



ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2022



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TGEU Annual Report January - December 2022

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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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MESSAGE FROM TGEU'S ACTING CO-DIRECTORS

2022 was an important year for TGEU, and a busy one.

Why an important one? Because after two years of interim Directorship, TGEU is ready to hire a new permanent Executive Director to steer it. We significantly improved our internal process, strengthened our capacity with the hiring of brilliant colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and the creation of much needed new departments (HIV, Asylum, Research), stabilised our operations, and secured new grants.

For that, we have to thank TGEU's whole membership, Board and Auditors, staff and external partners. Thank you all for your trust, support, and hard work. 2022 was also the year when in-person gatherings finally resumed. While carefully implementing measures to best protect our communities, we had the privileges to organise numerous offline trainings, country visits, and study visits.

There is no substitute to in-person gathering, and this year has proved it again. In this regard, our major highlight is [TGEU's European and Central Asian Trans Council](#) which was held in Berlin between 29 September and 2 October. The Council (TGEU's 8th!) has successfully gathered more than 200 participants in Berlin and online, all dedicated to connecting with one another and moving the trans movement's agenda forward.

Why a busy one? Because while we were busy stabilising internally, much has happened externally as well. We strived to react to crises and challenges, and also proactively pushed forward in line with our 2020-2022 Strategic Plan.

The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) is coming to an end, but its health, socio-economic, political, and financial consequences on our communities and organisational members are still to be felt. Hence, supporting our membership, and strengthening their capacity remained one of our key priorities throughout the year. The growing influence of anti-trans and anti-gender actors over the communities and our organising capacities has been another major development in the last years. In 2022, we kept on developing and implementing policy and strategic communication programmes to address the anti-trans backlash.

We also kicked-off important projects focusing on Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We secured two grants focusing solely on this part of our region and started the implementation of capacity-building trainings, and subgrants to members.



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Of course, the **war in Ukraine** has been, and is still, dramatically impacting trans communities in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, but also in the whole region. Together with peer-organisations and partners, we did our best to quickly react to the war and develop an Emergency Response tailored to the needs of those most impacted by the war.

Finally, in 2022 we renewed our commitment to defend and promote the rights and wellbeing of all trans people, with a particular attention through our programmes to those further-marginalised and under-represented.

We hope that all these critical achievements, and more, will be clear to our membership throughout this Annual Report. There is still a lot of work ahead of us, and we will do our best to keep on listening to our members, learning from our mistakes, and serving our community.

