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The Headhunter Group is pleased to announce and publish the findings of its second annual LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index in Albania.

Although when first initiating this idea in 2016, there were many naysayers, claiming that the Albanian private sector would not bother to participate and that the Albanian public would not care, thanks to our own convictions on the right to employment for all citizens, as well as a number of international actors in the country, we preserved. We are firm in our conviction that all Albanian citizens—regardless of any quality or status—have something to contribute to the country and they have the right to employment.

The end results surprised even us: a total of 71 companies participated in the first annual process and a few actually demonstrated concrete policies and measures in place to protect the rights and uphold the dignity of LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees. The number further increased the second year, by reaching a total of 109 participating Companies.

This year, the results of the third annual LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index in Albania were even more impressive. The participation was increased considerably and 149 companies operating in Albania answered to the questionnaires, which show a significant increase of awareness level from business environment in relation to the measures in place to protect the rights and uphold minorities and specifically, LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees.

Awardees and some other participating companies from the last year, achieved higher scores in the present year’s
Index and have already taken concrete measures to protect LGBTIQ Albanians. They set an admirable example for other employers in the country to follow, by recognizing that upholding the rights of any group benefits all of the society.

The increasing trend of participation and rates makes us believe that the 40 new companies joining this year’s LGBTIQ Index, will show improvements and achieve higher rating in the next year’s Index. We are humbled that they agreed to participate in our Index and we are inspired by their commitment.
While The Headhunter Group was pleased at the enthusiastic response to participating in the rating process, the results show that companies in Albania still don’t have much in the way of human resource policies and practices to protect and uphold the rights and dignity of minority job-seekers and employees. Unfortunately, this finding does not come as a surprise to most. Those which do include some policies and practices do not specifically extend them to LGBTIQ Albanians.

But a significant number of these companies support community-based organizations and charities, and are willing to do more in terms of minority professional inclusion. Most of businesses interviewed for this rating process mention their willingness to upgrade and improve their recruitment and HR management procedures to be more inclusive, accessible and secure to LGBTIQ candidatures and employees.

The Headhunter Group sees both a tremendous need and demand for continuous trainings on workplace diversity for companies in Albania as well as standardized policies and practices which companies can adapt and adopt.
Following the in-depth process conducted in July and August, 2018, The Headhunter Group tabulated the results for each of the 149 companies which participated.

**Interpretation of the Ratings.**

Each answer receives a fixed number of points, and the points are totaled for a total score. The Ranking is divided into 4 categories: **gold, silver, bronze, and non-rated.** Gold is the highest ranking allocated to companies with outstanding performance, support and inclusion of LGBTIQ in the workforce specifically. Only companies which specifically identify LGBTIQ persons in their human resources policies and practices can reach Gold level. Rankings are provided using 4 tiers:

- **Gold:** refers to companies which specifically mention protection for the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ job seekers and employees in their human resource policies and practices. They will have a demonstrated track record of promoting equality and dignity for LGBTIQ job seekers and employees through their actions and employee relations. These companies also demonstrate compliance with the Albanian law on non-discrimination.
- **Silver:** refers to companies which have policies and practices to protect the dignity of LGBTIQ job seekers and employees, but may not have a demonstrated track record of actions to do so. Their policies mention LGBTIQ specifically. These companies demonstrate compliance with the Albanian law on non-discrimination.
THE 2018 RATED COMPANIES

- **Bronze:** refers to companies with general policies on protection of rights and dignity for employees, but without specific mention to LGBTIQ job seekers and employees. These companies demonstrate compliance with the Albanian law on non-discrimination.
- **Non-rated:** All other companies and employers will be considered as non-rated. These companies lack policies and practices to protect the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ job seekers and employees. These companies do not show compliance with the Albanian law on non-discrimination.

This Ranking is intended to provide encouragements and provide the opportunity to the Headhunter Group to offer its services in terms of technical assistance, advice and training.
The LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index is the first of its kind in Albania as well as in the non-EU states of the Balkans. The LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index is a ranking system to determine how well companies respect the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ persons in their hiring, training, development, and general employment practices. In addition, it rates their compliance with local labor laws on the topic.

