

## The business community supports legal protections for same-sex couples and their families

As employers, we understand the importance of treating everyone with equal dignity and respect. Fairness, equal treatment, and opportunity are central to our corporate values because we care about both our employees and the customers we serve. **Therefore, we express our support for actions that will provide same-sex couples and their families in Poland with legal recognition and protection.** The first, necessary step in this direction is, of course, the comprehensive legal recognition of registered civil partnerships. Many of our LGBT+ employees are raising children and building families in Poland; they need the tools to care for their families like anyone else. The ability to enter a civil partnership is also socially and economically important from the point of view of many heterosexual couples in the country, who are not married, and their families. Moreover, we see the importance of the project of the registered civil partnerships bill in terms of our obligation to **respect the December ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, according to which Poland is obliged to provide a legal framework enabling same-sex couples to have their relationship properly recognised and protected.**

[It is a fact that lack of legal protection of same-sex couples leads to economic discrimination and stands in the way of economic development, which was made clear in 2022 by more than 40 Polish experts in the field of law and economics.](#) For example, they can only take advantage of the opportunity to include their partners in health insurance coverage at their place of employment based on internal company policy. They also suffer the costs of tax discrimination in comparison to couples in legally recognized relationships. This results in, among other things, unfavorable conditions for settling personal income tax, inheritance rules as well as limited access to loans. The lack of legal protection for these couples also creates obstacles for balancing family life and work, including where a biological child of one of the partners in a same-sex relationship is being raised by the couple. Under the current legal system, LGBTQ+ people cannot partake of bereavement leave in the event of the death of their partner. All this contributes to a difficult situation of such employees on the job market and undermines economic security, ultimately preventing the full use of their economic potential.

Moreover, [research by Open For Business shows that discrimination is detrimental to economic growth](#) - inequalities negatively affect innovation, limit the inflow of foreign investments and tourists as well as hinder competition for human resources. Back in 2019,

it was shown that discrimination against LGBTQ+ people **costs the Polish economy up to 0.4% of GDP every year; this means that because of discrimination, we lose up to PLN 9.5 billion annually.** The lack of legal protection for same-sex couples and the damage it causes to our country's reputation stand in the way of the development of local businesses. The current legislative situation makes it difficult for companies in Poland to compete for qualified, talented staff necessary for the development of the national economy on the European and global markets. Brain drain, the loss of workers who move to more inclusive environments, embracing the idea of social inclusion, robs us of our most important asset, people ready to drive the development of the country and the economy. [Poland - for the fifth time in a row - was ranked the very last amongst all EU member states in the ILGA-Europe "Rainbow Map" ranking, which assesses the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights in national law and the every-day application of law.](#)

No legal protection of same-sex couples in Poland makes it difficult for companies like ours to treat LGBTQ+ employees equally to their straight, married colleagues. This not only complicates our internal policies, it leads to unnecessary confusion and diminished employee morale. The reality of doing business often precedes legislation as companies understand the need to respond quickly to the expectations of their employees and society as a whole. In fact, many businesses are already supporting their employees by respecting their relationships regardless of gender - a clear case of corporates filling a gap created by local law to ensure equality for all. It is important that legislation also responds to these expectations. This will translate into, among other things, the ease of doing business in Poland.

**Our workplaces and our communities are strongest when everyone feels safe, treated fairly and can focus on doing their jobs and providing for their families.** Businesses grow, when their responsibilities to employees and customers are clear and understandable. However, to be successful, the business community also relies on the regulatory environment, including in terms of social policies. It has a tangible impact on how productive and engaged our employees are, and, ultimately, on our competitiveness and financial performance. **That is why we believe that legal protection for same-sex couples and the families they create is not only aligned with our core values, but ultimately beneficial for the further development of our companies and our country.**