

National analysis on violence against LGBTI+ children

KMOP, GREECE



Funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

Authors

Skourti Chara and Kokoliou Panagiota , KMOP, Greece

Project information

Project Title: Diversity and childhood. Changing social attitudes towards gender diversity in children across Europe

Project number: 856680

Involved countries: Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain

December 2020



Funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)

This Project was funded by European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The content of this website represents the views of the author only and it his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Contents

- Introduction – Research Design and Sample 4
- 1. Legal and political context regarding LGBTI+ rights..... 6
 - 1.1 Timeline of LGBTI+ rights in the country 9
 - 1.2. Relevant statistical data about LGBTI+ situation in Greece 10
- 2. DaC Areas of Intervention: schools, health, family, public spaces and media 12
 - 2.1. Education 12
 - 2.1.1. Needs related to children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the sphere of education 13
 - 2.1.2. Good practices related to education to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children 13
 - 2.1.3. Training needs for education professionals..... 14
 - 2.1.4. SWOT related to Education in Greece 15
 - 2.1.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews 15
 - 2.2. Health 15
 - 2.2.1. Needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the health sphere 16
 - 2.2.2. Good practices related to health to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children 16
 - 2.2.3. Training needs for health professionals..... 17
 - 2.2.4. SWOT related to Health in Greece..... 18
 - 2.2.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews related Health 18
 - 2.3. Family 19
 - 2.3.1. Needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the family sphere 19
 - 2.3.2. Good practices related to family to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children 19
 - 2.3.3. Training needs for professionals related to Families 20
 - 2.3.4. SWOT related to Family in Greece 20
 - 2.3.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews 21
 - 2.4. Public spaces..... 21



2.4.1. needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in public spaces..... 21

2.4.2. good practices related to public spaces to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children 22

2.4.3. Training needs for professionals related to public spaces..... 22

2.4.4. SWOT related to public spaces in Greece 23

2.4.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews..... 23

2.5. Media..... 23

2.5.1. Needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the media..... 24

2.5.2. Good practices related to media to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children 24

2.5.3. Training needs for media professionals..... 24

2.5.4. SWOT related Media in Greece 25

2.5.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews..... 26

3. Overall evaluation: identify tendencies and absences related to LGBTI+ children in Greece 26

References 30



Introduction – Research Design and Sample

Within the Framework of Diversity and Childhood, primary and secondary research has been implemented in Greece including apart from desk research a mixed research method. More specifically, quantitative data were gathered with an online survey and at the same time, qualitative data were collected with interviews with stakeholders and a workshop with lower secondary school children. First of all, a literature review was conducted which aimed to map the existing situation regarding LGBTI+ rights in Greece, the rights of their community and the legal framework in order to identify the remaining needs and gaps.

Secondly, an online survey was created, which was free to access from January until 31st of March 2020. The aim of this survey was to identify the current perceptions about gender identity and sexual orientation in children and adolescents. Analysis from the survey was used in order to better refine the interview guide and to better organize the interviews. In total, there were documented 59 answers (50 was the minimum expected). Among the respondents there were 23 cisgender women and 27 cisgender men (nine did not answer), and 62.7% of those who answered were heterosexual.

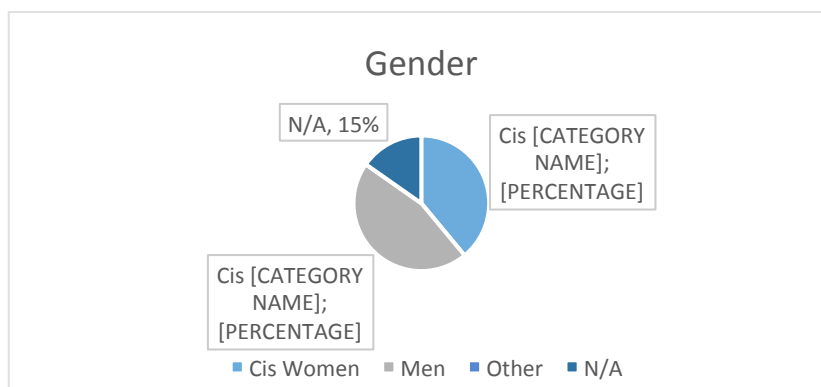


Table1. Gender of the Respondents

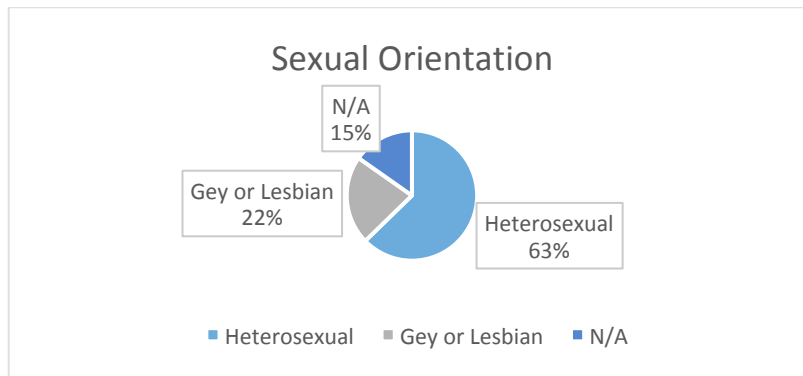


Table2. Sexual Orientation of the Respondents

Their average age was 38 years old with the older to have been born in 1960 (60 years old) and the younger in 1995 (25 years old). The average years of cisgender women were 35 years old, whereas the cisgender men was 40 years old. Regarding their place of residence, 76.3% grew up in the country they live in, while 22% did not answer. One mentioned that grew up in Greece and lives for 6-10 years there. Concerning their workplace, 15.3% work in the education sector, 13.6% in family care, 11.9% in health sector, 10.2% in media and networks and 15.3% in public space. In the specification of the type of institution they work, 3.4% work in family services, the same percentage works in health centres, 5.1% work in hospitals, 11.9% in LGBTI+ organizations, 1.7% in police, 11.9% in schools. In the private sector work 62.7% of them, while 22% work in the public sector.

