



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

REPORT 2022



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Member Engagement Report 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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INTRODUCTION

One of TGEU's most fundamental goals is to support, empower, and strengthen the resilience and well-being of activists in Europe and Central Asia. This report presents the membership engagement activities conducted by TGEU in 2022 based on our member strategy and directly informed by feedback gathered from our diverse members. Furthermore, the insights and reflections highlighted in this report speak to our commitment to deliver ongoing value to members while also making necessary adjustments given the uncertain times we find ourselves living and organising in today.

TGEU's membership engagement strategy aims at establishing continuous communication and outreach work to both create power within and share power with our membership, particularly with most underrepresented groups. Furthermore, the report is in line with TGEU's two overarching membership-related goals highlighted in the [Strategic Plan 2020-2022](#), which are:

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.

From these goals, the membership engagement plan has four main objectives:

1. Proactively engage with members by developing good relations with the entire membership particularly those based in underrepresented regions and from further marginalised groups.
2. Strengthen member capacities by being responsive to their needs. This also means ensuring members are empowered with tools and resources giving them the agency to meaningfully engage in key TGEU structures and processes.
3. Intentionally involve members in the design or co-creation and delivery of programmes.
4. Establish spaces and platforms where trans activists from Europe and Central Asia can securely connect with each other to build collaborations and are also able to engage with TGEU openly and freely.

The TGEU membership engagement strategies expected outcomes are as follows:

- Designed programmes are responsive and relevant to individual organisations' needs.
- Regular and custom communication with members is sustained and strengthened.
- Trust and relations with our membership are improved.
- Members are equipped with resources, platforms, tools, and connections to strengthen their organising and improve their communities' well-being.
- Members from most marginalised communities are targeted in our recruitment, meaningfully included in our programmes and empowered through their membership.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

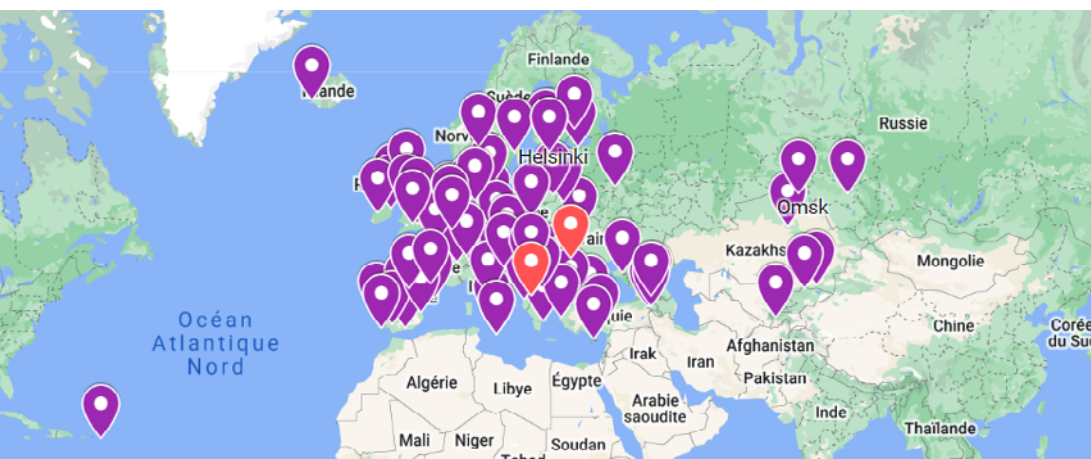
At TGEU, we believe in supporting our members and strengthening their capacities to collectively and sustainably organise their activism. We aim to continuously assess our members' needs to directly tailor our programmes to their priorities. We thrive at better representing the full diversity of trans communities in the region, particularly those from underrepresented communities. In this regard, in 2022 we conducted the following membership engagement activities:

| Membership growth and database upgrade

Despite the major challenges trans communities are facing, TGEU continues to witness significant growth in its membership base. From 152 group members in 2021, TGEU now has over 200 members and 258 individual members spanning 49 countries across Europe and Central Asia. Our membership is now covering three new countries: Latvia, Kosovo and Uzbekistan.

Although we still do not have members in Azerbaijan, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, and Turkmenistan, we are however optimistic that through continued and improved targeted membership engagement we will be connected with groups and activists in these countries.

To enhance relations and engagement with members, TGEU decided to connect all membership information in one, unified database. We adopted CiviCRM, an open-source software which is specially made for nonprofits and civil society organisations. TGEU now has an upgraded and highly secure database system which allows us to segment members according to various categories and effectively create programmes and activities that are customised to the needs of members. From the intelligence gathered through the software, TGEU is in a better position to analyse its engagement with members and identify areas of improvement. It is also useful for creating events and sending out debit notes for membership fees.



| Customised virtual consultations

To further understand members' context, challenges, and successes as well as how to best support them, we run ongoing customised virtual consultations. The **1:1 consultations** focused on a number of topics such as well-being, movement building, media and campaigning fundraising, policy and advocacy, and strategic litigation. Members also have the opportunity to choose any other topics relevant to their organisations. The consultations are offered in both English and Russian. To date TGEU has provided direct support to over 50 organisations in English and Russian, with a strong focus on groups focused on/led by further marginalised communities or underrepresented regions.

