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EUROPEAN GREENS WELCOME EXTENSION OF PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION

The European Green Party has welcomed the European commission's decision to extend anti-discrimination legislation so that it covers discrimination on grounds of age, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation, beyond the workplace. Such legal protection already exists to deal with discrimination on grounds of race/ ethnic origin and gender.

Commenting on the directive, **EGP Co-Spokesperson, Ulrike Lunacek**, who is herself a lesbian and is the Austrian Green Party's parliamentary spokesperson on LGBT issues said : " This directive will ensure much better protection for people who are discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, religion , age or because they have a disability. The reaction of EU citizens to last year's European Year of Equal Opportunities showed clearly that EU citizens see guaranteeing equality of treatment as a top political priority and the introduction of this directive means real progress in fighting discrimination. We would like to congratulate the European Parliament, and in particular the Greens-EFA Group, for fighting attempts to water down the legislation by excluding protection from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The important thing now is that member states react positively to this directive and the EGP and its member parties will be pushing national governments to do so."

Ulrike Lunacek went on to express some concern about the fact that there is no specific protection for same-sex couples in the area of marriage or registered partnerships: "We share the fears expressed by the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) –Europe that the proposed directive does not ensure protection for LGBT people and their families who receive differential treatment on the basis of marital/family status. We are confident that such disparities can be removed when the directive is discussed further in the European Parliament."

Press release

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