



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

PROGRESS REPORT 2023



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Member Engagement Progress Report 2023

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TGEU is a member-based organisation working to strengthen the rights and wellbeing of trans people in Europe and Central Asia.

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WHY THIS REPORT

The TGEU member engagement progress report builds off the TGEU Community Building 2022-2024 member engagement strategy which was created based on direct feedback gathered from interactions with our diverse members. The report is rooted in our values of centering the community, well-being, and intersectionality. It is undergirded by TGEU's overarching membership-related goals highlighted in the 2023-2024 strategic plan:

Goal 3. Protect our people: To protect and empower trans activists in Europe, Central Asia, and around the world with research, resources, and training.

Goal 4. Support our members: To increase the engagement, capacity, and support of TGEU's organisational members throughout Europe and Central Asia.

In pursuit of these goals, in 2022, we conducted various activities to increase collaboration, engagement and support to our members to strengthen our communities' resilience to sustainably organise. Based on the valuable feedback from members and key learnings from the activities conducted in 2022, this current report is thus a refinement of this strategy. It also points out our progress in improving relations and programming to provide value to our members.

INTRODUCTION

These are challenging times of unprecedented crises marked by wars, economic woes, pandemics and natural disasters. We are also witnessing a rise in authoritarian, far-right groups and anti-gender movements fuelling an anti-rights ecosystem in Europe as well as anti-migrant and anti-trans rhetoric and legislation.

Consequently, our members and communities – particularly those from further marginalised communities such as trans refugees, sex workers, black and people of colour, trans feminine youth, elderly and D/ deaf and disabled, – find themselves organising in these rapidly changing, complex and volatile landscapes.

Despite these challenges, we also witness the resilience and courage of our trans people, communities and allies who continue to show up for each other with love and compassion.

Now more than ever, TGEU needs to support and equip our members with resources and tools to organise in their communities. This realisation has prompted TGEU to enhance our membership engagement approaches and improve the nature and quality of our programmes to meet our members where they are while ensuring they feel part of a collective.

At the same time, we acknowledge that this engagement demands an agile and innovative approach and deliberate outreach efforts to ensure historically underserved regions and communities are represented, engaged and included in all activities.

Thus, this report is a comprehensive update and in-depth analysis of the strategic efforts undertaken by our various teams to enhance member support and community building. The report presents membership engagement activities conducted by TGEU in 2023. It highlights the various activities, outcomes, lessons learnt, and concrete next steps to refine the strategies further.

This report holds two concrete and interconnected goals at its core:

Goal 1: Highlight the activities results and demonstrate the impact of the membership engagement activities undertaken by the various TGEU teams.

Goal 2: Reflecting on key lessons learnt by dissecting the activities and results of various strategies. This insight will guide decisions on strategies to expand, refine, or introduce in future engagement approaches.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

| Targeted outreach and support to further marginalised communities and regions

To increase the visibility and representation of further marginalised communities and groups, we undertook various strategic actions. This involved a two-pronged approach of targeting those who are already members to strengthen relations and also identifying and directly reaching out to groups or regions in which we had limited information.

This proactive outreach extended to marginalised communities, specifically targeting refugees, elderly sex workers, nonbinary individuals, and Deaf/Disabled community members. Recognising the disproportionate impact of the current crises on these groups, we deliberately sought to engage with those whose voices need more visibility and representation in TGEU.

The communication included 1-1 consultation meetings, direct invitations for connection, support with community building work and peer-to-peer connections. More than just inviting groups to be members, we made sure that groups actively contributed to our engagement initiatives. For instance members had the opportunity to share contextual needs, and challenges and identify areas for collaboration and support from TGEU.

Effective engagement with members requires **we know their focus and needs and have systematised and centralised data about our membership base.** This is why, in 2022, we migrated **all our members' data to a highly secure and structured Client Relations Management (CRM) system called CiviCRM.** This CRM system has functionalities that allow us to document and segment members' data according to various categories. This year, we finalised updating the system based on previous membership information. However, we also know a lot has changed in our members' organisations' contexts; therefore, the data needs to be upgraded to ensure efficient programming and communication. We initiated the system upgrade to allow members access to their profiles. By so doing, we will ensure that members' information is regularly updated and that members feel they have agency in how their profiles and information about their work is documented. This feature will also allow members easy access to their subscription information.

