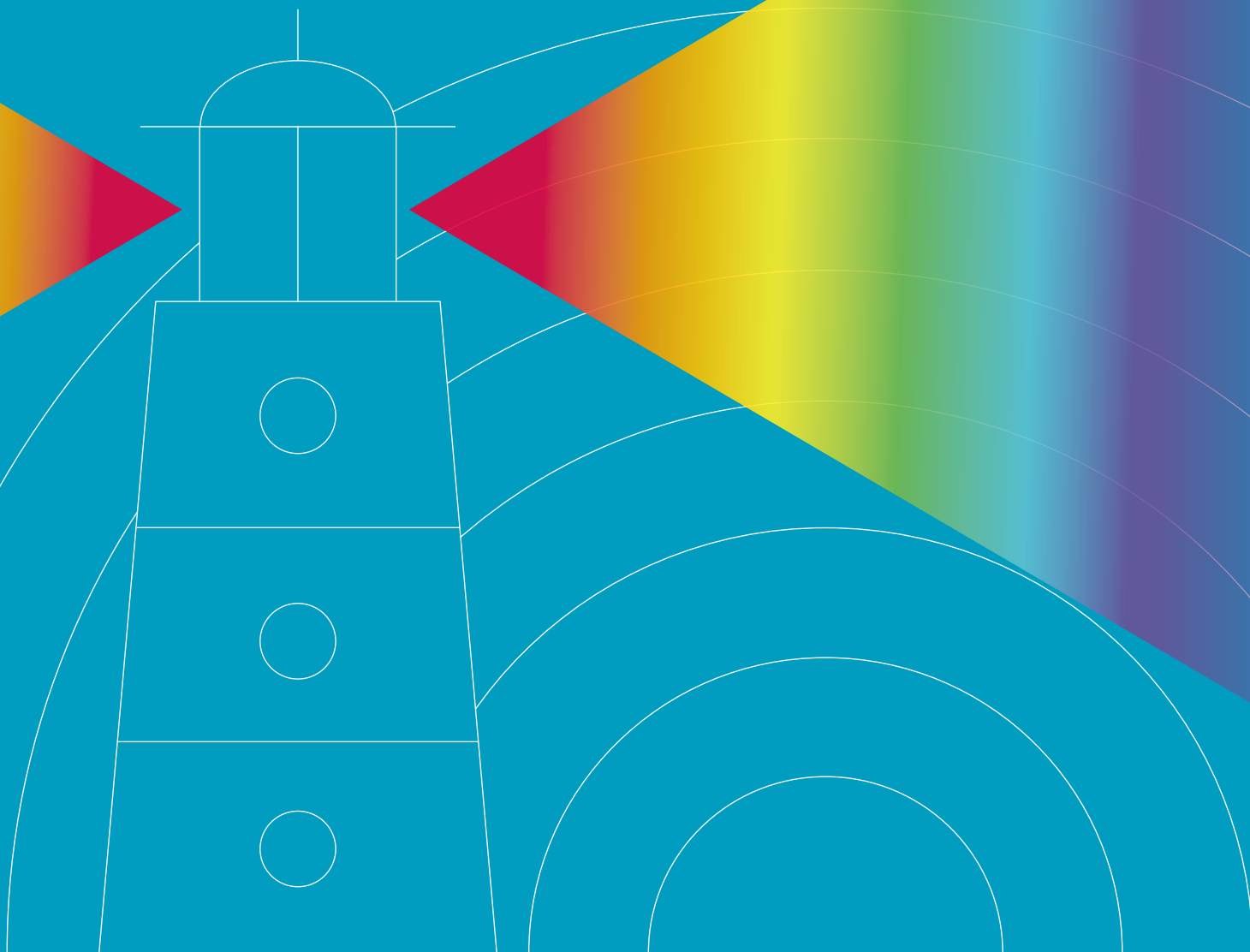


BIZNES NIE WYKLUCZA

# Safe Havens

Why Talk about LGBT+ People in the Workplace?



miłość  
nie wyklucza  
STOWARZYSZENIE

**SKANSKA**



# Safe Havens

Why Talk about LGBT+ People  
in the Workplace?

Safe Havens

Why Talk about LGBT+ People in the Workplace?

This publication was created thanks to conceptual and financial cooperation of Skanska Property Poland and Love Does Not Association

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Warsaw, 2022

ISBN of online version, English edition: 978-83-966501-0-8

ISBN of the printed version, English edition: 978-83-966501-1-5

Publication distributed free of charge

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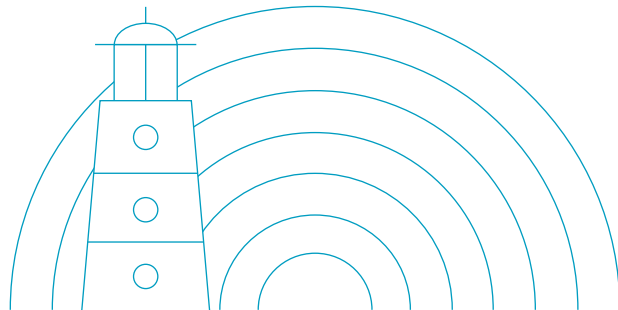
**NOZZ**



GAZETA.PL

**QUEER**<sup>PL</sup>  
PORTAL LUDZI LGBT

**MY  
COMPANY**  
POLSKA



**People working in more accepting companies enjoy better physical and mental health, which translates into the entire organization's results.**

# About the Report

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**The “Safe Havens” report is intended for various audiences who share the concern about creating inclusive workplaces.**

**For people from the LGBT+<sup>1</sup> community and their allies**, it can motivate them to look for a job in companies that take specific actions for this community and to build new or develop existing employee networks with allies in the workplace. **For employee networks** from various companies, the report can be a source of knowledge about what peer networks from other companies do and an inspiration to take further actions, including those carried out on an intercompany level, i.e. within the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks<sup>2</sup>.

The list of organizations and people who can support employers in creating safe havens will be helpful to both **networks and HR departments, as well as individuals in companies with a strong interest in the subject of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I)**. Sometimes in the maze of marketing activities by entities from the broadly understood DE&I environment, it is difficult to identify those that not only will be at the highest substantive level but also help influence the behavior and attitudes of people employed in organizations, including those in managerial positions. The list presented in the report includes people and organizations recommended by the business. Our report can be a guideline for these people and organizations regarding where to look for business partners and where there is fertile ground for joint action.

Finally, the report is addressed to **employers, both those who have already taken action and want to do more to improve the LGBT+ people’s situation and to those who have not yet taken such action** because of their belief they do not have the tools to do so within the framework of the current legal order. Meanwhile, there are tools and good examples from companies already making strides in this area. They operate under the conditions set by lawmakers but do not remain powerless – either at the level of individual employers or as a more comprehensive business community. Those still on the fence may be convinced that diversity and inclusion are integral parts of sustainable development – a trend that, given rising social expectations and regulatory requirements, the business cannot ignore. Moreover, as we mention in this report, it just pays off.

This report presents selected examples of employee networks, supportive actions and entities that can assist employers in creating an inclusive workplace, not only for LGBT+ people but also for a broader diversity. We hope this is not the last study of this type, and we suppose that the list of examples will be developed in subsequent editions. With this report, the first of its kind in Poland, we want to initiate a broad exchange of experience and knowledge on how the private sector can become an important, safe haven for employees from the LGBT + community. **Creating subsequent editions will depend on obtaining financial support and organizational commitment of the business in the coming years.**

1 As this report was created by several authors and contains many citations, we respect each choice in using an acronym for the LGBT+ community. Thus, in this publication, you will find abbreviations: LGBT, LGBTA, LGBTQ, LGBT+, LGBTQ+ or LGBTQI+.

2 You can find more information about LGBTQ+ Network of Networks on page 72 and throughout this report.

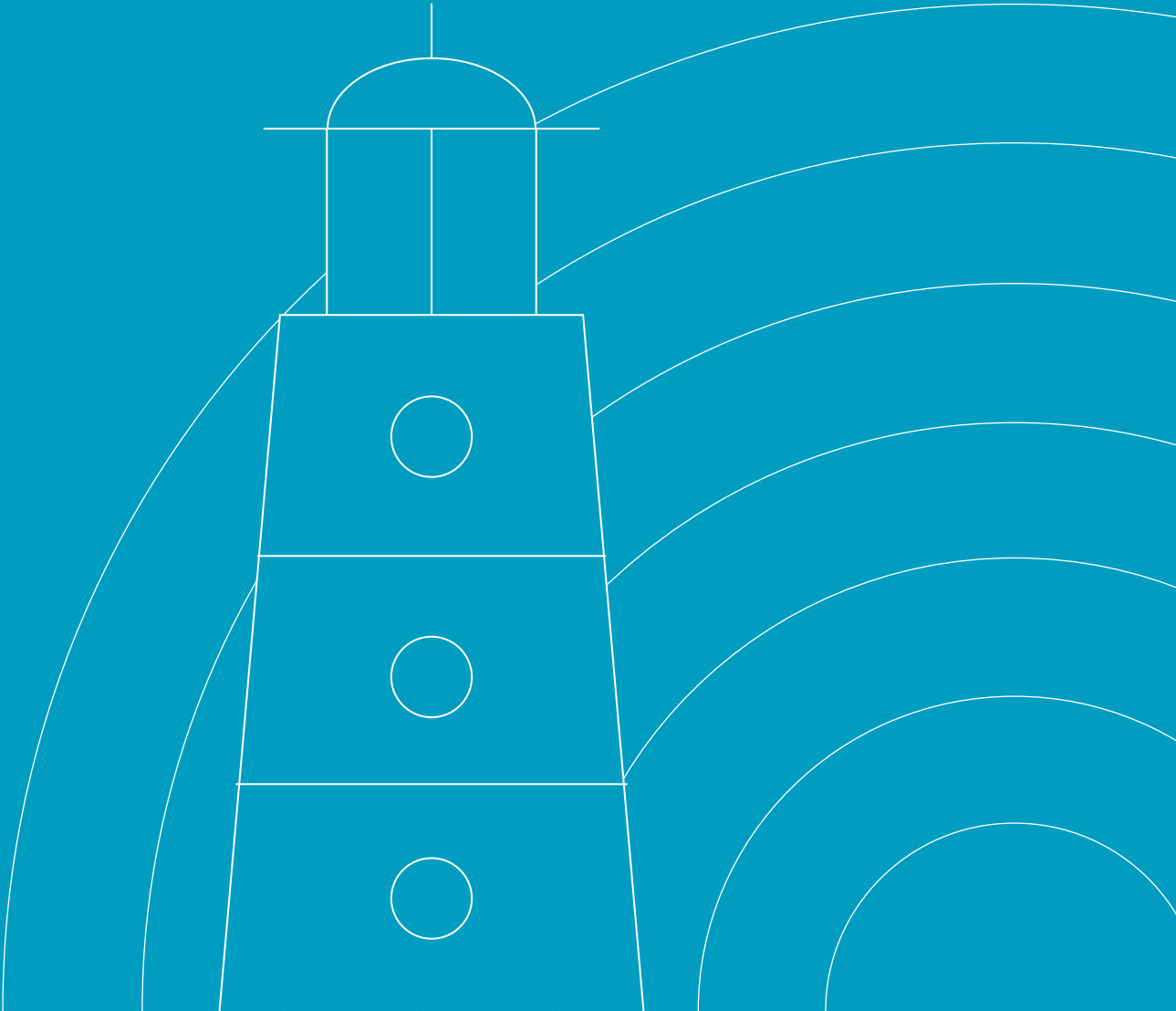
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# Introduction

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# Why Talk about LGBT+ People in the Workplace?

Hubert Sobecki | Love Does Not Exclude

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**“Why talk about LGBT+ people in the workplace?” is one of the questions we often hear during meetings with the business.**

On the one hand, companies in Poland are becoming increasingly aware that their teams include people struggling with additional difficulties resulting from legal and social discrimination. On the other hand, there is a growing awareness of possible solutions that would positively impact their lives. However, knowledge about how important in this puzzle the workplace and the rules around it are, as well as the employer's actions (or inaction) - is still missing in many instances.

On average, we spend half of our lives at work. We want to feel safe and at home there. In the case of LGBT+ people, this means, first of all, clear rules prohibiting unequal treatment, i.e. protecting against what they may have encountered in the family home, school, office or on the street. Secondly, **the sense of security is not only the absence of threats but also support in situations where the state fails.** Equal access to employee benefits for same-sex couples and internal policies that consider the needs of people in the gender affirmation process are just the first examples of such support. The last element is the organization's culture, which not only declares but also implements the principles of inclusion and strengthen people from the LGBT+ community.

**Such activities, procedures and work philosophy are still new in Polish business.** Of course, there are also high-profile marketing campaigns and declarations of love and acceptance. However, actual, well-thought-out initiatives that help people needing this help, although more common, are still perceived in terms of paving the way than industry standards.

On the following pages of this publication, we explain why they should be a standard - not only for ethical but also for business reasons - and we point to examples of employee groups operating in Poland and their activities. We also present social organizations that cooperate with businesses, and finally, we discuss specific solutions available in the realm of Polish law.

**This publication would not be needed in an ideal world where sexual orientation and gender identity have no bearing on our quality of life. However, in Poland in 2022, for LGBT+ people vulnerable to social stigma, exclusion and violence, it is the workplace that can become a safe haven.**



Hubert Sobecki  
Co-Chair  
Love Does Not Exclude Association

# On Being at the Forefront

Karolina Radziszewska | Skanska Property Poland

**The role of the leader, responsible for the well-being of employees in the organization, is to monitor their situation on an ongoing basis. What they experience in the workplace has a significant impact on their general psychological condition. These are words, gestures and decisions that can both hurt or keep you safe and motivated to work.**

We should also remember that nowadays, the line between private and business life is often blurred. It was largely influenced by the pandemic and remote work. The latter became, in a sense, a forced consequence of the former. As people, we are a whole that cannot be clearly separated into “professional” and “private” parts. These spheres intertwine. **Therefore, compensatory measures aimed at the community of LGBTQ+ employees are not only part of the canon of “employer actions” but also what is right and worth paying attention, time and energy to.**

My job is closely related to labor law. I know how important it is to look critically at both local laws and internal policies within an organization. I often ask myself: are our intentions and gestures – as an employer – reflected in the practices, policies and documents regulating the work environment? Do we give LGBTQ+ employees the confidence to refer to specific rules and corporate decisions? And finally: **is it enough to rely on what the principles of law currently ensure (in terms of the rights of LGBTQ+ employees), or should the employer reach beyond the law and compensate for the shortcomings with their resources?**

We closely monitor changes in national legislation and directions of changes in European legislation. We are equally attentive to other corporations operating in Poland implementing many beautiful and necessary compensatory measures for the LGBTQ+ community. That is why, together with the Love Does Not Exclude Association, we invited companies from the private sector which operate in Poland to share their good practices of measures aimed at LGBTQ+ employees.

**We trust that by identifying and popularizing numerous examples of such activities, the private sector – including its often heteronormative leaders – will be inspired, be bolder and become an important voice in efforts for equal rights for LGBTQ+ persons in Poland.**

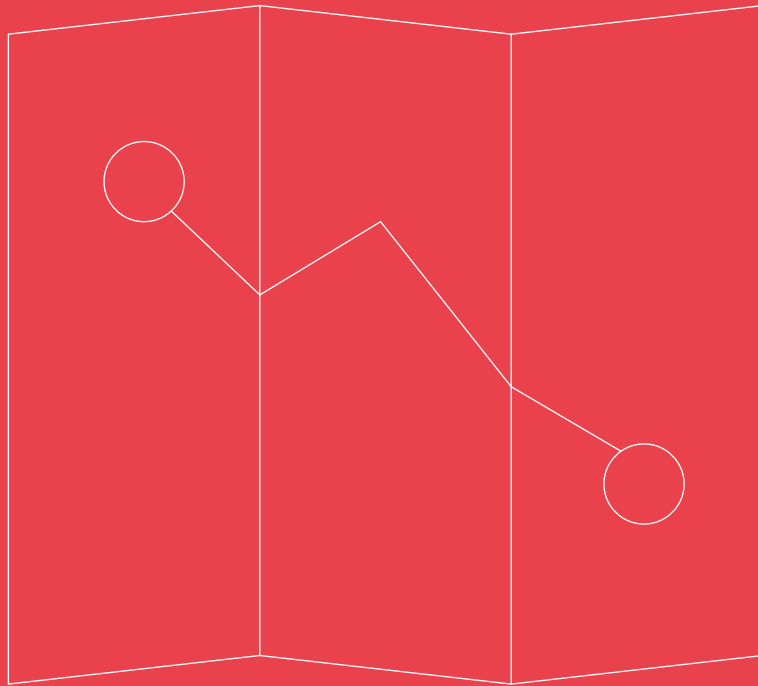
#bettertogether



Karolina Radziszewska  
Vice President for Human Resources  
Skanska Property Poland office for  
Central and Eastern Europe

# Situation and Benefits

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# Situation and Benefits

**The legal and social situation of LGBT+ people in Poland is difficult – the annual ILGA-Europe ranking measuring the equality of LGBT+ people in European countries leaves no doubt in this matter.**

**In three consecutive editions, Poland ranks last in the European Union. In the latest report for 2022, it also ranks 44 out of 49 countries in the entire classification.** Only Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan are lower – none of these countries belongs to the EU<sup>3</sup>.

