

## RETE MEDUS3 REPORT 2024

*(English Summary on Lesbophobia in Italy)*

Rete Medus3 is a **grassroots network of lesbian, bisexual, trans and feminist activists** that has been documenting and fighting lesbophobia in Italy since 2020. Born out of anger and solidarity after the lesbophobic murder of Elisa Pomarelli in 2019, the network brings together individuals and collectives united by a shared goal: **to make visible the specific violence faced by lesbian people and to dismantle the structures that uphold it.**

Between May 2023 and December 2024, Rete Medus3 collected 41 anonymous testimonies through an open questionnaire and tracked 12 cases of lesbophobia reported in the media. These numbers reveal a troubling truth: while lesbophobic violence is widespread, it is still rarely acknowledged publicly, and even less so institutionally.

The data shows that **80% of people surveyed have experienced lesbophobic violence.** Of these, **26% experienced it more than 10 times.** For many, the violence began early - **33% reported incidents occurring when they were minors.** The home, where people should feel safest, was the most frequently mentioned place of violence, often involving family members. Public spaces also emerged as dangerous, especially for couples: **43% of violent episodes involving couples occurred in the street or other public places.**

Invisibilization remains the most common and insidious form of violence. It often comes hand-in-hand **with psychological abuse**, particularly within families. **Verbal harassment, online hate, bullying at school and discriminatory media representations** compound the harm. And yet, **fewer than 10% of respondents filed a formal report with authorities.** Those who did often faced negligence or secondary victimization.

The media continues to misrepresent or ignore these stories. Articles, when they appear, often sensationalize or reduce incidents to “homophobia,” erasing the specificity of lesbophobic violence. They seldom name the problem for what it is: a targeted attack on women and people perceived as women who defy the heteropatriarchal norm.

In 2024, institutional lesbophobia deepened. **Legal setbacks for lesbian parenthood included efforts to invalidate birth certificates listing two mothers.** Italy dropped in ILGA-Europe’s Rainbow Map rankings, reflecting the worsening political climate. Yet resistance has grown in parallel. The upcoming EL\*C European Lesbian\* Conference in Rome and Italy’s first Dyke March are signs of renewed collective momentum.

**Rete Medus3 calls for urgent action:** inclusive hate crime legislation, widespread education on gender and sexual diversity, support services for survivors, and the amplification of lesbian voices. Visibility is not just a political act - it is a matter of safety, dignity, and survival.

**We exist. We resist. And we will continue to name the violence, create community, and fight for liberation.**