As a result of our targeted efforts, we are thrilled to share that our membership base has and continues to increase and broaden in terms of geographical and intersectional representation.

As of November 2023, TGEU has **225 group members** from 200 last year and **283 individual members** from 258 the previous year. The total number of all our members, including supporting groups and individuals, is currently 520.

We are also pleased to share that our membership has **expanded to two new countries: Moldova and Azerbaijan**, where we now have three new trans-specific groups, which all joined this year. TGEU also now has its **first trans-led and focused member group in Estonia.**

From this growth, It is patently clear that our communities need collective organising and solidarity, and we are invested in ensuring that we reach communities in countries where we are yet to have representation, that is, in **Liechtenstein, Monaco and Turkmenistan**.

Meanwhile, we have also been making proactive efforts to initiate contact with groups and activists in the countries. We will continue this process because **broadening our membership base is crucial for our overall strategic goals to support communities and strengthen movement building**.

| 1:1 Virtual Consultations

To establish a direct connection with each of our group members, in 2022, we initiated personalised virtual consultations. Over the years, these 1-hour meetings have proven to be a strategic way to expand our community outreach efforts while checking in with members to learn about their organising and stay updated about their contextual and capacity-strengthening support needs.

Aside from offering convenience and wide reach, the added value of these virtual meetings is that they are individualised and designed to cater to the unique needs of each member. Our previous approach for conducting the consultation was to share an open call to all members to book a consultation on a specific topic ranging from well-being, collective care, strategic litigation, strategic communications, fundraising, and any other specific needs. However, this year, we also made deliberate efforts to reach out to targeted groups or activists and invite them for a virtual meeting.

This proactive approach enabled us to connect with activists and prospective members from underrepresented communities and regions. As a result, we increased our connections with activists and groups and gained contextual knowledge about their communities and regions.

We also invested time in connecting with newly registered group members by offering them a TGEU newbies 1-1 consultation. Being able to meet with newly registered members and their teams. It also helped to strengthen relations and onboard members on the various activities within TGEU. This strategy was useful to empower new members with information about activities, services offered, and knowledge of other TGEU member groups. At the same time, we also learned about their expertise and successes and identified areas for potential collaborations with either TGEU or other members.

Engaging with our members is an important process that entails maintaining and rebuilding relations with existing members. This is why we also focused on reconnecting with member groups that have been members for a long time.

As a result of this approach to connection, this year alone, 20 virtual consultations were conducted with both newly registered and existing members in various countries and regions. Through these consultations, we gained profound insights into the context-specific issues related to our members and their local contexts.

Capacity support was offered in terms of fundraising. We supported with proposal writing, designing organisational development strategies, community building strategies, events organising, and peer-to-peer connections between member groups e.g. Autonomija - Lithuania to share tips on organising and fundraising for a trans conference with Gender Lens and partner organisations in Italy.

To enhance member organisations' advocacy efforts, we also provided 1:1 advocacy consultations. Discussions during these consultations take a bottom-up approach, meaning we focus on the contextual needs and our interventions and support are guided by the organisation on the ground. Following these discussions, local activists are equipped with relevant advocacy tools, strategies and skills to apply in their work and continue the discussion with their communities.

Additionally, TGEU provides support, information or concrete **ad-hoc support through political letters, op-eds, statements, interventions on European Court of Human Rights cases or simple networking**. For instance, TGEU staff met with Estonia, Germany and Georgia member organisations. Apart from online meetings, **we also continuously engage with member organisations on lengthy advocacy processes**: we are currently in close contact with organisations in Sweden, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria to discuss reforming legal gender recognition laws.

