

Comparative analysis on violence against LGBTI+ children

Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal
Slovenia and Spain



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Authors

Ana Cristina Santos, Mafalda Esteves and Alexandra Santos, Centre for Social Studies - University of Coimbra, Portugal

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Introduction - Research Design and Sample

Diversity and Childhood (DaC): Changing social attitudes towards gender diversity in children across Europe gathered 9 countries, Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain to combat violence based on gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation suffered by children and youth who do not conform to gender roles and gender norms. To do so, each country has conducted interviews with stakeholders in the areas of Education, Health, Family Services, Public Space and Media, a nationwide online survey and workshops with children.

Interviews with stakeholders

As a consortium, all partners agreed on the main characteristics of the participants in the study. It was decided there should be an even number of interviews per DaC area, and interview scripts were built having in mind stakeholders in the different DaC areas: Education, Health, Family Services, Public Space and Media. Across the consortium the main concerns regarding the profile of prospective interviewees were job relevance and work experience with LGBTI+ children and youth, knowledge about the subject, people who had participated in good practices regarding LGBTI+ youth, people who could represent a wide scope of experiences and perspectives to further the project. Many of the participants were also part of LGBTI+ NGOs and/or were themselves LGBTI+.

The recruitment strategies included contact through personal and professional networks, sending letters of invitation, using a process of referencing from other stakeholders and relevant contacts in the field.

In total 116 interviews were conducted. The average age of participants was 42 years old. Most participants identified as cisgender, making it noticeable it is still cisgender people who are perceived as experts, work with and are the stakeholders on transgender, gender non-conforming children and youth issues. The majority of participants identified as women.

Interviews gathered participants from all DaC areas in an even number making it possible to include perspectives from all of the fields of the study. Also it was very important to include activists and people working in LGBTI+ NGOs.



Online Survey and Sample

The Online Survey for Diversity and Childhood was designed by the DaC research team at CES-UC, led by Dr Ana Cristina Santos and Ms Mafalda Esteves, and with the support of Mr. Pedro Abreu from the IT Support Office at CES-UC. After being shared and commented by all partners in the consortium, the survey was translated to all relevant languages, adapted to national contexts and applied via the online statistical software LimeSurvey, between January and March 2020. This period was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which influenced the ability of effectively disseminating the call and ensuring wider participation.

The online survey had a total of 24 questions most of which with follow-up questions. Participants could choose which questions to answer/ not to answer, which enabled a broader participation, whilst at the same time impacting on the number of complete questionnaires.

The recruitment strategies included reaching out to personal networks, to stakeholders who participated in the interviews so they could disseminate the online survey to their networks. Sending information to specific partner institutions and LGBTI+ organizations. Most countries also used social media and their institutional dissemination channels including professional groups via social media to further the outreach of the survey. LimeSurvey provided participants confidentiality and anonymity giving people confidence to answer as honestly as they could. Feedback also showed this was a long survey and many participants didn't feel qualified to answer some of the questions.

The aim was to gather around 50 surveys for Portugal, Belgium, Slovenia, Lithuania, Hungary, Croatia and Greece, and 100 for Spain and Poland. In total 634 online surveys were collected in all countries. (Portugal - 69, Spain - 104, Greece - 59, Poland - 121, Croatia - 43, Slovenia - 72, Hungary - 78, Lithuania - 50, Belgium - 38). For the most part, demographic information was not collected presumably because this was the last section of the survey. The majority of participants were working in the areas of Education and Public Spaces, in particular from LGBTI+ NGOs, and also family intervention institutions. The area with least participants was Media. The main institutions involved as employers of respondents were Schools, LGBTI+ organizations and Hospitals.

The sample included a majority of people who identified as cisgender and female. On average, less than 20 per cent of respondents identified as male and less than 5 per cent identified as transgender or non-binary. Regarding sexual orientation, more than half of the people responding to the survey identified as heterosexual.



Workshop with children

Due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic COVID-19, some of the partners in the consortium could not conduct the Workshop before producing the National Report. That was the case with Croatia and Poland. Also due to their national laws, Hungary and Lithuania were exempt from the Workshop. The workshop had a duration of 3.5 - 4 hours and was designed to include 15 participants from age 6 to 9, 10 to 14 and 14 to 18. The main goal was to gather the understanding of children in matters of gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation bringing the children to the centre of the discussion as stakeholders. Through tools based on non-formal education and Theatre of the Oppressed, participants had the opportunity to discuss issues of bullying, violence and discrimination against LGBTI+ youth and position themselves around these subjects.

All safeguarding and Child Protection Policy was put in place prior to the workshop as well as all consent forms were sent and signed by parents and legal tutors for all participants.

1. Legal and political context regarding LGBTI+ rights

2.1 Historical evolution and/or backlash regarding the formal recognition of LGBTI+ rights

The current situation of LGBTI+ rights in Europe is highly complex, reflecting the internal diversity of the history of progress and backlash that each country has experienced at different times.

There is a sharp contrast between countries which have formal recognition and protection, and those which struggle with the lack of a legal framework that could be used in case of discrimination and other forms of violence. Over two decades Europe witnessed a significant change that included, in several countries, the possibility of same-sex marriage and same-sex parenthood for the first time in history.

The role of social movements and progressive political parties in Government made the difference in enacting social and legal change, even in contexts in which decades of fascist regimes and the role of the Catholic Church had traditionally blocked the advancement of LGBTI+ rights. That is certainly the case with Portugal (Santos, 2013) and Spain (Trujillo, 2009). Other countries struggle with strikingly different powerful actors that ranged from former communist regimes to the most recent anti-gender



backlash. That is the case with Croatia, Lithuania and Slovenia. Others seem to be particularly hit by the rise of far-right movements that identify gender equality as one of their main targets, shutting Gender Studies departments and banning any political measure aimed at advancing gender and sexual diversity. This affects many countries included in our research project, with a particular focus on Hungary and Poland.

Drawing on the context-based knowledge DaC produced in each of the countries involved in the study, Belgium, Portugal and Spain stand out as having a broader and inclusive legal framework. Importantly, however, this acknowledgement does not come without a disclaimer – legal recognition does not always translate into effective social measures that would prevent and combat discrimination. For instance, in all of DaC countries there is a deficit in training and education for diversity involving professionals of all of the 5 key areas – education, health, families, media and public spaces. Our data also indicates that the levels of LGBTIphobic violence and mental health issues stemming from prejudice remain high across Europe, even in countries with recognized protocols to tackle discrimination. In addition, not only discrimination occurs in all areas addressed, but there are still areas that require urgent improvement from the legal point of view. Belgium, for instance, does not provide any protection to surrogates, and Portugal, in addition to failing trans and other gender-diverse children and youth, does not have an anti-discrimination law¹. Acknowledging the existence of problematic issues and deficits in countries which rank high regarding the formal recognition of LGBTI+ rights is important to undo the homonationalist narrative and prompt decision-makers to enact effective anti-discrimination measures grounded in formal and informal education. Furthermore, decriminalizing homosexuality early on does not always translate into legal and social changes that would be consistent with decriminalization – to give one example, even if Poland and Hungary decriminalized homosexuality much earlier than many of its DaC counterparts (1932 and 1951, respectively), the speed or extent of LGBTI+ recognition in these countries demonstrate that there are no linear outcomes from one single legal breakthrough. Therefore, to reiterate, legal change aiming at recognizing LGBTI+ rights is the starting point, the most basic common ground on which we stand, but it will never be enough without a sustained and equivalent work aimed at social and cultural change.

¹ 1 The 2018 Gender Self-Determination law (Revision of the 2011 Gender Identity Law) was intended to include youth from 16 years of age in depathologizing the process with no need for medical reports; where schools had to treat trans students by their social name and give access to safe toilets; surgeries to intersex new-borns were to be banned, unless life-saving but this proposition was vetted by the Republic President which only allowed this to be the case in relation to 18 year olds and also not without a medical report: <https://www.publico.pt/2018/05/09/politica/noticia/marcelo-vetou-mudanca-de-identidade-de-genero-aos-16-anos-1829477>.



Understandably, countries where the legal and political context has historically remained hostile to LGBTI+ rights offer a broader range of concern today, especially in relation to violence, safety and well-being. In these contexts, both children and professionals feel discouraged and unsupported, in sharp contrast with other contexts where the state endorses local-based initiatives to be implemented in schools, health centres or public spaces.

The role of both social movements and the EU has been significant. Social movements mobilize support and trigger visibility, which in turn canvas for further mobilization, actively contributing to the creation of a LGBTI+ agenda. In the past decade equality marches and LGBTI+ prides have been celebrated in all countries, even when there have been subject to attack and backlash. In many countries, activists have been at the forefront of lobbying and consultation processes with decision-makers, especially local and national MPs. They have also filled significant gaps regarding the provision of training and social awareness in schools and other settings, organizing both face-to-face and online workshops, gathering statistical and qualitative data and operating as care providers in the absence of an efficient and inclusive welfare state – this aspect was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EU has established minimal standards for accession, which in the country-based history of LGBTI+ rights and politics has had an impact. Some of the countries had to change their discriminatory legal provisions in order to meet these criteria and thus be considered as suitable candidates for the EU membership – that was the case with Lithuania which, nevertheless, remains one of the very few European countries with no existing recognition of any form of LGBTI+ partnering. On a more symbolic level, being part of the EU also expands the equal-by-comparison effect (adding pressure to rank better) and offers a platform for local demands for more inclusion and diversity. Finally, in some contexts the European Court of Human Rights has played a significant part in furthering the respect for LGBTI+ rights.