The lack of marriage equality, provisions to protect against prejudice-motivated crimes, an act on gender recognition, banning of conversion practices and the obligation to counteract discrimination in schools – all this means that LGBT+ people living in Poland are vulnerable to situations that negatively affect their quality of life, sense of security, and consequently also the state of their health<sup>4</sup>.

According to the postulates presented by the LGBT+ community in Poland, the road to equality is still long. **Necessary legal changes indicated by social organizations are divided into six subject areas:** family, gender recognition, safety, equal treatment, health, and education, and each of them includes several proposals for legal changes<sup>5</sup>. **They address virtually all aspects of LGBT+ people's lives.**

## Poland in ILGA-Europe Ranking 2014–2022

Source: ILGA-Europe, [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
result	28%	26%	18%	18%	18%	18%	13%	13%	13%
rank among EU countries	23/28	24/28	26/28	26/28	27/28	27/28	27/27	27/27	27/27
rank among European countries	28/49	34/49	36/49	38/49	38/49	38/49	44/49	44/49	44/49

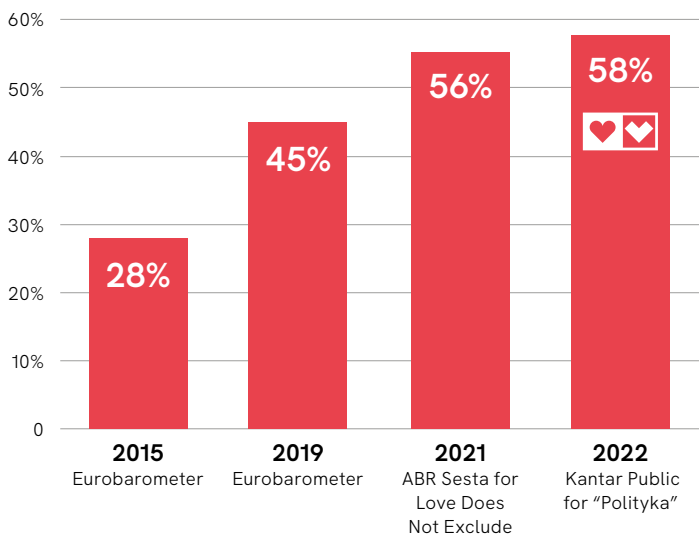
<sup>3</sup> ILGA-Europe, *Annual Review Of The Human Rights Situation Of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans And Intersex People In Europe And Central Asia* (Brussels: 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Mikotaj Winiewski, PhD, and Magdalena Świder, eds., *Social situation of LGBT+ people in Poland. Report in the years 2019-2020* (Warsaw: Campaign Against Homophobia and Lambda Warsaw Association, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> List of legal postulates adopted by 27 Polish social organizations during the LGBT+ Congress. <https://chcelepszejpolski.pl/> (accessed September 19, 2022).

Interestingly, Polish law and legislators are not keeping up with society. According to research, 58% of Poles favor marriage equality, and 49% believe that LGBT+ people should have the same rights as the rest of society<sup>6</sup>.

### Changes in Support for Marriage Equality in Poland<sup>7</sup>



It is also visible in the private sector – on a regional and national scale: 72% of Polish entrepreneurs surveyed in 2020 by Open For Business were **involved** or **very much involved** in activities to create a diverse and representative workforce<sup>8</sup>. And rightly so – besides employers’ values and social responsibility, inclusiveness pays off. What does this mean exactly for companies operating in Poland?

### Emigration, Brain Drain and Losses to the Economy – What Does Inclusiveness Have to Do with It?

Open societies attract skilled workers. **The direction of migration is obvious: people from Poland go to the West, to countries with higher acceptance rates of marginalized groups<sup>9</sup>.** 27% of non-heterosexual and transgender Polish women and men living in Great Britain indicate that the main or one of the main reasons for leaving the country was the problems they faced in Poland as people from the LGBT+ community<sup>10</sup>.

What is the link between a more innovative labor market and LGBT+ rights? Very close: innovative economies are countries with a high level of inclusiveness and LGBT+ rights, and the data analysis on both indicators shows an evident correlation between them<sup>11</sup>. **Furthermore, companies that implement anti-discrimination programs and policies protecting LGBT+ employees outperform those that do not pay attention to such actions<sup>12</sup>.**

“ **Innovative economies are countries with a high level of inclusiveness and LGBT+ rights, and the data analysis on both indicators shows an evident correlation between them.** ”

6 European Commission, *Perception of minorities in the EU: LGBTI people* (2019).

7 28% and 45%: European Commission, *Eurobarometer Discrimination in the EU* (2019).; 56%: Love Does Not Exclude Association, *We Are Family. What Do Polish Men And Women Think about Families of LGBT+ People? A Research Report* (2021).; 58%: “Kantar Public survey”, *Polityka*, August 16, 2022, 34.2022 (3377).

8 *The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in Central & Eastern Europe (CEE): Hungary, Poland, Romania and Ukraine* (Open for Business, 2021), p. 72.

9 *The Economic Case (...)*, p. 39.

10 Lukasz Szulc, PhD, *Queer #PolesinUK. Identity, Migration and Social Media* (Sheffield: The University of Sheffield, 2019), p. 17.

11 *The Economic Case (...)*, p. 52.

12 *The Economic Case (...)*, p. 54.

Notably, the information on the adverse effects of not taking action on diversity in the workplace, specifically addressed to LGBT+ people, is not limited to data from the Central and Eastern Europe region. Instead, we are talking about a universal correlation, the effects of which are exacerbated by legislative and institutional negligence in individual countries. Even the most prominent players on the market lose from the lack of inclusiveness: employees of companies that do not care about a safe work environment for LGBT+ people face problems such as difficulties concentrating on tasks at work, fatigue caused by constantly hiding their sexual orientation and gender identity from colleagues, avoiding specific people and integration events, working remotely due to lack of acceptance in the office, dissatisfaction and depression.

The effect of the problems mentioned above is resignation from work and looking for employment in a more friendly environment<sup>13</sup>. Employees who face discrimination due to their orientation declare that they plan to leave their current work in the coming years almost twice as often as people who do not face such problems<sup>14</sup>. Among them, there may be people who play vital roles from the perspective of the current and future functioning of the company.

**It all comes down not only to the personal decisions of individual discriminated persons or simply their quiet tragedies – it also has a significant negative impact on the economy of the entire country.** Due to economic discrimination and inequalities in health, the lack of equal rights costs Poland between 4.6 and 9.5 billion zlotys annually – between 0.21 and 0.43% of the Polish GDP<sup>15</sup>.

**Problems and difficulties faced by LGBT+ people in companies that do not care about their safety include<sup>16</sup>:**

- resignation from projects
- difficulty concentrating / distraction
- fatigue from constantly hiding one's sexual orientation and gender identity from colleagues
- avoiding specific people
- avoiding integration events
- avoiding the workplace
- exhaustion
- depression



**Employees who face discrimination due to their orientation declare that they plan to leave their current work in the coming years almost twice as often as people who do not face such problems.**

**Up to 9,5 bln zlotys yearly**

– it is the cost of unequal treatment and discrimination against LGBT+ people for Polish economy

13 Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *A Workplace Divided: Understanding the Climate for LGBTQ Workers Nationwide (2018)*, p. 7.

14 Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, *LGBT+ inclusion @ work: A Global Outlook (2022)*, pp. 8, 17.

15 *The Economic Case (...)*, p. 24.

16 Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *Degrees of Equality: A National Study Examining Workplace Climate for LGBT Employees (2009)*.

## Laws in Practice – Employers Come into Play

The ILGA-Europe ranking mentioned earlier has its limitations – it only considers the legal status, i.e. the regulations in force in the analyzed countries. It means that it says nothing about two equally essential dimensions that affect the daily life of the LGBT+ community: practice and social attitudes.

Legal provisions are not always easy to enforce, and practice can deviate from regulations. The limited protections of LGBT+ persons in Poland against unequal treatment are mainly the prohibition of discrimination in the Labor Code, which explicitly mentions sexual orientation as one of the characteristics listed in Article 11 (3) of this code. Moreover, according to the jurisprudence of Polish courts, this provision also protects transgender persons. **Regardless, LGBT+ people experiencing discrimination in the workplace rarely decide to take their case to court<sup>17</sup>** – apart from the practical aspect of time and financial resources, defending their rights as an LGBT+ person equals coming out, i.e. informing other people about their non-heterosexual orientation or transgender identity. Not everyone is ready for it. Due to homo- and transphobia still present in Polish society and the resulting risk of rejection, discrimination, aggression and violence, over 37% of LGBT+ persons in Poland do not openly speak about their orientation and identity with their family, 60% partially or entirely hide their identity at work, and over 81% – from their neighbors<sup>18</sup>.

However, employers can support their employees where the law fails, even in a small but needed scope. A lot depends on how seriously they approach the subject – **almost half of the surveyed employees from the LGBT+ community in the United States agree that implementing anti-discrimination policies in business practice depends mainly on their immediate supervisor<sup>19</sup>**. That is why it is so important to choose the right partner to conduct a training (both for managerial staff and all employees), internal audits and developing proposals for implementing activities in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I). **Such partners often turn out to be non-governmental organizations, which we write about in chapter 4. In chapter 5, we give examples and discuss specific anti-discrimination practices in the workplace available under Polish law and utilized by companies.**



**Over 37% of LGBT+ persons in Poland do not openly speak about their orientation and identity with their family, 60% partially or entirely hide their identity at work, and over 81% – from their neighbors.**

<sup>17</sup> As per the experience of the Law Does Not Exclude Fund run by the Love Does Not Exclude Association: court cases regarding discrimination at work based on sexual orientation or gender identity are among the rarest cases submitted to the Fund with an application for support.

<sup>18</sup> *Social situation of LGBT+ people in Poland(...)*, pp. 37, 102.

<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *A Workplace Divided. Understanding the Climate for LGBTQ Workers Nationwide* (2018), p. 17.

## Safe Havens in the Workplace – Tangible Benefits

An important aspect of efforts to create a safe work environment is that it simply pays off. In building our business case for diversity, let's refer to one of the reports of Open for Business coalition. The financial and marketing performance of companies that implement anti-discrimination policies and care for the well-being of LGBT+ employees are better than those that ignore it<sup>20</sup>. It is caused by various factors, which contribute to a positive result for the corporation in the economy, consisting of deeper involvement and greater employee productivity<sup>21</sup>.

Credit Suisse analysts conducted a study in 2016, creating an index of companies supporting LGBT + people in the workplace: LGBT 270. They compared its economic results with the results of the MSCI ACWI index (includes 23 countries with developed markets and 24 countries with developing markets) and a custom basket of companies composed of companies from North America, Europe and Australia.

**The LGBT 270 basket outperformed MSCI ACWI by 3% per annum over 6 years.**

Compared to a custom basket of companies in North America, Europe and Australia, LGBT 270 outperformed it by **140 basis points per year**.

Source: Credit Suisse, *LGBT: the value of diversity*, ESG Research (2016), p. 2.

# 83%

- this many LGBT+ employees admit that they hide important aspects of their lives at work

A workplace open to diversity provides a sense of security. The employee does not focus on hiding their identity and does not have to live under pressure that their secret will be discovered or disclosed by a third party. 83% of LGBT+ employees admit that they hide important aspects of their life at work (from the simple ones, such as a weekend trip to the lake with a partner, to the more important ones, such as an engagement or a humanistic wedding). For comparison: among white heterosexual men, this percentage is 45%<sup>22</sup>. Fear of revealing this secret causes a lot of additional stress and, in the long run – exhaustion drove not by tasks and responsibilities but the very fact of being in a workplace where there are no conditions to be yourself<sup>23</sup>. Being a non-heterosexual, let alone a transgender person, is an inseparable part of life, defining our private and social life. Hiding it usually requires a lot of energy, and if the employer does not signal that they do not tolerate all forms of discrimination, the fear and sense of insecurity in the person in the closet also come into play.

**The employer's clear position on the LGBT+ community helps employees "come out of the closet", that is, tell about their identity, but also provides them with greater peace of mind and the opportunity to focus more effectively on their duties instead of hiding, and reduces the associated stress.** And when discrimination is based on identity, this strong stance gives hope that the matter will be addressed, not swept under the rug.

20 Credit Suisse, *LGBT: the value of diversity*, ESG Research (2016), p. 2.

21 *Open For Business. Strengthening the Economic Case* (2018), p. 53.

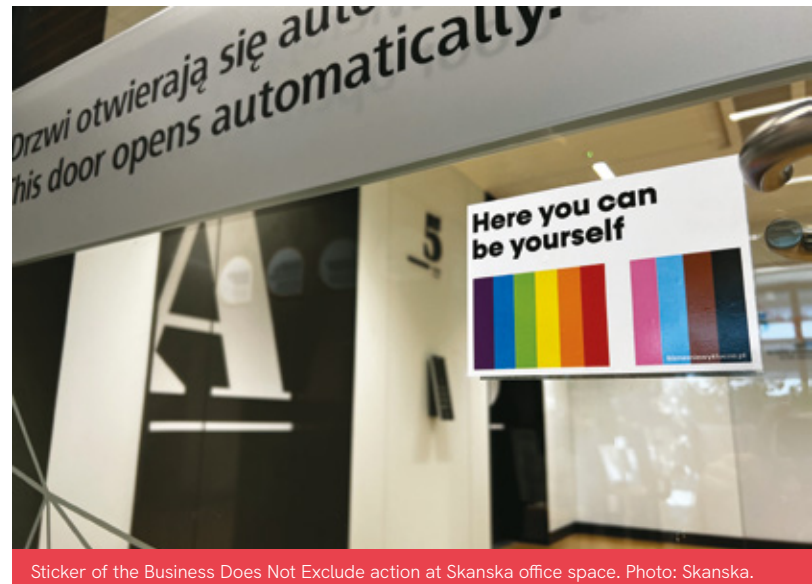
22 *Open For Business. Strengthening (...)*, p. 76.

23 *Open For Business. Strengthening (...)*, pp. 76, 77.



Workplaces open to diversity also increase employee motivation<sup>24</sup>. **Lack of acceptance kills motivation, while the sense of fair treatment by the employer translates directly into its growth.** Thanks to the policy of openness, it is much easier for employees to motivate themselves and identify<sup>25</sup> with the workplace. Such an atmosphere is also conducive to establishing and building relationships with other employees and, as a result, improves cooperation and communication in the team. It all affects the individual and collective results at the level of teams, departments, and, finally, the entire company.

Interestingly, people working in more accepting companies enjoy better physical and mental health, which translates into the entire organization's results. Healthier employees take sick leave less often, work more efficiently, and are more resistant to stress and possible challenges at work<sup>26</sup>. People protected by anti-discrimination policies, who have a sense of support in their organizational culture, do not inhibit speaking and suggesting new ideas<sup>27</sup>. It opens the door to more innovation and makes employees feel safe and valued, which in turn takes us to the starting point – preventing brain drain.



**Percentage of LGBT+ people who, due to the non-accepting working environment, struggle with<sup>28</sup>:**

	in a company with anti-discrimination policies and activities	in a company without anti-discrimination policies and activities
<b>depression</b>	26%	42%
<b>distraction</b>	24%	31%
<b>exhaustion</b>	20%	25%
<b>avoidance of coworkers</b>	22%	39%
<b>decision to change job</b>	18%	28%

24 Open For Business. Strengthening (...), p. 78.

25 Open For Business. Strengthening (...), p. 78.

26 Open For Business. Strengthening (...), p. 80.

27 Open For Business. Strengthening (...), p. 81.

28 Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *Degrees of Equality: A National Study Examining Workplace Climate for LGBT Employees* (2009).

All these elements mean that the actions born by employers, especially if they take the form of specific procedures and internal policies shaping the organization's culture, are of great importance in preventing the exclusion of LGBT+ people across the entire society. Discrimination against people from the LGBT+ community in the workplace is not only a Polish problem. **According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights data, it affects employees in all EU countries<sup>29</sup>. However, the adverse effects of unequal treatment are compounded by legislative and institutional shortcomings, especially blatant in the case of our country.** Realizing that caring for LGBT+ people in the workplace makes sense from an ethical and purely business perspective can help mobilize the private sector to be more actively involved in creating truly safe, inclusive and diverse workplaces. Havens where people from this community can feel accepted and respected as they are and, in an atmosphere of psychological comfort, carry out their tasks, making a positive contribution to the work of the team and the performance of the entire company.