The Headhunter Group, the largest recruitment and human resource company in Albania and one of the largest in the Balkans, decided in 2016 to launch such an Index as part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility and Workplace Diversity. The Group has an intrinsic commitment to see equal employment opportunities extended to all citizens. The Group is also well-placed to create and launch such an Index, as it has the credibility within the private sector to act as a judge of human resource policies.

Each year, the Headhunter Group presents awards to the companies which have been exemplary in protecting the rights and upholding the dignity of LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees. The Headhunter Group’s LGBTIQ Employment Index measures the policies and practices of companies operating in Albania towards LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees. The Headhunter Group staff interview directors and verify policies and practices of both international and Albanian companies each year.

Information on the Index can be accessed at: http://hh.al/en-us/lgbtq-index
The LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index was created by The Headhunter Group and is an important expression of its corporate social responsibility efforts. The Headhunter Group is active in supporting a number of issues related to employment for youth, women and girls, and minorities. In 2015, it founded RINI Albania to carry out charitable activities in favor of youth employment and workplace diversity. The Headhunter Group has conducted a number of activities for minorities-focused projects and organizations, including LGBTIQ Equality Index, Antidiscrimination Law awareness workshops for job-seekers, employees and employers, and Employer’s Antidiscrimination Manual implementation, etc. The annual Indexes are conducted by a team of experts in the Human Resources and Humanistic fields, within The Headhunter Group.
The Headhunter Group has designed a methodical and verifiable process of rating the companies according to the Index.

**Company Self-Selection**
Participation in the LGBTIQ Employment Equality Index is entirely voluntary. The Headhunter Group offers participation to companies and also responds to companies which wish to participate in the Index. It should be noted that all statements in this report should recognize that they are based on a voluntary participation and are not representative of the Albanian private sector as a whole. This year, for the first time, also Public Institutions and NGO-s were included, in order to have a wider basis for comparison amongst employing organizations in Albania.

**On-Site Rating Process**
Expert staff from The Headhunter Group use a standardized questionnaire for each company to be rated, and conduct an on-site interview with the Human Resources Department, Director, or other qualified staff person. The Headhunter Group staff, verify each answer on site as well, reviewing policies and procedures.

**Rating Issuance**
Upon completing the interview and returning to The Headhunter Group offices, the staff then tabulate the scores for each answer and issue a rating based upon a pre-determined scale. The results for each company are transparent, verifiable, and auditable.

The Headhunter Group will undertake the rating process in the early months of each year. It is envisioned that more and more companies will agree to participate. Companies which have already been rated will have the opportunity to be re-rated in subsequent years and achieve higher ratings.
KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section contains some key findings from the 149 company ratings. They are presented here to show important trends and gain insights into the status of Albania’s private sector, mainly, in upholding the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees.
The staff of The Headhunter Group conducted ratings on a total of **149** companies, versus **109** companies participating in the previous year. The participation was increased with **37%**.

**Chart 1: Number of Employees**

**Question 1.4.** approximately how many employees does the company employ in Albania?

As shown in **Chart 1 - 2018**, the majority of companies which participated in this year’s rating were relatively large, well-established companies. **29%** of those companies had more than **100** employees and **21%** had between **51** and **100** employees. This year, the aim was to include more companies of smaller size, in order to have more inclusive results representing at a wide level Albanian organizations, so **50%** of companies included had less than **50** employees, which is a considerable increase of this category compared to the **41%** of the previous year, as shown in the **Chart 1- 2017**. This increase is important as small size companies need to be on focus, since generally they have less developed policies and procedures in place, especially on these topics, and there is much work for improvement to be made.

Also, companies participating this year in the rating came from a wide range of industries but the most common were from Hospitality **24%**, Food&Beverage **11%** and Retail **9%**.
Questions in the second section asked companies about the policies they have in place.

Chart 2: Non-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy:

**Question 2.1.:** Does the company have a non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policy that applies to all employees?