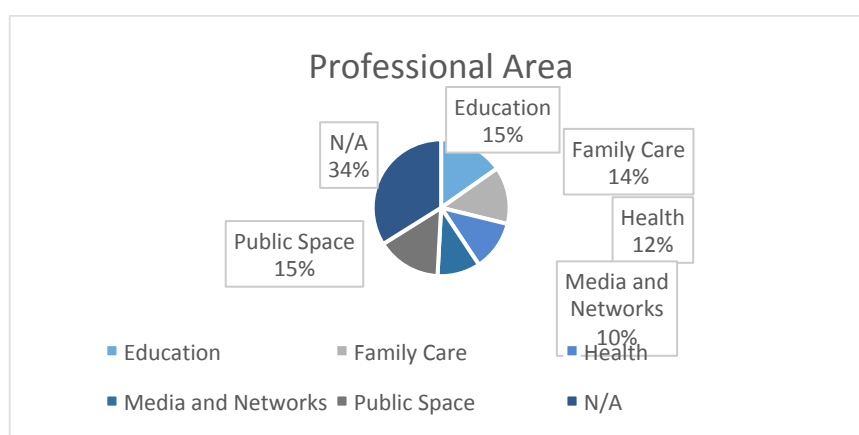


Table 3. Professional Area of the Respondents



Afterwards, six in depth interviews (two of them via skype) were conducted and four questionnaires were handed out¹ with stakeholders who represent education, health, media sector, family and people from public space (two people from each category) in March and April 2020. The aim of the interviews was to better map the needs and challenges professionals face but to also identify the remaining stereotypes regarding LGBTI+ and gender diversity children and youth. There were eight females and two males and their average years were 40 years old (min 27 years old- maximum 52 years old).

Lastly, a workshop with lower secondary school children was conducted on March 3, 2020 in a private lower secondary school in Athens. The aim of the workshop was to explore the ideas and beliefs that children have about gender identity and gender expression and to identify the gaps and the needs that are required in order to combat violence and discrimination towards LGBTI+ children. In total 16 students between 13 and 14 years old participated. All of them belonged to the school mediation group². Among them, there were three boys and 13 girls. Five teachers were also present during the workshop: two of them participated as well, while the other three were observing. In the back, an independent researcher was observing the workshop and did not participate at all. The workshop lasted three hours from 12:00 until 15:00 with a 15' break.

1. Legal and political context regarding LGBTI+ rights

One of the most profound needs for LGBTI+ people is action against all stereotypes that are attributed to them and result in stigma and marginalization. A very important step towards that is the legal initiatives of the states, which can offer safety and visibility. In Greece three laws have been established, which have mended some of the discriminations that LGBTI+ face: a) law 4556/2015 on the civil partnership, b) law 4491/2017 on the legal identification of gender identity,

¹ Due to the lockdown of the pandemic of Covid-19, face-to-face interviews were impossible to conduct.

² School Mediation is a practice that aims in the peaceful resolution of school conflicts and aggressive behaviors. Students of greater grades, after they have been trained, they try to intervene in conflict situations in the school settings and solve them through dialogue, empathy and active hearing.



and c) law 4538/2018 on fostering (Natsi & Papa, 2019). However, it would be interesting to present a general context of the laws and their course.

In Greece, homosexuality was decriminalized in 1951 with the article 347 of the Penal Code. Nonetheless, this article prohibited intercourse between male sex workers, and defined age of consent for gay men to 17 years, while for heterosexual men the consent age was 15. Since then, there have been many advancements regarding the rights of LGBTI+ community especially from 2010, but LGBTI+ people still face a variety of discriminations. For example, it is prohibited for someone who has had at least one intercourse with a same sex person, to give blood (Lukesas, 2017).

Discussion about LGBTI+ rights seemed to have no visibility. However, in the first decade of the 21st century, and especially in 2004, the National Commission for Human Rights stressed the discrimination that LGBTI+ community suffers, especially in the matters of marriage recognition, equalization of age consent for gay men, and the introduction of sexual education in schools (National Commission for Human Rights, 2004).

In 2005, law 3304/2005 on the “application of the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation,” was the first law for the fight against discrimination in the workplace sector and in the services provision (Sotirchou, n.d.). In 2016, it was replaced by the law 4443/2016, which clearly stated that sexual orientation is an element of the personality of people and is protected by both national and international laws and the constitution as well. (The Greek Ombudsman, 2018).

In 2006, with the law 3488/2006, on the “application of equal treatment between men and women regarding access in the workplace, professional education and promotion, the terms and conditions of the workplace and other provisions”, gender was for the first time included as a protected element from discriminations (The Greek Ombudsman, 2018). In the same year, law 3500/2006 which addresses domestic violence, included in its terms couples in civil partnership, something that involves same sex couples as well from 2015 with the law 4556/2015 (Natsi & Papa, 2019).

LGBTI+ rights started emerging even more in 2008. This happened mainly for two reasons. The first one was the upcoming law 3719/2008 on the civil partnership, which excluded same sex couples, and the other was the political marriage of two same sex couples in Tilos Island, in June



2008. Regarding the last one, the weddings caused severe reactions by conservative groups and the prosecutor of Rhodes applied for their cancellation. The case reached the Supreme Court, which stated that according to the current law there could be no valid marriage between same sex couples (decision 1428/2017). Regarding the law 3719/2008 about the civil partnership union, which excluded same sex couples, appeals to European Court for Human Rights law followed, with the government to argue that this law is not a violation of the rights of same sex couples, since it does not constitute the rights of heterosexual couples either (rights of social security and assets). In addition, it argued that same sex couples could manage matters of inheritance with common laws. Furthermore, arguments had to do with the protection of children and traditional family, while they also mentioned that this law could not regard same sex couples since they cannot reproduce. The Court ruled in favour of the plaintiffs and law 3719/2008 was concluded that it was discriminating towards same sex couples. In 2015, law 3719/2008 was replaced by law 4556/2015, and same sex couples could sign civil partnerships. However, LGBTI+ organizations thought that this initiative was not bold, since it did not address matters like adoption and marriage. With the same law, article 347 of the Penal Code on the prohibition of intercourse between male sex workers was cancelled, something that also meant the equalization of the age of consent for heterosexual and gay men to 15 years old (Natsi & Papa, 2019; Ioannou, 2018).

