

## Moving together towards social equality

# QUÉBEC POLICY

## against homophobia

### OVERVIEW

#### Objective of the policy

Improve the situation of people belonging to sexual minorities in Québec, in order to achieve social equality.

#### Origin

A report by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, entitled *De l'égalité juridique à l'égalité sociale — Vers une stratégie nationale de lutte contre l'homophobie*, released in March 2007; its first recommendation was to establish a Québec-wide policy to combat homophobia.

#### Key principles

- respect for the dignity of sexual minority members, and for their differences;
- the elimination of all discrimination against sexual minority members;
- recognition for the legitimate aspiration of sexual minority members to enjoy wellbeing;
- consideration for the specific characteristics of sexual minority members in service provision;
- the state's role as a leader in upholding rights and freedoms and keeping public order;
- the responsibility and commitment of all institutional and social players, and of the general public, to combat homophobia.

#### Content

Four main guidelines have been defined to provide effective ways to combat homophobia. They constitute the foundation of the policy; each guideline includes strategic choices targeting specific objectives.

#### GUIDELINE ONE

##### Recognize the realities faced by sexual minority members

Prejudice is the foundation for homophobic attitudes and behaviour, and because of prejudice, sexual minority members are often forced to keep their sexual identity quiet, perpetuating the lack of understanding and the rejection of difference. An effort must be made to “demystify” the realities of various sexual identities and orientations, and to promote recognition for and a better understanding of those realities.

#### STRATEGIC CHOICES

- **Raise awareness and educate**—to focus on and demystify the realities faced by sexual minority members, and also to promote the values of openness and inclusion in connection with sexual diversity.
- **Promote research**—to increase knowledge about sexual diversity, in order to create tools to combat homophobia more effectively.

## GUIDELINE TWO

### Promote respect for the rights of sexual minority members

Harassment and discrimination against sexual minority members persist in various sectors. The rights of sexual minority members are still largely misunderstood, a situation which helps maintain the influence of homophobic or heterosexist ideas over decisions and behaviour patterns. This guideline targets full social recognition for the rights of sexual minority members.

#### STRATEGIC CHOICES

- **Promote rights**—to strengthen social recognition for the rights of sexual minority members.
- **Help individuals exercise their rights**—to ensure the creation of resources to help victims of homophobia defend their rights.

## GUIDELINE THREE

### Promote wellbeing

Sexual minority members must have access to resources and services that take their realities into account. It will be necessary to deal with the heterosexist values on which some institutional practices are founded.

#### STRATEGIC CHOICES

- **Provide support for the victims of homophobia**—to ensure that individuals whose physical or mental integrity is threatened or harmed by homophobia have access to appropriate services.
- **Promote the adaptation of public services**—to support measures to adapt public services to the specific needs of the sexual minorities.
- **Provide support for community action**—to recognize the leading role played by community groups in the fight against homophobia. This will provide support for their actions and allow them to reach out to more victims of homophobia.

## GUIDELINE FOUR

### Ensure a concerted approach

To ensure that the actions taken to combat homophobia are coherent and effective, all players in society must work together in a focused and coordinated way. The fourth guideline reflects the government's intention to take the lead in the fight against homophobia, and to rally all players in society.

#### STRATEGIC CHOICES

- **Coordinate actions by public institutions**—to reflect the government's intention to ensure synergy between the initiatives launched by government departments and other public institutions to fight homophobia.
- **Ensure the support of local and regional authorities and other government partners**—to target participation by as many social players as possible in the fight against homophobia.

#### Implementation, monitoring and assessment

The Minister of Justice is responsible for the fight against homophobia. An interdepartmental committee will be created under the Minister's authority to implement the policy through a government action plan to fight homophobia. In addition, the committee will

- monitor the application of the government action plan and ensure coordination between the policy against homophobia and other governmental and departmental policies;
- act as the interface between government departments and LGBT groups.