![Chart 2 - 2017](image)

70% of companies state that currently have a policy for non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees. Although there is a progress compared to the results of 68% from last year, as shown in the Chart 2 - 2017, as this question is not specifically for LGBTIQ persons but for all persons, it shows that there is still tremendous room for improvement in building a culture of non-discrimination, especially in companies newly joining this year. The results for this question also showed why 30% of the companies out of the 149 which participated, did not achieve a rating.

In Chart 3 - 2018 below, companies were asked if the policy is specific to LGBTIQ and related status. 32% of companies had policies which contained language related to LGBTIQ and related status, again highlighting the fact that employment policies as yet do not sufficiently protect LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees. However, there has been an increase compared to the previous year’s results where only 25% of companies, as shown in the Chart 3 - 2017, had in place policies which contained language related to LGBTIQ, which shows a tendency from Albanian companies towards equal treatment and non-discrimination to minorities, including LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees.
Chart 3: LGBTIQ Specific Mentions in Non-Discrimination Policies

Question 2.2: does the non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policy contain the terms ‘sexual orientation’, ‘gender identity’ and/or ‘gender conformity’?

Chart 4: Specific Mandate for Non-Discrimination and Equality Opportunity

Question 2.3: does the company have a Human Resources Manager or a Senior Executive, with a mission mandate or a specific responsibility that includes non-discrimination or equal employment opportunity?
As noted in Chart 4 - 2018, only 31% of companies rated have a specific manager (usually a human resources manager or director) who has a specific mandate to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity for staff. Although this year’s results are slightly higher compared to those of the previous year, 28%, as indicated in the Chart 4 - 2017, this again highlights the fact that—not only do companies not have policies in place—they also lack the human resource skills and mandates to put those policies into place. Furthermore, without having staff specifically charged with this issue, it is assumed that many of these companies lack a champion for these rights within the management structure.

Chart 5 - 2018 below, reinforces this point, showing that only 9% of companies had a staff member with specific mandates to include LGBTIQ persons in the company’s human resource structure and policies. The results are the same with those of the previous year shown in the Chart 5 - 2017.

Chart 5: Specific LGBTIQ Mention in the Mandate

**Question 2.4:** does the mission mandate of this Human Resource Manager or Senior Executive specifically include LGBTIQ diversity?

![Chart showing 9% with specific mandates in 2017 and 2018](image)
**Chart 6 - 2018** below describes the extent to which companies actually train their human resource managers or other directors on non-discrimination and equal opportunity and only 22% reported that they do. The Headhunter Group finds this statistic troubling and there is just a slight increase compared to the previous year when the result was 20% as shown in the **Chart 6 - 2017** below. Even though 68% of companies reported having such policies (see **Chart 2** above), only 20% actually train their management on implementing such policies. This leads one to believe that those policies in companies without trained management are likely unenforced or weakly enforced at best.

**Chart 6: Training for Human Resources and Management**

**Question 2.5:** if yes to question 2.4, has this Human Resources Manager or Senior Executive been specifically trained on these topics?

In **Chart 7 - 2018** below, the Index asked if the company provides training on non-discrimination and equal opportunity to other managers, supervisors and team leaders and the results show that only 27% of companies offer such training. This is a good indicator of improvement, considering that last year the rate was of 22%, **Chart 7 - 2017**.
Chart 7: *Training for other managers*

**Question 2.6.** Does the company provide other managers, supervisors and team leaders with training on non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity?

In **Chart 8 - 2018** below, the Index asked if the company provides training on non-discrimination and equal opportunity to all employees. This is important as it relates to the working culture and atmosphere in the company. Only 20% of companies offer such training, still is an improvement compared to the previous year’s results of 16%, as appears in the **Chart 8 - 2017**.

Chart 8: *Trainings for all Employees*

**Question 2.7.** Does the company provide training to all employees on non-discrimination and equal opportunity in the workplace?
For those companies which do have a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy, the Index asks about the accessibility and dissemination of the policy to its job-seekers and employees. In **Chart 9 - 2018** below, companies largely displayed their policies publicly and compared to the previous year, all specified forms of display record an increase, as obvious from the collation with the **Chart 9 - 2017**. Whatsoever, further efforts could be made to increase awareness on them among the staff and job seekers.