Across Europe, the two areas in which formal recognition arrives at a later stage, if ever, are same-sex parenthood (still absent in Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland, and with restrictions in Greece allowing it only if the couple is in a same-sex civil partnership and in Slovenia only if the couple is formed by two women) and gender diversity, including intersex rights (still absent in Lithuania, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland and Hungary which passed a bill that prohibits gender recognition of trans people in 2020. In Greece law does not include intersex rights). More specifically, there are very few countries where the rights of LGBTI+ children and youth have been addressed and formally recognized, and even when they are, it corresponds to a very recent and controversial change. That is the case with Portugal, Spain and Belgium.



The most pressing concern regarding LGBTI+ rights in Europe today is backlash stemming from the advancement of the far-right populism and the expansion of ultra-conservative anti-gender agendas. This fact in parallel with the fragility of LGBTI+ children’s rights across the EU created a major reason for alarm and must become a priority for intervention at the supra-national level. As recently pointed out by the European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen who, in her first ‘State of the Union’ speech, said Poland’s “LGBT free zones” are “humanity-free zones” that have no place in the European Union:

“Being yourself is not your ideology,” Von der Leyen told applauding MEPs in the European parliament in Brussels. “It’s your identity,” she said. “So I want to be crystal clear – LGBTQI-free zones are humanity free zones. And they have no place in our union.”²

It is time to put children’s best interest at the centre of the human rights and equality agendas – all children, including LGBTI+ children and youth rights.

2.2. Timeline of LGBTI+ rights in DaC countries

LGBTI+ rights are being/have been adopted in different periods in the different countries of the Diversity and Childhood consortium and are also at different stages. It is relevant to understand that regional factors contribute to these differences since each country is very different politically and socially. The timeline of major LGBTI+ rights in DaC countries will reflect this.

Decriminalization of homosexuality

Although the decriminalization of homosexuality happened as early as 1795 in Belgium, and until 1993 it was still criminalized in Lithuania.

| BG | PL | GR | HG | CRO | SL | SP | PT | LT |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1795 | 1932 | 1951 | 1961 | 1977 | 1977 | 1978 | 1982 | 1993 |

Criminalization of LGBTI+Phobia

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/16/ursula-von-der-leyen-says-polands-lgbt-free-zones-have-no-place-in-eu>



Most countries have adopted legislation against discrimination in different areas such as labour, education and public space through hate speech legislation regarding mostly sexual orientation, but few have legislation that include gender identity and expression and also protection of sexual characteristics.

The case of Poland in 1997, Hungary in 2003, Lithuania in 2005 and Croatia in 2008, show how countries legislate against discrimination in general and not specifically. Spain and Belgium in 2003, Portugal in 2004, 2005 in Greece, 2009 in Slovenia and Lithuania have adjusted their legal framework in relation to sexual orientation discrimination.

When it comes to discrimination based on gender identity only, Portugal since 2011, Belgium since 2014, Slovenia in 2016, have formally addressed it. For Greece it was included in 2017 and then revoked by the State in 2019. Also, in 2020 Hungary passed legislation that prohibits the legal gender recognition of transgender people while in Belgium the criterion "sex characteristics" was included into the anti-discrimination laws.

Consent legislation

In many countries, legislation on consent has historically included different ages for heterosexuals and homosexual people. Therefore, equal ages of consent is much recent in some of the DaC countries.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| PL | SL | BG | CRO | HG | LT | PT | SP | GR |
| 1932 | 1977 | 1985 | 1998 | 2002 | 2004 | 2007 | 2009 | 2015 |

Same-sex Marriage

Legislation around same-sex marriage is still controversial in several DaC Countries where, in the case of Poland, Hungary and Lithuania, same-sex couples do not have access to any regulation on same-sex unions. In Croatia, in 2013, there was a Constitutional ban of same-sex marriage.

Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Croatia have access to same-sex marriage although with very different regulations on parenting, adoption and reproductive rights



| | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| BG | SP | PT | CRO |
| 2003 | 2005 | 2010 | 2014 |

Civil Partnership

In the last 5 years, Greece and Slovenia granted recognition of civil partnership.

| | |
|------|------|
| GR | SLO |
| 2015 | 2017 |

Homoparenting, adoption, and procreation rights

In most DaC countries LGBTI+ families have no to little rights when it comes to having children and having their families recognized. In Lithuania, and Poland there is no legislation. In Hungary, it is still a taboo and only since 2005 reproduction procedures have been extended to single women, which since then may be used by women in relationships with women. Also, in Slovenia single people can adopt. Therefore, many LGBTI+ people may access their right of parenting not disclaiming or omitting their same sex relationships. In Croatia, recognition of partner-guardianship with equal rights and obligations of the second parent adoption does exist for people in same sex relationships.

Adoption and co-parenting

| | | |
|------|------|------|
| SP | BL | PT |
| 2005 | 2006 | 2016 |

Fostering and co-parenting

| | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|-----|
| SP | BL | PT | GR | SLO |
|----|----|----|----|-----|



| | | | | |
|---------------------|------|------|--|--|
| 2005 - co parenting | 2015 | 2016 | since 2018 while in same sex civil partnership | 2019 registration rights only for moms |
|---------------------|------|------|--|--|

IVF for CIS women

| | |
|-----------|------|
| SP and BL | PT |
| 2006 | 2016 |

Gender recognition laws

Gender recognition laws are the latest to be available and are only available in a few countries. That is the case with Belgium with a first law dating from 2006, a more inclusive law in 2018, and the inclusion of protection of “sex characteristics” in 2020. In Portugal a first law dates from 2011 until a more progressive law including protection of sex characteristics replaced the previous one in 2018. In Greece in 2017 legislation was passed to recognize trans people and in Spain in 2019 the Constitutional Court added the children’s best interest to the 2007 law which allowed for the modification of the gender marker in the Civil Registry requiring a 2 year hormone treatment and a gender dysphoria certificate.

In some cases, there is no explicit legislation on this matter. That is the case for Slovenia, Poland, Croatia and Lithuania. In Hungary, in 2020, the Parliament passed a bill that explicitly prohibits legal gender recognition of transgender people.

Despite existing differences in access to rights and legislation for LGBTI+ youth and people, all countries participating in this study have Pride or Equality Parades and Marches which shows a general stand from the public and the relevance of LGBTI+ activism in all countries even where law is contrary to gender and sexual diversity.

Across Europe it is also important to note the general absence or dismissal of specific norms, legislation and other forms of protection of LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children and youth, as well as in relation to the protection of sex characteristics and intersex people.



2.3. Relevant statistical data about LGBTI+ situation in Europe

One way or another, all of DaC countries raise concerns regarding gender non-conforming children and rainbow families. Several studies undertaken in Europe report the situation regarding equality and social discrimination over the past few years.

According to ILGA Europe's report in 2019, there is a sharp rise of hate speech across the region, often carried out by public figures. One of the contexts which received significant media attention was Poland, where anti-LGBTI rhetoric by the governing Law and Justice (PiS) Party resulted in more than 80 municipal or local governments proclaiming themselves to be "free from LGBTI ideology" – which became known and LGBT-free zones. However, while much of the public and political attention was focused on Poland, ILGA Europe's review identifies growing official hate speech from political and religious leaders in countries such as Greece, Hungary, Portugal and Spain, amongst others. In the majority of these countries, anti-LGBTI rhetoric was propagated with impunity.

In many countries across the region, and not only those with a documented growth in official bias-motivated speech, there has been an equally sharp increase in online hate-speech and physical attacks on LGBTI+ people, many of the latter premeditated and brutal. This is a pan-European phenomenon. Brexit, for instance, and the populist narrative surrounding it, can be linked to an increase in anti-LGBTI hate crimes and incidents in England and Wales. Other developments such as the banning of events Poland (amongst other countries) and the prosecution of participants in Pride events, add to an atmosphere lacking in a sense of safety.

In the Polish city of Lublin, a couple was arrested for bringing an explosive device to the Pride march. Some cities and towns in countries including DAC countries like Hungary have attempted to crackdown on anti-Pride demonstrations, but they are in the minority.

The opinion about whether discrimination is widespread depends on who is being asked about, as the following data demonstrates³. For example, more than half of European respondents say that discrimination on basis of sexual orientation is widespread (53%), almost half (48%) report it in relation to being transgender or in relation to being intersex (39%). Overall, the proportion of respondents who think discrimination is widespread has generally declined since 2015, and particularly on the basis of being transgender (-8 percentage points) or grounds on sexual orientation (-5pt), but there are wide

³ Retrieved from European Union. (2019). Special Eurobarometer 493. Report on Discrimination in the European Union. European Union Publisher. doi:10.2838/5155 .



variations in the opinions amongst DaC countries. Statistics also highlight that only a small proportion of European respondents consider themselves as part of groups at risk of discrimination however almost half of European respondents report having friends/acquaintances who are gay, lesbian or bisexual and, in a lower proportion, transgender or intersex persons friends/acquaintances. Data shows a substantial variation between DaC countries with proportions ranging from 13% in Lithuania to 68% in Spain in the cases linked with LGLB friends/ acquaintances cases, 5% in Croatia to 21% in Spain for friends or acquaintances who are transgender and finally, friends or acquaintances who are intersex, ranges varies between 2% in Lithuania and 13% in Spain.

Concerning attitudes towards certain groups, Spain respondents, for example, are consistently most likely to feel comfortable with someone from a group of risk of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender than those in Hungary or Lithuania which are amongst the least likely to feel comfortable.

Regarding perceptions of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in 2019, it was reported as experienced by a large number of respondents. The vast majority of European respondents think discrimination against gay, lesbian and bisexual is widespread despite a wide variation between: on one side we have Portugal (73%) and Greece (70%), and on the other side countries like Hungary (46%) or Croatia (47%).