These personalised engagements with members are avenues for cementing relations, building trust, and understanding each organisation's journey. Moreover, the consultations allowed members to familiarise themselves with TGEU staff and share valuable feedback, which is useful in guiding our programming and future initiatives.

Member Feedback

As a newly starting organisation working in trans rights advocacy, it is encouraging to know that you can turn to a whole network of people and organisations for counselling and partnerships. Being part of TGEU has connected us with experts who have shared their invaluable insights to help us better reach our goals.

(Mel, Estonian Trans Alliance, Estonia)

I am honoured to be a member of TGEU. This organisation is working to be inclusive and open to members, and it's willing to help people in advocating for trans rights in Europe.

(Nicholas, Felis Advocacy Initiative, Moldova)

| Onsite support visits

Our key strategic goal is to support our members with tools and resources and strengthen their community-building capacities in their countries. To achieve this goal, we also believe in the power of in-person interaction. Thus, to complement the 1-1 consultations, we continued our traditional member engagement strategy of onsite member support visits. Much as we would like to visit all our members, we have to make a hard and strategic decision to limit our visits due to resource constraints. To make the most of these visits, we decided to visit members working in increasingly volatile contexts and groups in dire need of community-building strengthening support. Therefore, our community building and policy visited member groups in Greece and Slovakia this year.

In Greece, we had the opportunity to visit 4 of our existing member organisations in Athens: Emantes (LGBTQ refugee support group), GTSA (trans group), Proud Seniors Greece (works with elderly trans and LGB people), and Colour Youth (LGBTQ youth-led and focused group). Additionally, as part of our intersectionality-centred movement-building approach, we also took the opportunity to meet with **three other potential strategic and partner organisations: Safe Place International, Red Umbrella Greece, and Positive Vibes.** These organisations work on advocacy and support for refugees and sex workers, provide sexual reproductive health rights and HIV testing and also serve our trans communities in Greece. Therefore, connecting with them was also a necessary cross-movement organising strategy, aiming to ensure that our further marginalised communities have access to diverse and responsive services.

The visit to Slovakia in August was necessitated by the need to show solidarity and offer community support to activists mobilising against the retrogressive bill, which sought to remove legal gender recognition rights for trans people. We visited the Saplinq LGBTQ group and met activists leading the community organising. Our discussion focused on contextual challenges and community needs. TGEU also shared tools and insights into conducting a community needs assessment and strategy development. During the visit, TGEU also delivered a session on trans rights in Europe to the group of 20 International student Doctors who had come to Saplinq offices for a study visit.

After the visit, a follow-up virtual check-in was conducted to gather feedback on the needs mapping and strategy development process. We are also excited that we now have members in Slovakia because, after the meeting, Saplinq joined as a TGEU member.

Photo: Slovakia, international trainee doctors on study visit to Saplinq offices in Košice.



Member feedback

We greatly appreciate TGEU visiting us at our counselling centre in Košice and hearing voices from the local community. It showed us that TGEU cares about its members and is invested in supporting them. Miles' passion and energy inspired us to think of different ways to empower and engage the trans community in Slovakia.

(Zara, Sapliňq, Slovakia)

Additionally, to tweak our membership visit approach, we also visited communities on invitation by members to collaborate and participate in their events. For instance, TGEU was invited by Autonomija, a Lithuanian-based organisation, **to give presentations on the LGR situation and access to trans-specific health services in the Baltics during the first-ever Trans Rights in the Baltics conference held in Vilnius in June.** About 60 activists from across the Baltic region participated. Our members and partners from Latvia, i.e. Queer Safe Place and Mozaika, as well as Estonia Trans Alliance, also participated in the event.

The conference was attended by diverse activists, policymakers and academics in the region and focused on the state of trans rights in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Legal gender recognition in the Baltics and the healthcare situation, as well as an open discussion between trans allies, policymakers, activists and civil society representatives.



Photo: Autonomija conference organisers, politicians, allies and participants in Vilnius.