**Chart 9: Methods of displaying the policies**

**Question 2.8.** if the company has a non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policy, how is it made available to your employees and candidates?
SECTION III
POLICIES FOR RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION

In this section, the Index asked companies about the policies and procedures they have in place regarding recruitment and employee retention.

In Chart 10 - 2018 below, only 7% of companies reported that they have a specific mention for LGBTIQ job-seekers in their recruitment policies. Although last year’s results were lower, specifically 4%, as per Chart 10 - 2017, the percentage is still low and this is important to note because non-discrimination at the stage of recruitment is critical (a) to make LGBTIQ job-seekers encouraged to apply at that company for a job; (b) let non-LGBTIQ job-seekers know from the beginning that they will be expected to work in an inclusive atmosphere; and, (c) set the tone for hiring managers that discrimination is not tolerated. It also provides some basis for recourse if an LGBTIQ job-seeker feels that they have been discriminated against during the recruitment process.

Chart 10: LGBTIQ Mention in the Recruitment Policy

Question 3.1: does the company recruitment policy include a specific reference to LGBTIQ persons?

- 2017: 4% (4%) Yes, 96% (96%) No
- 2018: 7% (7%) Yes, 93% (93%) No
Only 9% of companies, as shown in Chart 11 - 2018 below, have application forms and interview questions which are LGBTIQ-friendly. Doing so is a much more nuanced form of respecting the rights and upholding the dignity of LGBTIQ job-seekers but many companies lack the skills to do so. This might include types of questions which do not force a gender-based answer or questions which are not invasive towards the lifestyle of the job-seeker. These also guarantee that the companies are not asking LGBTIQ job-seekers about their sexual orientation or gender identity through indirect means. The results have a slight increase from the previous year, where this element had 6%, as can be noticed in the Chart 11 - 2017.

Chart 11: Application Forms

Question 3.2.: are the company application forms and interview questionnaires designed to ask questions in a LGBTIQ-friendly manner?

While in 99% of companies, as shown in Chart 12 - 2018 below, Human Resource or Recruitment Manager do not ask candidates and employees individual questions about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, LGBTIQ identity, or any other type of question about gender or race. This is an excellent result which guarantees that the companies are not asking LGBTIQ job-seekers about their sexual orientation or gender identity through indirect means. The results have an increase of 3% from the previous year, as can be seen in the Chart 12 - 2017.
Chart 12: Interview Questions

**Question 3.3:** does the company Human Resource or Recruitment Manager ask candidates and employees individual questions about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, LGBTIQ identity, or any other type of question about gender or race?

- **2017:**
  - **96%** No, we don’t ask any of these questions
  - **3%** Yes, sexual orientation only
  - **1%** No, we ask a different question

- **2018:**
  - **99%** No, we don’t ask any of these questions
  - **1%** Yes, gender identity only
  - **Yes, LGBTIQ identity**
  - **Yes, race only**
In Chart 13 - 2018 below, only 9% of the companies acknowledge that have recruited one or several LGBTIQ persons. This low figure is also due to the fact that the majority of companies do not ask information regarding sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Chart 12), since 69% of them answers “don’t know”. There has been an increase from the previous year, when the results were 6%, as can be seen in the Chart 13 - 2017.

Chart 13: LGBTIQ persons Recruitment

Question 3.4.: according to the knowledge of the interviewee, has the company ever recruited one or several LGBTIQ persons?