In 2014, law 927/1979, which defined racist speech as a penal offence, was replaced by law 4285/2014, which for the first time included crimes based on racism independently from other crimes in the penal code. In addition, law 4356/2015 for the first time disassociated hate from the justification of the racist crimes. Thus, every crime based on characteristics protected by law would be addressed as a hate crime. Finally yet importantly, there was also protection in provision services, where it became a penal offence to deny services based on law-protected characteristics (Natsi & Papa, 2019).

In 2017, the new law 4491/2017 added gender as a criterion of racist discrimination and crime (Natsi & Papa, 2019). The same law, simplified the process needed of trans people to reassign their gender in public forms, such as their identification card and their birth certificate. Up until then, the process could only be done after a finalized court decision, which many times involved surgery of gender reassignment as a prerequisite (Natsi & Papa, 2019).

In December 2018, with the law 4538/2018 couples who are in a civil partnership, thus same sex couples as well, gained the right of becoming foster parents. However, this law excluded couples from adoption (Fleischmann, 2019).



It can be argued that in the second decade of the 21st century, Greece was moving towards a more inclusive approach regarding LGBTI+ people rights. However, in November 2019 a drawback was set. The Greek parliament with a majority of 170 members out of 300, voted against the constitutional establishment of the annulment of discrimination due to sexual orientation, gender characteristics and gender identity. In its current form, the article states, “All those in the Greek territory enjoy the full protection of their life, honour and freedom, without discrimination based on nationality, race, language and religious or political beliefs. Exceptions are permitted in cases provided for by international law” (Avgi, 2019).

1.1 Timeline of LGBTI+ rights in the country

Year	Rights
1951	Decriminalization of Homosexuality
2005	Equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation in the workplace and services
2010	Gender is added as a characteristic that is protected from unequal treatment
2014	Sexual orientation is added as criteria for racist crimes
2015	Civil partnership includes same sex couples Cancellation of prohibition of intercourse between gay sex workers Equalization of age of consent
2017	Ability of gender reassignment without surgery
2018	Rights for fostering to couples in civil partnership
2019	Vote against constitutional establishment of the annulment of discrimination due to sexual orientation, gender characteristics and gender identity



1.2. Relevant statistical data about LGBTI+ situation in Greece

In order to be able to discern the general tendencies in Greece regarding the rights of LGBTI+ people, we must look or even compare research that has been conducted. In general, there seems to be a small improvement and more people to support LGBTI+ rights. However, negative stereotypes remain, and discriminations are common.

For example, according to the Eurobarometer, out of 1,016 people that were interviewed in May 2019 in Greece, only 64% of them agree that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people. Regarding same sex marriage, only 39% support it; however, this figure is increased by 6 points in comparison with 2015 (Special Eurobarometer 493, 2019).

In addition, 70%, 57% and 54% believe that discrimination is very common against sexual orientation, transgender and intersex people respectively. However, this percentage seems to be lower than the one that has been recorded in 2015. At the same time, the 38%, 47% and 45% respectively, would not feel comfortable of having a LGBTI+ person in positions of power, percentages that are the highest among other groups, such as people of different religion or country of origin, but lower from the ones of 2015. The highest percentages are also documented in their reactions if their children had an intimate relationship with people of the same sex, intersex or trans people. 70% (71% for trans people) mentioned that they would not feel comfortable, which is lower than 2015. Regarding transgender people, 54% of interviewees believe that trans people should be able to change their gender in official papers, a figure that has declined from 2015 by 9 points (Special Eurobarometer 493, 2019).

Furthermore, Colour Youth conducted research in order to find out what was the situation in the public space. This programme, among others recorded instances of gender-based violence and discrimination occurrences due to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. In a period from 1/4/2014 to 30/11/2015 there were 101 instances documented regarding violence (96.03%) or discrimination (3.96%) with 140 victims and 194 perpetrators. The majority of the victims (46.53%) were assaulted with two or more perpetrators, while almost half of the instances included verbal violence with homophobic and transphobic comments. The average age of the perpetrators was 29.39 years old, while 89.11% were men. What is very alarming is that the vast majority of people (87%) who go through an assault do not report it to the appropriate authorities, either for personal reasons (57.95%), or because they do not trust the Greek justice system (21.59%). A percentage below 10% mentioned that they feared to report it, that the incidence was not so important, that they feared the reaction of their relatives, or that the incident happened long time ago (Theophilopoulos, 2015).



At the same time, Colour Youth have founded a helpline (Next to You- 11528)³, which is a national helpline for psychological support and empowerment to LGBTI+ people, their families and educators. Up until now, the helpline had dealt with 2330 telephone instances and 485 counselling meetings.

Regarding health sector, Paradiso Project⁴ a European funded project, conducted a research about the barriers LGBTI+ people face in their healthcare access and in 2018 gathered an online input from 368 Greek healthcare professionals. It found that 42% of the participants had little knowledge about LGBTI+ issues. In addition, 41% of them were not sure if they could identify a LGBTI+ patient and 45% were not sure that their colleagues would be able to provide them health care. 6% agreed that LGBTI+ patients should be hospitalised in different wards, and the same percentage believes that homosexuality, bisexuality and intersexuality are diseases, even though they are not sure why (PRAKSIS, 2018).

Regarding education, Colour Youth conducted a research about the experiences of LGBTI+ students in 2017 with a sample of 3,747 people. 74.2% of the participants have heard homophobic comments in schools, while 58.1% responded that those comments came from their teachers. 27.9% of the adolescents that have suffered gender-based violence in school have not reported it, while even for those who did, the matter was not properly addressed. Likewise, from a sample of 944 people, 74.7% mentioned that they often hear sexist comments in the school premises, while 53.4% stated that they have survived violence or assault in school due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (Iliopoulou, Nikolakakis, Diakoumanakou, & Grammenidis, 2018).

Furthermore, Colour Youth conducted another research about the experiences of LGBTI+ students in 2017 with a sample of 3,747 people. 74.2% of the participants have heard homophobic comments in schools, while 58.1% responded that those comments came from their teachers. 27.9% of the adolescents that have suffered gender-based violence in school have not reported it, while even for those who did, the matter was not properly addressed. Likewise, from a sample of 944 people, 74.7% mentioned that they often hear sexist comments in the school premises, while 53.4% stated that they have survived violence or assault in school due to sexual orientation,

³ <https://11528.gr/crowdfunding-gia-ti-stirixi-toy-11528-dipla-soy/>

⁴ <https://paradiso.gr/the-project/>



gender identity or gender expression (Iliopoulou, Nikolakakis, Diakoumanakou, & Grammenidis, 2018).