Member Feedback

It was wonderful to have Miles from TGEU join our conference “Trans Rights in the Baltics”. In a region where trans rights are still in an awful position, it’s important for us to feel the support of the TGEU network and have access to information about the situation of trans rights and best practices elsewhere through tools such as TGEU trans healthcare and trans rights maps.

(Ajus, Autonomija, Lithuania)

In addition, The Community Building team also **participated in the Transpozijum held in Montenegro in September** to support the movement and connect with activists. Transpozijum is a regional Balkan annual gathering for the transgender, intersex, and gender variant (TIRV) community. First organised in 2014, this event takes place in Balkan countries almost every year to build community and serve as a call for systemic change on key issues facing TIRV individuals. The gathering was organised by our members Spektra and Trans Network Balkan (TMB) and also attended by various TGEU member groups and activists in the region. The topics discussed during the highly interactive 4-day gathering centred on both the self and the community, delving into internalised transphobia, love, desire, body politics, movement building, collective care, youth and activism sustainability as well as arts and creative expression.

Member Feedback

We believe such exchanges between members and TGEU are great for collaboration and building a trusting relationship. We love the work we do and are very proud of how we implement planned activities, so we are always happy to be able to provide an experience-based insight into our work.

(Marija, Spektra, Montenegro)

In November, The Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence (PKI/POGI Norway) invited TGEU's Senior Communications Officer, Nadya Yurina, to participate in a panel discussion on inclusive communication in the media, drawing on TGEU's newly published Trans Media Guide. Journalists, media representatives, and students also took part in the event. TGEU's presentation provided insight into the importance of fair and inclusive media coverage of trans-related topics. It was a great opportunity to expand their knowledge and contribute to a more inclusive representation of trans people in the media.

Member support visits remain an added value to our communities. Such experiences of engaging members directly within their local contexts are essential for showing solidarity and support. These visits allowed us to understand our member's operating contexts and celebrate the community wins together and collectively strategies for overcoming challenges. We got to meet and interact not only with organisation representatives but also with their communities. Another tangible outcome was having Autonomija and Saplinq register to become part of TGEU. We are thrilled to announce that we now have trans-specific representation in Lithuania and Slovakia.

| Online Gatherings

General Assembly and Extraordinary General Meeting

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of TGEU, as members who are our guiding voice and one of the most powerful ways members contribute to TGEU's future is through the election of the Board and Co-Chairs and Auditors during the General Assembly (GA). The GA also allows members to propose and vote on statutes and approve the Organisation's strategic plan. This year, the virtual event occurred in March. 2 Auditors and eight board members were elected. However, there were not enough votes to elect the 9th Board member. This meant that the Board was not quorate and had to go to an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) later held in May. The 9th board member was then successfully elected.

Peer Networking Zone (PeerNetz Zone)

Following feedback from members on the need for safer peer-to-peer spaces for connection, networking and collaboration, we launched PeerNetz, a virtual community gathering space designed exclusively for members to connect, share experiences and feel a sense of belonging. PeerNetz is envisioned as our "braver space" and a haven where activists can come and share grief and joy and empower each other for resilience and collective care. Members can propose or lead activities as a co-created, collaborative space.

We held two PeerNetz meetings. The kick-off was for newly registered members to learn more about TGEU and meet other new members. The second was a virtual film screening and discussion organised with The Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM). It was the screening of their remarkable documentary 'Transition', showcasing the extraordinary journeys of trans individuals in Eastern Europe and Central Asia amidst the war in Ukraine. Close to 20 members attended the virtual event and participated in the discussion with the ECOM and film creators.

For a long time, our members have been operating within their contexts with limited knowledge of the operating context and the work of fellow group members. We hope that these PeerNetz gatherings will continue to instil a sense of community, unity and solidarity between diverse groups of members.

Member Feedback

*Thanks to PeerNetz virtual gathering space we discussed situations with trans*rights and the related challenges in different countries and had the possibility to share our experience and to learn more from the colleague's perspective. It is a useful platform for understanding the context of the trans movement in different parts of the world, analysing challenges, causes and consequences, and helping each other.*

(Heorhii, Gender stream Slovakia, Ukraine)

| Amplifying member's voices

Our new communications team started their work in April with a strategic approach to directly include the voices of our members and their local communities and growing TGEU's owned media presence through both internal and external channels.