In Chart 14 - 2018 below, only 40%, of companies reported that they have a mechanism to report harassment on the job, which is not at the level it should be, but is still higher than the 35% of the previous year, as shown in the Chart 14 - 2017. This low number is not surprising given the low number of companies that have non-discrimination policies. Nevertheless, the absence of such mechanisms leave LGBTIQ employees vulnerable. In addition, it is important that all employees know that such mechanisms exist so that they know any type of harassment would have consequences.
Similarly, in Chart 15 - 2018 below, only 17% of companies had management staff trained on responding to such complaints of discrimination or harassment. Again, this is troubling because of the 40% of companies which have a mechanism (see Chart 14 above), less than half have management trained on responding. Obviously, this highlights the vulnerability of LGBTIQ persons on the job and their limited options for recourse if they are discriminated or harassed. Also the fact that last year’s results are very close, 15%, see Chart 15 - 2017 below, shows that companies, especially the ones newly involved, have a lot to make in this direction.
In *Chart 16 - 2018*, only **11%** of companies have a mechanism to evaluate and mitigate the safety and welfare concerns of LGBTIQ employees in the workplace. This is not surprising given the low levels of companies with policies and trained management. Nevertheless, it highlights the vulnerability of LGBTIQ persons on the job and the small increase from last year, when results were **8%**, as seen in the *Chart 16 - 2017*, reinforces this.
Chart 16: *Mechanisms to Evaluate and Mitigate the Safety and Welfare Concerns of LGBTIQ Employees*

**Question 3.8:** does the company have any mechanism in place to evaluate and mitigate the safety and other welfare concerns of LGBTIQ employees in the workplace?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>11%</td>
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Chart 17 - 2018 asked companies if they had ever supported any initiatives to promote social and professional inclusion of minorities including LGBTIQ persons and only 9% of them responded positively, however, none of the companies pertaining to this category mentioned any specific challenges the company faces, by doing so. There is an increase from the previous year, when the result was 6%, as can be observed in the Chart 17 - 2017.
Chart 17: Company’s Support to the Professional Inclusion of LGBTIQ Persons

Question 3.9: has the company supported any other initiatives to promote social and professional inclusion of minorities including LGBTIQ persons?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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This section asks about a company’s corporate social responsibility and outreach to the community at large. As Chart 18 – 2018 below shows that 51% of the companies have a CSR strategy already developed. This is positive because it at least provides the framework for adding more protections for LGBTIQ job-seekers and employees if the company is willing, and also considering the increase from previous year’s result, 48%, illustrated in the Chart 18 – 2017.

Chart 18: Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy

Question 4.1: Has the company developed a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy?

- 52% NO 2017
- 48% YES 2017
- 49% NO 2018
- 51% YES 2018
However, as Chart 19 - 2018 below shows, only 11% of those CSR strategies mention LGBTIQ communities, which is a low rate, however, still higher than last year, where only 8% of companies stated that their CSR strategies mention LGBTIQ communities, as appears in the Chart 19 - 2017.

Chart 19: Specific Mention of LGBTIQ in the CSR strategy.

Question 4.2.: if YES to question 4.1., does the Corporate Social Responsibility strategy include specifically LGBTIQ diversity?
Chart 20 - 2018 below shows that **55%** of companies made charitable donations and this is a positive trend from last year where **53%** of companies declared the same, Chart 20 - 2017.

Chart 20: Charitable Giving by Companies

**Question 4.3:** during the last two years, has the company made any donations or offered any sponsorships to charities or community-based organizations?

From the above companies, only **5%** did so to LGBTIQ-focused organizations or projects, as shown in the Chart 21 - 2018 below. However, it must be kept in mind that there are only three active such organizations in Albania and thus, even if a company was willing to make a donation, its options for such are highly limited. There is an increase from the previous year, when the result was **3%**, as can be observed in the Chart 21 - 2017.
Chart 21: Charitable Giving including LGBTIQ

Question 4.4: if YES to question 4.3., did these donations and sponsorships include support for LGBTIQ organizations or events?

Chart 22 – 2018 shows that only 11% of companies joined any initiatives to support LGBTIQ equality and inclusion. While companies are interested in CSR, the issue of LGBTIQ persons does not represent a priority for their actions. However, this year’s result is higher, since last year the rating was 9%, as shown in the Chart 22 – 2017.
Chart 22: Company Support for LGBTIQ Initiatives

Question 4.5: during the last two years, has the company joined any campaigns or initiatives to support publicly LGBTIQ equality and inclusion?