The beliefs in widespread discrimination against transgender persons is highest amongst respondents of Portugal (59%) and Spain (58%) and lower in Hungary (34%), Lithuania (36%) where respondents seem to disregard gender-based discrimination towards transgender. Statistics also shows that European respondents would be comfortable with a transgender person in the highest political office (53%), although the variation across countries is huge and with more than a half respondents (61%) in countries like Belgium saying they would feel comfortable with this when compared to Lithuania (21%) or Hungary (27%). Besides that, more than half of the European respondents say they would feel comfortable having intersex persons as a colleague or in the highest political office (54%) with only 14% of total respondents saying they would not feel comfortable. However, once again, countries variation is considerable: 79% in Spain would feel comfortable with this situation in contrast with 33% in Hungary.

When the focus is on showing affection in public, although European respondents support it more now than in 2015, there is a substantial variation between countries. Respondents are now more likely to be comfortable with public affection (kissing or holding hands) between two women (+12 pp) or between two men (+11 pp).



The majority of respondents of DaC countries seems to be comfortable with the idea of having a gay, lesbian or bisexual person in the highest elected political position in their country or even working with a LGB colleague. Highest proportions found in Spain (86%) and Belgium (71%) and lowest in Lithuania (44%) or Hungary (41%). Croatia and Hungary are amongst the countries who report higher levels of disagreement (51% and 48% respectively).

Half of European respondents who work think that enough is being done in their workplace to promote diversity in relation to sexual orientation. For example, Belgium is amongst those countries with the highest score and Lithuania the lowest. When asked about if enough is being done to promote diversity in terms of sexual orientation in the workplace, Portugal (35%) and Hungary (31%) agree more that what is being done is not enough. Belgium (16%), Lithuania (19%) and Slovenia (19%) agree less with that idea. In relation with diversity promotion in the workplaces concerning to transgender persons, only 6% of respondents in Portugal agree that enough has been done, whilst for Slovenia 21% agree enough has been done for transgender inclusion in the workplace.

More than three quarters of European respondents (76%) agree that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people - which represents an increase of 5 points since 2015-, although differences can be found between DaC countries: Belgium (84%), Greece (64%), Spain (91%), Croatia (44%), Lithuania (53%), Hungary (43%), Poland (49%), Portugal (78%), Slovenia (64%). Compared to 2015, Slovenia respondents reflect the largest increase (+20pp). Croatia reported highest levels (46%) of disagreement in terms of equality rights. The majority of European respondents agree that transgender persons should be able to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity, although it varies from 83% in Spain to 16% in Hungary or 39% in Lithuania and Croatia.

Findings of FRA surveys, the Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU, and national studies based on discrimination testing published in 2019 confirm that discrimination and inequalities on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is still a reality.

A sociodemographic analysis on Eurobarometer survey (2019) suggests that respondents who are more likely to say that discrimination based on sexual orientation is widespread and that they would feel comfortable with a LGBTI person as a colleague or occupying a high political position in the country, are mainly women, aged between 15 and 24 years, who have completed high education, who live in urban contexts and who are left on the political spectrum. In addition, they are also those who most believe that LGBTI people should have the same rights as heterosexuals.



Studies provide us a complex picture that allow us to confirm that discrimination and inequalities on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity still exists. When looking at these numbers it is important to add that nearly 1/4 of European respondents agrees with the idea that gay, lesbian or bisexual people should not have the same rights as heterosexual people. Particularly with the following values referring to total disagreement with the idea that LGBTI should have the same rights: Belgium (15%), Greece (32%), Spain (6%), Lithuania (40%), Croatia (51%) Hungary (46%), Poland (45%), Portugal (16%) and Slovenia (33%). In addition, nearly 30% of European respondents agree that a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex is wrong, believe that same-sex marriage should not be allowed and last but no least also believe that transgender persons should not be able to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity. Results differ amongst different countries in terms of LGBTI+ issues and equality: Spain 91%, Belgium 84%, Portugal 78%, Greece 54%; Slovenia 64%; Lithuania 53%; Poland 49%; Hungary 48%; Croatia 44%.

Violence and crime due to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression is still part of the daily lives of many people (adults and children) and inequalities remains a reality in everyday life throughout the EU. Data also shows that LGBTI people are more likely to say that they have been more discriminated against or harassed in the last 12 months than heterosexual population (FRA, 2019) (numbers increased for those who consider themselves part of a minority group (17%) compared with those who do not identify as a minority (83%) with 58% of respondents that consider themselves part of a sexual minority (lesbian, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex)).

Also, 21% of survey respondents felt discriminated against at work in the previous year because of being LGBTI, and 23% felt discriminated against in other areas of life like public space or when looking for a job (13%). These rates are highest for trans (59%) and intersex (55%) respondents. When discriminated against, respondents say they would prefer to report to the police (35%), a friend or a family member (20%), or to an equality body (12%). Also important is that European respondents consider that school lessons and material should include information diversity regarding sexual orientation (71%), being transgender (65%) and being intersex (65%).

Meanwhile, in the year before the FRA survey (2019), 38% of LGBTI respondents experienced harassment. Values are higher for transgender (48%) and intersex people (42%) and higher for respondents aged 15-17 (47%). In the EU, 45% of young respondents aged between 15-17 years old, felt discriminated against at school.

It is worth noting that results show significant differences between Member States. On the other hand, several studies show that people who experience discrimination, seldom report it to any authority,



(FRA 2019; 2015) although that, all EU Member States have equality bodies and several directives on gender equality mandate. Only a minority thinks the efforts their country makes in fighting discrimination is effective. Just over one quarter (26%) thinks efforts are effective, which is very similar to the results obtained in 2015. These data should concern us. One of the core tasks of these equality bodies is to provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints. FRA (2019) encourages EU Member States to continue adopting and implementing specific measures to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons can fully enjoy their fundamental rights under EU and national law.

When asked why they did not report discrimination, victims most frequent answer is that they think nothing would change if they reported it. Some challenges in terms of effectiveness, independence and adequacy of human, financial and technical resources of equality bodies seem to be a reality. It is important to say that only a small proportion of European respondents have taken personal action to tackle discrimination and only 7% joined an association or campaign that defends people against discrimination.

Information on children and young people is collected in most countries by LGBTI+ organisations and especially within schools and public spaces. Other countries focus on transgender issues and the views of general societies on LGBTI+ issues.

In Portugal, *rede exaequo* association, showed that 25% of the young people surveyed had never spoken of LGBTI+ problems at school and more than half of the teachers interviewed had witnessed bullying and violence at school. A report on school discrimination (2017) has been released indicating that many pupils have suffered verbal abuse and other forms of violence. In Spain's government published a report on hate crimes that shows under 18 year olds in 2018 were 6.7% of the victims of hate crime and in this age group 31.4%, higher than racism and xenophobia and identified that the main causes of victimization are sexual orientation and gender identity. Greece has looked into *Color Youth's 2017 Education* report that led to the creation of a helpline. Since their 2015 report showed a high number of victims of crimes due to gender identity or expression and sexual orientation (46,53 %). Another project, called Paradiso Project, gathered information on health care access and showed more than 40% of these professionals had no to little knowledge of LGBTI+ issues. More alarming is that almost half did not think their colleagues could provide health care to LGBTI+ people including 6% who believed these patients should be hospitalized in different wards. From Poland a survey⁴ revealed 63% of respondents experienced prejudice-motivated verbal aggression, 33% received threats, 27% were

⁴ The Campaign Against Homophobia surveyed LGBT+ people for 2 years.



victims of vandalism and 13% experienced physical violence. In 2015 the association *Love Does Not Exclude* showed 43% of the respondents did not come out at work and 23% to their neighbours. The *Center of Prejudice Research* show 68% of participants who are from the LGBTI community have said in 2019 prejudice against LGBTI+ people has risen in Poland. In Croatia *Zagreb Pride* conducted in 2019 a survey that shows 64% of participants have suffered some form of violence and almost the same number suffered discrimination based on SOGEGI⁵ therefore that same number of people adjust their behaviour in public. Also in a national wide research from 2016, 57% of respondents said they did not support Pride Marches. Slovenia has researched mainly trans experiences. In 2015, the organizations *TransAkcija* and *Legebitra* and in 2019 the organization *Koletnik* showed 41% of 113 transgender respondents reported discrimination and violence on the basis of their gender identity. From Hungary, the *LGBT Alliance - Medián Polling Agency*, in 2019 reported 78% of the general society had not heard of the term LGBT, 36% said homosexuality is a sickness and only 29% support same sex marriage. Still more than half of the people interviewed say the topic of homosexuality should be thought in schools. The Hungarian LGBTI+ organization *Hátter society* shows in their National School Climate Survey from 2017, 82% of participants have been verbally harassed and 66% had never reported such incidents. In Belgium, the Flemish LGBT+ school climate survey from 2017 showed 41% of LGBT students felt unsafe at school due to their sexual orientation. One in four avoid toilets and dressing rooms and one in five missed at least one day of school for feeling unsafe. Lithuania presents data from the LGBT organization *LGL* which in 2017 reached 580 respondents ages between 14 and 18 in schools where 82% reported being bullied for being LGBTI and 90% reported feeling unsafe. Equally important, 50% of teachers according to the participants did not respond appropriately or did not respond at all to homophobic bullying.

To sum up, despite having some of the most extensive anti-discrimination legislation in the World the EU remains having a cis-heteronormative matrix and, its implementation depends of each country and their efficacy in guarantee its implementation.