In 2016, a policy from the Ministry of Education was introduced for the lower secondary education. For one week every year, educators had the opportunity to discuss among others about gender identities, an issue that was for the first time introduced in educational settings. This measure caused many reactions from conservative groups and the church. However, in the school year 2018-2019, 1,656 out of a total 1,700 secondary high schools participated and 876 of them focused on gender identities⁵. Besides, data from the Eurobarometer for 2019 show that only a small percent of 30-32% opposed to the inclusion of gender identities in school textbooks (Special Eurobarometer 493, 2019). Yet, in 2020, the new government cancelled the thematic week⁶.

Regarding the media, there is a number of magazines that publish issues either only about the LGBTI+ community (such as T-zine, LesbianGr, GayHellas.gr and Antivirus Magazine), or some mainstream magazines that also support LGBTI+ rights as well. On the other hand, there are media adjacent to far right groups that sometimes even openly, express homophobic, transphobic, biphobic views and hate speech. Unfortunately, in most of the cases these media remain unpunished (Žufić Dujmović, Kuktoraitė, Paganis, Theofilopoulos, & Vajagić, 2019).

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

2.1. Education

Within the framework of the Diversity and Childhood project, two interviews with stakeholders in the Education field were taken in order to map the situation, the needs, and the existing policies in

⁵http://iep.edu.gr/images/IEP/EPISTIMONIKI_YPIRESIA/Epist_Grafeia/Graf_Ereynas_A/Thematiki_Evdomada_2018-2019/2019-09-09_Parartima_Apotimissi_Thematikis_Evdomadas_2018-2019.pdf

⁶ <https://edu.klimaka.gr/sxoleia/146-ekpaidevtikh-klimaka/3194-thematikh-ebdomada>



schools, in Greece. We try to cover briefly the largest part of the education and for this reason, we conducted one interview with a primary education teacher in a public institution and one with a secondary education assistant headmistress in a private institution. Both of the interviewees have more than 15 years of experience in the education field.

Generally, their views converge regarding most of the subjects discussed during the interviews. For both of them, school is a “lighthouse of values” releasing stereotypes, builds critical thinking that makes children aware of their place in society and be a bearer of change as well as is a protector/defender of humans rights.

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

The two interviewees agreed that the main issues and difficulties faced by LGBTI+, gender non-conforming children and youth in Greece, are their parents and more specifically the whole family circle and then the society. In addition, they identified as main needs for the LGBTI+, gender non-conforming children and youth the support of their family, society and avoiding stigma. As supported by the second interviewee, school plays an important role in order to build characters and behaviours, and educators act as a role model for their students.

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

Regarding good practices, *Rainbow School* under the Auspices of Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, in 2018 built a course for lower secondary high school. This course was proposed for the thematic week, in which for one week teachers had the possibility to talk about a variety of issues, gender identity among them. The course is called “*Raising awareness of Issues of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Gender Characteristics*”⁷ and it exists from 2009. It aims to raise awareness and to inform and train educators to contribute in a safe, friendly and inclusive school for every child. Even though, this course is freely accessible in the internet and in the website of the Institute of Educational Policy, thematic week from January 2020 was cancelled.

⁷<http://www.iep.edu.gr/el/thematiki-evdomada-2018-2019/foreis-them-evd/polyxromo-sxoleio-evaisthitopoiisi-mathitron-mathiton-se-zitimata-seksoualikoy-prosanatolismoy-taftotitas-fylou-ekfrasis-fylou-kai-xaraktiristikon-fylou>



In addition, from March 2019, Orlando LGBT+ in collaboration with the University of West Attica, have implemented the Gender Identities and Sexual Orientation⁸ course. This courses negotiate issues of discrimination in the LGBTI+ community, they study the history of LGBTI+ movement both in Greece and globally and they focus on training the future professionals on good practices that promote the inclusion and the provision of psychosocial support to LGBTI+ people.

Finally yet importantly, HOMBAT⁹ (Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Schools) is also another European funded project under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) that aims in the prevention of homophobic and transphobic bullying. It was implemented from 2017-2019 in five European countries, Greece among them. It targeted it professionals, students, parents and the public and it provided training in teachers, advisors and parents on how to prevent and address to homophobic and transphobic bullying.

2.1.3. Training needs for education professionals

Regarding the training needs for the educational professionals, as the representative of the private institution indicates, private schools have the freedom to integrate new school policies and implement new projects comparing to the public institutions, where it is more difficult to integrate new practices, policies or projects without the official permission of the Ministry of Education and Religion, something that also confirms the representative of the public institution, mentioning that there is no real freedom to act outside of the curriculum. On the other hand, the private institutions very often ask the contribution of other institutions and/or NGOs in order to cooperate with them to take the education of their students' one-step further. More specific, as recommendations, educators asked for more freedom to adapt the school curriculum with issues relative to human rights, policies as well as LGBTI+ issues.

What they think is important is to continue talking, thinking and training for all the aforementioned matters. Furthermore, as supported by both educators, the most significant subject in education is the "overall awakening" and the "Continuing Professional Development (CPD)". Also, it is important to customize the curriculum and add a "sex education" class into it. Those views correspond with the views of the respondents from the questionnaires, where 72.9%

⁸ <https://orlandolgbt.gr/emfyles-tautotites-kai-seksoulikos-prosanatolismos/>

⁹ <https://www.hombat.eu/>



of them agree that gender and sexual diversity should be addressed in schools, by including gender in the curriculum (54.2%) and by professional training (42.4%).

2.1.4. SWOT related to Education in Greece

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination becomes socially condemned - Increasing visibility of LGTBI people - Increased discourse about bullying in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No regulations or specific policies in education that help or/and support LGBTI+ children - Lack of teachers' training in gender and LGBTI+ issues. - Teachers fear the reaction of parents when addressing LGBTI issues - No protocols against bullying exist

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs and the Ministry addresses more to the problem - Increasing number of trainings on gender issues by NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of homophobic and transphobic discourses in the media and public. - Strong connection of the Orthodox Church with the matters of state - Highly centralised education system, which does not allow initiatives

2.1.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews

“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.” (School teacher).