In Chart 23 - 2018 below, only 7% of companies have a policy or guidelines that prohibit them from doing business with other companies that discriminate about LGBTIQ persons (or other minorities). There is an increase from the previous year, when the result was 4%, as can be observed in the Chart 23 - 2017.
In Chart 24 - 2018, a total of 50% of participating companies did mention that they would be willing to work more on LGBTIQ inclusion. A considerable increase can be observed to the results of the previous year, in Chart 24 - 2017 which recorded 43%. Despite the fact that many businesses lack policies or training on the topic, it is encouraging that now, half of them would like to engage further. This creates the space for further projects.
Chart 24: Willingness to Work on LGBTIQ Inclusion Issues

Question 4.7.: would the company be interested in becoming a member of a working group on business fairness in Albania (to share best practices and lessons learnt, promote advocacy and awareness on LGBTIQ equality and inclusion in the workplace)?

- **2017**: 57% NO, 43% YES
- **2018**: 50% NO, 50% YES
In Section V, the Index asks companies for specific examples of work or support to LGBTIQ communities. Companies cannot achieve Gold status in this Index with having a proven track record of such actions.

As shown in Chart 25 - 2018 below, 13% of companies reported to have initiatives which are innovative to LGBTIQ inclusion, while last year, only 8% of those participating declared so, as shown in the Chart 25 - 2017.

**Chart 25: Initiative Programs**

**Question 5.3:** does the company have a program that it believes to be supportive or innovative in terms of LGBTIQ inclusion?
From the comparison of results for each question, generally there is an increase compared to the previous year’s results. Charts 26 below show that 27% of all participating companies gave positive answers to the questions in the 2018 LGBTIQ Index, while only 21% of all participating companies in 2017, did so.

The overall results increase with only 6% from the previous year, might look small but, if we take into consideration the inclusion of 40 new companies, the majority of which are of smaller size and do not have much in place in the frame of policies and procedures for equal treatment and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ employees and job-seekers, which considerably lowered the overall results, the 6% increase should be considered a success.

The results of only companies which participated in the LGBTIQ Index of both years show that, this year they answered positively to 37% of the questions, as shown in the Chart 27-2018 below, so there is an increase compared to the previous year results of 32%, shown in the Chart 27-2017. They have designed concrete procedures and policies to protect minorities and LGBTIQ Albanians.
**Chart 27:** 2018 results for companies participating in the Index, in the last 2 years

![Pie charts showing negative and positive answers for 2017 and 2018.]

- **2017:**
  - Negative answers: 68%
  - Positive answers: 32%
- **2018:**
  - Negative answers: 63%
  - Positive answers: 37%

Legend:
- Orange: Negative answers
- Blue: Positive answers
RECOMMENDATIONS

For Organizations for LGBTIQ Equality and Tolerance

• Include employment related topics in their advocacy efforts.
• Spread information on the protections for LGBTIQ Albanians in the 2010 Anti-Discrimination Law to the LGBTIQ community.
• Look for opportunities to make advocacy practical in producing tangible benefits for the lives of LGBTIQ Albanians.

For the Albanian Private Sector:

• Recognize that workplace diversity is positive for productivity, revenue, and employee retention.
• Recognize the need for and seek out training opportunities to improve the policies and practices for workplace diversity, for both LGBTIQ Albanians and other minorities.
• Raise the issue of workplace diversity in syndicates, trade unions, chambers of commerce, and other business membership organizations.

For the Albanian Government:

• Continue to enforce the 2010 Anti-Discrimination Law rigorously with an action plan containing concrete objectives and a timeline. This may include public awareness materials, standardized codes of conduct, standardized policies and a website to access such information.
• Ensure a strong focus on employment inclusion for LGBTIQ Albanians in the National Action Plan for LGBTIQ.

For International Donors:

• Continue to identify and fund evidence-based programs which produce tangible impacts on the lives of LGBTIQ Albanian citizens.