Anwar Orgm and Milena Papakoch,
Acting Co-Directors

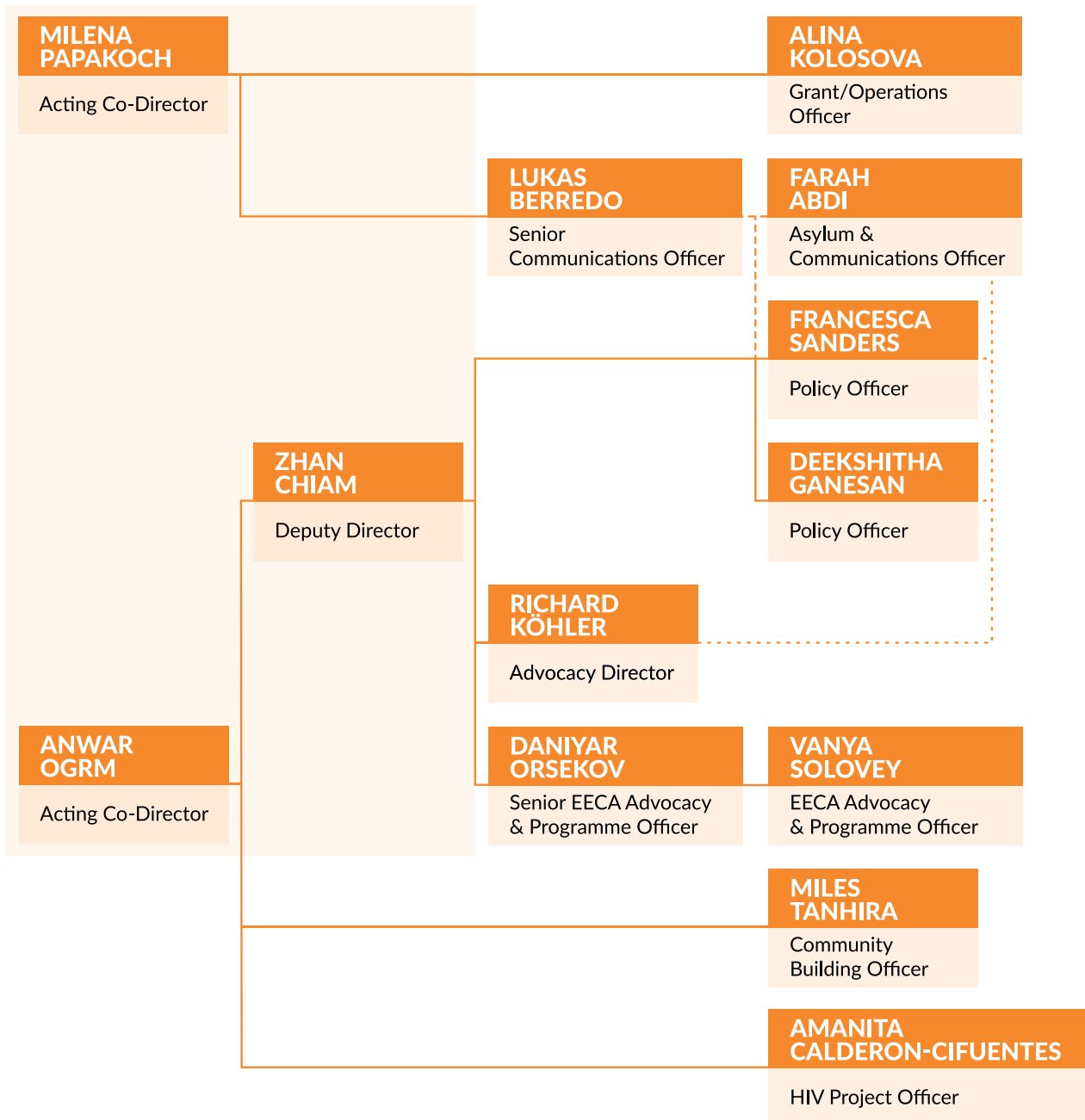
MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

| Organisational governance

Between January and December 2022, TGEU Board held 20 meetings. Their work in this period included leading the search for a new Executive Director, planning the 2022 Council, and updating TGEU's operational manual (approved on 22 July 2022).

| Human resources

As of December 2022, TGEU has 13 regular staff. We also have 3 consultants:
 Sebastian Rowlands (AGM Resilience & Backlash)
 Evá Papadakis (AGM Communications)
 Maroš Matiaško (Strategic Litigation)



The organisation formalised and improved its recruitment processes to better put intersectionality into practice, while keeping on aiming at the highest level of performance. As a result, the organisation has continued in its diversifying efforts, with more than 60% of the current regular staff being BIPoC and more than 75% with migration backgrounds from the Global South and East. Trans women and feminine people still make up a minority of the staff (23%). This will keep on being one of TGEU's priorities in 2022-2024.

We conducted a staff culture assessment in an effort to help us improve on the areas where we have strengths and work on the areas where there are weaknesses. We also worked on a staff wellbeing plan to make sure that our staff have a conducive work environment in which to operate.

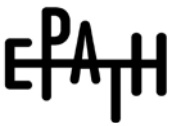
There have been two staff retreats this year. From 17 to 20 January, the staff met virtually for four days to discuss their work plan for the year ahead. There was also a team building and wellbeing session where staff got to discuss how to work across teams and build a healthy work culture. From 21 to 24 March, the staff met over a period of four days in Berlin and online. Staff were able to present their work for the first quarter of the year, discuss working together across teams, and have an in-depth conversation on how to support our communities affected by the war in Ukraine.



| Cooperation with other regional networks



TGEU staff has enhanced contacts with CFFP, the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, attending several events organised by the Berlin-based organisation.



TGEU has been attending the monthly board meetings of the European Professional Association for Transgender Health as an observer.



TGEU and other organisations joined the European Disability Forum (EDF) in a joint briefing to inform the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about issues of inequality and intersectional discrimination faced by persons with disabilities with intersectional identities in the European Union.



