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European Union Tries to Counter Anti-L.G.B.T.Q. Wave in Hungary and Poland

The bloc is trying to stop the Eastern European member nations from advancing discriminatory measures, but its legal powers are limited.



Monika Pronczuk, Benjamin Novak – Thursday November 12th, 2020

BRUSSELS — The European Union on Thursday unveiled policies intended to strengthen¹ the rights of L.G.B.T.Q. people, proposals that appear aimed particularly at right-wing governments in Hungary and Poland that have promoted discrimination.

5 The moves, drawn up by the European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, would classify hate crime, including homophobic speech, on a list of “E.U. crimes” that also contains offenses such as drug trafficking and money laundering, giving the bloc more powers to crack down² on member nations. The proposal would also protect same-sex families in all 27 of the bloc’s members, and promises more funding for organizations promoting equality.

10 The plan comes as the governing Law and Justice party in Poland faces the biggest protests in the country since the fall of communism in 1989. The huge demonstrations, which began as a defense of women’s rights after a top court’s decision last month to ban nearly all abortions, have grown to include calls for the protection of L.G.B.T.Q. rights.

15 In Hungary, the government has pushed for laws targeting³ the L.B.G.T.Q. community, including a bill⁴ that ties an individual’s gender to their sex and chromosomes at birth, restricting later modifications on official documents.

Announcing the European proposals on Thursday, Vera Jourova, the bloc’s commissioner for values and transparency, said, “Everyone should feel free to be who they are — without fear or persecution.”

“This is what Europe is about and this is what we stand for,” she added [...]

¹ To strengthen = to make stronger

² To crack down on = sévir, réprimer

³ To target = cibler

⁴ A bill = un projet de loi

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