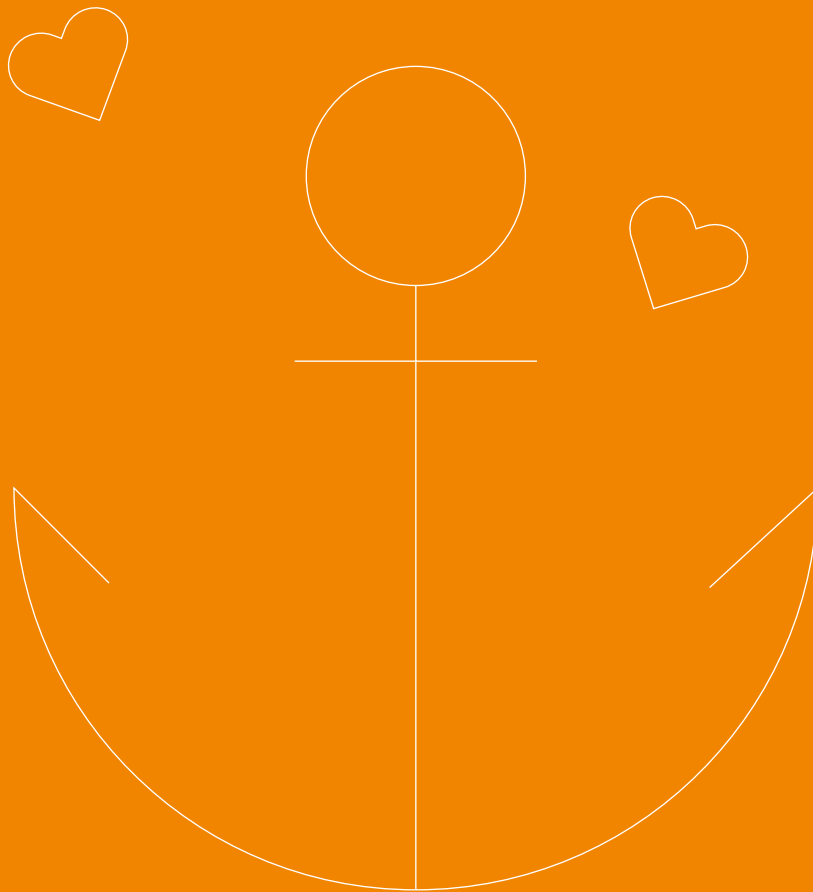
As indicated by McKinsey's research,<sup>30</sup> initiatives from Employee Resource Groups (ERG), i.e. groups and employee networks dealing with LGBT+ issues in the company, can play a crucial role in creating those safe havens. However, genuine commitment and support from the employer are of great importance for their creation and operation, regardless of whether they arise as grassroots initiatives undertaken by more committed employees or are created from above as an element of the company's DE&I strategy. We will take a closer look at this in the next chapter.

29 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *A long way to go for LGBTI equality* (2020), pp. 32-33.

30 McKinsey, *LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace: How to take action to support LGBTQ+ employees - not just during Pride Month, but year-round* Podcast June 30, 2021, <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/lgbtq-plus-inclusion-in-the-workplace>, (accessed September 19, 2022).

# LGBT+ Employee Networks

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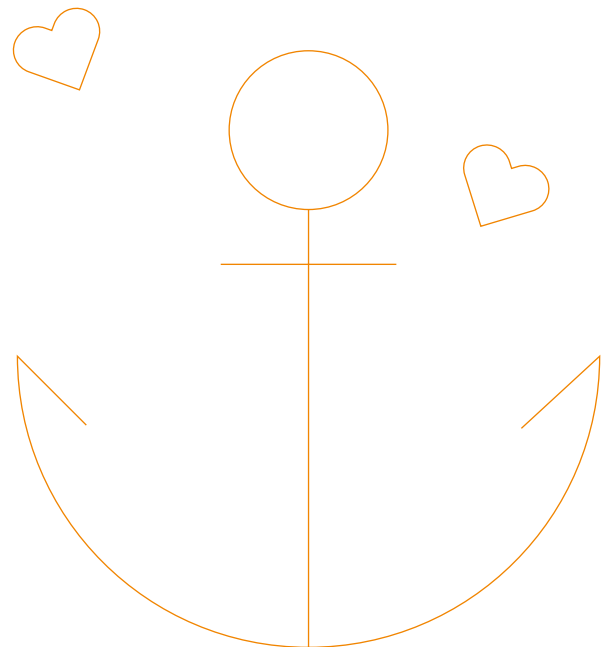
# LGBT+ Employee Networks

**In the last few years, new initiatives, groups and employee networks focusing on LGBT+ people in the workplace have been born in Poland. Their very existence helps break down prejudices and fosters acceptance building, increasing the visibility of people in the community in the private sector. However, their actions, arising from the conditions of each organization, count the most.**

In this chapter, we present the hallmarks of selected employee networks. It is not an exhaustive list but an overview of over a dozen initiatives showcasing a variety of operating philosophies and working methods. The impact of such initiatives on the well-being of LGBT+ workers in Poland is still a relatively new phenomenon. Therefore, this review aims to disseminate the experience and knowledge accumulated to inspire others to undertake or expand activities in other companies. After all, it is often easiest to learn and get inspired based on the experiences of entities that are organizationally similar to ours.

From small meetings and creating safe spaces, through uplifting the voices of LGBT+ people in the organization and education on the ground to the participation and organization of high-profile events - the collected examples clearly show that there are many templates for action. They also show that small, grassroots teams and even individuals - as long as they receive the employer's support - can achieve a lot.

We believe that in the subsequent editions of such a "rainbow inventory" of the Polish private sector, we will be able to show many more examples of similar activities, including Polish companies. Therefore, we encourage you to use the contact details of people who lead individual employee networks.



## 3M / 3M Pride



Pride Month 2022 finale, fitness dance session with drag queen Yanina de Silesia. Photo: 3M.



**INFO**

Established: 2017



**TEAM**

Fourteen people employed at 3M GSC Poland supported by allies from 3M branches in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine



**CITIES**

Wrocław



**ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

The global 3M Pride network was established as a grassroots initiative in the US in 1991, and local branches are founded within its framework. The employees of the Wrocław office established the Polish network, and today it is joined by allies from other 3M companies from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine.

The network has its budget, and its sponsor in Poland is the HR Operations Leader.



**ACTIVITY**

**Community Building**

The network organizes regular monthly meetings and events, such as “Coffee with Pride”, targeting everyone in the company. Their goal is to integrate the LGBT+ community and their allies.

People from the network are present during the onboarding of new employees, during which they inform about their mission and activities and encourage them to engage in pro-equality activities.

In addition to strictly training activities, the voices of community members are also strengthened in internal communication. For example, the workshop “How to be a better LGBT+ Ally?” and a global meeting on the situation of LGBTQI+ people in Eastern Europe were organized together with the Culture of Equality association. People from the network also took part in the internal panel “Hearing 3M-er’s LGBTQI+ Stories”.

**Events Participation**

Network members have participated in the annual Wrocław Equality March for three years, marching under the Proud@Work banner with other corporations.

The network is part of the Proud@Work initiative, bringing together rainbow employee networks of Wrocław corporations, which aim is to provide mutual support and share good practices.

**Internal Communication**

The network organizes LGBT+ workshops and training independently or by invited organizations

## 3M / 3M Pride

and experts. Its activities are up-to-date on the company's intranet.

In the area of DE&I, allyship discussion sessions are currently being held, with already 250 employees in attendance.

Every year in June, actions are initiated on Pride Month. People from the network are also involved in the activities of 3M Pride groups in other countries, as well as in the work of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion group, e.g. on World Inclusion Day in October.

” **Another opportunity for activities was the month of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. As 3M Pride, we organized workshops on inclusive language: we educated on how powerful words are and how they can support building relationships. Still, they can also easily create barriers and build walls. We also prepared an educational space for all people in managerial positions (awareness session) so that they are equipped with appropriate knowledge about the benefits of building a safe and diverse workplace and gain information about tools to react in the event of discrimination.**



### SUCCESSSES

#### Network Development

The 3M Pride network at 3M GSC Poland is celebrating its 5th anniversary. From a small group of three, it has become a vital part of the European and global 3M Pride structure, which leads the LG-BTQI+ movement in 3M in the countries of Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine). In 2022, the 3M Pride network chairs in EMEA are people from Poland and Slovakia.

Over 1,000 people have participated in training courses and other events organized by the network.

#### Pride Month

The network has twice organized Pride Month under the patronage of the company's CEO. A digital information space was launched on the company's intranet, and people were encouraged to be an ally through banners, rainbow frames in correspondence and gadgets (lanyards, stickers, mugs, etc.) Rainbow flags were hung in the office windows.

This year's Pride Month finale was a fitness dance session with drag queen Yanina de Silesia. The event received a highly enthusiastic feedback and positive comments.

” **It was great fun and an opportunity to introduce employees to the drag culture and its importance to the LGBTQI+ community.**



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperates with the Culture of Equality association in Wrocław, using its knowledge base and expertise as part of the Proud@Work initiative and organizing workshops and employee training.

## 3M / 3M Pride



### CONTACT

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## Accenture / Pride @ Accenture



Accenture attending Equality Parade in 2022. Photo: Accenture.



**INFO**  
Established: 2015



**TEAM**  
Ten people are actively involved in the work of the network. The allied group "Allies" counts over 660 people in Poland



**CITIES**  
Warsaw, Kraków and Łódź.  
Plans to activate people working in Gdańsk, Katowice and Wrocław



**ORGANIZATION OF WORK**  
The network is a grassroots initiative created with the support of people from the global network. It has its budget and a sponsor in the company's structure.

**” It all started with participation in the Equality Parades. Then plans were made to act more specifically. It was mainly about training, building good practices within the company, and interventions related to LGBT topics, depending on the need. All this to make everyone feel at ease.**



**ACTIVITY**  
**Internal Communication**

The network organizes educational webinars for the company's employees.

The pandemic-induced remote working period contributed to a significant increase in interest in online meetings, in which up to 150 people began to participate.

On average, the team creates internal and external guides on good practices for LGBT+ inclusion once a quarter. They are addressed to everyone in the company, with particular emphasis on HR and recruitment departments, leaders, and allies.



## Accenture / Pride @ Accenture

” At the beginning of our journey, there were some adverse and individual comments, but we managed to build an atmosphere of mutual understanding and acceptance. In these cases, if necessary, we always support ourselves by talking to such a person in the manager’s presence, referring to the values of the network and the company. We encourage them to dialogue, deepen their knowledge on the subject and become allied persons.

### Participation in Initiatives and Events

In addition to its annual presence at the Equality Parade, the network also participates in other events, such as the LGBT+ Diamonds Awards competition, the Crowns of Equality gala or the D&I Changemakers conference.

It is a member of LGBTQ+ Network of Networks.



### SUCCESSSES

The network has managed to acquire a large group of allies and to work out the basis for cooperation between various business lines within the company.

” We are very proud of our internal cooperation. We started the network in the Operations department, whose team is very diverse and international, so it was easier to commence inclusive activities in such an environment. Today we work together in all teams as One Accenture.

A valuable educational activity was the cooperation with other companies in preparing the “TRANSformation. Good Inclusion Practices in the Workplace” guide – a pioneering Polish publication on DE&I practices addressed to transgender people.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperates with social partners in organizing employee training courses and events such as the Equality Parade.

” It is an exciting experience, a meeting of two different worlds – the world of business with the world of non-governmental organizations struggling with many organizational challenges and Polish law. We see great value in meeting half-way and exchanging experiences.



### CONTACT

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See “TRANSformation. Good Inclusion Practices in the Workplace”:  
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## BlaBlaCar / BlaBlaRainbow



Drag brunch. Photo: BlaBlaCar.



**INFO**  
Beginnings in 2019. Official launch of the network in 2022



**TEAM**  
Six people are involved in the work of the network. 65 people subscribed to the network



**CITIES**  
Warsaw



**ORGANIZATION OF WORK**  
The network is a grassroots initiative that has made its way from the Slack channel to the official employee group. It has its budget and a sponsor in the organization's structure.



**ACTIVITY**  
**Events Participation**  
With the official launch of activities, the group began participating in external events dedicated to LGBT+ people in the workplace.

### External Communication

On the new career page for people interested in working for BlaBlaCar, information about the network appears as one of the company's strengths. It also features a conversation with a person from the network.

### Internal Communication

During Pride Month, everyone in the company received weekly educational and entertainment materials related to the LGBT+ community. Following the Fun&Serious slogan, these were, among others, playlists or films recommended by people from the network, as well as short educational films about

the meaning of the LGBT+ acronym and the history of the rainbow flag.

### Internal Communication

During Pride Month, people in the company collected money for local LGBT+ organizations operating in Poland.



**SUCCESSES**  
Building the visibility of the network itself, and thus of LGBT+ issues inside the company. Successful intervention in using more inclusive language in the company's internal communication.



**COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS**  
The network has just been created, so it has yet to cooperate with organizations, and it has such plans. Taking part in this publication is the first step in this direction.



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GLOBE during Equality Parade in 2022. Photo: Zof Łapniewska.



INFO

Established: the beginnings of operations date back to 2016. Official launch of the network in 2021



TEAM

126 people belong to the network, of which approximately half are active daily



CITIES

Mostly Warsaw. Active people also work in offices in Poznań, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Rzeszów



ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The network has strong support from the company's management. The network sponsors are Maja Zabawska, partner responsible for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Joanna Świerzyńska - partner and leader of the talent area. The initiative is also supported by the president of Deloitte and about ten other leaders, i.e. partners and directors, that is people in the highest positions in the company. The network has its budget within a broader financial basket for activities in the field of DE&I.



ACTIVITY

**Events Participation**

After two years of unofficial (communicated only internally and in social media) participation in the Equality Parade, the official representation of the company appeared at the event along with Tomasz Konik, president of Deloitte in Poland and the Baltic States. In 2023, the company plans to register its representation as one of the official groups participating in the Parade.

**External Communication**

The network actively informs about its activities on social media. Communication and external activities are primarily focused on Pride Month.

Example: a member of the network's steering committee, Filip Kaplita, took part in the "Impact Stories" podcast for students, where he talked about the need to create a safe space for LGBT+ employees as part of DE&I activities. The episode featuring him is available online and was promoted on social media.

At the end of 2022, the network also promoted the global Deloitte report: [LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work: A Global Outlook](#) in Polish media.

The network was also the official partner of the [Open For Business conference](#) in June 2022.

**Internal Communication**

The network informs about its activities both at the network level and the entire company.

## Deloitte / GLOBE

Information about the network's existence is included in the welcome pack and is passed on to all new hires. Such an onboarding model was developed by leaders together with the Talent area.

The network consults the company's internal activities for the LGBT+ community, e.g. in terms of communication on the availability of employee benefits for same-sex partners, the possibility of seeing a psychologist or adjusting the official dress code.

In cooperation with social organizations, webinars are organized for all employees.

### Community Building

Once a month, "Rainbow Coffee Online" is organized, and every other month an event targeted to members of the network, such as a joint visit to the theater or club, forest walks or a meeting with the president of Deloitte, is held.

**” Our network led to formal activities for employees and the LGBTQ+ community in other Deloitte member firms in Central Europe. The Polish GLOBE network is the largest and most dynamically operating network in the region, supporting the network's activities, including in the Czech Republic and Hungary.**



### SUCCESSES

#### Rapid Growth and Constant Activity

During a year of official operation, supported by corporate communication, we gathered over 120 people. The network is active all year round, not just during Pride Month.

#### Webinars and Training

The network organized a series of webinars addressed to all Deloitte employees and prepared in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Topics included, among other things, marriage equality, the identity of transgender persons and LGBT+ people fleeing Ukraine. The events were popular and received excellent feedback.

**” During Pride Month in 2021, the network prepared a challenge for allies who were asked not to make any reference to their private life at work for a week. We wanted them to put themselves in the shoes of many people in the LGBT+ community who do not feel safe enough to be open about it at work. The challenge ended with a webinar during which the challenge participants and the LGBT+ employees from the network could discuss their experiences.**



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

We cooperate with Equality Factory, Lambda Warsaw and Love Does Not Exclude associations. For a Change Fund prepared the first Pride Month 2022 webinar and then conducted training for the HR and payroll team.

## Deloitte / GLOBE

” Supporting non-governmental organizations is very important for people working in the network. As a network, we operate in the field of business. Still, we believe NGOs can most effectively act for the LGBT+ community, and it is worth using their knowledge and experience. Involving organizations to conduct training and webinars allows you to support their operations financially.



### CONTACT




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## Dentons / Dentons GLOW Europe



Photo: Dentons.

-  **INFO**  
Established: 2019
-  **TEAM**  
Twenty people
-  **CITIES**  
Warsaw



### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The network was established on the initiative of LGBT+ people and allies working in Dentons' branches all over Europe.

The group has a dedicated budget allocated from funds for activities supporting diversity. Its sponsor is Adam Mycyk, GLOW Europe Chair.



### ACTIVITY

#### **Community Building**

The network provides educational materials to people across the region and provides pro bono legal support to local NGOs in several European countries.

Internal events addressed to employees are aimed at strengthening the voices of LGBT+ people and raising the team's awareness of the problems faced by the community. For example, on International Coming Out Day, the network organized a meeting with Agnieszka Holland and Kasia Adamik.

The annual Pride Day, celebrated at the national and regional level, is an opportunity to show support for colleagues from the LGBT+ community.

## Dentons / Dentons GLOW Europe



### SUCSESSES

Establishing a network of GLOW ambassadors to support activities for a more inclusive and diverse organizational culture. Ambassadors are primarily allies, i.e. people who want their colleagues from the LGBT+ community to feel heard, understood and safe in the workplace.

Pro bono cooperation with organizations such as Safebow is an opportunity to provide tangible support to local LGBT+ communities.



**Our flagship Pride Day event has caught the wind since the network's inauguration and is now visible in offices across the continent. Its goal is to build a sense of security for LGBT+ people in the workplace and to de-stigmatize this topic.**



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperated, among others, with Campaign Against Homophobia, Equaversity, For a Change Fund, and Safebow – an organization supporting migrants due to war in Ukraine.



