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New Coqual Report Exposes Global LGBTQ+ Workplace Challenges and Launches the Coqual Navigator to Drive Meaningful Change

“Pride Under Pressure” Highlights Ongoing Barriers for LGBTQ+ Professionals Worldwide, Urging Employers to Take Bold, Lasting Action

LONDON, March 31, 2025 — Coqual, a leading global think tank advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in the workplace, today released ***Pride Under Pressure: Charting a Course for Global LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion***. This groundbreaking report explores the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ professionals across five global markets, exposing persistent challenges—from discrimination and lack of representation to the ongoing need for safer, more inclusive workplaces.

According to Ipsos, roughly 1 in 10 people globally identify as LGBTQ+, meaning those whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual and/or whose gender identity is not cisgender. As disinformation and fear-based rhetoric continue to undermine LGBTQ+ rights and DEIB progress, this new report builds on insights from Coqual’s 2016 study, *Out in the World: Securing LGBT Rights in the Global Marketplace*, offering fresh data and actionable solutions to help organizations create environments where all employees can thrive.

“When we started this research a year and a half ago, the world looked different. Since then, the conversation around inclusion has gotten louder, more polarized—and in many places, more dangerous,” said Jennie Glazer, CEO of Coqual. “But this moment isn’t just about setbacks. It’s also about opportunity. LGBTQ+ professionals are at the heart of every identity—across race, gender, class, religion, and nationality. If we build workplaces where they feel safe, valued, and seen, we build better workplaces for everyone. This report isn’t just about the LGBTQ+ experience—it’s a blueprint for inclusive leadership in a time of uncertainty. The data is clear, and the time to act is now.”

LGBTQ+ professionals don’t just seek safer places to live—they seek safer places to work. *Pride Under Pressure* reveals that anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination strongly influences where LGBTQ+ employees choose to live and work. Many migrate to countries and cities where they feel safe and are equally selective about the employers they choose. Across all five markets studied, LGBTQ+ professionals—from nearly one in five (18%) in Brazil to more than half (56%) in India—report that anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination has greatly impacted their choice of employer. These professionals seek organizations that prioritize their safety, well-being, and dignity—and they encourage their networks to do the same.

While most LGBTQ+ professionals report having role models who are openly LGBTQ+, a positive shift from Coqual’s 2016 research, the path to executive leadership remains fraught with challenges. Across markets, many LGBTQ+ professionals—from nearly 30% in Brazil to more than half in India—believe they must hide their sexual orientation to advance into executive roles. Openly LGBTQ+ executives remain rare. In 2016, there were no out leaders in the Fortune 500. Today, there are 25 out executives globally on Fortune’s inaugural LGBTQ+ Leaders list—including five women and two who are openly trans—leading companies with \$100 million or more in annual revenue. While progress is evident, a vast gap remains before the average LGBTQ+ employee can look up and see themselves represented in senior leadership.

Even in markets with strong DEIB frameworks, many LGBTQ+ professionals still feel unsafe being open about who they are. One in three LGBTQ+ professionals in the US are not out to anyone at work. In the UK, LGBTQ+ professionals disclose their identity to their managers (72%) at nearly double the rate they disclose to peers or select colleagues, underscoring the complexity of navigating authenticity in the workplace.

Seven Key Takeaways for Multinational Corporations Supporting LGBTQ+ Inclusion:

1. The global LGBTQ+ community is massive and multiplies when counting loved ones.
2. Anti-LGBTQ+ hate harms both employees and the bottom line.
3. Anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination shows up at work in daily assaults, insults, and indignities.
4. Workplaces still send the message that you must be straight to succeed—and out leaders are outliers.
5. Transgender and gender-diverse professionals deserve dedicated attention.

6. Intersectionality is integral to inclusion.
7. Rainbow branding outpaces real support.

To help multinational corporations move beyond symbolic gestures and implement strategic, sustainable interventions for LGBTQ+ inclusion, Coqual introduces the **Coqual Navigator** in this report. This diagnostic tool empowers DEIB practitioners to cut through complexity, gain clarity, and advance meaningful outcomes by focusing on four cardinal directions:

- **Case** – The “why” behind the work. Organizations can strengthen their Case by aligning inclusion efforts with mission, values, and business imperatives.
- **Capacity** – A company’s resources, infrastructure, and leadership readiness. Building Capacity at global, regional, and local levels requires internal and external collaboration.
- **Context** – Local laws and societal norms. Understanding Context ensures legal compliance, helps translate policies and programs on a global scale, and identifies human rights risks.
- **Culture** – The workplace environment and employee experience. Insights on Culture help organizations prioritize Capacity and craft policies that reach those who need them most.

Now is the time for DEIB leaders, practitioners, and allies to rise and meet this moment with courage and purpose. Armed with data and actionable solutions, the private sector has the power to transform lives and build a more inclusive future for millions of LGBTQ+ professionals worldwide.

Markets Studied: Brazil, India, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Methodology: Our web-based survey reached 2,582 respondents, who were at least 21 years old and currently employed full-time in professional occupations. In our sample, 51% identify as women and 47% identify as men, while 2% identify as nonbinary. Throughout this report, our primary comparison groups of “men” and “women” include both cis- and transgender men and women, respectively. Ninety-six percent of respondents are cisgender, and 4% are transgender and gender diverse (TGD). Where possible, we analyze the experiences of TGD respondents, but due to sample size, we are unable to do so in all countries. This group includes those who identify as transgender men or women, or nonbinary, and respondents whose sex assigned at birth differs from their current gender identity. In terms of LGBTQ+ status, 70% of our sample identify as cisgender and heterosexual, and 30% identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or another sexual orientation other than heterosexual (LGB+), or TGD, or both.

Research Advisor: Dominic Arnall, Chief Executive Officer, *Open for Business*.

About Coqual: Coqual is a leading global, nonprofit think tank dedicated to helping leaders design diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces where every person belongs. Founded in 2004, Coqual provides in-depth research, thought leadership, and data-driven, actionable solutions for companies to address bias and barriers to inclusion for underrepresented populations in the workplace. Coqual’s cutting-edge research and advisory services focus on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, veteran status and LGBTQ identities, etc.—as well as the intersections among these groups. For more information, visit www.coqual.org.

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