| In-person outreach visits

A key pillar of our member engagement strategy is to support members and activists operating in hostile contexts. Thus, to show solidarity and support the movements' strategising and organising, TGEU visited Poland and Latvia, two countries where LGBTQ, and particularly trans rights, are under threat. Meetings with local activists and organisations were conducted to assess needs, share good practices, and plan prospective collaboration.



| Capacity strengthening: trainings and meetings

Given these challenging times of crises, TGEU has been providing various trainings and programmes to members both on and offline to further build resilience and support the trans movement into sustainability. These trainings were not only learning opportunities but also served as safer networking platforms for activists from diverse countries and regions. These included:

Fundraising training

TGEU organised an in-person **fundraising training** for members from 10 to 12 June in Berlin. A cohort of 12 members took part in the training focused on organisational sustainability fundraising strategies and grant writing.



Trans Feminine Leaders Academy

In order to strengthen the leadership and sustainable organising skills of further marginalised trans-feminine communities, TGEU launched the **Trans Feminine Leadership Academy (TFLA)**. Some of the courses include personal and organisational development with a focus on strategic communication, fundraising as well as movement building

and collective well-being. TFLA is a year-long program divided into 3 parts. The first phase of the programme kicked off with a cohort of 15 selected participants gathering in Berlin from 10 to 12 August. The second phase before year-end consists of virtual individual consultations and coaching sessions to support participants in the development of their leadership projects. The third and final phase is a peer exchange and learning retreat set for Spring 2023.



Photo credit: © Lukas Berredo

Trans Leaders Academy

In addition to all the courses offered since its launch in 2021, new content from in-person trainings were conducted in 2022 were uploaded to the e-learning platform. New courses are available on fundraising and grant writing as well as strategic messaging. From the participant's feedback, the platform has become a credible and valuable learning platform for many activists.

Training on responding to the anti-trans movement and strategic messaging

In times of rising authoritarianism, fighting back against the growing anti-trans narratives is one of our members' priorities. In 2022, we conducted two online trainings on strategic messaging against anti-gender movements with follow-up meetings with individual members on strategizing around their communications plans. These meetings aimed at equipping TGEU members with tools on strategic communications to build support for trans rights.

Study visit to Brussels

TGEU brought six activists from six different EU countries to Brussels to participate in orientation sessions and meetings with representatives of the EU institutions, as well as to exchange with each other. The study visit had two goals: to strengthen the activists' understanding of how legislation is developed at the EU level and the role of equality bodies on the one hand, and to advocate directly with the European Commission and European Parliament in regard to the specific needs of trans communities on the other hand.



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Webinar on recent TGEU reports on poverty, discrimination, and homelessness

20 participants attended this webinar, where TGEU discussed the findings of its recent reports on trans people's experience of poverty, discrimination and homelessness in the EU. During the webinar, we presented our latest data and discussed with participants strategies and projects that aim to address the situation for trans people as well as recommendations to policymakers at the EU, national and local levels.



| Peer-to-peer group exchanges

In addition to training, TGEU also facilitated peer-to-peer exchange opportunities for members. These included:

Direct connections

TGEU aims to continuously connect members with one another to ensure ideas are shared and our sense of community is strengthened both on- and offline. For instance, after both the fundraising training and the TFLA, an online group was set up for participants to maintain contact and continue the exchange.

We also organised specific connections between members who request this type of support usually during 1-1 virtual consultations. These connections were facilitated between organisations working on common areas of interest (i.e. on minors, LGR...) or in the same region. The main topics of interest requested included supporting trans people in prisons, refugees and asylum seekers, homelessness, capacity strengthening for trans youth, strategic movement building and organising activist wellbeing camps.

TGEU European & Central Asian Trans Council

After almost two years of virtual organising, a major highlight in our member engagement efforts was the hosting of TGEU's European and Central Asian Trans Council which took place from 29 September to 2 October. The Council was attended by over 200 members both in person and online, 90 of which were covered by TGEU. This includes 46 activists from Europe and Central Asia who received

were awarded full scholarships. In line with the theme of *Together more than ever: Resisting, caring, moving forward*, the Council brought together activists from diverse backgrounds, policymakers and allies. The Council provided an opportunity for TGEU to connect with members, which included a highly interactive session. More information can be found in the Council's booklet and summary.



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In addition, many members also had the opportunity to give anonymous feedback in a post-Council survey. This feedback was overwhelmingly positive. However, some members also expressed concern over some areas which we acknowledge will need further improvement, especially in terms of content and representation of further marginalised trans people, for example, D/deaf and disabled, Trans Black and People of Colour, trans femme, trans elderly and trans people from Central Asia. This feedback will be useful to guide TGEU's work and to improve future Council planning and engagement with members from these communities.



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Trans Health Network

In 2020, TGEU launched a Trans Health Network to facilitate the exchange of information and strategies, and to promote the mutual support of members working in the field of healthcare. In 2022, the Network met twice, alternating different focuses and combining training sessions, good practice exchanges, and strategising sessions. The Network gathers members from 23 countries

who are actively advocating for access to care for all trans people in line with human rights standards.