2.2. Health



Concerning the health field, two interviews with stakeholders were taken, in April, 2020, in order to map the situation, the needs, and the existing policies in the health sector. The professionals work in the private sector and both of them have an idea about gender stereotypes but had not had any specific training, which is something that they were keep mentioning throughout the interview. They seem not to be properly informed about the services and the policies regarding gender, nor for the protocol they should use in case they need it in their work. Their knowledge stems only from circumstantial occurrences, like a discussion in the past, an experience from a friend or an essay from university.

2.2.1. Needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in the health sphere

The two interviewees agreed that the main difficulties that LGBTI+ children might face, they have to do at first with the potential negative stereotypes their guardians might have, that can lead to denial of seeking counselling. Both of them when talking about LGBTI+ people they focus most on the personal attributes they consider they might have, like internalised stigma, trauma having faced rejection from the family, or that they might be subjected to violent behaviours in their environment, attributes that correspond with the online survey as well. At the same time, they recognise that available services are not known to children and raise the issue of confidentiality that might trouble the youth. However, they acknowledge that there have been steps of raising awareness, although not concerted. In addition, LGBTI+ children and youth might face difficulties in hospice centres mainly due to gender stereotypes, and sometimes this may lead to them being treated with lower priority. They also recognize the added burdens trans people might face due to the lack of legal recognition of their gender. One of them highlights the importance of protective laws for the patients, while considers the legal regulation and the creation of protocol important in order to avoid issues of misdiagnose and maltreatment.

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

Regarding good practices in the health sector, one good practice comes from Colour Youth and is called Transcending Youth¹⁰. This practice operated from 2018 and it aims to inform trans people

¹⁰ <https://www.colouryouth.gr/transcending-youth/>



about the process of legal recognition of gender identity and the process of transition. They provide information, support in administrative processes, and trainings to both trans people for advancing their skills and to health professionals in matters that concern trans people. This practice operates on a voluntary basis from August 2018.

Praxis and Transgender Association, from 2017, implement the Empowering the Trans Community¹¹ project, which was funded by the ViiV Health Care UK until 2018. It aims to support the trans community, through health promotion and empowerment actions in areas such as claiming rights, finding resources and communicating. At the same time, it supports and empowers the families and partners of transgender people and provides free legal and psychological assistance

Another good practice is coming from Orlando LGBT+. Orlando LGBT+ has uploaded on its platform a Practitioner's Guide: Helping Families to Support their LGBT Children¹² that was built from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMSHA). This guide aims to help practitioners to understand the critical role of family acceptance and rejection in the welfare of LGBTI+ adolescents, and aspires in helping them implement good practices through a family intervention approach, which will help guardians to support their LGBTI+ children.

2.2.3. Training needs for health professionals

In the challenges of their profession, they both mention the lack of knowledge regarding what constitutes a normal behaviour or psychopathology. Emphasis on the training and the laws is given because they think it is very easy for professionals to diagnose a disorder for something that actually it is not. Regarding their intervention with young people, they consider that parents might interfere in a negative way due to the stereotypes they might have. What is interesting is that both of them highlight the need for targeted interventions in the educational sector, in order for a normalization process to happen. They also mentioned the role of the Orthodox Church that have affected negatively the progress of the LGBTI+ movement. They both emphasize to the necessity of professionals to be properly trained, since mistakes and wrong attitudes can be proved traumatic for their patients. Regarding propositions for better inclusion in the health system, they highlighted the need for raising awareness. They also mentioned the need of normalising attitudes and the need of the empowerment of the LGBTI+ community especially in informing them about

¹¹ <http://tgender.gr/endynamonontas-tin-trans-kinotita/>

¹² <https://serendipitydodah.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/helping-families-support-their-lgbt-children.pdf>



their rights. Finally, yet importantly, they proposed the creation of gender specialists that could be located in hospitals something that could actively engage public institutions in a more inclusive approach.

2.2.4. SWOT related to Health in Greece

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination becomes socially condemned - Increasing visibility of LGTBI people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of training on LGBTI+ matters - Lack of specific protocols

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New laws which are more inclusive towards trans and LGBTI people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of homophobic and transphobic discourses - Medical staff can deny treatment if it objects their individual values - Medical staff is not trained - Strong connection of the Orthodox Church with the matters of state

2.2.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews related Health

“The situation in Greece, for me is disappointing, with the murder of Zak last year to be a wakeup call. Before I was more optimistic, or I did not think of it as much (...) I understood that it is not safe to wander in the streets (ok it is not safe for anyone but), they might attack you due to characteristics of identity, without even doing anything (...) You might walk on the streets and be in danger, how can you feel with this realisation? And let’s say someone attacks you. Who is to help you? (...) Someone can attack you just because you exist”. (Psychologist).

“Yes I would locate differences. Mainly because we talk for these issues. Even though they are not all familiar with the LGBTI+ community, they seem more familiar with let’s say homosexuality. I do not know though what a person from the LGBTI+ community would say , (...) but I think that steps



have been made, legal steps as well, and mainly that we talk about these stuff, that they exist, something that I do not think was happening before”. (Psychologist).

2.3. Family

Regarding the Family field, two questionnaires were handed out to family representatives in order to better map the current needs and gaps in Greece. The respondents were two females aged 52 years old and 44 years old.

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

Both the two representatives of the family filed think that families play a significant role in the reproduction of gender stereotypes, stating that in Greece guardians “correlate the sex of children with the attributed gender roles” and that “parents express an insecurity when their children do not behave according to those roles”. Thus, it is very often for girls to “attend ballet classes”, while boys to “attend football”, or for girls to be “gentle” while boys to be “violent”. In fact, children from the workshop recognized these specific stereotypes as characteristic for girls and boys as well. Regarding the main difficulties, they think that parents pressure children to conform to social gender expectations, something that may cause identity difficulties in children. They identify acceptance as one of the biggest needs of the children, as well as support from their families.

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

Regarding good practices, Share It¹³ is a project by Colour Youth that operated in 2014 and 2015. In that time, an internet platform was created that aimed to help parents of LGBTI+ people to share their experiences. It was on a voluntary basis and is not implemented anymore.

