



# Dialogue between transgender persons and equality bodies: good practice

**Institute for the equality of women and men  
BELGIUM**

INSTITUUT VOOR  
DE GELIJKHEID  
VAN VROUWEN  
EN MANNEN



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DES FEMMES  
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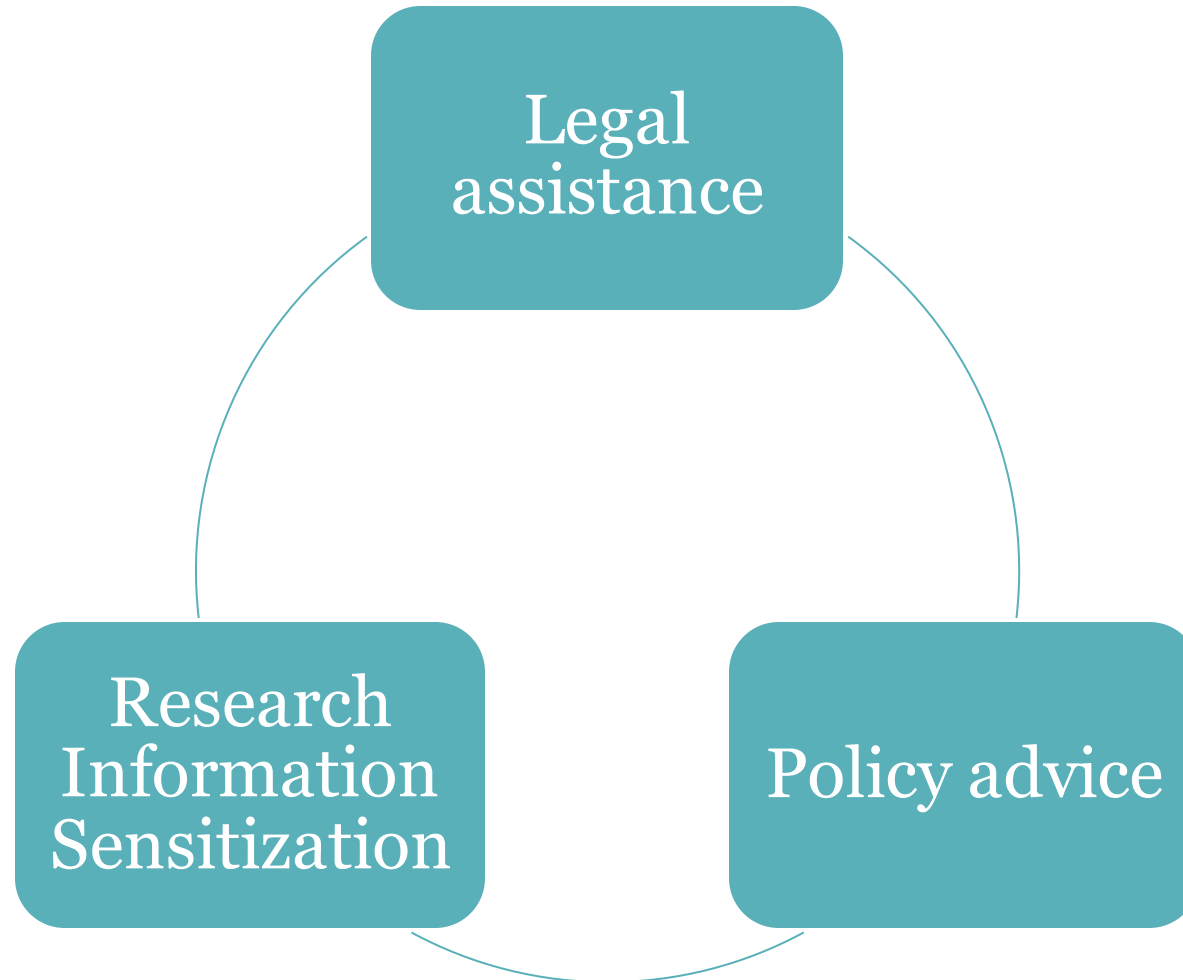
# Institute for the equality of women and men - Belgium

- Equality Body
- Competent for **discrimination based on sex**, including:
  - Gender identity
  - Gender expression
  - Gender reassignment
  - Sex characteristics