### CONTACT

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## Google / Pride@Google Warsaw



Google during Equality Parade in Warsaw. Photo: Aleksandra Jarmolińska.



**INFO**  
Established: 2009



**TEAM**  
In Warsaw, an active team consists of 22 people. The whole group is about 100 people



**CITIES**  
Warsaw, Wrocław



### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The network was established in the Warsaw office on the initiative of Kuba Piwowar, who founded it as a new company employee.

**” The idea to start the network came up when I came out, when one of my colleagues, who had been working for the company longer, asked if I knew there was a Pride network at Google. I contacted them, asked what our options were and heard that we could even display a Google float at EuroPride, which was held in Warsaw in 2010. It didn't even occur to me to ask the bosses in my Warsaw office for permission. I showed up with an idea, a complete project, and the funding I had obtained, so there was no reason to cut off the initiative.**

Like other ERG initiatives in the company, the networks in Warsaw and Wrocław have separate budgets. The group's sponsor is Joanna Obstoja, Director Of Engineering.



### ACTIVITY

#### External Communication

An official presence at the Equality Parade, initially a vital element of the network's activities, has become just one of its activities over time. External actions include networking with employee groups from other companies within the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks, promoting the LGBTQ+ Diamonds Awards competition and supporting Open for Business organizations in conducting research and reporting on DE&I LGBTQ+ activities in Poland and the CEE region.

The network also supports the company's official external communication during Pride Month, when rainbow emblems are added to the search results - they accompany, among others, the search terms "Equality Parade" or the names of Polish LGBTQ+ organizations. The route of the Equality Parade in Warsaw is marked with a rainbow in the company's applications every year.



## Google / Pride@Google Warsaw

### Internal Communication

Over the past three years, the network's membership has increased twelve times. Discussions on new internal activities are underway, such as an LGBT+ reading corner, watching queer films together, playing board games or treasure hunting.

” Rainbow lanyards remain the most desirable item in the office.

The network organizes meetings with people from social organizations to raise awareness of the situation of LGBT+ people in Poland. Social partners are also invited to global-scale events organized in Poland.

Notably, during the November giving week, company employees can donate to a selected charity organization, including LGBT+ organizations in Poland.



#### SUCCESSSES

### Equality Parade

Thanks to the network's efforts, Google became the first company in Poland to walk the Warsaw Equality Parade as an official group.

### LGBTQ+ Network of Networks (NoN)

On the initiative of people from the Google and NatWest networks, the Network of Networks was founded, i.e. a group of LGBT+ employee networks from various companies in Warsaw.

” It all started with a conversation at Equality Parade and an open meeting with invited several hundred people from the contact list. Today, several dozen people actively participate in the network's work, exchange experiences on the projects implemented and organize meetings with LGBT+ organizations and exciting guests, such as transgender activist Jessica Lynn.

” The networks also discuss how to manage budgets most sensibly and who is worth supporting, sometimes dividing different areas of interest among themselves to achieve the most significant possible impact.



#### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperates, among others, with Love Does Not Exclude, Culture of Equality, Campaign Against Homophobia, and Bart Staszewski.

Kuba Piwowar took part in the first LGBT+ Congress organized by Love Does Not Exclude in March 2019, where, together with Blanka Rozbicka from NatWest, he talked about the possibilities of cooperation between businesses and activists.



#### CONTACT

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## Intel / IGLOBE – Intel Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender Employees



Photo: Intel.



**INFO**

Established: 2021



**TEAM**

Twelve people actively involved in the work of the network. The group brings together a total of 50 people



**CITIES**

Gdańsk, Warsaw



**ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

The network was founded on the grassroots initiative of two people working in the company.

**” The founders established the network with representatives from Germany and the Netherlands; together, they managed to convince site leadership and successfully set up the network. The beginnings were not easy, the founders were met with doubting comments from the management, and there were also difficulties with financing. Eventually, the sponsor hired someone for the position of DE&I Leader.**

Today, the network has its budget, and a sponsor, Bartosz Ciepluch, vice president of Intel, General Manager of the R&D Groups focused on networks, data centers and artificial intelligence.



**ACTIVITY**

The whole group meets at least once a month and additionally, if necessary – e.g. an event is organized on dates important for the LGBT+ community. Invitations are sent to all company employees, which means that people from outside the network also participate. Attendance depends on the topic but is usually around 30–40 people.

**External Communication**

People from the network participate in the Equality Marches as individuals. They plan to participate in the international Workplace Summit conference organized by Out & Equal in the United States.

A step towards more significant activity outside the company is also participating in the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks group and signing the Responsible Business Forum’s Diversity Charter.

## Intel / IGLOBE – Intel Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender Employees

### Internal Communication

The network organizes online meetings and training courses on romantic orientations and gender identity. It also conducted workshops on reacting to microaggressions and – with the team from [zaimki.pl](http://zaimki.pl) – on inclusive language.

Together with Culture of Equality, a meeting on same-sex parenthood was organized, and in cooperation with the We, Parents association, an internal panel on Pride Month.

As part of an internal information campaign, materials were posted in the office explaining why it is worth being an ally of LGBT+ people.



### SUCCESSES

#### Visibility

**” During Pride Month 2022, for the first time in the Polish Intel branch in Gdańsk, a rainbow flag was successfully hung on the mast in front of the office. Negotiating the hanging of the banner was quite stormy and required talks with leadership, who was concerned about the employees’ reaction, but it worked. We plan to repeat this action next year.**

### Rapid Growth

The network’s growing commitment is also a great success: from two people looking for information on how to set up ERG, the group grew to several dozen people.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network used expert support from social organizations, inviting them to co-organize the events. Depending on the topic, it was, among others, the Responsible Business Forum, Tolerado and We, Parents associations and people creating the [zaimki.pl](http://zaimki.pl) website.



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## JLL / JLL Building Pride




LGBT+ Diamonds Award for JLL Building Pride. Photo: JLL.

- 
**INFO**  
 Established: 2019
- 
**TEAM**  
 The network consists of 21 actively engaged people supported by a group of around 50 allies
- 
**CITIES**  
 Warsaw (primary team) and Krakow and Gdańsk (supporters)

 **ORGANIZATION OF WORK**  
 The network does not have a fixed budget. It uses a framework plan of expenses and requests approval of costs each time after presenting an action idea.

Mateusz Gołembiewski (Head of HR, Poland & CEE Cluster) is the partner support in the company's management.

People involved in the network's operation meet every two weeks. On average, an extensive action is organized once a quarter.

 **ACTIVITY**  
**Events Participation**  
 The network participates in Equality Parade in Warsaw.

**Internal Communication**  
 Awareness-raising actions accompany, among others, the IDAHOBIT celebrations.

The network's members record their educational films targeted at employees. They answer questions such as "What is the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity?" or "What do the letters of the LGBTQ+ abbreviation stand for?" The films are distributed online and broadcast on screens in the company's office. They aim to encourage employees to discuss the LGBT+ community in the company, explore the issue of unconscious prejudices and explain the meaning of allyship, i.e. support for LGBT+ people by people from outside the community. Additionally, the office library has been supplemented with LGBT+ books.

**Community Building**  
 On International Coming Out Day - October 11, 2022 - the space dedicated to discussing diversity and inclusiveness was inaugurated. One meeting room had been rearranged to be a tangible testimony of the support and presence of LGBTQ+ people in the organization. It is about creating a space where we can distribute educational ma-

## JLL / JLL Building Pride

terials and invite our colleagues to a dialogue on conscious and unconscious prejudices against this community.



### SUCCESSSES

Thanks to a grassroots initiative outside of working hours, a network float was set up to participate in the event. Inspired by the network, the owner of the Warsaw Spire building turned on its rainbow illumination on the Parade weekend.

The network's work was recognized in the LGBT+ Diamonds Awards competition, where it was awarded the title of the best employee network in 2021.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

In 2020, Lambda Warsaw conducted an internal webinar on inclusive language. The network only cooperates with organizations occasionally.



### CONTACT

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## NatWest / Rainbow Network Poland



Photo: Rafal Dembe.



INFO  
Established: 2016



TEAM  
Three people on the committee. About 40 people subscribe to communication channels



CITIES  
Warsaw



### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The inspiration for establishing the network in Poland was the branch in Great Britain, which has been operating for over six years.

“ We received a newsletter from the global network with the information that a local group in Poland would soon be established. Weeks passed, and nothing happened. We organized the first meeting attended by several dozen people. The question was, “What do we want to do?” Someone said, “Let’s go to the Equality Parade.” This first outing was a breakthrough. We caught the wind in our sails and did not have to convince our sponsors to take on new activities – they were coming to us with suggestions on their own.

The network has its budget and has a sponsor with the rank of a board member.



### ACTIVITY

#### External Communication

Thanks to the network’s work, NatWest was the second company in Poland to officially participate in the Equality Parade in Warsaw, displaying the company’s float. The network engages in DE&I conferences and events like the Open for Business Summit.

“ We took part in the Parade for the first time in 2016. There were a dozen of us. The participation of businesses in this event was then something unheard of. We were the only company next to Google, and as we walked under the old Royal Bank of Scotland brand, people thought we came from Scotland. It was an important and groundbreaking event for us. Thanks to the meeting at the Parade, the idea of establishing cooperation between groups from different corporations was born.

## NatWest / Rainbow Network Poland

A network member, Blanka Rozbicka, is a co-founder (together with Google) of LGBTQ+ Network of Networks, an initiative bringing together employee groups from various companies.

The network is also strongly involved in organizing the annual LGBTQ+ Diamonds Awards competition – the only award in Poland for initiatives supporting LGBTQ+ people in the private sector.

### Community Building

Since its inception, the network has organized several dozen training courses, discussion panels and meetings on the LGBTQ+ community. Educational articles and materials are distributed via a special newsletter.

The network also organizes integration meetings and occasional joint actions, e.g. cleaning the graves of LGBTQ+ people in Warsaw's Powązki Cemetery. There are also joint trips to cultural events such as the LGBT Film Festival, and network members receive a subscription to the "Replika" magazine. A regular item on the calendar is joint participation in the Warsaw Equality Parade.

The network also cares about the visibility of topics related to LGBTQ+ people during other events. For example, as part of a series of meetings devoted to children and parenting (Family Week), a conference was organized with a pair of rainbow mothers and a mother of a transgender child who shared their experiences.

In inclusive language meetings, time is set aside to address the topic of the LGBTQ+ community. Work is underway to improve and simplify data processing systems in line with the needs of people transitioning.

” **Procedures are fine with us, but IT systems generate unnecessary complications. When a transgender colleague appeared in our team, we responded to his needs and started working on changes.**



### SUCCESSES

The network organized a fundraiser for the Lambda Warszawa association, which runs a helpline for LGBTQ+ people. As part of employee volunteering, an action was scheduled to clean the graves of LGBTQ+ people in Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw.

The network is a co-initiator of the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks and the LGBTQ+ Diamonds Awards competition.

” **I am happy about the moments when we were able to tell you how to build an inclusive business at external events. We also managed to meet with many organizations, share knowledge and experience and learn from each other. It is a way of showing that we really want to educate people by using the best resources.**



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperates with social partners, including in the organization of the LGBTQ+ Diamonds Awards competition. Every year, a different organization is the leading partner of the event. In recent years, these have been Love Does Not Exclude, Trans-Fuzja Foundation and Campaign Against Homophobia.



### CONTACT

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## Nokia / Nokia Poland Pride



### INFO

Established: 2022



### TEAM

The network comprises 57 people, four actively involved in the project team's work



### CITIES

Bydgoszcz, Kraków, Warsaw, Wrocław



### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The network was established on the grassroots initiative of people employed at Nokia Poland, and decisions about its shape and activities are made internally.

We use the budget for I&D Nokia Poland activities, which we share with other initiatives in this area.



### ACTIVITY

#### Community Building

**” Building a community around the Nokia Poland Pride initiative is very important; therefore, each network member received a thank-you letter with the information that Nokia Poland Pride is a formalized employee network. We officially welcomed the members in the letter, including rainbow stickers and lanyards. Only recently, it was easy to see rainbow elements in the office; thanks to our actions, they are becoming a common symbol.**

Once a month, the network organizes special Safe Space Meetings where members can discuss any topic in a comfortable environment. Informal meetings of members outside working hours are also an important initiative. They allow for better integration between members and relax the conversation space.

At least once a month, there are also organized classes open to everyone working at Nokia Poland, e.g. yoga/meditation sessions in the office space. Events that do not directly relate to LGBT+ people aim to promote the network - information that the Nokia Poland Pride employee network is organizing the activity is provided.

The network supports the preparation of additional guides for non-binary and transgender people on dealing with documents for new hires in the company - where you can enter a chosen name and get an e-mail address or a work ID with a chosen name. Interviews with transgender people during or after the gender affirmation process inspired these actions.

Just as the idea to create the network came from the grassroots initiative of people working at Nokia Poland, many action ideas appear similarly. The network members share their problems and reflect on how they can be solved at the level of the team, department or the entire organization.

The network has planned a training program for all employees of Nokia Poland. As part of the celebration of National Coming Out Day 2022, the network and the Culture of Equality association conducted the "ABC LGBT+ Introductory training". As part of the International Day for Tolerance celebration, the "Diversity in a company: why should we talk about LGBT+ in the company" training is planned.



## Nokia / Nokia Poland Pride

The network is planning a pilot training program for team leaders on the subject of unconscious bias. The possibility of organizing sessions on non-binary and transgender issues for persons who are parents and guardians is being looked into. All training, where possible, is recorded and made available to every person at Nokia Poland through internal communication channels.

” **Nokia Poland Pride is a place for the LGBT+ community, for people who are only now defining themselves, for parents and guardians of LGBT+ people, and allies.**



### SUCSESSES

**Quick Start of Operation and Increase in Network Visibility**

” **During the month of the network’s operation, we managed to attract more than 40 people to it, start work on improvements in the recruitment process targeted at non-binary and transgender people, and provide network members with the opportunity to open up to a friendly environment.**

Nearly 600 people took part in the ABC LGBT+ Introductory training.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network is involved in the activities of the Proud@Work initiative bringing together employee networks from various companies. It is in the process of co-organizing trainings with the Culture of Equality association, and planning trainings with the Love Does Not Exclude association.



### CONTACT

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Co-Founder of Nokia Poland Pride  
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PwC / PwC Shine Poland



Participation in Warsaw Equality Parade 2022. Photo: Katarzyna Mnich.



INFO  
Established: 2021



TEAM  
4 Four people in the project team, eight people in working the group and 120 subscribers participating in meetings and active on forums



CITIES  
The network directs activities to all offices in the country: Warsaw, Wrocław, Poznań, Kraków, Gdańsk, Katowice, Opole, Łódź and Lublin



ORGANIZATION OF WORK

” Shine in Poland operates as part of an international network, but the initiative to join it came from the company’s employees. The need for unambiguous support for the company’s LGBT+ community was also emphasized in a survey examining the effectiveness of I&D activities addressed to all company employees.

The network has its budget, and its sponsor is the Managing Partner of PwC Legal and the leader of Inclusion & Diversity in Poland and the CEE region – Cezary Żelaźnicki.

ACTIVITY

Internal Communication

Regular network activities, carried out 1-2 times a month, include educational meetings conducted by representatives of LGBT+ organizations and talks with psychologists and social gatherings. Due to pandemic constraints and significant number of regional offices, most meetings are held online.

The network works mainly internally through educational and social meetings and communication in internal channels. External actions are undertaken at the initiative of individual members of the network.

The paramount objective of actions is to build a network and create a safe place for the community through integration and education about implicit bias and microaggressions.



SUCCESSES  
Equality Marches

” Celebrating Pride Month was our first opportunity to meet in person as a community. Both in Gdańsk and Warsaw, several dozen people participated in our meetings and Equality Marches. It was an excellent opportunity to cement our activities and discuss our community’s needs.

## PwC / PwC Shine Poland



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network organized educational meetings with Love Does Not Exclude, Lambda Warsaw and the Trans-Fuzja Foundation.



### CONTACT

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QIAGEN / Pride@QIAGEN



Photo: QIAGEN.



INFO  
Established: 2022



TEAM  
Fifteen people in the leadership team and 138 subscribed to communication channels



CITIES  
Wrocław



ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Informal meetings, brainstorming sessions, and participation in the Wrocław Equality March preceded the network's official launch. With Culture of Equality, a local LGBT+ organization, an online training course was organized with 90 people participating. In an internal needs assessment survey asking employees what ERG initiatives were most needed, the LGBT+ network was among the top four most popular responses.

The formalized network was established at the initiative of leaders with the support of the CEO and the head of HR. However, its activities are autonomous and grassroots. The official sponsor is Stephany Foster, Senior Vice President, Head of Human Resources.

The group now uses a joint budget for all ERG initiatives in the company. Ultimately, it is to have own means allocated.



ACTIVITY

**Internal Communication**

The network organizes remote meetings addressed to people inside the organization from all over the world. Allied people joined the group of local ambassadors, i.e. people responsible for animating activities on the DE&I LGBT+ topic at the local level. Live meetings are also organized during the Equality March in Wrocław.

**External Communication**

This year, the network proposed to put up the company's stand as part of Wrocław's Town of Equality and provide financial support to the organizers of the March. The presence was also emphasized by a banner with the company's and the Proud@Work network's logos, created by the Culture of Equality association.

