Questions 1 to 8e will be answered together.

1. **Conversion therapies in Germany**

In Germany, so-called “conversion therapies” are still being offered and conducted. By our definition, these are treatments that aim to change or suppress a person’s sexual orientation or their self-perceived gender identity.

Conversion therapies impair the sexual and gender development and self-determination of affected persons and endanger their health. They cannot be reconciled with medical ethics. This is why the Federal Government have taken a clear stance against conversion therapies, as have the German Medical Association, the relevant national and international scientific and psychotherapeutic organisations, and the *Bundesrat* (Upper House of Parliament, with representatives of the Länder).

The Federal Government is planning a law to protect persons against such therapies. Federal Ministry of Health is in the process of drafting a separate law to protect persons against such therapies. In April 2019, while preparing the Bill, the Federal Ministry of Health convened an expert committee of concerned parties and their organizations, as well as experts in the fields of medicine, psychology, social sciences and law and conducted a two-day symposium. The Federal Foundation Magnus-Hirschfeld supported the committee with their professional and scientific expertise. The results of this symposium, including a scientific review, were published on 30 August 2019, in the form of a final report.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The review revealed that no scientifically valid evidence exists for the alleged effect of such “therapies”. By contrast, scientific evidence does exist for the deleterious effects such practices have on those treated: depression, fears and increased risk of suicide, as well as stigmatisation and discrimination effects on third parties in the form of minority pressure. Vulnerable persons such as minors are particularly affected as they are still in the identity-finding phase, and persons of legal age whose consent to conversion therapy is based on a lack of volition, for example because consent resulted from coercion or deception.

Furthermore, the symposium concluded that, in order to protect these particularly vulnerable persons, both therapies against sexual orientation and against a person’s self-perceived gender identity should be prohibited and criminally sanctioned. In order to prevent further victims and protect other persons from feelings of stigmatisation and discrimination, the advertising of conversion therapies should also be prohibited and made punishable by a fine. In addition, the need for the education and counselling of affected persons was acknowledged.

The bill of law prepared by the Federal Ministry of Health based on these results provides for the following:

* prohibition of the conduct of conversion therapies on minors and on persons of legal age whose consent is based on a lack of volition,
* prohibition of the public advertising, offering and brokering of conversion therapies for the treatment of minors, even when not conducted publicly,
* counselling opportunities at a central counselling centre for affected persons and their relatives, as well as for persons who deal with the topic on a professional or private basis,
* application of penal provisions and provisions on administrative offences for violations of these prohibitions.
* The prohibitions apply to all persons. In the case of legal guardians or persons holding parental authority, criminal liability is limited under specific conditions.

Consultations on the Bill are currently still underway with the other ministries. Subsequently, it will be the subject of parliamentary deliberations that are expected to be concluded by May 2020.

1. Conversion therapies and German development cooperation

Human rights are a guiding principle of German development cooperation. This includes non-discrimination of sexual minorities. On these grounds, we consider so-called “conversion therapy” a human rights violation. Organizations and institutions that practice “conversion therapy” and other human rights violations cannot be partners of German development cooperation.

1. <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2019/2-quartal/kommission-verbot-konversionstherapien.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)