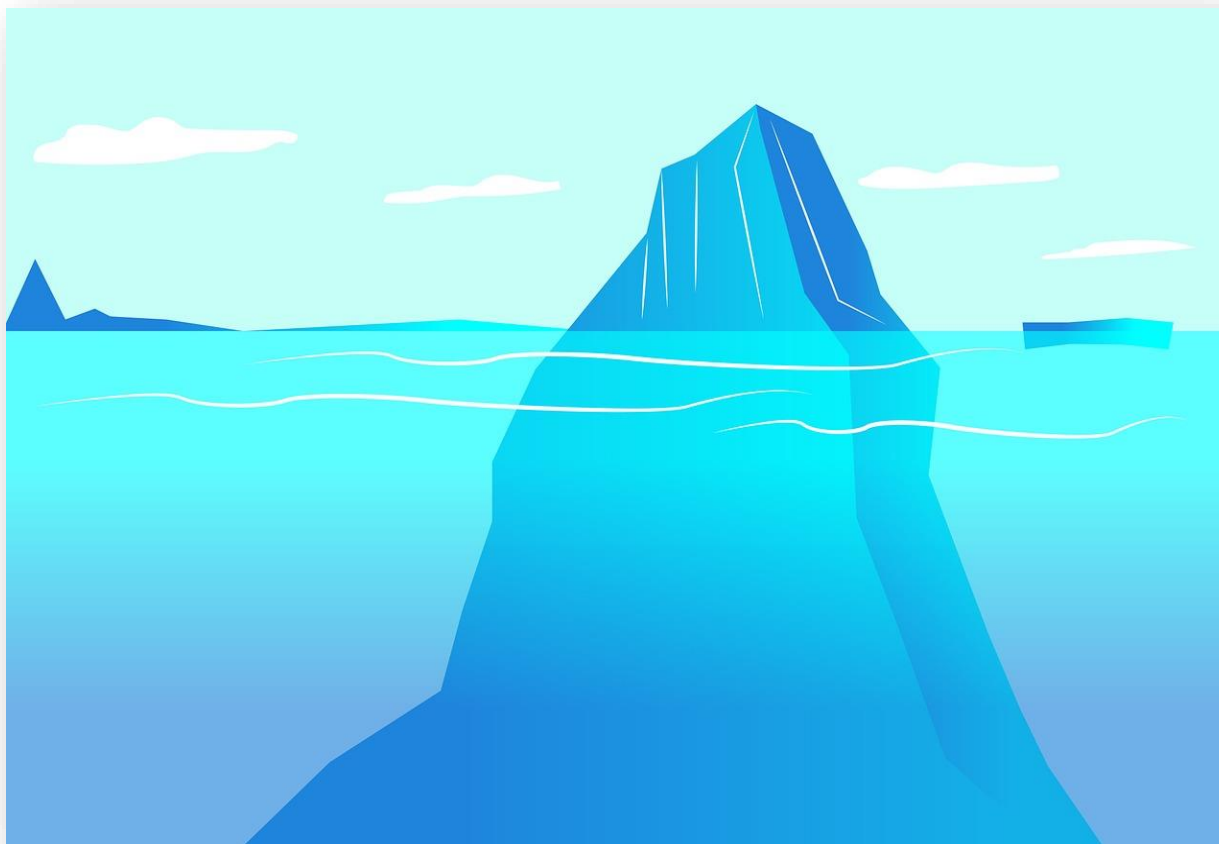
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OF WOMEN  
AND MEN