¹³ <https://www.colouryouth.gr/projects/>



2.3.3. Training needs for professionals related to Families

As for the challenges they face and the needs they have, they think that the biggest challenge is to be open-minded without letting their personal views interfere. In fact, one respondent stated that she constantly reflects on her own stereotypes and empathy. When asked how to address this, they stated that the most appropriate step would be the creation of a safe environment in education. At the same time, they think that appropriate trainings must take place in order for them to be better equipped and have the right tools, to learn about the right terminology and also to change their expectations of their children. Last but not least, they propose the establishment of help lines and the involvement of institutions and organizations that work in this field, in order to be able to turn to someone when in need of guidance as well the support of the media in order not only to change the existing stereotypes but to also communicate all the available resources.

2.3.4. SWOT related to Family in Greece

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination becomes socially condemned - Increasing visibility of LGBTBI people in families and in youth - Many NGOs and organisations are active in gender issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong binary stereotypes still exist. - The Greek family structure is traditional and conservative

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New laws that are more inclusive towards LGBTBI families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of homophobic and transphobic discourses - Strong connection of the Orthodox Church with the matters of state



2.3.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews

“Parents sometimes feel annoyed or frightened, when their children do not behave as they are supposed to according to their gender”. (Family member – mother).

“I always have to check within me my stereotypes, my true empathy, my approval and my authenticity as well as my knowledge for gender issues and the expression of them in my country”. (Family member – mother).

“People, especially in local places, are still expressing discrimination and violence, sometimes even to their own children and Greek citizens don’t seem very open minded at gender issues. They are also not enough educated, especially the young ones, and even teachers have difficulty with bringing these kind of issues in the classroom”. (Family member – mother).

2.4. Public spaces

Regarding the Public Space field, two interviews with representatives of the Public Space were taken in order to map the situation in Greece. We conducted two interviews with people involved in private institutions. The first interviewee is cis man with more than 5 years of experience in the field – he is 27 years old – and the other one is a cis female with more than 25 years of experience in the field – she is 50+ years old. As there is an age gap, it is very interesting that their views do not converge much.

2.4.1. Needs mentioned by children to combat violence regarding sexual and gender diversity in public spaces

Generally, according to both interviewees, the main issues and difficulties that LGBTI+ children, gender non-conforming and youth have to face are first their parents and their families and then the society. As the second interviewee states, “if anyone has the acceptance and the respect of their family, in any subject, they can defend society much more easily than those who do not have them”. This also corresponds with the views from the children in the workshop, who stated that family plays the most significant role.



2.4.2. good practices related to public spaces to combat violence against LGBTI+ and gender non-conforming children

Regarding good practices, a project of NGO Colour Youth that operates from April 2014 and is called Tell Us¹⁴, aims to document homophobic and transphobic instances of violence and is addressed to all ages. This practice had already been piloted in 2011 for two months, and afterwards, in 2014 it was re implemented due to the lack of any formal documenting institution. Tell Us is documenting instances of gender based violence due to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation after taking individual interviews with the survivors, or by using the communication form. At the same time, it also provides 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 addition, witnesses of discriminating instances can also make claims. This project faces a restriction due to its implementation only in the periphery of Attica. However, this periphery is the densest residential area.

Another good practice from Gay and Lesbian Community of Athens, Positive Voice, Athens Pride, and Thessaloniki Pride, which is under the auspices of Ministry of Education from June 2016, is a national helpline for psychological support- Next to You¹⁵. This line provides information, support and counselling to children and youth, educators and parents in matters of sexual orientation and gender identity by trained professionals. It operates from 11:00-20:00 and is not free of charge but it also provides the alternative of skype calls.

2.4.3. Training needs for professionals related to public spaces

Regarding training needs for professionals, the interviewees do not give the same attention to professionals in the public sphere. On the contrary they emphasise to educators and necessity of inclusion of relative courses in order to educate children in the human rights and values. In this respect, they think that the role of the workers in public spaces in supporting LGBTI+ children and youth is more general and neutral.

¹⁴ <https://www.colouryouth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Ekthesi-Ergou-Pes-to-S-emas.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://11528.gr/grammi/>



2.4.4. SWOT related to public spaces in Greece

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination becomes socially condemned - Increasing visibility of LGBTI people Many NGOs and organisations are active in gender issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not enough visibility of diversity in public spaces.

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New laws that are more inclusive towards LGBTI people - Discrimination instances in the public sphere are more and more communicated through the mass and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of homophobic and transphobic discourses - Strong connection of the Orthodox Church with the matters of state - Public Authorities are not trained towards gender issues - Protocols do not exist

2.4.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews

“People working in the public sphere in their majority follow current laws and rules. They cannot do that much to support LGBTI people and youth. On the contrary, education is the institution that can change the whole system, it can change the society. It can alter stereotypes and it can positively address to LGBTI children and youth. If we really want things to change, we should emphasise to education”. (Representative of public space).

2.5. Media

Regarding the Media sector, two questionnaires were handed out to journalists that work in the private sector in order to better map the situation in Greece. One of them is a 37 years old homosexual cis man, and the other a 38 years old straight cis woman. The cis man is active in



human rights issues, volunteers in many non-governmental organizations and represents Greece abroad.

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

Regarding the main issues that LGBTI+ children and youth face, both interviewees think that children are more vulnerable to bullying. In addition, the first respondent thinks that LGBTI+ children face different issues depending on their geographical location, with children in the suburban areas to face more dangers of isolation and discrimination due to lack of access to support and participation in campaigns. However, he still thinks that children in the cities face discrimination as well. He thinks that intervention should take place “with mobile units of outreach contact of the Associations, Psychosocial support and special editions of shows and reportage hosted into the local mass media”. Both of them think that the major need of LGBTI+ children and youth is the recognition of their rights and their preferred response. As one of them summarizes what is needed is “recognition and empowerment of their equal human rights and their proper acknowledgement by their preferred self-determination according to the gender they identify”.

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

Regarding good practices, in the media sector, there is the E.T.Ho.S. (Eliminating Transphobic, Homophobic and Biphobic Stereotypes through better media representation)¹⁶ is a European funded project that aims to raise awareness to journalists and media students about transphobia, homophobia and biphobia and the reproduction of negative stereotypes against LGBTI+ people. It is being implemented in three partner countries, Lithuania, Croatia and Greece. Through this project, a media-reporting guide was built with training activities and policy recommendations.