TGEU staff met with the European Sex Workers Rights Alliance at the beginning of the year to discuss and develop different avenues of collaboration. Since then, the two organisations have stayed in touch and found ways to work together. To mark International Sex Workers Day, the two organisations released a joint statement.



International Refugee Assistance Project

TGEU prepared a presentation on trans issues, general EU policy on trans rights, and EU asylum policy that we gave to the International Refugee Assistance Project. The collaboration was an effort to bring IRAP's staff up to date on the challenges that trans asylum seekers and refugees face, the rights they have under EU law, and developing trans inclusive language when it comes to dealing with and serving trans asylum seekers and refugees.

Migration Discussion Group

We have been an active member of the Migration Discussion Group, a collective of groups and organisations in the field of migration. We have used this space to raise awareness on issues that trans asylum seekers and refugees face which are more often than not not addressed by traditional humanitarian organisations working in the field.



TGEU attended the Annual General Meeting of NELFA, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations. At the event, they voted on the strategic plan, financial report, budget, and annual report. As a member of NELFA, TGEU was able to meet some of the volunteers and other members, and hear about what they're working on.



TGEU staff gave a training to OII Europe staff on trans issues. During the training, the TGEU got the opportunity to present their work to the OII Europe team. After the presentation, the two organisations identified a number of areas where there were possible avenues of collaboration. Reciprocally, OII Europe gave the staff a training on intersex issues. The training started off with an overview of OII Europe's structure, an intersex 101 presentation including work areas, and OII Europe's projects and possible areas of collaboration.

| Funding for TGEU sustainability

Customer Relationship Management Software

TGEU has started the process to adapt a new software to be able to engage with our members and donors effectively. CiviCRM is an open-source project that produces software for nonprofit and civil society organisations. The software is customisable and will be used as the main membership and contacts database at TGEU. The platform will be used for creating events, sending out debit notes for membership fees and as a communication tool with members and other contacts.

| Accessibility

TGEU is currently working on a revamp of its website, which is set to be launched in 2023. The redesign of our website aims at making it more accessible and user-friendly.

| Health and wellbeing

Wellbeing plan

An online staff Culture and Wellbeing assessment was developed in June 2022 and completed by ten staff in July. A presentation was developed based on the results, including recommendations for the future, that was presented to the staff. The outcome from this is going to inform TGEU's wellbeing plan.

| Membership engagement

TGEU has offered its members the opportunity to be able to get **1:1 consultations** because we believe in engaging and supporting our members and strengthening their capacities to collectively and sustainably organise their activism. So far, we have been able to do 15 consultations covering a wide range of issues from wellbeing, to movement building, to media and campaigning, to fundraising, to policy and advocacy, and strategic litigation.

| Leadership succession

After two years as TGEU's interim Executive Director, Masen Davis left the organisation after the European & Central Asian Trans Council 2022 (29 September - 2 October). The Board has engaged a search firm to help lead the recruitment process for TGEU's next Executive Director. In the meantime, Anwar Ogrm, Senior Programmes officer, and Milena Papakoch, Senior Operations officer have been appointed as Acting Co-Directors by the Board. They will be closely supported by Zhan Chiam, Deputy Director. The hire of a permanent Executive Director is expected by March 2023 at the latest.



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MEMBERSHIP AND NETWORK STRENGTHENING

| European & Central Asian Trans Council

TGEU hosted its biennial European and Central Asian Trans Council from 29 September to 2 October after four years due to the pandemic. The Council took place in a hybrid format. Some participants came to Berlin where it was hosted, and others joined the activities online. The theme of the Council this time around was Together more than ever: Resisting, caring, moving forward. The Council brought together activists, allies, policy makers, our members, and the board. For more info on what happened during the Council, have a look at [our website](#).

TGEU put measures in place to ensure accessibility including renting a venue that was accessible, recruiting volunteers to be able to help both participants and the staff, partial translation of the programme.



Photo credit: © Lukas Berredo

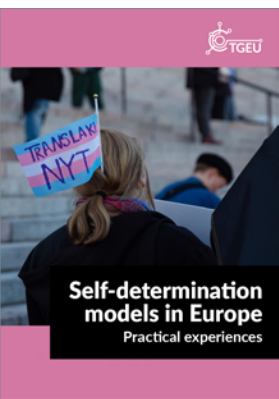
| European institutions advocacy & lobby

TGEU has worked on a series of publications, reports, and initiatives focusing social justice and the rights trans communities who are further marginalised.