⁵ Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression



2. DaC Areas of Intervention: schools, health, family, public spaces and media⁶

2.1. Education

2.1.1. Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the sphere of education

- **Recognition and safety:** gender and sexually diverse children and youth (LGBTI+ children) need to feel acknowledged, respected and safe in the school environment. As such, school staff must be gender sensitive and actively embrace diversity.
- **Representation and role-models:** LGBTI+ children also need to see themselves represented in text books and teaching curricula, and to have access to positive role models, including LGBTI+ teachers and other school staff. They need to know they can trust their teachers and head of school to be their allies, in case they need support to come out or to denounce any form of abuse they may be facing (or fearing).
- **Self-acceptance and support:** self-acceptance emerged as an important issue to ensure emotional well-being, improve mental health and overcome fear and isolation. Self-acceptance is directly dependent on feeling acknowledged, respected and safe in the school environment. Another important aspect in this regard is family support and combating social stigma.

Gender identity and gender expression: our data suggests gender diverse or gender creative students have specific needs, starting from the use of their right pronouns and name, and should therefore be at the centre of specific measures for inclusion and protection.

⁶ Conceptual note: throughout this section we are using the acronym LGBTI+ children to refer to the target population of the DaC project – gender and sexually diverse children and youth.



2.1.2. Good practices related to education to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children

- Mainstreaming gender and sexual diversity in textbooks and classes.
- Introducing small-scale changes in the school that trigger significant impact, such as running a LGBTI+ extra curriculum classes, having a LGBTI+ shelf in the school library, creating gender neutral toilets, implementing an Anti-Discrimination Contact Point / Unit in each school.
- Producing and distributing handbooks for professionals in the sphere of Education.
- Running social awareness campaigns such as the School Diversity Week in Hungary, Rainbow Fridays in Poland, Oasis Summer Camps in Spain or the Observatory of Education in Portugal. The support of celebrities and dissemination through social media is significantly important for the success of these initiatives.
- Encouraging more diversity of staff (not necessarily gender and sexual diversity only).
- Using inclusive and gender-sensitive language, including the adequate use of pronouns (e.g. when presenting themselves teachers would be encouraged to say which pronoun they prefer students to use to address them) and avoiding the universal masculine form.

2.1.3. Training needs for education professionals

Most respondents in our European Survey who worked in the Education sector revealed they did not have access to resources or specific policies for LGBTI + children in their institution aiming at guaranteeing a comprehensive and adequate intervention. Training in LGBTI+ issues emerges as a major need for Education staff. In general, the topics in which education professionals would benefit from training can be summarized as follows:

- Gender and sexual diversity regarding children and youth, as well as on gender-based violence;
- Sex education;
- Human rights education;



- Anti-discrimination education that includes LGBTI+ topics;
- Impact of LGBTI+phobia and ways of preventing it;
- Informed knowledge about social and psychological mechanisms regarding vulnerable minorities, such as stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and minority stress;
- Understanding LGBTI+ issues in general and LGBTI+ youth in particular (including the process and obstacles that come with discovering one's own non-heterosexual orientation or non-conforming to traditional gender definition);
- The skill of talking openly and in a straightforward manner with children;
- Learning about basic concepts and using non-offensive, inclusive language.

The formal training of future teachers should also be updated to include LGBTI+ issues as a mandatory element of their education as soon-to-be professionals.

Professionals also expressed the need to have more access to publications and other teaching and training materials addressing these topics.

2.1.4. SWOT re: Education in Europe

Strengths

- Gay and Straight Alliances.
- Proactive involvement of school psychologists and gender-sensitive teachers.
- In some countries, the formal involvement of the state, especially the Ministry of Education, and the school against discrimination.
- In some countries, the formal inclusion of LGBTI+ issues in the school curricula as a mandatory content/ discipline.
- Existing available scientific data and materials to support teachers and students.



Weaknesses

- Lack of adequate training for school staff regarding LGBTI+ issues and gender-based violence.
- Absence of consistent policies and a common binding legal framework that would support and/or protect LGBTI+ children throughout Europe.
- Some countries still ignore or ban LGBTI+ issues from the school curricula (Croatia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, etc.).
- Absence of consistent anti-bullying protocols throughout Europe, including monitoring and follow-up assessments.
- Most students do not report school-based incidents of abuse and assault because they believe they would be either mocked or ignored.

Opportunities

- To reform school curricula to include a gender-based perspective that recognizes and celebrates gender and sexual diversity.
- To mainstream gender and sexual diversity.
- More general social awareness of LGBTI+ issues, including greater support from school staff to include LGBTI+ related issues in the school curricula (e.g. in Greece 72.9% of respondents of the 1st European Survey Diversity and Childhood agreed that gender and sexual diversity should be addressed in schools).
- School collaborations with NGOs providing robust support, including material, information and session.

Threats



- Meagre funding of public schools, precariousness of the school staff and obsolete educational systems (with the educational sector being seriously underfunded in many countries, it becomes difficult to motivate school staff and actively involve the school administration).
- Current political climate, including the anti-gender backlash, populist attacks from the rising far-right and the interference of unsupportive families.
- Social stigma, increased homophobic and transphobic violence (including bullying) and related mental health issues.
- Lack of internal procedures to tackle gender and sexuality-based discrimination in the school environment.
- Regional differences (e.g. urban vs. rural settings).
- The resilience of the unquestioned dominant culture leading to the reproduction of traditional patriarchal and cis-heteronormative norms and values amongst teachers

2.1.5. Exemplary quotes

You can't expect every teacher to be the expert on every topic. But you can try and make sure there is one expert on every topic in every school. Like a first aid expert who can tend to wounds, you could have a gender expert who can tend to gender creativity. (BE, Middle school teacher).

The power of Gay Straight Alliances is that it's not just about gender atypical children. It's about getting everyone involved and creating a connecting narrative. (BE, University researcher).

You should never tell your child they shouldn't wear an outfit because 'people' will look at them, laugh at them. Instead open the conversation. Tell them 'most people won't care, some will find it fantastic, but others may find it strange'. Ask the child if they thought about how they would react if someone said something mean. At that point you are training your child in resilience and presenting them an inherently different world view. (BE, Middle school teacher).

The fact that in Greece a homosexual teacher doesn't show up with his/her partner in a school celebration is a significant issue that exists and we must combat it, if we want to help and support



LGBTI+ community to feel more comfortable to talk about their orientation. We talk about the opening to diversity but, in real life, due to society in Greece, we cannot represent this opening easily. (GR, teacher)

I was worried because of his peers, but no one hurt him, none of his classmates. Whatever harm was done, it came from a teacher, or from the education authorities, the church. (HG, a parent)

I think maybe we just need more information so that teachers or anyone else in the field would realise that being an LGBTI+ person is not a disease, that it's not something abnormal. So that children can feel more comfortable with it. (LI, school staff member).

On paper, there can be zero tolerance policy for any kind of violence, but can it be put in practice? And if a couple of people try and act on it, then it will positively affect 500 children as well (SL, Counsellor (psychologist) in an elementary school).

LGBT+ youth just need an adult person who is willing to see and acknowledge them. That's all. (SL, Teacher in a secondary school).

We would be at the point of what I would call "liberal homophobia". We are at a point where it seems that nothing is happening, that is, you go to any school, and they will tell you that they don't have any problem, everybody has homosexual friends or has lesbian friends, whatever ... and therefore they say "well, I don't have any problem with anybody, I don't feel that these people are worse off". There is like a ... like an equality of rights, which is not real (...). They don't know, they don't know what to do. (ES, Representative of a family association).

Children love thinking, making connections... Kids do not enjoy being tailored. We are the ones tailoring children all the time, stuffing their luggage with items that we are made of. (PT, teacher).

Education should be the doorway to knowledge, the doorway to diversity. And students must feel that the adult in the classroom is the first to stand for equality. Otherwise, the doorway is wide open to abuse. (PT, teacher).

It is important to provide adequate training to teachers, answering their questions about gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expressions, making teachers feel safe and encouraged to share their doubts. [To implement change at the school level], teachers need to feel supported by official guidelines and materials. (PT, school psychologist).



2.2. Health

2.2.1. [Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the health sphere](#)

- **Diversity as a value in the Health Care System:** Diversity in gender and sexuality among children and youth challenge views on LGBTI+ people aiming at guaranteeing equality in health facilities. They also need health services that encompass diversity and are free of cis-heteronormative approaches. Finally, they need regulated clinical practices that not pathologize LGBTI+ children and the establishment of procedures and protocols that act in a protective way and against LGBTI+ violence during the process of clinical decisions and during clinical follow-up (e.g. puberty blockers, intersex babies surgeries, counselling and psychiatry sessions).
- **Networks of care and support:** Children need respect for diversity and self-acceptance. Hence, healthcare professionals (broad sense) well prepared to meet their needs, that do not pathologize LGBTI+ identities and also guided responses to deal in a preventive way are needed. LGBTI+ issues should be included in the medical course curricula and scientific knowledge should be updated. Support for LGBTI+ children, especially when well-being and mental health is strongly compromised since in many occasions there is no family support or social circles of support is extremely relevant.
- **Safe spaces and Services:** Health care services must be free of cis-heteronormativity and adopt children oriented practices. Safe spaces need to embrace diversity in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIGE). All children must be protected and need to know they can trust health professionals. Therefore, confidentiality is an important issue. Professionals must be allies for LGBTI+ children and help to mitigate negative stereotypes of the parents/guardians in order promote self-acceptance and ensure emotional and psychosocial well-being.
- **All children in the centre of the clinical processes:** Need to decrease adult-oriented approaches and to ensure that all children are involved in medical decisions and not only their parents/legal tutors (e.g. treatments decisions, satisfaction with the process of psychotherapy or with the professional).
- **Recognition of experiences of LGBTI+ children:** Data suggests that trans children have to face specific issues (e.g. restrictions in the access to puberty blockers) as well as intersex babies (non-consensual informed surgeries). It is important that advisory board/medical council access to updated relevant scientific information for a trans or intersex informative treatment. Because of that, professionals should recognize, inform and support children and their families.