With this approach in mind, TGEU shared the monthly Stories of Impact highlighting our member organisations, fundraising and policy campaigns, in our social media channels and regular newsletters.

The TGEU's new Trans Media Guide, an inclusive guide for journalists, editors & content creators published in September, is community-sourced in its key parts. It includes best and worst media language practice examples that our members shared following an open call for the contribution of their direct recommendations to the regional and global media actors, and the EN version is localised to Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian and other European languages and local contexts by TGEU members. We aim for even more membership inclusion and collaboration in strategic communications and TGEU's publications.

| Trans Refugee Network (TRN)

Since its formation in 2020, our Trans Refugee Network has continued to grow as an established safer space and an instrumental community of practice where trans refugees and support organisations learn and strategise together on key issues affecting LGBTI refugees in Europe at the community, national and EU levels.

This year, the network conducted its first in-person meetings. **The first gathering was a 3-day retreat** in the frame of a Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) refugees' rights advocacy and empowerment collaborative project with our Greek members, Emantes.

The TGNC refugees empowerment retreat was held in January in Athens, and 12 trans-feminine refugees participated. To streamline programmes and ensure peer-to-peer exchange and skill sharing, we invited three other TRN trans feminine BPoC refugee members from Sweden, Germany and Austria to participate. Discussions during the retreat centred on Trans rights advocacy, i.e. how to use the EU framework to advocate for trans rights at a local and regional level. Also addressed were topics on documenting trans-refugee rights violations, individual well-being, collective care, and trans-refugee movement building, as well as trans-refugee rights and access to services such as healthcare, labour market and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The highlight of the meeting was witnessing TRN members extend solidarity and support to refugees in Greece. This culminated in the creation of the Trans Alliance Athens (TAA), the first collective for and by trans feminine refugees of colour in the country. We are even more honoured to announce that TAA is now officially a TGEU group member.



Photo: Trans refugees during the retreat in Athens.

Member Feedback

Meeting fellow BIPOC trans asylum seekers and Refugees in Greece ignited my resilience. It reminded me how we still have a long way to go to even afford basic needs regarding integration.

(Purity, Rainbow Refugees, Sweden)

In addition, the Network held its **first in-person meeting where 11 refugees and allies gathered in Brussels for a 2-day reflection, connection and planning meeting. During the same week, the group also took part in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) meeting** held at the Belgian Parliament by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The conference, dubbed Finding Safety: Guaranteeing the Rights of LGBTI refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe, was aimed at raising awareness of the issues at stake and shining a spotlight on ways to guarantee full respect for the human rights of LGBTI persons in need of international protection. The one-day event was held at the Belgian Parliament and attended by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), Belgian Policymakers and Senators, and various International Civil Society and Humanitarian Organisations. During the meeting and the lunch mingle, TRN participants also had the opportunity to present their experiences and expertise in discussions with policymakers.

Member Feedback

As trans refugees, we are often left out and not considered among think tanks and knowledge exchange programs. Integration becomes difficult if we don't even know our rights and the workshops with MEPs and senators in the Belgian Parliament were empowering and a much-needed learning experience.

(Purity, Rainbow Refugees Sweden, TGEU board member)



Photo: TRN network members and TGEU staff gathering in Brussels.

Strengthening our members' capacity also means providing them with platforms to amplify their issues in various forums. This year, we also decided to involve members in representing TGEU and their communities in various human rights events. For instance, in August, during the Conference on **Statelessness** organised by the European Network on Statelessness (ENS) in Madrid, TGEU collaborated with our Spanish-based members ACATHI to lead a panel discussion on intersectional marginalisation and the impact of statelessness on trans people. ACATHI representative Chebi, a migrant transwoman of colour, participated in the event. After the event, Chebi shared vital reflections in the form of a report and ACATHI's presentations, which were distributed to network members through the TRN lists.