## QIAGEN / Pride@QIAGEN



### SUCSESSES

” **The launch of the global network in June 2022 was undoubtedly a success. About 80 people from all over the world participated in the kick-off meeting, in which many people worked hard. Participants were very willing to talk, ask questions, and after the event, we received a lot of e-mails with words of support.**



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network cooperates with the Culture of Equality Association in Wrocław.

” **We contract training from a social organization. Why? Because it's frustrating to see rainbow frames on company profiles doing nothing for the community – dialogue and cooperation between the corporate world and the non-hierarchical space of the organization matter. Besides – per the principle of “nothing about us without us” – NGOs know the community and its needs, so it is worth supporting their work. In turn, corporations can take advantage of training not to show off but to really help and show that their space is safe for everyone.**



### CONTACT

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Anna Kubiak  
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## Skanska / Place of Pride



Skanska Place of Pride wearing Pride 2021 sweatshirt. Photo: Skanska.



## INFO

Established: 2021



## TEAM

Four people in the project team, 34 people subscribed to communication channels



## CITIES

Warsaw, Gdańsk, Łódź, Wrocław, Kraków, Katowice, Poznań, Budapest, Bucharest, Prague



## ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The regional network includes people from Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary. The initiative to establish it came simultaneously from two employees from offices in Warsaw and Budapest. The network has existed since 2021, but it came out outside the company in June 2022, when information about its existence appeared on social media.

**” For the first year and a half, we decided not to communicate about our activities outside the company. We wanted to avoid pinkwashing – claims about being an inclusive workplace even before the planned activities within the company were implemented. We chose to speak in the present tense – about things accomplished. We assumed that only after the fact we would be able to tell LGBT+ people who think about working at Skanska that it is an open and genuinely supportive place – says Bartłomiej Budnicki, Co-Founder of Place of Pride, Skanska.**

The network has its budget from the line dedicated to activities related to DE&I, and its sponsor is Karolina Radziszewska, a board member responsible for HR issues.



## ACTIVITY

**Community Building**

The first activities of the network (2021) focused on conducting a cross-disciplinary program of internal training in the field of DE&I, detailing the subject of LGBT+ people. The network developed its own visual identity and created a communication channel available to every employee. In the following year (2022), webinars have been organized once a quarter on an important day for the community, e.g. a conversation between a parent from Skanska and a parent of a transgender person on International Transgender Day of Visibility.

In cooperation with the Knut Mazurczak Adwokaci law firm, an audit of legal regulations in four countries belonging to the network was carried out,

## Skanska / Place of Pride

along with an assessment of their impact on the situation of LGBT+ people and their families. A gap analysis was prepared, which will be the foundation for changing the company's internal procedures.

In this year's (2022) Pride Month, stickers from the Business Does Not Exclude campaign were hung in the office. People employed in the Skanska office company received rainbow gadgets to participate in the Equality Parade with the company's logo.

Information about the activities of the network appears regularly in corporate communications.

**” Our primary goal is to keep you safe and sound in the workplace, where you spend much of your time. There are further business goals connected with this. Attracting and retaining talent among LGBT+ people is vital in a highly specialized industry. Parents of LGBT+ people are also a significant group; we have already had several such coming-outs in the company. Leaders of change in private sector are the third key group addressed by our activities.**

### Initiatives Participation

The network and Love Does Not Exclude initiated the Business Does Not Exclude campaign. It is actively involved in the work of LGBTQ+ Network of Networks, cooperating with employee networks from other companies, An example of this cooperation is the publication of the "Safe Havens" report.



### Business does not exclude LGBT+ persons

We spend half our lives at work. We want to feel safe and at home there. Sometimes a symbolic gesture can help with that.

We have started our campaign with five corporations: CitiBank, HUUUGE, ISS, NatWest Group and Skanska Property. Two more joined since then: Smith+Nephew and BNP Paribas.

Join at: [www.biznesniewyklucz.pl](http://www.biznesniewyklucz.pl)

## Skanska / Place of Pride



### SUCCESSSES

#### Training program

The network's initiative organized an extensive training cycle consisting of 7 thematic modules and 13 training hours. The first wave was mandatory and intended for HR, communication and all managers. The second round was aimed at the remaining employees. Almost 100% of people employed in the company participated in the training. The entire cycle was exceptionally well assessed in the post-training satisfaction surveys. Among the topics discussed were microaggression and prejudice, sexual orientation and gender identity, racial and ethnic identity, mental health and gender equality.

#### Legal audit

At the network's request, the Knut Mazurczak Adwokaci law firm verified the legal situation in four countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the Skanska office company is present. In this way, gaps were identified that directly impact the lives of LGBT+ people and their families. Based on the results of this analysis, changes to the company's internal procedures will be prepared.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

**” The principle of representation is the most important; we give voice to those who know best what they are talking about and are the most authentic in it. Cooperation with the third sector is a form of giving voice to people who are experts in their fields.**

The network has cooperated with Love Does Not Exclude and We, Parents associations and the Diversity Hub foundation, organizing meetings and training cycles for the company's employees.



### CONTACT

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# Standard Chartered Global Business Services Poland / SC Pride Poland



Painting workshops. Photo: Standard Chartered.

-  **INFO**  
The network registration took place at the turn of 2019 and 2020 and was preceded by grassroots activities of employees since 2018
-  **TEAM**  
36 people
-  **CITIES**  
Warsaw

 **ORGANIZATION OF WORK**  
The network was established as a grassroots employee initiative with the support of the CEO of Standard Chartered Global Business Services (GBS) Poland. It is a registered group operating within the company's Diversity & Inclusion strategy.

The network has its budget allocated from funds for activities in the D&I area, and its sponsor is co-founder Ewa Kuchcińska, GBS Head of Compliance.

 **ACTIVITY**  
**Internal Communication**

**” We believe that coming out also applies to LGBT+ families.**

Together with social partners such as Lambda Warsaw and We, Parents, we organize webinars to raise awareness of allies of LGBT+ people. There are also meetings where LGBT+ people in managerial positions share their stories and perspectives.

Last year, allies from the company participated in the global Pride event, which hosted a series of themed webinars.

Rainbow gadgets – flags and lanyards – are distributed among people working and visiting the company.

The network also supported the HR department in working on a series of educational publications on the dignified treatment of LGBT+ people as well as in preparations of the “Ally to Advocate Toolkit”.

### External Communication

The network belongs to the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks and tries to support employee groups from other companies by sharing their experiences. Every year there is a group of employees that participates in the Equality Parade in Warsaw.

## Standard Chartered Global Business Services Poland / SC Pride Poland



### SUCSESSES

” **The network development is undoubtedly a success – from a small group operating on a grass-roots level to an official Employee Resource Group (ERG) initiative enjoying the support of colleagues in the company. Many people put a lot of work into this process, devoting their free time to organize events.**

The formalization of the network – providing structure and obtaining a budget – enables it to effectively promote activities in the company’s internal channels, for example, by organizing “Tea with Pride” events. Topics relevant to the network are also included in the official HR newsletter, which is distributed to everyone in the company.

In the Warsaw office, Pride Month was celebrated by hanging occasional banners, and at the end of it, a meeting for employees accompanied by music was organized.



### COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The network has cooperated with We, Parents and Lambda Warsaw associations.

In addition to organizing meetings with activists, the network also supports the digitization of the resources of the LGBT+ history archive in Poland, led by the Lambda Warsaw association.



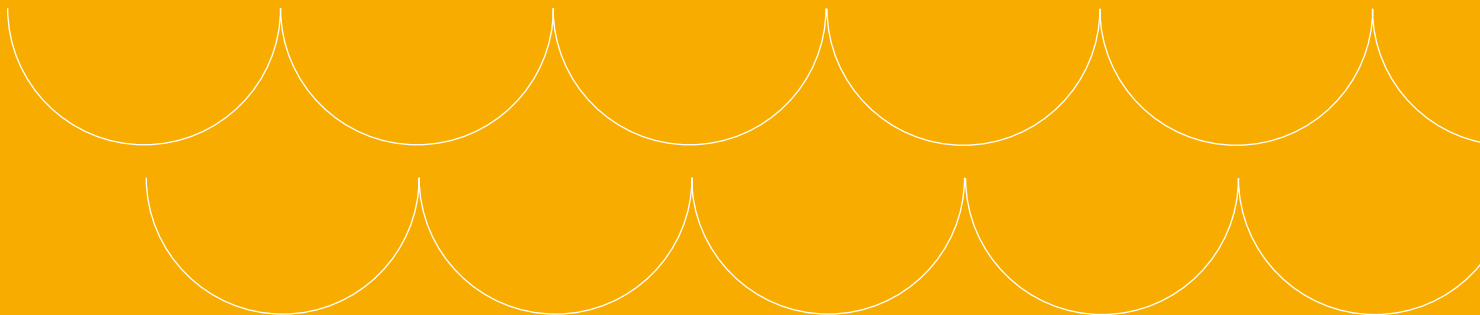
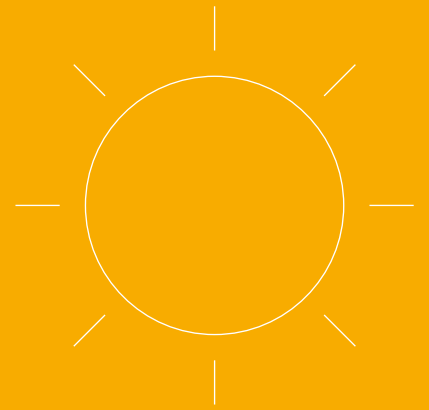
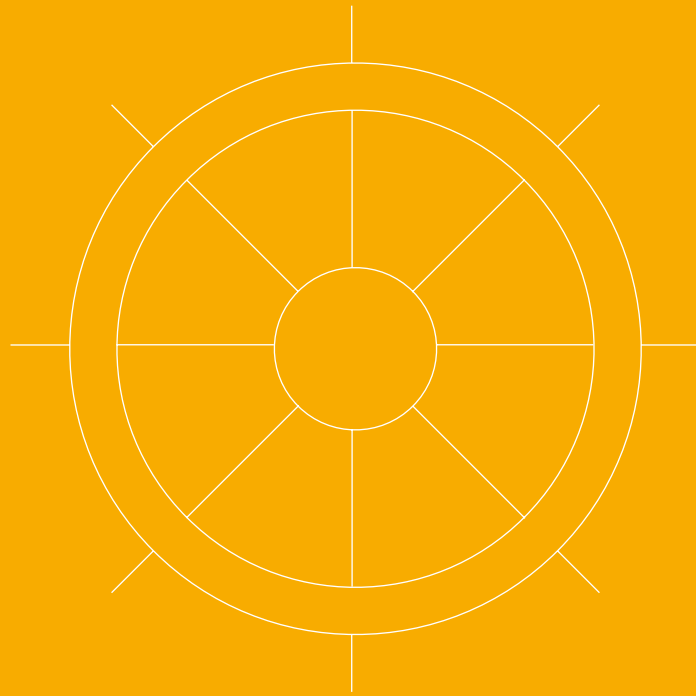
### CONTACT

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# Stories and Inspirations

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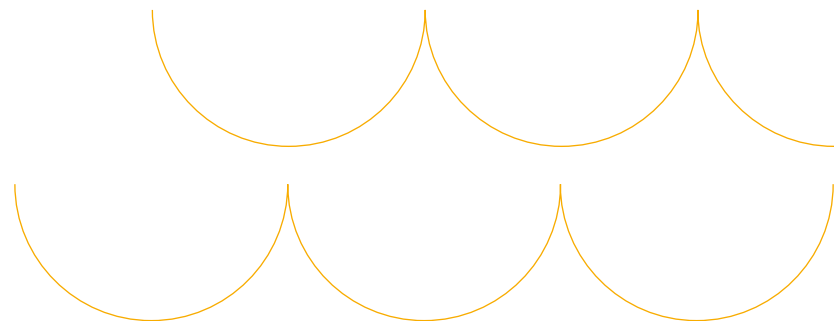
# Stories and Inspirations

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**Activity of rainbow employee networks always depends on the context. With appropriate support in the organization's structures, freedom to act, access to resources and the possibility of engaging other people in the company, networks can implement not only spontaneous but also methodical actions that have a tangible impact on the LGBT+ people's functioning in organizations and the results of their work.**

On the following pages, we give the floor to people from the rainbow employee networks who talk about what they have managed to do. We present only a few examples from the growing number of good practices that can inspire employees and employers.

Especially in the latter case, being guided by trust and providing real support are of great importance for the success of employee initiatives. Combined with the determination and enthusiasm of creators, networks can lead to a gradual change in attitudes, procedures, and even the entire culture of the organization.



CASE **Deloitte | Needs Assessment Research**

**Maja Zabawska**  
 Partner, Tax & Legal  
 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Leader  
 Deloitte Poland



The story of the GLOBE network in Poland began in 2011-2013 when I was delegated to work in Deloitte’s London office and had the opportunity to engage in work in the DE&I area and the initiatives of the local rainbow network. After returning to Poland, I wanted to create such a network in our local circumstances. At the turn of 2015 and 2016, we started the first activities of an informal initiative.

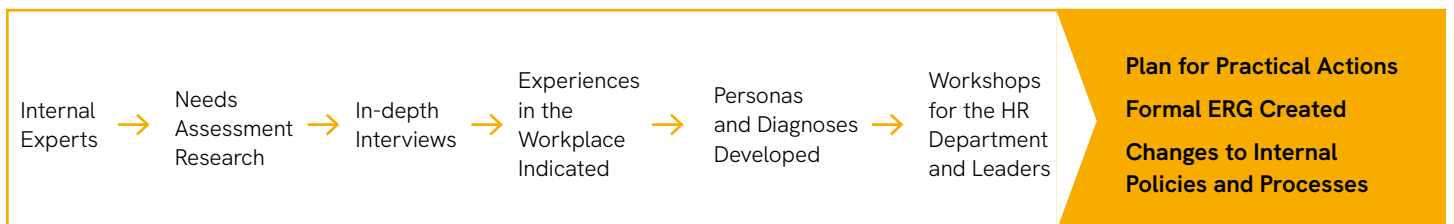
**Internal discussions and the accompanying DE&I activities around LGBT+ subject matter in the company sparked a broader interest amongst employees in taking action in this area.** At the same time, we were building a coalition of allies to support the network’s efforts. In 2019, we started organizing webinars on LGBT+ people for the entire company as part of the DE&I week.

The turning point was a survey organized by the Deloitte Consulting team for the entire Deloitte Poland at the end of 2020. We were lucky to have experts in this field within the organization. As part of the study, in-depth interviews with LGBT+ employees were conducted. Interviewees talked about their experiences in the workplace and identified areas that, in their opinion, could improve the comfort of their functioning in the professional environment. Based on the research, personas and diagnoses were developed, followed by workshops for the HR department and leaders.

This way, an entire plan of practical actions was developed, a formal network was created, and changes were made to internal policies and processes. Among others, in the intranet, in the section on employee benefits, it was explicitly indicated that in the case of

benefits also intended for partners/spouses of employees (it was primarily medical insurance), they also apply to persons of the same sex. Information about the rainbow network was included in the onboarding of new hires. A rainbow sticker signaling the support of people from the LGBT + community accompanied the “welcome pack” distributed to new employees.

Psychological support for employees, which previously functioned as a “family psychologist”, was renamed a more neutral “consultation with a psychologist” – of course, it had been verified whether the psychologist had competence in supporting LGBT+ people. We organized training for HR and payroll departments on creating a work environment open to LGBT+ people, conducted by For a Change Fund. Rainbow lanyards and mugs were purchased and distributed in the Warsaw



and regional offices. We eliminated the outdated dress code that reproduced gender stereotypes.

**Why is it worth starting with a needs assessment?**

Because it is crucial to examine your assumptions about why and how we want to create a work environment open to LGBT+ (and not only) people and ask the interested parties what is essential to them. Building mutual understanding between LGBT+ employees, the talent team (HR) and leaders involved in the process also turned out to be critical in the study carried out at Deloitte. It allowed, among others, to debunk many superstitions and myths about LGBT+ people and understand why this topic is important from a workplace perspective.



**Building mutual understanding between LGBT+ employees, the talent team (HR) and leaders involved in the process also turned out to be critical in the study carried out at Deloitte.**

**Maja Zabawska**  
Partner, Tax & Legal  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Leader  
Deloitte Poland

CASE **Google** | **Networking of Networks**

**Kuba Piwowar**  
Digital Acceleration Lead  
Google Poland



It all started in 2016 when I met Blanka Rozbicka from NatWest at the Equality Parade. The companies didn't display their floats back then; ours were the exception, so we were thrilled to have met. We exchanged gadgets and met for coffee. During the conversation, we concluded that in many companies, something was already happening regarding LGBT+ matters, but there was no contact between us, and we did not cooperate.

Using our contacts and the support of LGBT+ organizations cooperating with businesses, we compiled a list of people and sent out invitations. About 30 people attended that first meeting. We talked about everything related to establishing and running the network, many people spoke about their difficulties and the lack of support from the leaders, but the meeting itself was equally important. We just wanted to get to know each other, communicate and see if we wanted and could do something together.

From that moment on, we kept in touch for good, and people from other companies set out to organize live meetings. **Our LGBTQ+ Network of Networks has become a platform for sharing experiences and gathering knowledge about what works and doesn't.** News of our existence spread among people interested in the topic. More people who wanted to start with their company initiative contacted us looking for advice.