Jumping ropes: Experiences of trans parents in Europe & Central Asia

This report complements the first TGEU report on trans parenthood by discussing a variety of obstacles faced by trans parents in their daily lives that go beyond issues relating to freedom of movement.



Self-determination in Europe. Practical Experiences

This report that is set to be launched in December will document the practical experiences when it comes to self-determination in Europe.

TGEU's Farah Abdi was selected to be in the expert committee at the EU Asylum Agency developing **new LGBTIQ asylum guidelines** for case workers. Our effort will be to bring the perspectives and needs of trans and gender-diverse refugees and to ensure intersectionality is mainstreamed throughout. TGEU also participates as experts in the development of guidelines by the International

Organization for Migration (IOM) for unaccompanied minors seeking asylum. TGEU contributed to the development of **EU guidelines for national LGBTIQ Equality Action Plans**.

TGEU participated in consultation meetings with the European Commission and other civil society representatives on recommendations for **ending harmful practices against women and girls**. In its spoken and written contributions TGEU focused on forced sterilisation as part of legal gender recognition procedures, forced medicalisation of trans identities, and conversion practices.

TGEU attended meetings of the **EU high level group on hate speech and hate crime** in Brussels, and spoke at its joint meeting with the LGBTIQ equality subgroup on the situation around hate speech and hate crimes against trans people in the EU.

TGEU participated in a two-day consultation with the **EU Fundamental Rights Agency** evaluating their second LGBTI survey and planning for the third LGBTI Survey. Our main concern was how to ensure that the next survey is more suitable to reflect the living reality of those most affected by discrimination and violence, namely more marginalised trans communities.

TGEU, together with other regional LGBTI networks, met with the Council of Europe on the issue of **discrimination against LGBTI women in sport**. The discussion was based on the joint report on the topic published last year and the input will feed into a report that includes a resolution for the Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The **European Network of LGBTIQ-friendly governments (EFPN)** met in May in Cyprus, the first time in person after 2 years. The members of the network, mostly from but not only EU member States, decided to elevate status of several LGBTIQ organisations, including TGEU from “observer” to “participant” of the network. The EFPN is an important place for LGBTIQ-friendly governments and CSO to exchange and strategise.

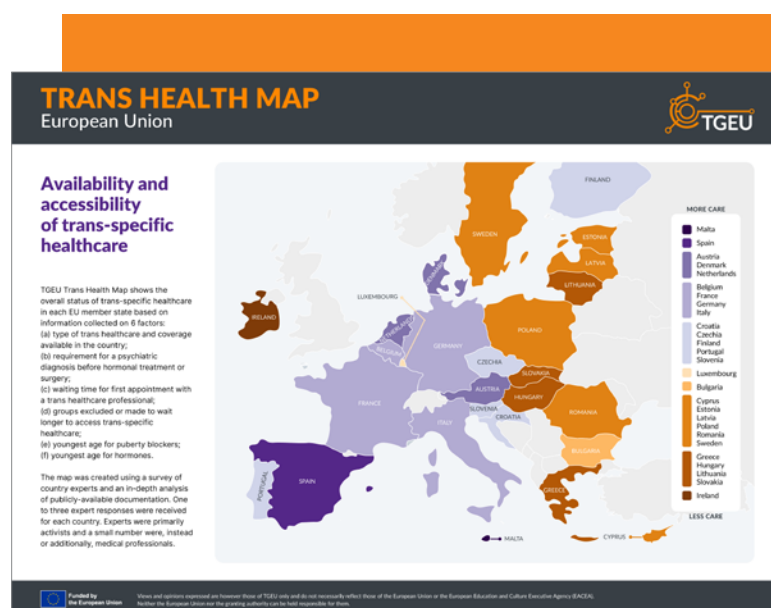
| Trans Refugee Network

TGEU has organised four meetings since the beginning of the year bringing together members of the Trans Refugee Network. During the meetings, members were able to discuss the challenges that are faced by trans and gender-diverse asylum seekers and refugees, share best practices in the different countries, and come up with collaborative avenues where we can work together to advocate for the rights of trans and gender-diverse asylum seekers and refugees. TGEU will continue to hold this important space, especially at a time when our region is in crisis and more people have been displaced and are on the move.

| Equal Access to Healthcare

In the first half of 2022, TGEU hired a new policy officer dedicated to trans people's access to healthcare. Deekshitha Ganesan took up the position in August.