Member Feedback

I found it enriching to engage in discussions focusing on the topic of statelessness. As trans immigrants who leave our home countries for a place where we can flourish our identities (aside from the obstacles), we face many barriers. For example, legal procedures regarding our name and gender changes may lead to statelessness since we usually don't have any right to do so until we are European citizens. It is important always to have a trans-LGBT+ perspective for every public policy that prevents statelessness. Participating in this space was a great opportunity to sit at the table to ensure trans immigrants' voices were visible and included.

(Chebi, Acathi, Spain)

In addition to in-person gatherings, having online meetings is one of our key strategies for reaching a wider audience. In March, the network had a virtual meeting to review the yearly work plan and to discuss the agenda for the Network's first in-person meeting. The second virtual meeting was held in August, focusing on the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) guidelines that are being developed by the European Agency for Asylum (EUAA) in collaboration with TGEU and other organisations. TGEU shared with the participants how these guidelines will hopefully impact the processing and reception of asylum applications by trans and gender non-conforming asylum applicants in the EU.

The TRN remains a platform for meaningful strategising, empowerment and engagement for trans refugees and organisations working with or supporting refugees. The diversity of experiences and expertise within the network, led by trans refugees and supported by allies, remains its added value.

| Capacity enhancement trainings

Advanced Fundraising and Grant Writing Training

Resource mobilisation remains one of the key challenges facing our underfunded trans communities and members. Thus, in 2022, we set out to support our members in improving their fundraising and sustainable organising skills. We designed a comprehensive 1-year fundraising training programme for a cohort of 10 activists from different organisations based in the EU.

The Advanced and final round of this training was held in October in Berlin at the TGEU offices. Selected activists participated in the two-and-a-half-day training. The programme focus areas encompassed organisational development, fundraising strategy, collective, donor and grant mapping, budgeting proposal writing and pitching their projects to donors, and collective care and burnout prevention. Furthermore, each participant also received 1-1 virtual coaching and a support session with their fundraising needs and ideas.

The 1-year Fundraising Training Program gave members the tools and skills to enhance their fundraising endeavours. The highly interactive training also offered a space for peer exchange, best practice sharing, and exploring opportunities for collaboration. Through the capacity enhancement, members could design fundraising strategies, draft funding proposals, explore alternative ways of sustaining collective organising, and explore opportunities for collaboration. A second similar Fundraising training programme with a new cohort will be launched in 2024.



Photo: TGEU staff and the fundraising training cohort at TGEU offices in Berlin.

Member Feedback

I have participated in the whole programme parts one and two. And it gave me some clarity about what donors are looking for and what they find valuable in us because I didn't have that perspective.

(Mordekaj, Boiling Point Foundation, Poland)

I have learnt about strategic ways of fundraising and organising. It has made me think more about what we can do and how to go about it. I also want to thank TGEU for this opportunity and the support of the team.

(Disa, Red Umbrella, Sweden)

| Trans-Feminine Leaders Academy (TFLA)

TGEU launched TFLA in 2022 to create a space for mentoring, peer-to-peer sharing and, most importantly, enhancing the leadership skills of trans-feminine people, particularly those with further marginalised backgrounds.

The first cycle of this year-long programme kicked off last year with a cohort of 12 diverse trans-feminine participants from different countries in the EU. This year, the second and final phase of the programme was a peer exchange and learning retreat held in Porto in April. The 3-day gathering was organised in collaboration with the European Sex Workers Alliance (ESWA) as part of our intersectional cross-movement building strategy. Topics focused on personal and organisational development, for instance, leadership, strategic communication, fundraising, movement building and collective well-being. This event marked the end of the first cycle of TFLA.

The participants underwent a year of training, peer-to-peer support 1-1 individualised coaching support in developing their leadership projects. With the skills acquired, participants felt empowered to take up leadership roles in TGEU and other organisations. For example, 3 TFLA participants applied to become TGEU Board Members; they were all successfully elected and are now leading core committees on the TGEU Board. The second round will be launched in 2024 for another cohort of 15 selected participants.