- **Specific services for gender and sexual diversity among children must be created:** in order to guarantee the universal access to healthcare services. Reduce bureaucratization and time constraints of the clinical procedures and improvements in public services (in terms of geographical localization and number of existent services. Number of services is not enough and they must be free and agile.

2.2.2. Good practices related to health to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children

- **Inclusive language:** Some services report using inclusive language so that all patients feel comfortable. This vision has a significant impact. Measures such as using the patient's surname or a number in the waiting room; efforts to use the children's social name even when there is no ongoing procedure for name change (to make sure transgender and non-binary patients would be addressed the way they preferred) are also being implemented.
- **Collaborations:** Networks between LGBTI+ children-oriented healthcare services allow the consolidation or creation of new policies. Establishment of partnerships with LGBTI+ organizations allows knowledge transference, crucial in guaranteeing high-quality responses to specific needs of LGBTI+ children. (e.g. in Slovenia a request by NGO TransAkcija to the Ministry of Health regarding the celebration of a protocol for trans-affirming health care was positively resolved).
- **Small changes in terms of services and health care practices:** Some examples: issuing official medical statements for the school to address all children by their social name; creation of manuals and guidelines which guarantee LGBTI+ affirmative practices; organization for the internal staff workshops that include LGBT+ issues to fight against myths and prejudice about prevalence of certain health issues in the LGBTI+ community which are still very strong in the medical community with huge impact on the psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction of LGBTI+ children (e.g. "Sexual Health of LGBT+ Women, Trans and Intersex people" project in Slovenia; National Health Strategy for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People (2019) in Portugal).
- **Gatherings and meetings for awareness:** Healthcare services should encourage spaces for learning with the internal technical staff/team to show receptivity to LGBTI+ specialized intervention, manuals/guidelines to decrease pathologization of LGBTI+ identities by healthcare professionals and strengthening relationships with LGBTI+ organisations. These initiatives are being done mainly in the field of mental health through some guides created in this field, which aims to help practitioners.
- **Information and support in administrative processes, and trainings:** to both trans people for advancing their skills and to health professionals in matters that concern trans people. Also free



counselling and support to transgender persons and their families. Other incentives take place: regular events and inner training on LGBTI+ topics, offer LGBTI+ inclusive sexual education to schools, list of psychological and medical experts in LGBTI+ patient that could be further directed to if needed an awareness in the field of mental health (e.g. Kék-Vonal Child Crisis Foundation in Slovenia).

- **Trans health specific services:** Specialized services for trans people. Some people need a non-pathologizing perspective, including children's needs (In Belgium the creation of "Genderteam", the multidisciplinary team of the university hospital of Ghent, specializes in care for transgender people, including children and youth from the age of 9).

2.2.3. Training needs for health professionals

- **Deconstruction of the mainstream gender and sexual diversity:** Importance of introducing gender-related issues, especially LGBTQI+ issues, in professional training in order to increase the capacity to respond more effectively and conveying better and more relevant information and care to LGBTI+ children and their families.

- **Workshops** aiming at depathologizing representations and knowledge improvement on LGBTI+ children. Should be mandatory in the health care professional curricula (all medical and psychological studies and not only specialized ones). In particular, include training to teach medical staff that medical intervention in intersex babies and children is not usually indispensable and what constitutes a normal behaviour or psychopathology according to updated to scientific knowledge.

- Raising **awareness** in all staff of the health care service, and not just health professionals on **LGBTI+ topics**. Should be included in the national education programmes for everyone who is in any way involved in health care. Furthermore, LGBTI+ issues trainings should mandatory for psychology (e.g. LGBTI+ issues training and help methods should be a part of psychology programmes, including: problems, difficulties, minority stress related issues, areas of sensitivity, standards. Each clinic should employ at least one psychologist that underwent such training. Additionally, methods helping violence victims should be known to professional).

- **Emotional and personal skills and more knowledge** on how to approach gender diverse children and what standards/directives to adhere. Training must include contents that help parents of LGBTI+ or educate medical professionals about the procedures available for transgender patients, with emphasis on those legally available for transgender children and youth (including the consequences of lack of



hormonal therapy during puberty). Empathy training for professionals also should be addressed to be able to act adequately in the presence of patients with values and norms different from their own.

2.2.4. SWOT re: Health in Europe

Strengths

- Health care system has become more aware of diversity and the increment of visibility on SOGIGE. Some countries have trans specific services (e.g. Spain, Belgium, Portugal, etc.).
- More openness for gender diversity training by healthcare professionals and practitioners.
- Increment of formalization (more protocol and guidelines) for better working with LGBTI+ youth even when they experienced violence (in some cases, specifically with trans children).
- More different publications and educational materials to learn about LGBTI+ issues and accessible for health care professionals.
- Language becomes more respectful and inclusive for all children.
- Strong activism and in some countries a strong involvement from trans activists push the legal framework (specially in trans issues)

Weaknesses

- A cis and heterocentred perspective is very present in institutional medical approaches. Transgender individuals might receive no professional services from medical professionals and increase the risk of self-medicating and its severe impacts; Also LGBTI+ people might be subject to unnecessary psychological or psychiatric treatment.
- Discrimination based on SOGIGE in healthcare sector is still legal in some countries and LGBTI+ identities still highly pathologized in healthcare sector. Pathological medical practices not yet fully banned like 'conversion therapy'.
- Meagre legal framework that protect LGBTI+ children, and lack of policies through Europe (issues like: consent form; discrimination based on SOGIGE in healthcare sector is still legal in some countries).



- Lack of specific training for healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, psychologist, etc.) on LGBTI+ matters in general, and childhood in particular; connected with LGBTI+ issues inclusion in the curricula.
- Significant regional differences in terms of LGBTI+ children’s specific services and medical and psychological professional availability and who are familiar with LGBTI+ issues.
- Neoliberal States and Structural socio economic problems with an impact on health care services emergence (e.g. lack of professionals in healthcare system and worse scenario in rural areas than in urban settings).

Opportunities

- **More aware of specific need of LGBTI+ individuals by healthcare professionals.** Allies amongst medical staff against SOGIGE discrimination provide information on LGBTI+ topic for parents.
- **Existence of legislation** that address LGBTI+ rights, including health;
- **Official guidelines targeting health professionals** regarding gender diversity, produced by the National Health Authorities (e.g. National Health Strategy for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People (2019) in Portugal);
- **Strengthen economic resources** to train health specific services as well as general medical staff;
- **Involvement of families** in combating discrimination and in medical treatment options; Besides that, it is worth to note that treatment options reliant on parents’ decision offer a huge opportunity for them to choose doctors, therapists and procedures according to their LGBTI+ children’s needs;
- More formal **networks and share knowledge**: cooperation between experts from health care, LGBTI+ NGOs and schools to better support; materials prepared by NGOs are useful and can guide healthcare professionals. The existence of protocols offers established standards according to the most recent knowledge and technology advances.

Threats

- **Conservative political wing** rising in all Europe;



- **Lack of resources** (e.g. financial, human resources and time constraints) in the health care sector.
- Increasing **presence of homophobic and transphobic discourses** in the public arena, including some political parties.
- Professionals who are favour of conversion therapies;

2.2.5. Exemplary quotes

Intersex people have learnt to be in silence (Nurse, lesbian woman, Spain).

[We must] stop creating policies and programs for them, without taking them into account. And with this I mean taking into account LGBTI+ adult people, but also children and teenagers. Adultism is also patriarchal (Project technician, Spain).

In the hospital everyone will look up and react in case a transgender person would come. The medical staff would talk behind this person's back (healthcare professional; Lithuania).

A positive evolution to me is that general practitioners are organizing in group practices more and more. You get a more interdisciplinary approach – the GP works with the psychologist, works with a social assistant,... this widens the expertise and makes referral easier. You can't expect a GP to be an expert about everything. (University researcher, Belgium).

During my work I changed my way of communicating with young people a lot because my son once told me how a simple question, such as if he has a girlfriend could be aggressively intrusive and I've never thought about it before. After that I sometimes asked them if they were in love and didn't mention if a boy had a girl or a girl had a boy. I even told this to the doctor I worked with and she also admitted that she never thought about it so we both changed our communication after that. (Retired nurse, mother of a LGBT+ child, Slovenia).

The biggest problem is this horrible feeling in their body and the awareness that it takes ages to finally get something done and get that first appointment so you can start the process of gender reassignment. My child also cuts himself/herself and since healthcare doesn't have the capacity to get to an expert soon enough this becomes a long-lasting problem (Mother of a trans child, Slovenia).



2.3. Family

2.3.1. Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the family sphere

- **Support and acceptance within the family:** all children need to feel they are accepted within the family. Families should thus be better equipped to offer support, both in the process of coming out and in upholding the atmosphere in which children could feel safe and accepted at home, instead of giving children the idea that they are wrong or that their families are not proud enough of them. When LGBTI+ children do not receive support from parents, they tend to hide their sexual orientation and gender identity. Living in such isolation is very difficult for children.
- **Self-determination and respect for their decision** by the adults involved in the child's upbringing and development. A supportive and safe family environment is needed. Parents/family should rearrange expectations on how children should be or behave because when children cannot fulfil these expectations it places an emotional burden on them.
- **Psycho-emotional support** to equip children to deal with prejudice and SOGIGE violence. Encouraging reassurance should be transmitted to LGBTI+ children.
- **Public institutions and family services need to get involved**, be proactive in their support to children (and not erasure or deny their specific needs). More services for all children are claimed and more support for rainbow families as well.
- **Children's right to play and express as they wish.** They must have freedom to do so, their needs to be heard and to be taken seriously especially in places where they spend a most of their time like home or school.
- **Access to wide training.** Families need to have access to all of the available discourses in gender and sexuality, as well as to spaces to share experiences, perspectives and concerning about their children. Also gender diversity and different types of family should be addressed at schools from an early age so children are aware of. A more comprehensive top-down approach should be implemented amongst training professionals and some basic for parents on LGBTI+ children should be introduced during preparatory courses (even during pregnancy to introduce parents to the variety of sexual orientations and gender identities).