When the pandemic limited the possibilities of action and cooled down the enthusiasm, Rafał Dembe - at the time from NatWest - took on the mantle of the organizer and helped restart the operation. He also established many external contacts, thanks to which the network could become involved in external initiatives addressed to the community. **We do not want to limit ourselves only to conversations in our business bubble, but also be in touch with social organizations and support them financially, professionally and as much as possible.**



**We just wanted to get to know each other, communicate and see if we wanted and could do something together.**

I can say today that a lot has changed over the last few years. In the past, Google was the only company at the Parade; today, there are several dozen. I can see that, as the private sector, we are at the stage of conducting talks, but in some companies, the most critical question is not “Should we act?” but “How to do it best?” Such a shift to the level of detail means that, at least in some organizations, the topic has matured and stabilized, which is encouraging.

**Why is it worth joining the LGBTQ+ Network of Networks?**

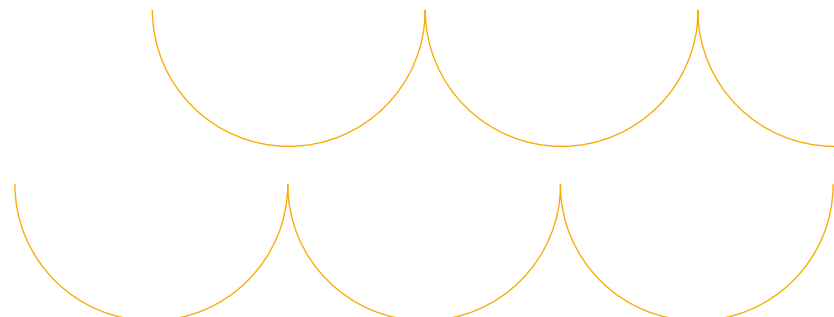
Because together, we do our best to engage the potential of the companies we work for for the LGBTQ+ community.

We can share the know-how and knowledge about employee networks, help take the first steps and establish more advanced cooperation. We are a group of supportive people who often face similar difficulties.



**We do not want to limit ourselves only to conversations in our business bubble, but also be in touch with social organizations and support them financially, professionally and as much as possible.**

**Kuba Piwowar**  
Digital Acceleration Lead  
Google Poland





CASE **JLL | A Space for Conversation****Tomasz Młyniec**

JLL Building Pride Network Poland

Chapter Leader Team



For us, inclusiveness means, among other things, creating conditions for dialogue about LGBT+ people and broadly understood diversity. We understand the space for conversation in two ways. It is the presence of a subject in our communication and readiness to speak and listen to each other, but also a specific, physical place where everyone can feel at home.

To introduce the subject of LGBT+ people to our colleagues, at the beginning of this year, we started creating a series of educational films in which we share our knowledge ourselves and answer basic questions. We began by making a list of over 30 topics and writing scripts. From concept to implementation, all the work is done by people from our network. **So far, we have recorded eight episodes in which – among other things – we explain the meaning of the LGBT+ acronym, answer the question of who non-binary people are and tell the story of decriminalizing homosexuality.** The films are broadcasted online and on screens in the office. The feedback we have received from our colleagues is very positive. Many people congratu-

late us on this initiative and consider it a good idea.

The next step was creating a physical space in the office dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness. We came up with the idea of arranging a room next to the HR department, which many people in the office pass by daily. **We wanted to create a space where you can have a good time and relax while reading – for example, educational materials developed by the network.** Additionally, we wanted the room to maintain its previous functionality – the intention was that each employee could conveniently use it for conference calls, display a presentation or organize a business meeting. Despite our concerns about whether the idea would be met with understanding and acceptance, we received much support and the go-ahead from Mateusz Gołembiewski, a management board member. An interior designer working with JLL helped us arrange the space.

Our rainbow room officially opened on October 11, National Coming Out Day. The space was open to all JLL employees, with network members, in-

formation brochures and sweet snacks waiting for them. We talked with our company's employees, who came to see the room, spoke about our actions, and encouraged them to join our other activities. We sparked great interest in our activities. In total, over 100 people visited the room throughout the day.

Since then, the Rainbow Room has served as a meeting place and a safe space for every employee of the company, and the purpose of its creation is to spread awareness, tolerance and visibility of LGBT+ people in the corporate environment. The Rainbow room also permanently functions as a standard conference room, with additional armchairs and sofas for a more relaxing and integration purpose.

**Why is building a space for conversation important?**

Because it is not enough to assume that we all know everything and are open to others – we also have to show it and give voice to people who can and want to share their experiences. By providing a space dedicated to the LGBT+ community, we want to raise our employees' awareness and

encourage them to talk, ask questions and educate.

**Was it challenging to create this space – did it require special projects or construction work?**

Fortunately not. We only changed the room's décor and furniture and glued foil on the glass. Creating this space did not require heavy or specialized construction work or creating unique projects.

**What would you say to networks and ERGs in other companies if they would also like to create such a space?**

Keep trying, and don't be afraid to ask! Organizing such a space is easier than it seems. :)

”

**Since its opening, the Rainbow Room serves as a meeting place and a safe space for every employee of the company, and the purpose of its creation is to spread awareness, tolerance and visibility of LGBT+ people in the corporate environment.**

**Tomasz Młyniec**  
JLL Building Pride Network Poland  
Chapter Leader Team



The opening of the rainbow room. Photo: JLL.

CASE **NatWest | LGBT+ Diamonds Awards**

**Emilia Nowakowska**  
Communications Manager  
NatWest



We noticed that companies in Poland do not talk about supporting LGBT+ employees. We wanted to break this pattern with the help of those organizations we knew were supportive. Apart from starting these talks in the private sector, it was also essential for us to move beyond the Warsaw bubble.

Diversity is becoming increasingly important today, so there was also a growing need to organize a competition in which business initiatives stand out. We also wanted to raise employers' awareness that supporting diversity is not only an ornament but brings real business benefits as well. **Today we have the first data from the "Open for Business" research, which clearly shows the measurable financial losses generated by the lack of equal rights for LGBT+ people. These losses affect not only business but all of us, the whole of society.**

In organizing "Diamonds", the company's leaders and external allies' support was beneficial. Parallel to business ones, we gathered social partners. Organizations such as Trans-Fuzja

Foundation, Love Does Not Exclude, and Campaign Against Homophobia have accompanied us from the beginning. **Cooperation with activists also plays a vital role because we want to hear from them whether something we are doing makes sense and is not an artificial creation.**

Embassies of, among others, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom have joined the helpful institutions' group. All these relations paid off with new contacts and opportunities for cooperation.

Transparency in cooperation with the NGO sector is key to us. Many LGBT+ people perceive business activities with distrust and skepticism as pink-washing, that is, superficial work that serves only self-promotion and earning money at the expense of the community. When we talked with organizations about the "idea for "Diamonds" before its launch, not everyone immediately believed in the sincerity of our intentions. Today, these people are convinced of this idea, and I am glad we have earned this trust.



**Cooperation with activists also plays a vital role because we want to hear from them whether something we are doing makes sense and is not an artificial creation.**

We organize the LGBT+ Diamonds Awards competition as part of voluntary work, often after hours and from the heart. At the same time, we care about maximum professionalism, so work on each edition starts almost a year in advance. **It is essential for us that people who devote their time to this venture should feel agency and subjectivity so nothing is dictated beforehand and all voices matter.**

The team comprises a project manager and people responsible for communication and formalities and works under the oversight of a sponsor from the management board. Different working groups are also formed where possible.

After several years of organizing the competition, we can say that it has been successful in content and communication. In 2022, the information about the award gala reached over 700,000 people, and the relationships established during the event between people from employee networks, social organizations, community members, and allies paid off with new initiatives.

**What are "Diamonds" for?**

To celebrate good things, appreciate the people who do them, and inspire others. **To show that it is possible.**



**In 2022, the information about the award ceremony reached over 700,000 people, and the relationships established during the event between people from employee networks, social organizations, community members, and allies paid off with new initiatives.**

Emilia Nowakowska  
Communications Manager  
NatWest



Laureates of LGBT+ Diamonds Awards 2022. Photo: NatWest.

CASE **Skanska | Training Program****Bartłomiej Budnicki**

Workplace Flexibility/Diversity  
& Inclusion In-house Consultant  
Co-Founder of Place of Pride  
Skanska Property Poland



The in-house training program conducted in 2021 was inspired by the complicated political and social situation in which people from the LGBT+ community in Poland and Hungary, but not only, found themselves. The difficulties related to the pandemic, the results of the employee satisfaction survey indicating the need to support diversity, and other political events (such as the Women's Strike) - all these factors influenced our decision to organize something more than a one-off webinar.

We decided that we needed a proper, cross-disciplinary training program with clearly defined goals and a well-planned process. We have planned two rounds of training for all four countries of our region: the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Hungary.

**The first wave, covering seven modules, was targeted at people shaping the company's organizational culture – the ethics committee, HR, marketing and communication departments, as well as all team managers – that is about 43% of our staff, who has a real and the most significant impact on shaping everyday work at Skanska office.**

Participation in this wave was obligatory, and we treated the whole thing as a test and an opportunity to verify the idea. The surveys and feedback we collected after the classes helped us improve the process' continuation. The second wave was open to everyone else and optional except for the module on legal issues of discrimination, compensatory measures and national and European legislation directions.

**Due to the pandemic situation, all training happened online. Bearing in mind the employees' packed schedules, we adjusted the training frequency so that it was not arduous but still significant. Therefore, the execution of the training program took us nearly seven months.**

**As a result, each participant attended about 13 hours of training in the comprehensive DE&I educational program.** Three modules focused on fundamental knowledge; four talked about the problems of specific groups vulnerable to unequal treatment. They covered issues such as microaggressions and implicit bias, racial and ethnic diversity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and visible and invisible disabilities. **Importantly, we managed to avoid marginalizing the LGBT+ issue and diluting it in an undefined diversity.** This topic was clearly marked and treated on an equal footing with other matters within specially designated modules.

Positive evaluation results (NPS at 39 points) allow us to deem the training a success. We were particularly pleased

### PDE&I Training Program at Skanska in Numbers

4	CEE countries	13	hours of training per person
7	months		
2	waves of training	91%	of company's employees trained
3	basic knowledge modules	39	NPS points (-100 to 100 points scale)
4	modules on marginalized groups		

with the increase in this index between the first and second waves. Both individual modules and the entire program were evaluated exceptionally well.

We estimated that over 91% of company employees participated in the training. **Communication and promotion of the event were of key importance to achieve such a high attendance.** We sent invitations to employees' calendars well in advance and informed them about the training in internal articles with branding specially created for this purpose. It was also important to train essential employees in the first phase of the program, who later became ambassadors of the initiative and often encouraged other people to participate. The work culture and the company's values were also influential, putting people at the center of operations. The only difficulties we can point to were technical. Remote work can be challenging, and sometimes people get lost between virtual "rooms".

The right decision was to give the trainers free rein while informing them about the questions the participants had asked earlier. The message of the

entire program was also valuable: "the difficulties faced by the people we are talking about may one day affect you as well". This human perspective, combining knowledge and specific situations, naturally stimulated empathy and motivation to act. The workshop on people with disabilities also inspired the creation of a new employee network (Body & Mind Network).

#### Why do we say training makes sense?

Because we know that they bring measurable results. **In one of the recent job interviews, a person who applied for an open position in our company said: "I want to work here because I know it is a safe place for LGBT+ people."** Our network's activities were also recognized within the company - during last year's meeting of all employees, our Place of Pride network was awarded and received a statuette in the category "Be Better Together" - one of Skanska's core values. And our network is often approached by our employees, who, as parents of LGBT+ youths, are looking for support for themselves and their children.



**The right decision was to give the trainers free rein while informing them about the questions the participants had asked earlier.**

**Bartłomiej Budnicki**  
Workplace Flexibility/Diversity & Inclusion In-house Consultant  
Co-Founder of Place of Pride  
Skanska Property Poland

# Social Organizations Cooperating with Business

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# Social Organizations Cooperating with Business

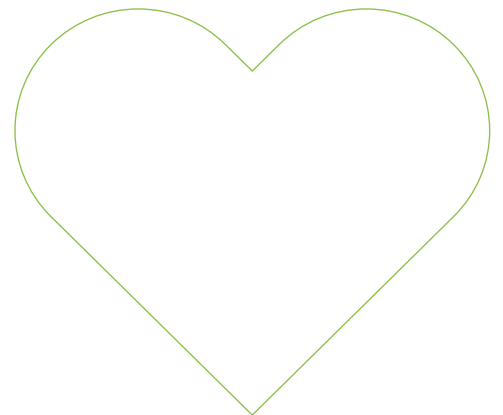
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**Despite adverse circumstances, and perhaps because of them, more and more organizations and groups working for the LGBT+ community are being created in Poland.**

Not so long ago, concentrated mainly in larger urban centers, in recent years, activist initiatives have also appeared more and more often in smaller towns, covering the entire map of Poland with the rainbow initiatives. Between 2017 and 2019, when Opole, Lublin, Rzeszów, Olsztyn, Białystok and Zielona Góra joined the marching cities – those where the Equality Marches take place – all voivodeships gained at least one March of their own. Currently, over 60 organizations and groups operate directly for the community in Poland – something unthinkable just a few years ago. A regularly updated list of these organizations and groups and contact details can be found at [mnw.org.pl/polska-lgbt](http://mnw.org.pl/polska-lgbt).

Organizations' and groups' themes and operation methods are diverse – from organizing individual events in a given city through sports clubs and choirs, running aid groups, and providing legal support to nationwide social campaigns and multi-path social and political activities based on a strategy planned for many years. Activists from all over the country prove that the LGBT+ community in Poland can stick together, and the rainbow sector not only works but also develops, professionalizes and improves skills in individual thematic segments.

Among the numerous activities of the organization, there are also specialized DE&I offers for business. Consulting, workshops, training, webinars, employee volunteering, conducting audits, support in creating anti-discrimination policies, assistance in developing employee networks and networking – all this is already offered by organizations, groups and activists. Tailor-made solutions mean that every company – if it wants – can quickly provide employees with a safe and friendly workplace, increasing productivity and building loyalty and improving the general well-being of the people it employs – all this while supporting the rainbow social sector by using its services.





## **Flexibility, Expertise, Empathy – Offers Worth Considering**

LGBT+ people in Poland, wanting to change the reality for a better and safer one, very often have to pursue self-advocacy. It means a constant need to improve skills and knowledge in inclusiveness. Community activists, including trainers, are up to date with the state of knowledge, research and the legal situation of LGBT+ people. A wide range of topics in which they are proficient means a great flexibility and the ability to adjust the offer to the company's specific requirements.

Below we present selected topics and their leaders, and then the complete offers of over a dozen organizations/people ready and open to cooperation, which you can use as an employer or employee. We made the selection based on our knowledge of the social sector but also on recommendations received from companies, following their good experience of working with these specific organizations and people at the substantive level, as well as the ability to pass the knowledge in an accessible and engaging way, openness to the needs of companies, building partnership relations, as well as orderly activities from the formal and legal standpoint. We believe that this list will also grow longer in future editions.



**LGBT+ people in Poland, wanting to change the reality for a better and safer one, very often have to pursue self-advocacy. It means a constant need to improve skills and knowledge in inclusiveness.**

## Topics and Their Leaders



### Introduction to DE&I in the workplace

**Topics:** basic and elementary issues, explaining the need to introduce good practices in the workplace, communicating anti-discrimination policies in a team, benefits of DE&I principles

What is diversity, and how does it relate to the workplace? What does it mean when someone is transgender? Who needs inclusive language and anti-discrimination policies? What exactly is orientation, and why should we talk about it? Do I **really** have to attend training and workshops if I am tolerant?

**These and many other questions will be answered by, among others, Love Does Not Exclude, Culture of Equality or Stonewall Group.**



**The most valuable for me are questions from people who are genuinely interested in the subject and want to enhance their knowledge. I also remember the moments of coming out, when people told their colleagues for the first time: “These are not abstract topics; we are now talking about me and my life.” I am deeply convinced that such testimonies have enormous power to change people’s attitudes and reduce prejudices.**

**Hubert Sobecki**, Love Does Not Exclude



### Practice - implementing policies, the language of benefits

**Topics:** practical DE&I context, first steps, implementation process, business argumentation through the language of benefits

How to implement the principles of the anti-discrimination policy in practice? What does this mean for the team? What does such a process look like, and is it difficult? Is DE&I profitable in business at all, and if so, how?

**For example, the Diversity Poland Foundation, Stonewall Group, Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law and Love Does Not Exclude will help to clarify these issues.**



**I like it when participants ask difficult questions because it proves their commitment. The best training is one after which no one feels they have wasted time.**

**Mateusz Sulwiński**, Stonewall Group



### Integration and employee volunteering

It is an increasingly popular way of supporting the social activity of employees by the employer, but also an excellent opportunity to integrate the team and help non-governmental organizations. Many organizations allow this form of cooperation – it is worth asking local associations and foundations if they have such an offer.

**Diversity Poland Foundation** – helping contact local organizations and organizing employee volunteering..

**Signs of Equality**, Kraków – a city game ending in the DOM EQ community center, combined with a presentation of the community center and refreshments.

**Culture of Equality**, Wrocław – meeting with drag queens (bingo, brunch meetings, etc.), WenDo classes, various forms of employee volunteering, e.g. helping organize the Equal Place – LGBT+ Center Wrocław.