Photo: TGEU representatives welcoming participants during the TFLA-ESWA joint conference in Porto.

Member Feedback

Trans women, especially those of us who are refugees Black people of colour, are under-represented in positions of leadership in various spheres. The Trans Feminine Leaders Academy gave us a space to dream, share our ideas and get support in our career and leadership journeys. We had a space to meet others, share challenges and good practices and empower each other. Such programmes are crucial to improve not only our skills but also our mental health. It gives one a reason to want to succeed because you are equipped with the techniques, strategies and network that support you to get things done. I hope there will be more such programmes targeting further marginalised communities.

(Suma, Trans Alliance Athens, TGEU board member)

| Trans Leaders Academy (TLA) virtual learning platform

The TLA serves as a convenient resource and learning hub for members and trans activists. This year, we continued to generate and update new content on the e-learning platform.

The new courses focus on Advocacy, fundraising, and documenting trans rights violations using UWAZI - a secure open-source platform for monitoring and documenting rights violations. The TLA platform has become a source of reliable and rich content; thus, it continues to witness an increase in engagement as the number of subscribers has grown substantially in two years from only 20 in 2021 to 200.

| The UN Trans Advocacy Week (TAW)

TGEU organised and covered the participation of 3 trans activists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine in the UN Trans Advocacy Week (TAW) in Geneva. The TAW is a collaborative initiative and a significant global platform to centre trans activism and address crucial issues concerning trans communities globally.

Held annually since 2017 during the June/July sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, TAW facilitates direct engagement between trans rights HRDs and various UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council, Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies, specialist agencies, and country missions. Organised for over a dozen countries by TGEU, APTN, GATE, ILGA World, RFSL and EATHAN, the event drew three trans activists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.

This year, participants had the opportunity to engage in interactive dialogues, collaborate on statement writing and prepare speeches for meetings with various stakeholders.

Participants expressed that the event profoundly impacted their activism and advocacy as they have now obtained a high-level understanding of UN systems and their practical application to advance trans rights in their contexts.

| Brussels study visit

In November, TGEU organised a study visit of six trans activists from across the EU to Brussels to participate in orientation sessions and meetings with representatives of EU institutions, as well as to exchange with each other on the topic of anti-trans hate crimes and our recommendations for best policy responses.

The study visit had two goals: firstly, to give the activists a chance to meet each other, share their knowledge around good practices, and learn from each other, and secondly, to advocate directly with MEPs and advisors and the European Parliament to share these recommendations regarding the specific needs of trans communities, especially those further marginalised who are most at risk of being victims of hate crimes.



Photo: TGEU staff, European Parliament staff, the Vice President of the European Parliament, Marc Angel, and trans participants who took part in the hate crimes study visit.

Member Feedback

To protect trans people is to protect democracy.

(Guglielmo Giannotta, ACET - Associazione per la Cultura e l'Etica Transgenere, Italy)

| EECA: Training, visits, and cohort meetings

Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) remains an under-resourced and underrepresented region where activists and communities are vulnerable to numerous threats from state and state agents. Thus, our key strategies for enhancing membership engagement in 2023 aimed to increase EECA trans activists' capacity to sustainably organise, support their advocacy, and collect data on the state of trans rights in the region.

To achieve this, support was provided to EECA trans activists in various areas, including protection, well-being, project administration, and other needs. Several online bilingual training sessions (in English and Russian) were provided, including a 2-day training on strategic communications to counter anti-gender narratives (attended by 21 trans activists from EECA), training on CoE human rights mechanisms (attended by 19 EECA activists), and six training sessions on data collection and community-based research.

Additionally, an in-person meeting was conducted in September in Turkey. The 4-day meeting was attended by 18 activists representing member groups from 9 countries across the region; the meeting programme included training on fundraising and advocacy planning and networking with Turkish members.

TGEU worked closely with 11 members from EECA on 3 research training sessions, i.e. anti-trans violence in EECA and trans rights violations in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine (both projects using the UWAZI platform) and an EECA country context research whose results will be published in 2024.