One of our major highlights was the launch of the first edition of TGEU's Trans Health Map. The project was piloted in the 27 member states of the European Union. The Map shows the overall availability and accessibility of trans-specific healthcare in each member state based on information collected on 6 factors (type of transgender healthcare and coverage available in the country, requirement for a psychiatric diagnosis before hormonal treatment or surgery, waiting time for the first appointment with a trans healthcare professional, groups excluded or made to wait longer to access trans specific healthcare, the youngest age for puberty blockers, and the youngest age for hormones). The map shows that trans people in the EU continue to face significant challenges in accessing quality and affordable healthcare.



In March, we advised the Lithuanian Ministry of Health in the development of the country's first diagnostic pathway for trans-specific healthcare and engaged with Lithuanian organisations on the topic. See [our assessment of the released protocol](#).

In July, TGEU participated at **EPATH's first summer school**, contributing to the new educational initiative for medical and academic professionals by co-moderating a master class on challenges in adolescent and adult trans healthcare. TGEU successfully advocated for and participated in a dedicated public hearing in October 2022 on trans depathologisation jointly organised by the EU Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs.

| Legal Gender Recognition



TGEU made a submission to the public consultation on legal gender recognition in **Scotland**. The reform looks at introducing a self-determination model.



In June, the main points of the long-awaited self-determination law in **Germany** were presented. It foresees a simple administrative procedure at the civil registry, based on the person's self-declared gender identity. From age 14 a minor can apply, requiring parental consent. For younger children the parents make the application. An interim solution is anticipated for trans parents, to ensure that their gender identity is recognised on the kinship documents of their children.

It was also announced that victims of forced sterilisation and divorce will also be compensated. A full draft is expected to be introduced in the cabinet in autumn, with subsequent involvement of civil society. TGEU has been for years urging German lawmakers to replace the outdated procedure with a human rights compliant gender recognition law.

In May, TGEU met with the Minister of Justice of **Cyprus** to discuss plans to quickly advance on introducing legal gender recognition. The proposal is based on self-determination but has a limiting list of requirements, such as single-status/ divorce requirement, age limit at 16 years old. Activists see it, nonetheless, as an important step forward to introduce a first legal basis in the country for legal gender recognition, which can later be amended.



Lithuania made headlines by finally introducing a name change procedure for trans people. The procedure still has some flaws, but signals an important step that legislating trans rights is possible in a country that has since 2007 failed to implement a European Court of Human Rights judgement, requesting the introduction of a workable gender recognition procedure. TGEU has been for years advising authorities and civil society on the matter. The latest at the National Roundtable on legal gender recognition held in December 2021.



Spain's new trans law is back on track. After some hefty anti-trans attacks, the Spanish Council of Ministers passed in June the legislative draft that would introduce self-determination. The parliament has still the chance to make improvements to the law,



for example to ease the accessibility for non-binary persons and for migrants.

| Strategic Litigation

The case law of the European Court of Human Rights on the European Convention of Human Rights has “special significance” as a “guiding principle” for interpreting how EU member states should implement their EU treaty obligations when it comes to fundamental rights (*Nold v Commission*, Case 4/73 [1974] ECR 491). The legal frameworks of the EU and European Convention share for example a similar understanding of the right to private and family life. Most legal gender recognition cases the ECtHR hears fall under this right. Therefore, the standard setting by the ECtHR is also directly relevant for EU member States in interpreting their EU treaty obligations. Therefore, TGEU’s engagement with the Committee of Ministers as the body of the Council of Europe responsible for reviewing implementation case law from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) is relevant also for EU member States.



The Committee of Ministers expressed concerns over the lack to introduce legal gender recognition procedures for refugees in **Hungary** and invited authorities in **North Macedonia** and **Lithuania** to continue their efforts in adopting gender recognition procedures, to satisfy the court judgements. TGEU, together with European and domestic groups, made detailed submissions on the implementation of the cases from North Macedonia (twice) and Lithuania, and had consulted with Hungarian organisations.