2.5.3. Training needs for media professionals

Regarding the challenges when working with LGBTI+ children, they identify that stigma and oppression may cause them to be suspicious and not express themselves. They think that what

¹⁶ <https://www.ethos-project.eu/>



is of extreme importance is the proper knowledge of terminology, which can affect the perspective and perceive the appropriate meaning and seriousness to the issue. They also believe that there is a lot of effort needed to be done in order for media to be inclusive towards gender diverse people, and that could be achieved by training journalists, by raising awareness and with the proper legislation. Media argue can create a “safe place” by supporting shows and round tables, with reporting on LGBTI+ communities personal lives, and reposting on more issues that concern the LGBTI+ community aiming to raise awareness. In addition, the first respondent considers education the most important institution and the sexual education course a potentially preventative course for bullying and discriminatory behaviours. At the same time, he calls for psychological support in schools for both students and staff. This corresponds with the views of children from the workshop too. In addressing the situation, students talked about the need of raising awareness and of further trainings. They also emphasized in the power of speaking up when they see injustices. They stated that visibility plays a vital role, and that movies and television series, which are addressing the issue, made it easier to be acquainted with it.

2.5.4. SWOT related Media in Greece

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More LGBTI friendly media exist - LGBTI issues broadcast more - Movies and series depict LGBTI characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professionals are not adequately trained - Stereotypes still are massively produced

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs and Activists actively engage with media for more visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of discriminating discourses - Many journalists do not recognise stereotypes and reproduce them or even condone them
---	---

2.5.5. Exemplary quotes from interviews

“We have faced so many rigorous discrimination and harsh violence against people who tried to make their coming out, which has caused a fear to the other members of the community by hiding themselves and feeling ashamed about their personality”. (Journalist).

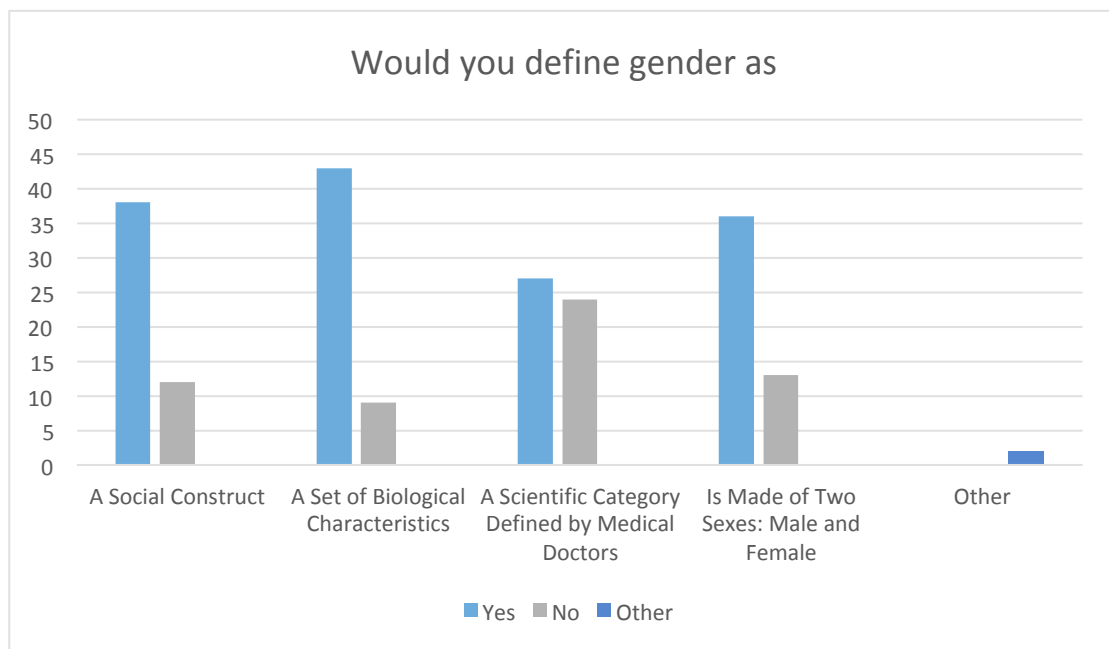
3. Overall evaluation: identify tendencies and absences related to LGBTI+ children in Greece

Greek state in its majority seems that has not dealt efficiently with the prevention and confrontation of discriminations that take place. In fact, Greece seems to take the fourth position of the countries that violate human rights, according to a report that the European Court for Human Rights has published. Violence and discrimination in almost every field exist, and that makes LGBTI+ people afraid of reporting instances of discrimination. In addition, media often reproduce negative stereotypes and issues that concern the community are not considered important enough, something that often is very stressful for young with different gender identity and sexual orientation. Furthermore, the interconnection of orthodox church in primary and secondary education have many times withheld progress in courses about gender identity, and the phenomenon of bullying due to characteristics of gender or even the lack of sexual education in school. At the same time LGBTI+ people, face discrimination in the health sector, a sector that is very neglected and underfunded. Their human rights and the ethics of medical departments are often violated, with many instances of homophobic discrimination, doctors who think that a different sexual orientation is a disease that can be cured, and trans people having no legal rights, thus no economic insurance if they decide to proceed to gender transition (Theophilopoulos, 2015).

In this current research, the respondents even though they have some knowledge about gender, it is fractured and sometimes even misguided. For example, from the online questionnaire, 38



defined gender as a social construct, 43 as a set of biological characteristics, 27 as a scientific category defined by medical doctors, while 36 put it in the dipole of male and female. Only one defined gender in a spectrum and one stated that gender is one the one hand defined by the biological characteristics but people can adjust it later. The interviewees confirmed the same as well. Only some of them are acquainted with the definition of gender, and those are the ones, who are more involved both personally and professionally with gender matters.



What is interesting is that, even if they are not familiar with the gender concept, 64.4% of the online questionnaire stated that they support gender and sexually diverse people while only an 11.9% stated uncomfortable with them. Nevertheless, the sample of the research works in its majority in sectors like education, NGOs, or LGBTI+ organizations, and thus this is not representative of the Greek society.