2.3.2. Good practices related to family to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children

- **Public events, lectures and gatherings** in order to provide information, raise awareness and enhance family acceptance. Family associations' gatherings are wonderful opportunities for LGBTI children to get to know other LGBTI children, and to bond with them (e.g. parents and Supporters of LGBTQ person Facebook group or short film with parents' personal stories in Hungary).
- **Listening, supporting and referring** the child/young person to qualified services/ professionals. Counselling and talk groups are available and online programmes turned out of extreme importance because due to the lack of privacy at home, specially within the families who do not support their children (they can participate in chat event if can't attend in live discussions).
- **Material resources on LGBTI+ issues.** A range of new materials (e.g., books, brochures, diversity tales) has been published and disseminated to raise awareness about sexual and gender diversity. Campaigns are being created in most of DaC countries (e.g. "This is me" in Hungary, "Colour Youth" project in Greece; "What If I Had Another Colour in Portugal, etc.), to inform and support youth, families and teachers about sexual orientation and gender-based equality." Many of these materials disrupt the adult perspective as well as a cis-heterocentred view.
- **Partnerships and collaborations.** Networks amongst different children, family services and NGOs are been encouraged (*Guidelines for Parents and Professionals* produced by parents' organization AMPLOS, and IAC – The Child Support Institute in Portugal); Implementation of specific protocols and good practices available that involved schools.

2.3.3. Training needs for professionals re: Families

For professionals supporting families (e.g. family counsellors):

- More knowledge issues of gender diverse children and their experiences (basic information including: what is gender and more specifically, how to raise awareness on this topic with other professionals and not also in urban settings but also in semi-peripheral/rural areas;
- How to be supportive as a professional for LGBTI+ children and how to bring up this topic with other children; educate about diversity as a value.



For parents:

- How to be supportive as a parent and how to support diversity: The role of families is very important for the life-satisfaction and well-being of LGBTI+ children. Training families on sexual and gender diversity, particularly related to children’s development, and giving them tools is crucial. Training should include: broad knowledge of LGBTI+ topics so that they know what it means for their children to be LGBTI+; knowledge in order to induce acceptance and emotional support for the child and methods of supporting LGBTI+ children.
- Redirect expectations: Although many parents feel that they are not LGBTIphobes, they still may have cisheterosexual expectations for their children. They will probably need support in redirecting these expectations. Also, group therapy or LGBTI+ parent’s meetings so that they can cope with the knowledge about their children’s situation (which is often a source of distress for the parents as well) and in order so that they are able to better support their children.
- Training and manuals for parents. Particularly in transgender or intersex children, teaching families’ associations and the broad society that gender diversity is not an illness. Knowledge about LGBTI+ situation both psychologically (for instance minority stress) and legally so that they know what their children go through and what options they have). It will help families worry less about their children and, at the same time, it gives children enough space to grow up without extreme monitoring and gender-related violence.

For professionals providing LGBTI-specialized services:

- Training on children’s perspectives, as these services can often be geared towards adult experiences and meet s LGBTI+ youth specific needs so they better attend.
- Support and monitoring professionals in practice (e.g. thematic supervision).

2.3.4. SWOT related to Family in Europe

Strengths

- Families with LGBTI+ children are getting more visible in Public Space. Visibility has an impact on LGBTI+ children that leads to families being more open to their children coming out and for a better



normalization of gender diversity. (Pressure on children and parents to broke cis-heteronormative society is decreasing).

- Existence of several NGOs and associations that support LGBTI+ families. Partnerships entrench the (already) available support.
- Strong activism (including parent’s activist).
- Existence of LGBTI+ children’s allies (e.g. some school professionals support LGBTI+ children)
- Existence of good practices and services that support LGBTI families.

Weaknesses

- **Lack of support and rejection from parents:** some parents do not support LGBTI+ children which troubles the process of coming out. Emotional, psychological and physical effects (e.g. low self-esteem, suicide, risk to be homeless);
- **Absence of well-prepared professionals who work with SOGIGE, families and children.**
- **Family discourses of non-gender conforming children** are highly binary and biology-driven (families are not knowledgeable enough about gender diversity).
- **Lack of institutional support** (low budgets to LGBTI+ youth and families and, thus, a reduced or absence of **specific services** to deal with specific needs of LGBTI+ children.

Opportunities

- **More openness for professionals** and parents to learn about sexual and gender diversity and about LGBTI+ children which is related with better media representation.
- **NGOs and associations available** who provide resources with a gender diversity perspective guided to support parents and families on LGBTI+ children.



- **Partnerships and cooperation.** Possibilities of networks amongst several services who support LGBTI+ children, parents and families (e.g. emotional/psychological, family, housing, domestic violence, etc.) that improve the quality of support even in crisis situations.

Threats

- **Increasing presence of homo-bi-transphobic discourse** and practices in the public arena, including in the political level.
- **Insufficient financial resources** for specific services and NGOS and associations who work with LGBTI+ topics which will impact the response of family services towards LGBTI+ children and their families. (Public family care services are underfunded).
- **Lack of efficiency of legislation** and child protection policies implementation
- **Sometimes families are not welcoming** of gender diversity. The ways parents react will have impact on how children receive support through other channels (e.g. teacher).

2.3.5. Exemplary quotes

When I became aware of what was going on with my child, I was mostly worried about bullying and that she would have an unhappy childhood. But that never happened. Maybe because we told her she could be whoever she wanted, she transferred this attitude to the outside world? The more of a non-issue it is at home, the more it will be a non-issue outside. - (Parent of a gender creative child, Belgium).

The free right to personal development is violated every single day. (Police officer, Spain).

I believe that all of the adult world needs training on diversity. Deep training, that goes all the way to the bones and that you understand that if your baby who was initially assigned a boy at birth likes pink or handbags or things considered to be girly; that if this happens, you can look at them with glee and with the same love as if they like cars. (Trans children activist, Spain).

For a family to be supportive to gender diverse children and youth, it should have an outside support system because a family isn't a lone satellite circling outside society. Some families can manage because they are educated and will know what they're dealing with and how to be supportive, but most will have no idea what to do. Many will be confused and have difficulties in dealing with these issues



and they'll be afraid of becoming a source of stigma, prejudice and discrimination. These parents need support, counselling, experts in schools, education. Oftentimes they will avoid these topics out of ignorance or because they think they will cause even more problems for their children. (Interviewee 4; Croatia).

Fear of being thrown out of their own home is very common [among LGBT+ youth]. (Poland)

Gender-diverse children or children with different gender expressions, whatever they say they are or whatever they are, it doesn't matter. Just let them be children. They're kids, experimenting, growing up, getting to know themselves. They're creating a jigsaw puzzle, not a catastrophe. (member of a parents support NGO, Portugal).

2.4. Public spaces

2.4.1. [Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in public spaces](#)

- **Counteracting hegemonies in public places:** Diversity is present in all societies and it can be visible and legitimate. Thus, public spaces have to be claimed and adult, cis heterocentred perspective eliminated (need to work on the level of community and association, so that everyone could get the right information, social awareness since early ages or LGBTI+ symbols more pronounced).
- **Reviewing the use of children places in public space:** Children haven't got many places for their own use in public spaces. At the same time, these are regulated by binary perspectives on gender and sexuality. Sport centres, parks and other places used for children should be reviewed under LGBTI+ perspective. Need to decrease restrictiveness in settings such as sport activities.
- **Protection against discrimination and violence:** Antidiscrimination legislation on the basis of gender and sexual orientation, effective sanctions). Legislation as a starting framework (e.g. for schools and organizations) and a driver for social change.
- **Finding safe spaces and environments in which gender-non conforming children can express themselves freely and develop personal connections:** Healthy development of any child is crucial, including for LGBTI+ children who are more likely than their heterosexual peers to be exposed to additional societal stressors. Actions that combat violence must be introduced in an effective way in public spaces. Thus, anti-violence settings should be created (which condemn different forms of



violence: physical, psychological and emotional abuse, financial restraints, peer violence against LGBTI+ children, especially in the form of cyber bullying, in public spaces and hostile.

- **Rethinking visibility strategies:** Visibility in public spaces needs to be rethought in relation to children. Many children, particularly young ones, do not identify the rainbow as a sexual and gender diversity sign. This might be very useful only for adults. It would be good to fill other public spaces, frequented by children, such as theatres, libraries, playgrounds and other spaces, with content that would raise awareness on LGBTI+ topics, (spaces have a need to feel safe, unexposed and ordinary).
- **Less regional differences** in access LGBTI+ groups, meetings or NGOs must be achieved. Educational campaigns, events, actions, and all forms of outreach to LGBT+ youth in smaller cities or rural settings also needed.

2.4.2. [Good practices related to public spaces to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children](#)

- **LGBTI+ friendly practices and materials for diversity recognition:** Documents and guidelines to provide a safe space, empowering the users, advocacy, informing, counselling, social events, peer support, support groups, raising public awareness and increasing visibility. Also partnerships between public services and LGBTI+ organisations (e.g. (e.g. Since 2014, Municipality of Ljubljana issues the “LGBT-friendly” certificates to service providers and organisations who provide a safe space for LGBT+ people and whose employees attended an LGBT+ sensitivity training).
- **Visibility actions:** Many city councils and other public entities are carrying out visibility actions and children oriented activities and sports are emerging with a non-gender confirming approach to raise awareness (e.g. Belgian Quidditch Federation; Purple spots in Spain; QueerSport Weekend in Croatia).
- **Supportive services & Use of gender inclusive language:** Proactive engagement of services in demonstrating they are supportive and/or do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (e.g. in Greece, free legal and psychological counselling and assistance from trained professionals, and it trains other organizations and professionals on how to properly address and support LGBTI+ people and manage violent instances. In Portugal, CIG – State Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality published guidelines for professionals working in institutions and shelters for domestic violence addressing LGBT victims specifically).