Photo: TGEU staff with training participants in Istanbul.

Member Feedback

We have been a TGEU member since 2022 and have been a part of 2 projects so far, and the TGEU staff have supported us in developing internal documents for our group. The trainings TGEU organises are based on activists' needs and use accessible language. Thanks to TGEU, the Central Asian trans community is uniting both within the country and at the regional level. The only wish we have is to have more in-person meetings. This would help unite activists and the community even more.

(Anonymous member, Uzbekistan)

In recent years, we saw TGEU's work, such as trainings and capacity-building activities with Central Asian organisations, become more intensive and productive. We're happy about the active communication and invitations to engage in TGEU's activities, and we would like to work closer on other strategies.

(collective feedback by AlmaTQ, Kazakhstan)

| Regional meeting on trans health in Central Asia

In preparation for the 2026 Second Trans Health Conference, trans activists and health experts held a Regional Meeting on Trans Health in September this year. The main focus of the meeting was to reflect on the feedback and results of the First Conference and to create a working group responsible for planning the second one. During the meeting, participants discussed the realities, challenges and achievements in Central Asian countries regarding access and the rights to trans-specific healthcare.

Participant Feedback

This was my first time at an event like this, and I never understood how to start activism. And now I know. It turns out you just have to start. And I'm ready.

(Anonymous participant)

| Trans Health Network

To strengthen our work on trans health topics within the Network, we organised an in-person meeting in Berlin, bringing together ten activists working on trans-specific healthcare in Europe in July 2023.

During the fruitful 2-days event, they developed a concrete action plan for advocating the cross-border healthcare directive to enhance healthcare accessibility for trans individuals who travel. The plan also outlines a comprehensive strategy for strategic communications to build support for child and youth-focused trans-specific healthcare. Additionally, the network members led by TGEU collaborated on advocacy strategies in conjunction with the Council of Europe's Thematic Review process and the UN Special Rapporteur on Health's initiative to compile best practices in healthcare.

LESSONS LEARNT AND MOVING FORWARD

Member engagement is a journey of serving, learning, re-learning, and growth. We humbly acknowledge the progress achieved on this path yet concurrently recognise the continuous need for refinement. In our quest for improvement, we closely examine what we've done and what can be better. Thus, we continue to listen to members at the frontline of the struggles as you remain our guiding voices in all our ways of working, thinking, and organising. The report is our effort to increase transparency and celebrate big and small wins while acknowledging that our strategies are not set in stone. We constantly need to introduce more adaptive and agile structures to support community organising. With our members' support, we continue to learn and identify areas needing fine-tuning for an even more significant impact. Below are some of our key learnings:

Flexibility as Key. Given the unprecedented times we are living and organising in, we have realised that our strategies need to be flexible and allow for adaptation to member's needs and local contexts. What works in one context will not work in another, so the best is to continuously listen to members, learn, reflect and adapt as we go.

Understanding member perspectives helps create meaningful interactions. We aim to enhance communication with members and use every connection encounter to gather feedback from members, as this is helpful to strengthen our relations.

Continuing investing in inclusivity and representation of further marginalised voices. As an organisation centering on values of decoloniality and intersectionality, there is a great need to continue reaching out to underrepresented groups, supporting, extending solidarity and collaborating with them.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our journey towards enhancing membership engagement at TGEU has been marked by continuous learning and reflection. We recognise the strength within our communities and the importance of empowering, connecting, and supporting every member.

As we move forward, we acknowledge that membership engagement is an ongoing and non-linear process. Thus, we remain open to learning, adapting, and refining our strategies to ensure they are relevant and effective.

Our commitment to serving our diverse members has never been more substantial. We are grateful to our members for the invaluable inspiration, knowledge, feedback and lessons crucial for shaping our future programming and approaches. Your resilience and courage inspire us to listen, reflect and stay grounded in our values to provide value to our communities. We believe that by supporting our members and working together, we contribute to more empowered, resilient, connected, and healthy trans movements.