In the review of the implementation of *L v Lithuania* (lack of LGR procedures) the Committee noted positive developments (e.g. new name change law) but reminded the government to put in place procedures at the level of Council of Europe standards. The case has not been implemented for 14 years.

TGEU made a joint submission on **Bulgaria’s unsatisfactory action plan**, sent to the CoE Committee in May, on how it plans to implement the ruling in *Y.T. v Bulgaria*.

TGEU consulted its **Czech** member organisation Trans Parent on questions of advocacy and strategic litigation following the disappointing judgement of the Czech Constitutional Court not condemning forced sterilisation. The case has been advanced to the European Court of Human Rights.

| Employment

TGEU helped a local trans-led organisation in Croatia develop training materials for employers on being trans-inclusive in the workplace.

At the EU-level, TGEU is working to ensure inclusion of trans people in upcoming legislation on minimum standards for equality bodies. To support this work TGEU took trans activists to the European Parliament as part of a study visit to explain first hand why strong equality bodies are needed to protect trans people against discrimination.



| Fundraising (members)

TGEU organised an in-person **fundraising training** for members from the 10th to the 12th of June in Berlin. A cohort of 10 members took part in the training which focused on organisational sustainability fundraising strategies, and grant writing. As some members of the cohort were unable to travel, most of the programme was made available in streaming from their homes. This training is part of a year-long programme aiming at strengthening our membership's fundraising and financial capacity.

| Legal protections against hate crime and gender-based violence

TGEU is working with other regional LGBTI networks to advocate for the inclusion of trans and intersex people in the EU directive for combatting violence against women and domestic violence, and in the revision of the EU directive for victims' rights. TGEU's initial response to the proposal for a directive on violence against women and domestic violence can be read [here](#).

TGEU supported the Council of Europe's review of national-level efforts to tackle hate crime and hate speech against LGBTI people. This included bringing together trans and LGBTI activists with other national experts and stakeholders to share best practices and recommendations. These roundtables will be followed with national-level thematic reports. So far Albania, France, and Romania will be involved with the review.

| Trans Feminine Leaders Academy

From 10 to 12 August, TGEU organised an in person Leadership training in the frame of its Trans Feminine Leaders Academy. A cohort of 15 members focused on key skills to strengthen them as emerging leaders: organisational development, public speaking, fundraising, and more. The training was only the first part of a 3-parts year-long programme and is followed by a series of individualised consultations with TGEU staff and a peer-learning retreat (2023).



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COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, AND VISIBILITY

| Strategic communications

Research into effective communications approaches that build support for trans rights (in the US, Ireland, and the Czech Republic, amongst others) formed the foundation for TGEU to develop a messaging approach based on these tested principles and detailed analysis completed by others. A series of messages that target general public audiences in the conflicted middle are being developed and will be tested in three pilot countries. These messages aim to build awareness of trans people, and support for trans rights, amongst people for whom this might be a new issue. A series of online trainings running to the end share the learning from this work, and support members and other stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to adapt the communication approach and messages to their own contexts.

| Trans Rights Map

On the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia 2022, TGEU launched the 2022 version of the **Trans Rights Map** in English, Russian, and now also in Spanish. The map illustrates the legal situation of 49 countries in Europe and 5 in Central Asia in matters of trans-specific legislation. It shows country-specific requirements for legal gender recognition as well as existing protections for trans people in asylum, hate crime/speech, non-discrimination, health, and family. This year, the map registers slow progress, after no significant advancements in 2021. Despite the pandemic, an ongoing attack on human rights, and a devastating war in our region, trans activists and their allies achieved 23 positive developments. Unfortunately, there has also been regression in six areas, with governments allowing policies on asylum, bias-motivated speech/violence, and equality to expire without being renewed.



| Campaigning for trans rights

Trans Day of Visibility

This year, for Trans Day of Visibility, TGEU decided to shine a spotlight on trans migrant women of colour, who face very high levels of violence, unemployment, and discrimination, while often being overlooked. The video can be found on TGEU's [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [YouTube](#).