What is more, is that even though gender based discrimination is documented as an often phenomenon, the majority of the online questionnaire respondents (67.8%) as well as many interviewees state that they have not witnessed a situation of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Interestingly, a 57.6% of the online respondents does not deem gender norms necessary to be analysed in their trainings in order for them to be better equipped to work with LGBTI+ children,



something that can be explained by the fact that they are not properly trained. For example, only the 27.1% has attended trainings to prepare them to work with LGBTI+ children, while all the interviewees mention in some way that they have inadequate knowledge. However even if they are don adequately trained, as it is proved from the online questionnaire, a percentage of 45.8% knows specific services, which are addressed to LGBTI+ children and youth. Contradicting, most of the interviewees did not know specific policies, and those who did, only knew them after personal search and motivation.

Another interesting thing is that in the interviewees of the education field and the public space consider taking into consideration the gender in their work as something negative. On the other hand, the other respondents considered it as something necessary. This may had to do with either a misunderstanding of the question, or it was based on the view that in order to be objective they have to “get rid of” variables such as gender.

Furthermore, even though all of the respondents admit of needing more training, it seems that few of them actually participate in when trainings happen. This could explain why only a 10.2% of the online survey believe that gender norms influence their work with LGBTI+ children.

Regarding the challenges that they face, the majority of them mentioned the established gender stereotypes of parents and guardians that may prove to be a barrier to the healthy development of children. In addition, they all stated that LGBTI+ children are mostly in need of acceptance and support from their environment, something that can empower them to deal with every other negative attitude. In addition, regarding the challenges when working with LGBTI+ children, they recognize the:

- Lack of provider knowledge of affirmative practices and recourses (74.6%),
- Lack of available services (61%),
- Lack on LGBTI+ issues (64.4%),
- Lack of services for LGBTI+ children (61%),
- Lack of training on working with LGBTI+ children (66.1%) as well as
- Lack of confidentiality (61%).

Last but not least, they think that Greece is not welcoming towards LGBTI+ people yet. However, they discern that positive steps have been made towards that direction, and they acknowledge that the visibility the LGBTI+ communities have gained has played an important role in that. Regarding intervention methods, both the respondents from the online questionnaire, children



from the workshop, as well as interviewees consider education the most promising way of combating discrimination and transforming people's views. At the same time, they also propose the establishment of mobile units, and gender specialists in a variety of fields (e.g. schools, hospitals), psychological support, as well as the promotion of LGBTI+ friendly media shows, documentaries, articles etc.



References

- Avgi. (26 de 11 de 2019). *Greek Parliament voted against non-discrimination*. Obtido em 30 de 03 de 2020, de Avgi: <http://www.avgi.gr/article/10811/10439023/piso-olotachos-gia-t-ellenike-boule-katapsephise-ten-apagoreuse-ton-diakriseon>
- Fleischmann, A. (18 de 06 de 2019). *When Countries of Europe Decriminalised Homosexuality?* Obtido em 30 de 03 de 2020, de Euronews: <https://gr.euronews.com/2019/06/18/pote-apopoinikopoiisan-omofylofilia-xwres-evrwphs>
- Iliopoulou, C., Nikolakakis, N., Diakoumanakou, F., & Grammenidis, K. (2018). *Experiences of the LGBT Student Community in Secondary Education*. Athens: Colour Youth.
- Ioannou, C. (2018). *Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Schools. National Report Greece*. Athens: KMOP, Social Action and Innovation Centre.
- Lukeas, A. (12 de 04 de 2017). *When the Exclusion of Homosexuals from Blood Donations will be Cancelled?* Obtido em 01 de 04 de 2020, de Efimerida ton Syntakton: https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/dikaiomata/106788_pote-tha-katargithei-o-apokleismos-ton-omofylofilon-apo-tin-aimodosia
- National Commission for Human Rights. (2004). Athens: National Commission for Human Rights. Obtido de http://www.nchr.gr/images/English_Site/Ektheseis/eng2004.pdf
- Natsi, D., & Papa, T. (2019). *Legislative Approach of Gender Discrimination in Greece*. Thessaloniki: Heinrich Boll Stiftung. Obtido de https://gr.boell.org/sites/default/files/gender_study_lr.pdf
- PRAKSIS. (2018). *PARADISO. Participatory Approach for Raising Awareness and Fighting Discrimination Concerning Sexual and Gender Orientation in the Healthcare Sector*. Obtido de https://paradiso.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/d2.1-desk-quantitative-qualitative-analysis-report_public-report.pdf
- Sotirchou, D. (n.d.). *LGBT: Legal Approach of the Rights and the Violations of the LGBT Citizens, Institutional Protection, Legal Status and Statistical Data*. Obtido em 31 de 03 de 2020, de Curia.gr: <https://curia.gr/lgbt-nomiki-proseggisi-ton-dikaiomaton-kai-ton-paraviaseon-eis-varos-ton-lgbt-politon-thesmiki-prostasia-nomiko-kathestos-ana-xora-kai-statistika-dedomena/>
- Special Eurobarometer 493. (2019). *Discrimination in the European Union*. European Commission.



The Greek Ombudsman. (2018). *Respect Makes the Difference. Guidelines to Public Service Employees for Equal Treatment*. The Greek Ombudsman.

Theofilopoulos, T. (2015). *Homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination in Greece: Final Report of the Project "Tell Us"*. Athens: Colour Youth. Obtido de <https://www.colouryouth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Ekthesi-Ergou-Pes-to-S-emas.pdf>

Žufić Dujmović, S., Kuktoraitė, E., Paganis, P., Theofilopoulos, T., & Vajagić, N. (2019). *Media reporting and reference guide on LGBT issues*. Athens: KMOP Social Action and Innovation Centre & Colour Youth Athens LGBTQ Youth Community. Obtido de <https://www.ethos-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Media-reporting-and-reference-guide-on-LGBT-issues.pdf>





Diversity and Childhood

Project's coordinator: Dr. Jose Antonio Langarita

Address: Pl. Sant Domènec, 9 17004 Girona

Email: diversityandchildhood@udg.edu

Website: <https://diversityandchildhood.eu>



Funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)

This Project was funded by European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The content of this website represents the views of the author only and it his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