2.4.3. Training needs for professionals re: public spaces

- **Diversity and anti-discrimination training.** Should be mandatory for government employees and include not only **general knowledge on LGBTI+ Issues** (e.g. minority stress, deconstruction of myths, fake news) but specific training of LGBTI+ children should be addressed too. Thus, scientific information from social sciences must be included. Other topics such as: informed consent, autonomy and sexual self-determination and aspects victims' interrogation tackling the topic of minority victims and hate crimes as fundamental issues.
- **Spaces for learning environments:** open and receptive to sexual diversity, intervening to stop discriminatory behaviours when they occur, creating awareness about sexual and gender diversity, and mainstreaming informed training and counselling regarding LGBTI+ issues in childhood and youth.
- **Adults should be prepared to deal with discrimination,** harassment and bullying among children and be able to create and teach kids that diversity and acceptance are crucial values. Therefore, some important practical knowledge on: guidelines of addressing discrimination and acting out situations to be better prepared, a greater awareness on this issues, empathy and courage to overcome social norms.
- **Sports, youth and other organizations needed support** in accommodating gender creative children with regards to gendered spaces (such as toilets and dressing rooms).
- **Specific trainings for public bodies professionals:** specific needs of the LGBTI+ children should be organized for all individuals employed in public bodies at all levels, including local authorities, police bodies and schools as well as organizations which have children as beneficiary. Training should include LGBT+ specific topics but also aspects of anti-LGBTI hate crime and anti-discriminatory public discourse, recognition as well as inclusive language.

2.4.4. SWOT related to public spaces in Europe

Strengths

- **Increment of available resources** (in the internet, in larger cities, in public spaces maintained by the NGOs);



- Greater **social awareness** of issues such as discrimination, inequality, violence, bullying and LGBTQI rights and self-determination support by professionals (belief amongst professionals that through legislation the sociocultural conservative mind-set can change, is undoubtedly the framework will support social changes). Impacts on a more *incorporation of LGBTI issues in their professionals practice*;
- Existence of **safe spaces** for young LGBTI+ people (e.g. Youth community places)
- More **visibility** discourses and recognition.

Weaknesses

- **Little awareness** of the needs of LGBTI+ children related to public space;
- LGBTI+ children in **Public Spaces is not a main priority** (no thematic programmes, cis heteronormative approach and adult centred);
- **Regional differences** in accessing specific services provided by public bodies for LGBTI+ children and resources;
- **Public officials lack knowledge on specific needs of LGBTI+ children.** In some countries is still a taboo (Croatia).
- Discrimination in all forms: ignorance, fear of difference, jokes and teasing people who are perceived as LGBTI.

Opportunities

- Antidiscrimination laws that can be updated with the inclusion of LGBTI+ and implemented with specific procedures;
- Public authorities are more and more carrying out symbolic and visible actions to support LGBTI+ people;
- Increased public awareness about LGBTI+ topics;



- Consolidating the work with academia and activism and associating LGBTI+ organisations with organisations working in public spaces.

Threats

- Increase in violence against LGBTI+ population, presence of hate speech against LGBTI+ people in public discourse and attacks on safe spaces;
- LGBTI+ children might feel lack of representation or might think nobody could help them;
- Expansion of extreme-right and populism throughout Europe;
- Gender binary as the hegemonic cultural norm.

2.4.5. Exemplary quotes

I wish one day there wouldn't be the need for my daughter or my son to come out. Come out from where, from what? It should be as simple as it is for any straight daughter or son who comes home and says they are dating someone, "I'll bring her/him over for you to meet soon". It should be as simple as that. (Portugal, member of a parents support NGO).

I think it is still dangerous to show you're different in any way in Croatian public spaces, especially if you're outside the gender binary. A boy with nail polish, even if dressed in men's clothing, can expect verbal or physical harassment. So, this is still a very ignorant environment and although there are oases where we can meet and be relaxed, a gay couple still cannot hold hands in the street (Croatia, University researcher).

Clothes, music, everything that belongs to finding one's identity is "punished" if it differs from the mainstream. (Hungary, a sport professional)

If there are different corporealities and subjectivities that are not understood at the level of their experience, they are at risk of having their rights violated in almost all the areas of their lives, and public space is one of them (Spain, NGO coordinator).



The main problem of LGBT youngsters is living in harmony with the rest of the citizens, which don't know about these youngsters' needs. This creates insecurity from citizenship" (Spain, Police officer).

Not having model groups is a main problem for LGBTI+ children. Someone they can mirror themselves in (Spain, NGO psychologist).

The fact that kids have nowhere to go is a form of structural, societal violence. This is not something that a child should go through on their own. In fact, it's not something a family should have to go through alone, without any source of information available to them. (Belgium, Coordinator NGO).

A gender creative 10-year-old without any adults in their environment who have information, concrete information, not static, that's one of the biggest challenges. (Belgium, Communications officer NGO).

2.5. Media

2.5.1. Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the media

- **Normalize difference:** acknowledge and recognize gender non-conforming identities giving visibility to role models including LGBTI+ stories, love and acceptance in all areas as part of a day-to-day reality including specific media for children.
- **Deconstruction of gender norms and patterns:** children feel very pressured to follow preconceived gender ideas and roles.
- **Media coverage:** Media outlets showcasing Pride Parades and other LGBTI+ events giving positive and happy portraits of people who participate.
- **Awareness and campaigning:** creating visibility and awareness with campaigns against violence and discrimination, through all areas: Education, Health, Family and Public Spaces.
- **Accessible Information:** through dissemination of NGOs, helplines and others to the general public, making these more readily available to professionals, families and youth using diverse media outlets and decentralizing information where not only the main/bigger cities and some professional areas receive training and information.



2.5.2. Good practices related to the media to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children

- Moderating social media: news portals, journals websites and social media having moderation and deleting hate speech, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments.
- Ethical media: raising visibility and awareness, creating counter discourse against LGBTI+ phobia and disseminating educational news and information.
- Making a deliberative effort to include diverse people as sources of info regardless of the topic being reported also including children as sources of information.
- Mainstream fiction that include positive role models and LGBTI+ stories. (i.e. TV teen oriented program *Oh My Goig* in the Catalan TV channel BTV in Spain)
- Guidelines and other resources to be disseminated on best practices for media outlets i.e. inclusive language. (a good examples of this practice is, the *Media Guide for respectful reporting on trans topics* (2017) published by TransAksija Institute from Slovenia, also the project E.T.Ho.S., *Eliminating Transphobic, Homophobic and Biphobic Stereotypes through better media representation* in three countries Greece, Lithuania and Croatia)
- Creating space for dialogue to end polarization.

2.5.3. Training needs for media professionals

- Include LGBTI+ issues in journalists and other media professionals formal training. (In some countries media professionals did not recognize LGBTI+ issues as relevant for their training).
- LGBTI+ awareness training, organized by LGBTI+ rights organisations. Inclusive language and updated terminology.
- Training based on case-studies.
- Training targeted to editors and journalists who do not engage with these topics.



- Proofreading systems not only to guarantee language accuracy but also to for example avoid stereotyping.

2.5.4. SWOT related Media in Europe

Strengths

- Media becoming more ethical.
- Active moderation of hate speech online and taking positions against LGBTI+ discrimination and violence (in some countries).
- More articles and news on LGBTI+ issues including plural media platforms from individual influencers, radios, online journals, tv channels and newspapers.
- Openness to participate in awareness training.
- Formal complaint venues to reinforce good practice and punish poor professionalism (Code of ethics, Journalist Honour Tribunal in Hungary, Ethical and Deontological Codes in Portugal).

Weaknesses

- Lack of knowledge and awareness of LGBTI+ issues also specific to children and youth and only few journalists have LGBTI+ expertise.
- No inclusion of LGBTI+ issues in formal training.
- Pink news/Fast media based on over representing stereotypical, extravagant, sexualized LGBTI+ identities and expressions promoting disinformation and reinforcing stereotypes.
- Dismissal of LGBTI+ experience in news outlets also always using the same type of allegedly “reliable” sources.



- Being a channel for cyberbullying through social media.
- Underrepresentation of LGBTI+ people, children and youth in the media.

Opportunities

- Collaboration between media outlets and LGBTI+ NGOs having activists participating more in the news making process while giving training to journalists.
- More articles celebrating and showcasing LGBTI+ experiences and profiles so that children and youth feel represented and seen in a positive light.
- More and better news on LGBTI+ youth and children normalizing gender diversity.
- Use social media to engage children and young adults more easily.
- Engage Equality State bodies and journalists trade unions to promote gender and sexuality awareness.

Threats

- Country laws that prohibit dissemination of information around LGBTI+ issues targeting children and youth making it difficult to publish even for general issues regarding gender expression, identity and sexual orientation (anti-LGBTI+ propaganda law in Lithuania).
- Less availability, since mainstream media is owned, regulated and or edited by conservative editors, boards and/or run by conservative governments (Hungary, Croatia, Poland).
- Journalists might sexualize, speak derogatorily about LGBTI+ people and spread fake news. (Poland and Greece).
- General suspicion of LGBTI+ and queer activists against journalists and mainstream media.
- Job insecurity, low salaries and time constraints may hinder any efforts to train journalists, editors, producers and other media professionals.