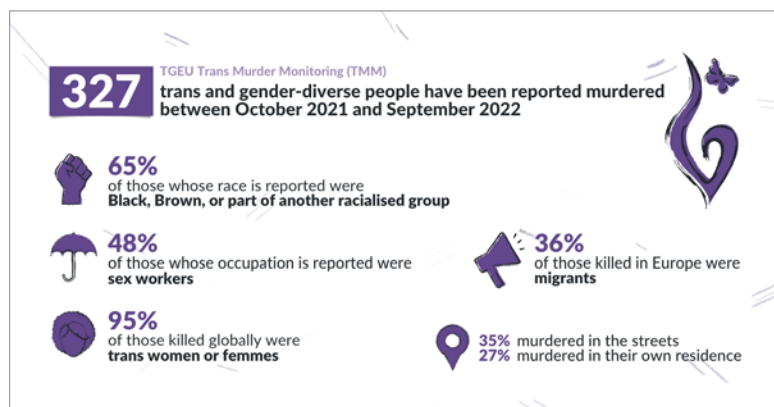
World Refugee Day

On World Refugee Day, TGEU released a campaign that was targeted to shine a light on the plight of trans and gender-diverse asylum seekers and refugees in the EU. The campaign gave a voice to trans and gender-diverse refugees to be able to communicate their needs to policy makers, inspire others in the community, and state how they celebrate this day. The campaign can be found on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [YouTube](#).

Trans Day of Remembrance

In 2022, TGEU's campaign for Trans Day of Remembrance focused on the impact of the anti gender backlash on trans communities. Especially those in the community who face further marginalisation because of their intersectional identities. The campaign included the [publication of names](#) of trans people murdered in the past year; [social media resources](#) for public use; a [joint statement](#); and an [English-language video](#) with subtitles in 44 languages: Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, Galician, Georgian, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kazakh,

Kinyarwanda, Korean, Kyrgyz, Luxembourgish, Macedonian, Norwegian, Persian, Portuguese (Brazil), Portuguese (Portugal), Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Uzbek.



| Communications toolkit

TGEU believes that communication strategies are critical for movement building and have the potential to amplify trans people's voices, shift attitudes, and connect our personal struggles in global solidarity. Getting that right is key, especially as our community faces a well-trained and well-financed anti-gender movement. Although trans rights organisations and activists are increasingly using tools for communication and campaigning, most do not have the means to develop a strategy due to lack of funding and capacities. The [Communications toolkit: campaigning for trans rights](#) addresses communications strategies as well as tips and tools to support organisations and activists in campaigning for trans rights and social justice.



| Hate crime monitoring

We are pleased to announce the expansion and update of our anti-trans violence reporting efforts. Starting this year, we will be using the online tool **Uwazi**, developed by **Huridocs**, to collect data on anti-trans violence across Europe. TGEU is currently organising training sessions for members on using the tool for data collection.

RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

Ukrainian response

From March to November 2022, TGEU hired an Emergency Response Officer:

- We supported trans individuals leaving Ukraine in accessing service organisations, shelters outside Ukraine, and trans-friendly medical or legal professionals, in collaboration with regional and national organisations.
- We created a dedicated page on our website with resources in support of people affected by the war in Ukraine. The page has information on trans-specific impact and needs, how to support trans people whether they choose to leave Ukraine or stay, and credible media outlets to get your news from.
- We connected organisations providing legal support with the border crossing procedure and trans people who wanted to leave Ukraine and coordinated logistics with shelters, organisations, and evacuation routes.
- We issued subgrants to Ukraine and neighbouring countries, including unregistered groups that provide emergency support to trans people such as safe housing, shipping and distributing medication, and psychological counselling
- In cooperation with ILGA Europe, Pharmacists without Borders, and activists from border countries, a system was created for the purchase, reimbursement, and distribution of hormones from the EU countries to Ukraine.
- In cooperation with RFSL, we conducted in-depth interviews documenting cases of human rights violations in connection to border crossings, military medical commissions, and obstructed access to legal gender recognition.

COVID-19

While the pandemic is coming to an end, our communities are still dealing with its consequences. In 2022, we kept on providing capacity building support through 1:1s and fundraising to help our members surviving the economic downturn. We have also participated, together with 20 regional and global organisations, in the launch of a research highlighting the impact of COVID-19

on LGBTQ communities and organising capacities. Finally, as the possibility to meet in-person resumed in 2022, we cautiously prepared activities that would bring trans activists together while best protecting our communities. All events followed a precautions plan with key measures to protect our participants. Furthermore, when possible, streaming options were offered to those unable to travel abroad.



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