## Main tasks of the Institute



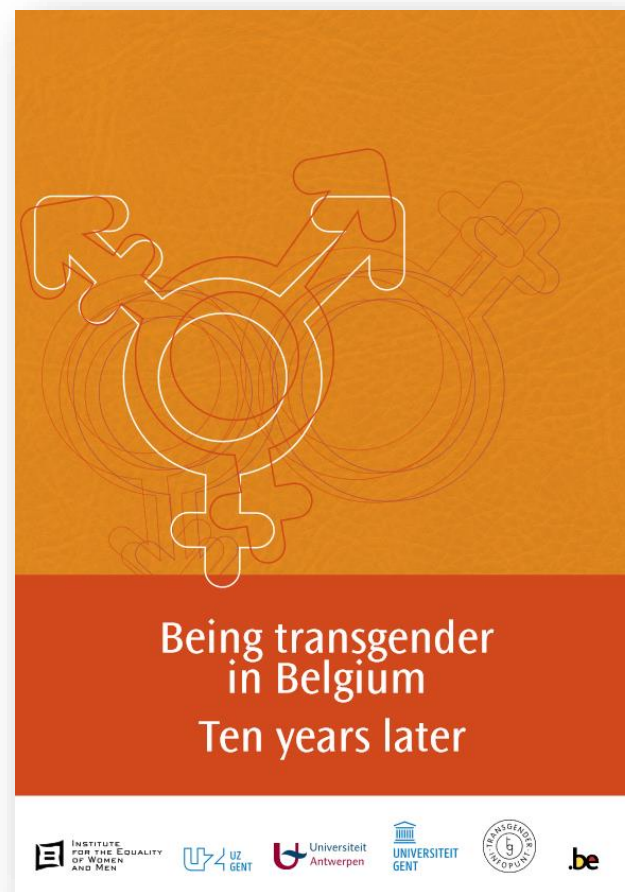
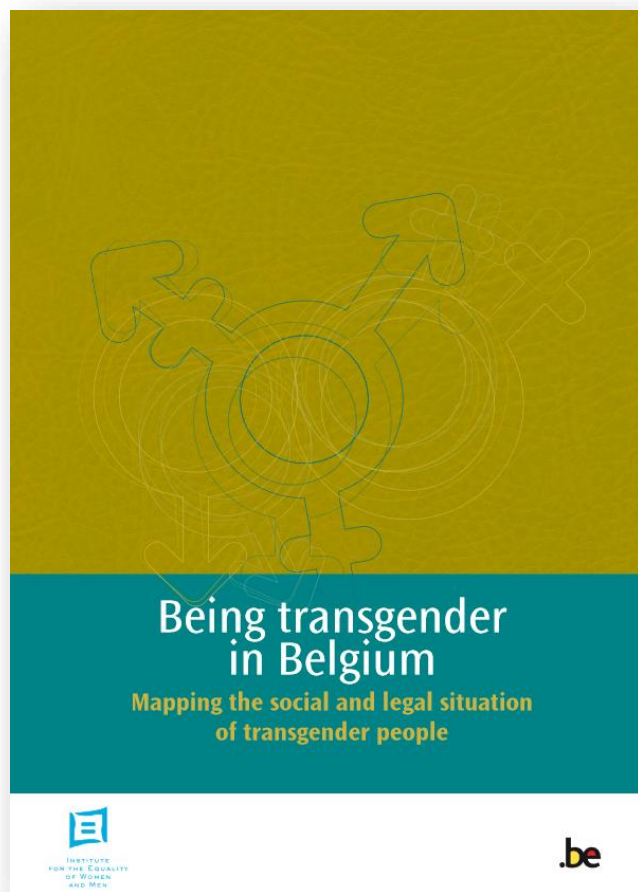
# Notifications of transgender discrimination

= 5% of all notifications at the Institute





# Research: “Being transgender in Belgium”





## Results from the research: 2017 vs 2007

- More respondents live openly according to their gender identity: 70% vs 50%
- First coming out earlier: average 17y vs 30y
- Obstacles for living openly: family, work, opinion of others,...
- More access to transgender health care: 75% vs 60%
- Less negative reactions in health care: 21% vs 34%



## Results from the research: school & work

- More than  $\frac{1}{2}$  transgender pupils faced discrimination at school
- More than  $\frac{1}{3}$  faced discrimination at work
- 11% is unemployed (compared to 8% in cisgender BE population)
- 8% quit job because of negative reactions



## Results from the research: well-being

- Negative experiences leads to reduced wellbeing
- $\frac{1}{8}$  had suicidal thoughts, more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  attempted suicide
- Often no help sought
- Support of family and friends is essential, but not available for all





## Results from the research: filing a complaints

- Only 10,6% of respondents filed a complaint
- Increase in contact with police: from 34,2% to 43,2%
- Increase in contact with Equality Body: from 23,7% to 36,8%
- Increase in knowledge of rights: from 44,7% to 83,7%



## Main research conclusions

- Improve support and care for transgender persons
- Inform and sensitize employers to fight discrimination at work
- Inform and sensitize schools to fight discrimination in education
- Sensitize families on their support role
- Include transgender persons as a suicide prevention target group
- Guarantee adequate financial support for support groups, civil society organisations, care workers, and Equality Body



## How to include transgender persons in the research?

- Research carried out by experts in transgender research
- Transgender persons and organisations included in the supervisory committee of the research
- Research seminar: panel with transgender organisations

# How to reach transgender respondents?



- ✓ Survey website: [www.transgenderinbelgium.be](http://www.transgenderinbelgium.be)
- ✓ Facebook page → shared by LGBTQI+ organisations
- ✓ Flyers and posters
- ✓ Press release by the Institute
- ✓ Contacted almost 30 T\* and LGBTQI+ organisations & aid workers
- ✓ Advert in LGBTQI+ magazines
- ✓ Digital banners on websites of LGBTQI+ organisations
- ✓ Advert in Belgium PRIDE program brochure
- ✓ Stand at Belgium PRIDE 2017

**→ LGBTQI+ organisations were essential**



# Challenges

- Gaining trust of the community
- Dealing with different opinions within the community
- Always room for improvement in dialogue with organisations
- Still groups that are hard to reach
  - Transgender persons not connected with LGBTQI+ organisations
  - Transgender persons not on social media
  - Transgender persons of ethnic minorities, older persons, migrants, ...
  - ...



## Conclusion

Equality Bodies need:

- Research and data
- To involve transgender persons in research and policy making
- To strengthen alliances with LGBTQI+ organisations

Thank you!

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