- Polarisation in political discourses permeates public opinion due to the expansion of right wing political discourses (e.g. Poland where interviewees shared distancing from social media to avoid burn-out, and Spain where also TERF discourses are disseminated).

2.5.5. Exemplary quotes

In schools it is a really sensitive problem when kids turn to psychologists at school, they do not necessarily react properly, children do not get the help they need and are advised to just close their eyes and ignore it or fight with the perpetrator – (Lithuania, journalist)

I feel like in media there is more and more an open-mindedness about gender that makes kids realize that they're not necessarily abnormal. Being different from others, sure, they can sense that, but I notice that when gender creativity or diversity is touched upon in a kids show, that it helps. I find this very important, because if there never are any gender diverse characters on TV, kids will very quickly feel that they deviate completely from the norm, and that they don't belong. This is a good evolution. But it can be better, and more. (Belgium, Parent of a gender creative child.)

In the media a lot more celebrities are coming out, this is important because of the visibility. More TV series etc. include and show LGBTI+ people. But there are negative aspects of publicity as well: media outlets that focus only on leather thongs when they show the Pride will not bring the community closer to uncle John, and he should see all the average people there as well. –(Hungary, nurse)

And if this is the case, that you are born with it the way you are born, as gay or lesbian, then of course society must be made aware of that to such an extent that people like me, who may be a little sceptical about it, may understand it. I think there needs to be some kind of normalization so that this is not an issue. It seems to me that none of these things should be an issue- (Slovenia, Journalist, online children newspaper)

We lack an open, straightforward message. The presence of diversity in mainstream culture that would be a trustworthy message. – (Poland, journalist)

Giving visibility in the media to LGBTI childhood and adolescence and/or of nonconforming gender youth is very difficult. They often do not want to participate in interviews or to engage with the media. On other occasions, they do want to, but they need the authorisation of their parents or guardians.(Spain, Journalist and content creator)



Training based on case studies is so useful... Sometimes it is necessary to mention a specific case and say ‘look, it happened’, to give examples of how it was done, where do you go... Sometimes I know the theory, I know where I need to arrive, but how do I get there? – (Portugal, journalist).

3. Overall evaluation: identify tendencies and absences re: LGBTI+ children in your country, including perceptions and attitudes, stereotypes, representations

A brief overview of equality and LGBTI+ rights in Europe allows us to identify some important characteristics in terms of legal advances and legislative development in different countries during 2019, namely in DaC countries.

Firstly, in some countries, LGBTI+ rights relating to family life and anti-discrimination laws were expanded to explicitly cover gender identity or sexual characteristics (e.g. in Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Spain). In the particular case of Greece, new Law 4604/201 combating gender-based violence was approved and introduced a national mechanism for gender equality, which will also address discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. In Spain, a new law on LGBTI+ equality entered in force in one of the Autonomous Community and the main priority is to give visibility of people with intersex variations or with differences in sexual development. Important legal changes concerning parental rights for same-sex couples have also taken place in countries like Lithuania. The Constitutional Court stated that the Constitution now protects sexual orientation, sexual identity and same-sex family relationships. In the field of legal gender recognition, the Spanish Constitutional Court questioned the legal restriction that required a person to be at least 18 years old to apply for a change to the sex registration on his/her national identity card. The legal restriction was considered unconstitutional as it prohibits changing the sex registration for children who are mature enough and are in a ‘stable situation of transsexuality’. In Lithuania, the amendments to the Non-discrimination Promotion Action Plan (2017–2019) provide professionals training on non-discrimination, tolerance and access to social services. In Portugal, a new health strategy for LGBTI people was established and an order incorporating administrative measures for non-discrimination against trans persons and intersex youth and children was issued. The order is for schools at all levels of education, and it



requires that schools ensure that children and young people can exercise their rights to self-determination of gender identity and expression, and to the protection of their sexual characteristics.

Secondly, there is positive progress in terms of bodily integrity for intersex people, with small steps towards gaining more prominence on the political agenda of governments and institutions. In February 2019, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on the rights of intersex people, setting out clearly what needs to be done both on national and EU levels, such as putting in place legislation that will finally ensure protection of intersex people's bodily integrity. While there is an increasing interest in intersex rights by policymakers, only the first steps are being taken. Nonetheless, most DaC countries, as well as other European countries, find a large absence of legislation regarding third gender markers. For example, new gender recognition legislation in Belgium excludes non-binary people. These recent developments are important steps forward in the process of a diversity approach based on equality, respect and dignity for all.

Finally, we see that progressive legal frameworks are often met with backlash in the context of right-wing, anti-gender and anti-sexuality populism. Although legislation is a fundamental step, it is far from being enough. In most occasions, legislative changes are not followed by consistent social transformation. Beliefs, attitudes and behaviours require a constant and articulated plan for educating, adjusting and monitoring the change. Societies must have a sustained commitment with an anti-discrimination approach and diversity as a basic value. This is not the case in several countries where the state does not take it upon its shoulders the responsibility of defending LGBTI+ rights proactively. Furthermore, in some countries anti-gender and anti-sexuality backlash has already triggered worrying legal changes: Croatia introduced legislation that excludes same-sex partners from fostering and raising a child and in Poland the protection of LGBTI persons against discrimination in access to goods and services is being severely challenged.

The analysis of the 9 Country-based Reports produced by DaC enable the identification of a series of shared features. Some of these features are signs of hope and result from progress in the sphere of diversity and anti-discrimination. Others raise concerns and demand urgent attention. Together they provide the core for an evidence-based knowledge production that will inform reflexive and inclusive policy making at both national and supra-national levels. As such, we conclude with the identification of urgent measures regarding legal, policy and social change for a more inclusive context for LGBTI+ children and youth across Europe.



Encouraging features:

- Professionals begin to be more alert to the need to adopt practices that respect and support gender diversity in childhood and demand guidelines and protocols that regulate practices;
- There is greater visibility for LGBTI + children achieved due to the emergence of support and support spaces for children and parents / families;
- There are more alliances in support of diversity (on the part of professionals from different areas);
- There is a greater number of existing resources to intervene with the LGBTI+ children, which means greater recognition of diversity as a value in our society;
- The number of regulatory instruments for discriminatory and anti-LGBTI practices has been increasing in all areas. The role of NGOs and academia has been instrumental in this monitoring and reporting;
- Increasing perception that emotional and psychological support is essential to support LGBTI+ children and young people and their families;
- Recognition that there is little discussion about surgery on intersex babies;
- Acknowledgement of the existence of discriminatory professional practices (e.g., sexual reorientation therapy (also called conversion therapy or reparative therapy) that continue without legislation against their practice;
- Growing awareness about the deficit of training in LGBTI+ issues;
- The notion that emotional and psychological support is very necessary when there is a lack of recognition and support and, consequently, suffering, which can take extreme forms (minority stress).

Alarming features:



- Unequal territorial distribution of services and the existing support for LGBTI+ children compromises universal access to social protection. In general, there is a perception in all countries of the existence of an unequal distribution of existing resources to support LGBTI + children and young people (urban contexts vs. peripheral or rural contexts). Services tend to be in large cities, making access in rural areas difficult. Regardless of the location of the residence, support for all children and young people must be guaranteed;
- Ignorance and absence of social awareness, especially reflected in the participants who work in the DaC area of Public Space (cultural spaces, sports facilities, police, youth centres and associations, community spaces). In some countries, there is a lack of awareness that public space professionals are agents for the promotion or not of diversity / well-being.
- In some countries more than others, there is still a need for social awareness (from surgeries to intersex babies in Spain to the difficulty of holding hands on the street safely in Greece or Portugal).
- In some countries, a debate on public space and hate crimes and violence has not been identified. This debate has a greater presence in one context and less in others (Poland and Greece vs. Portugal). It seems that countries where legislation has suffered setbacks or where LGBTI + rights still need to be guaranteed (or where the rates of discrimination are higher) present greater urgency in this matter in the public space.
- In most countries there are no specific services for trans children. The role of LGBTI + associations / NGOs is critical in supporting these children and families.

Urgent measures:

- Need to include LGBTI + themes in the curricula of any professional (doctors, psychologists, teachers, nurses, sports association technicians, etc.) who in the future will work with children and young people;
- Need to review professional practices aimed at children and young people since they continue to be highly oriented from an adult and not a child's perspective. Children are at the centre of the process and must therefore be considered in the construction and design of interventions.



- Need to work at the community level and bring young people closer to different spaces, incorporating a diversity-based and intersectional perspective;
- Need to involve social media professionals in anti-discrimination campaigns, because social media offers spaces for sociability: Online is a space for socialization and support for young people (also for families / parents), but also for crime and violence;
- The state must have a primary place in the defence of children's rights and their well-being and to be a vehicle for ensuring compliance with a professional practice that integrates the principles of diversity;
- Ensuring compliance with the CHILD'S RIGHTS STATEMENT. When considering the principle of universalism or differentiation, the idea must be conveyed that all children, including LGBTI+ children must be protected and their well-being ensured;
- Ensuring that LGBTI+ children and young people have spaces for support and care even in dramatic cases (violence in the family);
- Networking in an articulated way between different services to provide better responses (education, social services, center for attention to domestic violence);
- Providing support for parents and families.

The most striking absence across Europe are interventions that integrate the child's (and not the adult's) perspective. In conclusion, it is urgent to mainstream gender and sexual diversity – making the respect for diversity everyone's business! – and in order to do so, children and young people must be acknowledged as relevant sources of information and expertise.



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Diversity and Childhood

Project's coordinator:

Organisation: University of Girona

International coordinator: Dr. Jose Antonio Langarita

Address: Pl. Sant Domènec, 9 17004 Girona

Email: diversityandchildhood@udg.edu

Website: <https://www.diversityandchildhood.eu>



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