**Our experience supports the theory we are talking about, and examples of good DE&I practices are based on visits to our partners and not on stories heard or read in the materials. For me, it is vital that companies, organizations and NGOs continue their cooperation.**

**Danuta Sowińska**, Diversity Poland Foundation



### The law

**Topics:** legal situation of LGBT+ people and issues in the field of anti-discrimination legislation, legal framework of internal policies in the workplace, assistance in creating and implementing policies, audits

Are you interested in practical legal issues, for example, help in creating anti-discrimination policies to protect employees adequately? Or maybe you have questions concerning anti-discrimination law?

**It is best to talk to people who operate in the field of law daily and contact the Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law or Knut Mazurczak Adwokaci law firm.**



**Sometimes during the training, we meet with resistance to only then receive feedback on how important this topic is and how much talking about it strengthens employees. It is incredibly satisfying to overcome such resistance and observe the change in the attitude of people who leave training with a strong determination that they want to change the reality around them.**

**Karolina Kędziora**, Attorney,  
Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law



### Transgender persons in the workplace

**Topics:** recommendations for HR departments, transgender and non-binary persons in the workplace, creating inclusive office space for non-binary and transgender people

How to facilitate the transition process in the workplace? What exactly is transition? How to support a transgender employee, and why might they need support at all? What is non-binary? Where did the pronouns in the footers of e-mail messages come from? Transgender identity in the workplace is a significant issue that, unfortunately, is often overlooked in standard DE&I training and webinars.

**Trans-Fuzja Foundation** is a contact where you will find professional webinars, workshops, off-site training sessions and workshops, and lectures combined with exercises. You can also receive consulting and advisory services.

**Ewelina Negowetti** will comprehensively talk about transgender identity – from the basics, through assistance to human resources departments, to practice.



**The world is very diverse, and pretending not to notice it causes our business to lock itself into a narrow area of operation. An employee who feels inferior in the workplace is a worse employee, and benefits, fruit Thursdays will not help. By making someone feel better, we make them give more, develop and surprise us with their potential.**

**Ewelina Negowetti ART**



### Networking

**Topics:** employee networks, ERGs (Employee Resource Groups), are groups created within a company by its employees. They allow for the exchange of experiences, good practices, development and networking. There are many employee networks for LGBT+ people in Poland; you can read more about them in Chapter 2.

**Diversity Poland Foundation** – Diversity Network  
**Culture of Equality Association** – Proud@Work



**I am glad that we receive more and more inquiries from companies about particular issues, e.g. how to support a parent of a transgender child at work or how to respond to an employee's coming out appropriately. We want to stimulate self-reflection, showing mechanisms of thinking, feeling, acting, implicit prejudices, etc. It's great if people ask themselves questions: "Where do I get my opinion?" and "What can I do differently now?"**

**Alina Szeptycka**, Culture of Equality






## With Whom and about What - from Topic to Contact

You will find here an overview of topics of the trainings, webinars and consultations conducted by Polish LGBT+ social organizations for the private sector. We hope that such a matrix will allow everyone to better navigate through, on the one hand, a wide range of organizations, and on the other hand, a wide range of topics. Below the matrix, there are details of the offers of individual organizations, a brief information about each of them along with contact details.






At the end of the chapter, we also added information about a few initiatives, which are additionally worth paying attention to when implementing activities in the area of DE&I.

Topics of trainings, workshops, webinars and consultations:	Diversity Poland Foundation	Ewelina Negowetti ART	Signs of Equality Federation	For a Change Fund	Stonewall Group Association	Campaign Against Homophobia Association	Knut Mazurczak Association	Culture of Equality Association	Lambda Warsaw Association	Love Does Not Exclude Association	Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law	Replika Foundation	Trans-Fuzja Foundation
LGBT+: basic issues	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Socio-political situation of LGBT+ persons	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●
Transgender persons in the workplace	●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●	●
Non-binary persons in the workplace		●								●			
DE&I: anti-discrimination policies	●			●		●	●			●	●		
DE&I: benefits for employees and employers	●		●	●				●		●	●		●
DE&I: implementation of anti-discrimination policies and practices	●					●				●	●		
Counteracting discrimination and mobbing in the workplace and in services						●							
Inclusive language	●		●	●	●			●	●	●			●
Creating an inclusive office space for non-binary and transgender persons		●								●			
Good allyship, inclusive behavior and practices towards LGBT+ persons in the workplace				●				●		●			
History of the LGBT + movement / History of the Polish non-heteronormative community								●	●	●			






### Love Does Not Exclude Association

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, audit
-  detailed offer: [mnw.org.pl/biznes](http://mnw.org.pl/biznes);  
Love's Rainbow Shop: [sklep.mnw.org.pl](http://sklep.mnw.org.pl)
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Hubert Sobecki, [hsobecki \[at\] mnw.org.pl](mailto:hsobecki@mnw.org.pl),  
+48 501 647 563, [mnw.org.pl/en](http://mnw.org.pl/en)





### Ewelina Negowetti ART

-  Poland, France, online
-  cooperation: webinars, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, creating recommendations and outlines for HR departments
-  supplementary information: individual consultations related to transgender issues in the workplace are possible (recruitment process, training, transition in the workplace, etc.)
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Ewelina Negowetti, [ewelk \[at\] icloud.com](mailto:ewelk@icloud.com),  
+48 781 001 338, [patronite.pl/EwelinaNegowetti](http://patronite.pl/EwelinaNegowetti)






### Signs of Equality Federation

-  Kraków, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, lecture + exercises, employee volunteering, team integration activities
-  supplementary information: federation runs DOM EQ - Cracow's Center of Equality;  
online shop: [prideshop.pl](http://prideshop.pl)
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  kontakt [at] [znakirownosci.org.pl](http://znakirownosci.org.pl),  
+48 605 949 550, [znakirownosci.org.pl](http://znakirownosci.org.pl)






### For a Change Fund

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, audit
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  kontakt [at] [dlaodmiany.org.pl](http://dlaodmiany.org.pl),  
+48 505 023 804, [dlaodmiany.org.pl](http://dlaodmiany.org.pl)






## Replika Foundation

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, Q&A, consulting and advisory, meetings with activists and LGBT+ persons
-  supplementary information on LGBTQIA Replika Magazine: advertising offer: [replika-online.pl/oferta-reklamowa](https://replika-online.pl/oferta-reklamowa); business subscription to an LGBT+ magazine, participation in the publication of articles, the possibility of purchasing a series of articles for publication on the company's intranet
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Tomasz Piotrowski, [tomasz.piotrowski \[at\] magazynreplika.pl](mailto:tomasz.piotrowski@magazynreplika.pl), +48 600 231 936, [replika-online.pl](https://replika-online.pl)






## Diversity Poland Foundation

-  Gdańsk, Poland, Europe, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, audit, employee volunteering: support in establish relationships with local NGO's (i.e. volunteering support in events or study visit organization)
-  detailed offer: [diversitypl.org/oferta](https://diversitypl.org/oferta)
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Danuta Sowińska, [danuta \[at\] diversitypl.org](mailto:danuta@diversitypl.org), +48 501 500 614, [diversitypl.org](https://diversitypl.org)






## Stonewall Group Association

-  Poznań, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, the possibility of organizing of employee volunteering as part of the activities of the Association
-  detailed offer: [grupa-stonewall.pl/szkolenia/dla-biznesu](https://grupa-stonewall.pl/szkolenia/dla-biznesu); online shop OUT&PROUD: [outandproud.pl](https://outandproud.pl), Stonewall Group also runs, among others: assisted housing for LGBT + people in the homelessness crisis, the commercial Hostel Stonewall, the Lokum Stonewall drink bar and is the organizer of the annual Poznań Pride Week
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Mateusz Sulwiński, [mateusz.sulwinski \[at\] grupa-stonewall.pl](mailto:mateusz.sulwinski@grupa-stonewall.pl), +48 661 830 894, [grupa-stonewall.pl](https://grupa-stonewall.pl)






## Culture of Equality Association

-  Wrocław, Lower Silesia Province, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, employee volunteering: the possibility of organizing of employee volunteering as part of the activities of the Association, team integration activities: i.e. meeting with drag queens (playing bingo, having brunch, etc.), WenDo
-  detailed offer: [kulturarownosci.org/szkolenia-i-warsztaty](https://kulturarownosci.org/szkolenia-i-warsztaty), Association runs Equal Place Równe - LGBT+ Center in Wrocław
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Anna Kubiak, [anna.kubiak \[at\] kulturarownosci.org](mailto:anna.kubiak@kulturarownosci.org), +48 502 587 573, [kulturarownosci.org](https://kulturarownosci.org)






### Lambda Warsaw Association

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, consulting and advisory
-  supplementary information: organization runs, among others: Warsaw's Emergency Hostel for LGBT+ persons in the crisis of homelessness and nationwide helpline for LGBT+ persons
-  VAT invoice: no
-  Miłosz Przepiórkowski, mprzepiorkowski [at] lambdawarszawa.org, +48 690 610 107, [lambdawarszawa.org](http://lambdawarszawa.org)





### Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory, audit
-  detailed offer: [ptpadlapracodawcy.org.pl](http://ptpadlapracodawcy.org.pl); the Association is an expert non-governmental organization of lawyers specializing in counteracting discrimination
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  Marta Musiejewska, mmusiejewska [at] ptpa.org.pl, +48 739 975 508, [ptpa.org.pl](http://ptpa.org.pl)

### Knut Mazurczak Adwokaci law firm

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, specialized consulting and advisory concerning LGBT+ legal matters, audit
-  supplementary information: the law firm specializes in the protection of the rights of LGBT + people, including the topic of equal treatment in the workplace; details: [knutmazurczak.pl/zakres-uslug/#rowne-traktowanie-w-miejscu-pracy](http://knutmazurczak.pl/zakres-uslug/#rowne-traktowanie-w-miejscu-pracy)
-  VAT invoice: yes
-  kontakt [at] knutmazurczak.pl, +48 793 907 807, [knutmazurczak.pl](http://knutmazurczak.pl)

### Trans-Fuzja Foundation

-  Warsaw, Poland, online
-  cooperation: webinars, workshops, off-site training/workshops, lecture + exercises, Q&A, consulting and advisory
-  VAT invoice: no
-  kontakt [at] transfuzja.org, +48 510 853 634, [transfuzja.org](http://transfuzja.org)



### Campaign Against Homophobia Association



Warsaw, Poland, online



cooperation: webinars, lecture + exercises, Q&A



supplementary information: the organization does not have a training and workshop offer as such aimed at business, but conducts meetings and workshops at the request of the contacting company and if it is able to meet the expectations and the given activity fits in the organization's strategy



VAT invoice: no



info [at] kph.org.pl, +48 22 423 64 38, [kph.org.pl](http://kph.org.pl)



## Other initiatives worth checking

### **LGBTQ+ Network of Networks [LGBTQ+ NoN]**

A network of Polish employee networks focused on LGBT+ issues, founded by people working at Google and NatWest. The network organizes its work through a group on LinkedIn. Search for "LGBTQ+ Network of networks (NoN) in Poland" and request to join.

### **Proud@Work**

A network of DE&I employee groups in Wrocław corporations started and developed by Culture of Equality. Anna Kubiak – coordinator of the Proud@Work rainbow employee network in Wrocław  
anna.kubiak [at] kulturarownosci.org  
contact [at] kulturarownosci.org

### **Wolontariat Równości Foundation**

The organization behind the **Equality Parade in Warsaw**, the largest rainbow festival of equality in Poland.  
Julia Maciocha  
julia.maciocha [at] paradarownosci.eu  
[www.paradarownosci.eu](http://www.paradarownosci.eu)

### **Diversity Hub Foundation**

A think-tank whose mission is to develop business thanks to diversity.  
+48 12 353 05 59  
info@diversityhub.pl  
[www.diversityhub.pl](http://www.diversityhub.pl)

### **Responsible Business Forum**

An expert organization that initiates and partners in critical undertakings for CSR, ESG and sustainable development in Poland.  
+48 22 627 18 71  
[www.odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl](http://www.odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl)

### **Open For Business**

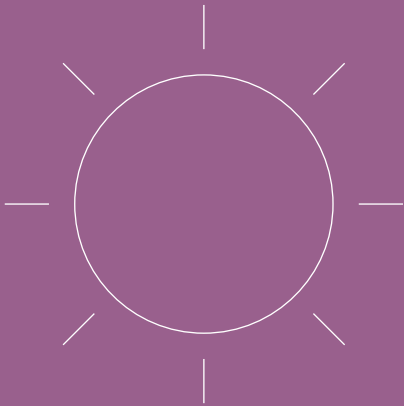
Coalition of global enterprises that believe diverse, inclusive societies are a better environment for business and economic growth. The coalition's objective is to promote the rights of LGBT+ people around the world.  
[www.open-for-business.org](http://www.open-for-business.org)

### **Law Does Not Exclude Fund**

Run by Love Does Not Exclude is an initiative that financially and legally supports LGBT+ people in difficult situations who fight in court against unequal treatment or discrimination.  
Milena Adamczewska-Stachura  
+48 512 724 773  
prawo [at] mnw.org.pl  
[www.mnw.org.pl/prawo](http://www.mnw.org.pl/prawo)

# Legal Issues – What an Employer Must Do, and What an Employer Can Do?

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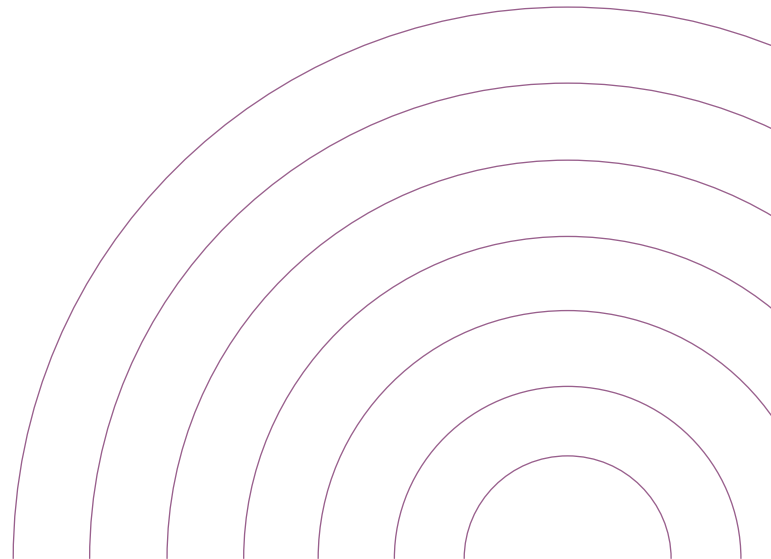


# Legal Issues – What an Employer Must Do, and What an Employer Can Do?

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**This chapter aims to place the issue of protection of the rights of LGBT+ workers and the benefits granted to them on the map of Polish law.**

This issue is closely related to the topic of equal treatment in the workplace - in this context, the chapter refers to the fundamental legal obligations of the employer resulting from the Labor Code<sup>31</sup> and the act on equal treatment<sup>32</sup>. The employment area is, unfortunately, the only one in which the protection of LGBT+ rights is guaranteed in Poland by law. On the other hand, legal gaps in the protection of different areas - mainly private and family life - significantly affect the daily life and mental health of LGBT+ workers, which impacts their functioning in the professional space. Hence, apart from answering the question “What does an employer **must** do?” the chapter provides information on what an employer can do to equalize the situation of LGBT+ people with that of other workers. The legal framework of possible actions presented in this chapter is crucial. The good practices’ recommendations are merely examples, as their exhaustive list goes beyond the scope of this publication.



<sup>31</sup> Act of June 26, 1974 - The Labor Code, Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1510, hereinafter: the Labor Code.

<sup>32</sup> Act of 3 December, 2010 on the implementation of some regulations of European Union regarding equal treatment, Journal Of Laws of 2020, item 2156, hereinafter: the Act on equal treatment.

## What an Employer Must Do – Legal Framework

### 1.

#### Comply with the prohibition of unequal treatment

*Legal Basis: Directive 2000/78<sup>33</sup>; Article 32 of the Polish Constitution; art. 11(3) and art. 18(3a)- 18(3e) of the Labor Code; the Act on equal treatment; jurisprudence*

The first primary duty of employers is not to discriminate against workers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. What does this mean in practice, i.e. what activities and towards whom are prohibited?

#### The subject scope of the prohibition of unequal treatment

The Labor Code and the act on equal treatment list **sexual orientation** as the forbidden grounds for unequal treatment. Although they do not explicitly list gender identity, **according to jurisprudence, protection against discrimination based on sex also covers gender identity<sup>34</sup>.**

Moreover, the act on equal treatment applies to persons employed under a contract of employment **and to persons cooperating under a civil law contract (contract of mandate or contract to perform a specified task or work).**

#### The material scope of the prohibition of unequal treatment

Both the Labor Code and the act on equal treatment indicate four forms of prohibited unequal treatment:

- **direct discrimination** – which happens when an employee, due to their legally protected characteristic, has been or is treated worse than another person in a comparable situation

EXAMPLE: termination of contract due to the employee's participation in the Equality March<sup>35</sup>

- **indirect discrimination** – which takes place when, as a result of an apparently neutral action or criterion, there are unjustified disproportions or a particularly unfavorable situation for an employee due to their legally protected characteristic

EXAMPLE: preventing a transgender person from working by requiring them to work in a male uniform that is incompatible with their gender identity<sup>36</sup>

- **harassment** – i.e. undesirable behavior related to a legally protected characteristic, the purpose or effect of which is to violate the dignity of an employee and create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or abusive atmosphere

EXAMPLE: persistent addressing a transgender person in the workplace according to their state-issued identification, not the chosen name and pronouns used

- **sexual harassment** – i.e. unacceptable behavior of a sexual nature or relating to the sex of an employee, the purpose or effect of which is to violate their dignity or to degrade or humiliate them; this behavior may consist of physical, verbal or non-verbal elements

EXAMPLE: inappropriate comments about a transgender person's appearance and gender characteristics.