Trans Refugee Network

Since its creation in 2020, the TRN has become a network of practice and a platform of exchange and mutual learning for trans activists, allies and organisations working with and supporting Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) refugees in Europe. The network consists of 15 members who meet quarterly to discuss identified topical asylum issues and areas of interest. Three virtual meetings were conducted the first gathering was on designing the network 2022 action plan. The second meeting was a learning and strategising opportunity with network members sharing about their interventions to support activists in and outside Ukraine. As part of TGEU's Ukraine Emergency Response, we coordinated support for trans people in and outside Ukraine and invested in the TRN as a space where to share some strategies and tips on how to support trans people in crisis, including Ukrainian refugees. The third meeting was a virtual visit by a guest activist from the organisation TransformA, one of our North Macedonian member organisations. The discussion was on the overall situation of asylum seekers in EU countries, especially those coming from other European non-EU countries such as North Macedonia and Turkey.

TGNC refugees support and empowerment project

Through a collaborative project with Emantes from Greece, TGEU conducted three virtual group consultations to connect groups and

increase the capacities of organisations working with trans and gender non-conforming asylum seekers and refugees in the country. The session focused on Communications and Campaigning, Advocacy, and Fundraising.

Focus groups

On providing support to trans victims of crime

To strengthen TGEU's understanding of our members' experiences in providing support to trans victims of crime and to allow members to exchange with each other, TGEU held an online focus group in February 2022 with five representatives of member organisations: Movimento Identità Trans (MIT) in Italy, TransAktion in Denmark, Trans United Europe in France and Netherlands, TransVanilla in Hungary, and Zagreb Pride in Croatia. The group focused on the types of support they provide to trans victims- especially those from further marginalised backgrounds such as trans asylum seekers and trans sex workers, the challenges they face when providing services as well as their needs and priorities to be able to carry on their support.

Upon members' request

On request we coordinated and joined meetings with our members in Cyprus, Sweden, Norway, Croatia, and the United Kingdom on various aspects relating to access to trans-specific healthcare and healthcare for transgender children.

| Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) engagement

Financial and capacity building support

In 2022, TGEU launched a new project to

provide targeted support to trans-led groups from EECA. After a multi-stage selection process, a cohort of 7 partners from the region was selected to receive subgrants for their projects. TGEU has conducted monthly online meetings for the cohort and quarterly trainings on international advocacy, research and documentation of anti-trans violence, psychological safety and trauma response. TGEU has also supported the participation of several activists from the region at the online UN Trans Advocacy Week 2022, which included training on UN human rights mechanisms and meetings with the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and other UN officials.

Emergency support in Ukraine

Since the beginning of the war, TGEU has been condemning Russian aggression and investing in rapid support for the affected trans communities. This included connecting trans people seeking evacuation or relocation, and providing safe housing, and medical help. We also employed various other interventions to support organisations in Ukraine and bordering countries, as well as connecting these organisations to each other. This included:

- Sub granting 4 organisations which were providing emergency assistance to trans people affected by the war in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.
- Coordinating emergency shipments of hormones and other necessary medication to Ukraine.
- Raising awareness with international institutions on the specific needs and vulnerabilities of trans people in times of war.
- Documenting cases of anti-trans violence and discrimination in the context of war.

KEY LEARNINGS

As a learning organisation, we acknowledge that as we continue to make progress in some areas there still remains room for improvement. Through continued engagement with members and listening to feedback, we are continuously enhancing our work.

Some key focus areas for improvement include:

- Continuing engagement and improving relations, especially with groups in countries where we have no members and also reconnecting with older groups we may have lost direct contact with.
- Conducting more targeted outreach work to connect with underrepresented activists or groups namely trans people who are D/deaf, elderly, BPoC, youth, and sex workers.
- Creating more opportunities and spaces where members can connect with each other and have exchanges.
- Focusing on engaging grassroots actors by bringing forward their work and, breaking/adapting our work for use at the grassroots level.
- Developing opportunities, tools and methodology for connection between members and the Board.
- Increasing focus on economic justice and Focusing more on economic justice: especially housing and employment
- Amplifying and celebrating members' achievements.
- Strengthening our rapid response systems to be able to assist even in times of crises.

MOVING FORWARD

Serving our membership is our core focus.

The work highlighted in this report is designed with and for the members with the ultimate goal of advancing the fight for trans rights and improving the well-being of our trans communities in Europe and Central Asia.

In 2022, a lot has been achieved. In our work with and for members, we strive to provide maximum value and continue to learn more from our mistakes and listen to feedback. Yet, there is always room for improvement. We acknowledge that achieving these ambitious goals requires collaboration with all our diverse members. We now turn over to you for continuous feedback on our programmes and updates regarding your needs and priorities.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our goals of intentionally investing in membership engagement, providing relevant and responsive programmes, and leaving no communities behind. Together with our membership, we will keep on strengthening resilient trans movements where activists are empowered to sustainably organise their activism and thrive despite challenges.



European & Central Asian
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