33 Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation; hereinafter: Directive 2000/78.

34 Ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union of April 30, 1996, case C-13/94 and ruling of the District Court in Warsaw of September 29, 2020, unpublished, description of the case available on the website: <https://kph.org.pl/historyczny-wyrok-sadu-osoby-transplciowe-pod-ochrona-prawa-w-zatrudnieniu/>. (accessed September 15, 2022).

35 Example based on the case law – the District Court in Warsaw, in its ruling of November 18, 2015, allowed the claim of violation of the principle of equal treatment.

36 Example based on the case law – the District Court in Warsaw on September 29, 2020, allowed the claim of violation of the principle of equal treatment.

## 2. Counteract discrimination

*Legal Basis: Directive 2000/78; art. 94, 94(1) of the Labor Code; jurisprudence*

Not only is the employer obliged to refrain from unequal treatment of employees but also to **prevent unequal treatment of one employee by other persons**. The Labor Code indicates in this respect the following obligations:

- counteracting discrimination
- counteracting mobbing<sup>37</sup>
- ensuring safe and healthful working conditions
- influencing the shaping of the principles of social coexistence in the workplace
- ensuring access to the provisions on equal treatment in employment (by making the text of the provisions available in writing or otherwise).

Although the acts do not specify how the employer is to fulfill the above obligations, the answers are provided by case law<sup>38</sup>, doctrine and practice. Employers must act **diligently**, i.e., **effectively and efficiently, to prevent unequal treatment**.

It is often done by adopting **internal regulations (anti-discrimination procedures)**. However, the mere adoption of a document is not enough – to meet the requirement of effectiveness and efficiency, **the anti-discrimination procedure should have certain features**, including:

- readability and accessibility
- indicate in an understandable and example-based manner which behaviors constitute unequal treatment and are therefore prohibited in the workplace
- have an accessible and confidential procedure for reporting violations by those who experience them
- respond to situations typical for a given workplace and its employees, taking into account their specific needs
- in the context of the situation of LGBT+ workers, indicate directly that sexual orientation and gender identity are unacceptable grounds for discrimination and leave the catalog of forbidden premises open
- in the case of undertaking compensatory measures by the employer for the benefit of LGBT+ employees – indicate these rights.

We recommend preparing or revising anti-discrimination procedures in cooperation with employees (including through LGBT+ employee networks) and in consultation with experts, including organizations identified in Chapter 4.

<sup>37</sup> Mobbing is not a form of unequal treatment – it is not, or at least does not have to be, related to a legally protected characteristic of the person experiencing it. In certain situations, behavior constituting unequal treatment may also exhaust the hallmarks of mobbing. In practice, the implementation of the obligation to counteract unequal treatment and the responsibility to counteract mobbing is often carried out by employers jointly, e.g. by adopting procedures relating to both phenomena, hence the legitimacy of mentioning this obligation here.

<sup>38</sup> Ruling of the Supreme Court of August 3, 2011, file ref. act I PK 35/11; ruling of the Supreme Court of November 7, 2018, file ref. no. II PK 210/17.

## What an Employer Can Do – Legal Framework

### 1.

#### Benefits and compensatory measures

*Legal basis: art. 8 sec. 2 of the equality act; art. 18(3b) § 3 of the Labor Code*

Due to the legal and social situation of LGBT+ people in Poland, employers are introducing types of benefits, additional entitlements and actions for this group of employees. It fulfills the obligation to counteract discrimination against LGBT+ people in the workplace and brings many benefits, more about which in Chapter 1.

To answer the question about the legal limits of such actions of the employer, it is worth differentiating them (based on the criterion of their legal significance) as:

- **legally irrelevant actions** – i.e. those that do not in any way affect the legal situation of other employees but improve the situation of LGBT+ employees  
EXAMPLES: creation of a rainbow employee network, enabling a transgender person to use a chosen name and pronouns at work, organization of webinars on rainbow topics, introducing gender-neutral toilets
- **the so-called compensatory measures** – i.e. those that could be considered unequal treatment of cisgender or heterosexual employees if not for the exception to the prohibition of unequal treatment adopted in both the Labor Code and the equality act..

According to it: It is not a breach of the principle of equal treatment **to take measures to prevent unequal treatment or to compensate for inconveniences related to unequal treatment** based on one or more protected characteristics (including sexual orientation and gender identity).

EXAMPLES: additional days off for caring for a sick partner, extra days off in place of parental leave for a social parent in a rainbow family, co-financing the transition of a transgender person

**Any actions of the employer aimed at offsetting the difficulties and discrimination that LGBT+ persons experience due to their sexual orientation and gender identity are therefore considered compensatory measures and are, therefore, legally permissible.**

### Examples of compensatory measures for LGBT+ workers

The following examples and recommendations were developed based on information on actions implemented or planned by companies engaging in improving the situation of LGBT+ employees and based on the legal status and systemic discrimination of three selected groups.

## Examples of compensatory measures for LGBT+ workers

### 1. LGBT+ employee: partner

#### Legal status

Persons of the same sex cannot get married in Poland. The regulations also do not allow for any other form of legal recognition of the relationship. Consequently, same-sex couples cannot take advantage of any of the rights available to spouses, which violates the right to private and family life, indirect discrimination based on sexual orientation,<sup>39</sup> and causes many difficulties in the daily life of LGBT people<sup>40</sup>.

There are many consequences of such a legal situation for LGBT people, and most (such as the issues of tax credit and exemptions, the right to inheritance or the possibility of adopting a child) are beyond the influence of the employer's compensatory measures. However, the situation is different in social security, where the employer may, to some extent, compensate for the existing inequalities.

#### What can an employer do?

1. As an equivalent of days granted to spouses in such situations, under § 15 of the Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy on How to Justify Absences and Grant Employees Exemptions from Work,<sup>41</sup> they may grant persons living in unmarried couples two additional days off due to:
  - entering into a marriage/civil partnership abroad or a humanistic wedding in Poland
  - funeral of a partner.
2. Grant unmarried persons the possibility to take a maximum of 14 additional days off per year for the care of a sick partner, equivalent to the entitlement granted to spouses under Art. 31 sec. 1 point 3 of the Act on social security cash benefits in case of sickness and maternity<sup>42</sup>.
3. In the case of providing employees with access to private healthcare, including for family members – choose a provider that allows for the insurance of a partner of the same sex.
4. Prevent unequal treatment and create an inclusive atmosphere – including same-sex partners for invitations to company-organized events, gifts and other actions to benefit employees' families.

39 While unmarried couples of different sexes do not enjoy the rights granted to spouses, they have access to them because they can get married. Hence, the criterion differentiating the situation (being married or not) is seemingly neutral – in fact, non-heterosexual people do not have access to them due to their sexual orientation.

40 Information on marriage equality and the results of discrimination in this area is available at <https://rownosc.malzenska.pl/> (accessed September 15, 2022).

41 Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 15 May 1996 on How to Justify Absences and Grant Employees Exemptions from Work (Journal of Laws of 2014, item 1632); hereinafter: Regulation on Justifying Absences and Granting Employees Exemptions from Work.

42 Act No. 636 of 25 June 1999 on social security cash benefits in case of sickness and maternity, Journal of Laws of 2022, item 1732; hereinafter: act on social security benefits.



## 2. LGBT+ employee: social parent

### Legal status

Rainbow families, i.e. same-sex couples bringing up children together, are currently invisible to Polish law. As a result, they live in uncertainty, a constant feeling of danger and fear for their future and their children's future. The number of rainbow families living in Poland is impossible to determine, but there are estimated to be about 50,000 of them<sup>43</sup>.

Due to the unavailability of same-sex couples' joint adoption or adoption of a partner's child, Polish law recognizes only the bond between a child and a biological parent in a rainbow family. The other parent (the so-called social parent) can, therefore, not take advantage of many rights that the law grants parents in work and employment - including additional days off, benefits, parental leaves, protection against overtime work or the obligation to travel on business. The legislator's aim in introducing numerous provisions to facilitate and protect the situation of people raising small children is to balance professional and family obligations. Therefore, workers who raise small children as social parents in rainbow families are deprived of this protection and have to reconcile roles without the support they deserve. The employer can fill this gap, at least to some extent.

### What can an employer do?

Provide LGBT+ workers who, as social parents, raise children with:

1. Protection against overtime work and posting outside the permanent place of work if the child is under the age of 4, equivalent to the right granted to parents under Art. 178 § 2 of the Labor Code.
2. Two days (or 16 hours) of leave (with pay) for the care of a child up to the age of 14, equivalent to the right granted to parents under Art. 188 of the Labor Code.
3. Two additional days of leave in the event of the birth of a child, equivalent to the right granted to parents under § 15 of Regulation of the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of 15 May 1996 on How to Justify Absences and Grant Employees Exemptions from Work.
4. Two additional weeks of leave (to be used between the child's birth and their second birthday) as the equivalent of paternity leave granted to fathers under Art. 1823 of the Labor Code.
5. The chosen form of entitlements allowing for exemption from the obligation to work in a situation where it is necessary to take personal care of a sick child (an insured parent, whose relationship with the child is recognized by law, is then entitled to a care allowance, per Article 32 of the Act on social security cash benefits in case of sickness and maternity).
6. Prevent unequal treatment and create an inclusive atmosphere - include rainbow families in invitations to company-organized events, gifts and other activities to benefit employees' families.

<sup>43</sup> More information at <https://jestesmyrodzina.pl/> in the report available there (accessed September 15, 2022).

### 3. LGBT+ employee: transgender person transitioning

#### Legal status

Amending the state-issued identification with the affirmed gender in Poland is possible only based on a civil action to recognize the gender that a transgender person must bring against their parents. Due to the lack of detailed legal regulations for this procedure, the course of a given process entirely depends on the judge and may take months and, in extreme cases, even years<sup>44</sup>. Throughout these proceedings, the person concerned must use an identification card with data inconsistent with their gender identity and cannot obtain an interim document.

Moreover, changing the name before obtaining a court order to recognize the gender is, in practice, only possible with a gender-neutral first name. On the other hand, medical transition, including hormonal therapy, is not reimbursed. Therefore, the process is usually difficult and costly and causes stressful and even dignity-violating situations for transgender persons.

Consequently, transgender people are significantly excluded when it comes to employment. They are afraid of taking up a job, changing it or talking openly about their identity in the workplace<sup>45</sup>. Employers have a tangible impact on this situation and can improve it.

#### Co może zrobić pracodawca?

1. Enable transgender persons to use the chosen name and pronouns in the workplace, including in internal systems and remote work tools, as well as on contracts and documents (it is enough if the official data is indicated on them once – e.g. “Person X, official data Y” – and then only use data X).
2. Create a safe atmosphere and prevent unequal treatment by encouraging all employees to indicate their preferred pronouns when introducing themselves, on remote work platforms and in the footer of the e-mail.
3. Avoid binary division into male and female gender, e.g. in forms or other divisions into groups.
4. Create gender-neutral bathrooms.
5. Grant financial support or additional days off for the transition.

<sup>44</sup> More on the process of recognizing gender in official documents, shortcomings of the current practice and recommendations to improve the situation in the publication of the Ombudsman, entitled “Proceedings in cases of legal recognition of sex in official records. A guide for judges and attorneys” available at [https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Postepowania\\_w\\_sprawach\\_o\\_ustalenie\\_plci.pdf](https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Postepowania_w_sprawach_o_ustalenie_plci.pdf) (accessed September 15, 2022).

<sup>45</sup> More on this subject in the publication of the Ombudsman, entitled “Equal treatment in employment irrespective of gender identity. Analysis and recommendations”, available at: [https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Rowne\\_traktowanie\\_w\\_zatrudnieniu\\_bez\\_wzgledu\\_na\\_tozsamosc\\_plciowa.pdf](https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/sites/default/files/Rowne_traktowanie_w_zatrudnieniu_bez_wzgledu_na_tozsamosc_plciowa.pdf) (accessed September 15, 2022).



# Closing Word

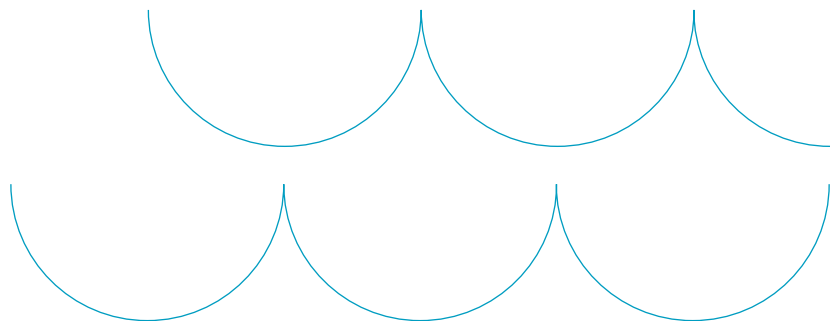
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**The situation of people from the LGBT+ community in Poland is not easy, both in private and at work. Many contributing factors are beyond business' control, especially in the short term. However, this does not mean that your only option is idleness.**

We have a long way to go before we can say that private companies operating in Poland are doing everything they can to support LGBT+ people, but you have to start somewhere. We can see that the business world is gradually becoming more active, and we are glad that these actions are more and more real and not mainly image-building, like a few years ago. We see a growing wave of new ERGs, i.e. grassroots initiatives of LGBT+ employees who decide to take matters into their own hands more and more often. We are also glad that companies want to take these actions with people and organizations representing the social sector because it allows us to share knowledge and exert a positive influence, as well as the possibility of financial cooperation - which facilitates the implementation of the mission of individual organizations in the sector.

We want to thank the employee networks and the companies they operate in for contributing to this report - your stories prove that business can and wants to be socially engaged. Special thanks go to the LGBT+ Network of Networks for helping to find concrete examples and for the personal involvement of members of these networks in preparing this report.

"Safe Havens" is another action under the "Business Does Not Exclude" initiative - a set of initiatives addressed to the private sector. The first inter-corporate project was the sticker campaign "Here you are at home", where determined employers decided to equip their workspaces with signs indicating the equality and safety of each employee, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We believe that the coming years will bring more similar initiatives.



# Thanks

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3M Poland  
Accenture Poland  
BlaBlaCar  
Deloitte Polska  
Dentons Europe  
Google Poland  
Intel Technology Poland  
JLL Poland  
NatWest Group  
Nokia Poland  
PwC Polska  
QIAGEN Business Services  
Skanska Property Poland  
Standard Chartered Global  
Business Services Poland



**We would like to thank the employee networks and the companies within which these networks operate for their contribution to the *Safe Havens* report. Your stories prove that business can and wants to be socially engaged.**

Love Does Not Exclude Association would like to thank in particular Bartłomiej Budnicki, Co-Founder of the Place of Pride employee network at Skanska, as well as the network and the company itself for partner collaboration in the process of creation of this publication and in other joint activities for the benefit of LGBT+ community in Poland.

# Love Does Not Exclude Association



## We want all families to have equal protection under Polish law.

Since 2009, we have been working on protecting and strengthening the representation of the LGBT+ community in Poland. Our main goal is marriage equality for all, enabling all couples to have a civil marriage regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity..

- We believe that **full equality is marriage equality**
- We believe that **all families have a right to happiness, security and respect**
- We believe that **Love Does Not Exclude**

## What do we do? We help to understand. We change the law. We build the community.

These are the three pillars of our activity, together creating a strategy we have consistently implemented for years. If you want to learn more about our activities, successes and projects, please visit [mnw.org.pl/en](https://mnw.org.pl/en) and our social media - we are on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube.

## Love does not exclude business

We spend half our lives at work. We want to feel safe and at home there. That is why at Love Does Not Exclude we have prepared several offers for the business - because business should not exclude.

**The Love's offer for business** includes tailored DE&I training on LGBT+ issues, consulting in internal policies and practices, support in creating LGBT+ employee networks and the possibility of joining the *Here You Can Be Yourself - business does not exclude campaign*. See here: [mnw.org.pl/biznes](https://mnw.org.pl/biznes) and here: [biznesniewyklucza.pl](https://biznesniewyklucza.pl).



## Love's Store - rainbow for everyone!

100% of the value of store purchases goes to support the Association's activities. Therefore, shopping in the Love's Store is one of the easiest ways to support marriage equality in Poland. Moreover, all stores' products are made in Poland, so Love supports local entrepreneurship. Or do you need gifts for people working in your company? Visit [sklep.mnw.org.pl](https://sklep.mnw.org.pl) and let us know how we can help you :)

## I support

Do you like what we do? You can also support Love with a donation and pass information about it to people working in your company: [mnw.org.pl/wspieram](https://mnw.org.pl/wspieram).

The Love's Team  
[kontakt@mnw.org.pl](mailto:kontakt@mnw.org.pl)





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