



Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics

National Report - Italy

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WP2_D2.7_National Report - Italy



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1. Introduction

Individuals who identify as LGBTQI+¹ or are perceived as LGBTQI+ by the society still face high levels of various forms of discrimination, harassment, violence, hate crimes and victimisation in several areas of their life. The recent Agency on Fundamental Rights of the European Union - EUFRA - survey of 140,000 LGBTI² carried out in 30 countries (EUFRA 2020) does not seem to highlight a great improvement in this group's rights if compared with the survey carried out in 2012 (EUFRA 2013), even though a more open attitude towards it seems to emerge in the general public. In fact, on the one hand, discrimination spans from the access to work for people who openly express their gender identity or sexual orientation to family rights and low levels of political participation. Results show that LGBTI people continue to face multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination. 11% of respondents said they felt discriminated against when looking for work, only a 2% decrease from 2012. For those who felt discriminated against at work, the number increased, from 19% to 22%, and for transgender respondents, the increase was even larger: 22% in 2012 and 36% in 2019 (EUFRA 2020). LGBTI people also face discrimination when looking for housing (11%), when using healthcare or social services (16%), in educational institutions (19%), at cafés, restaurants, bars or nightclubs (22%), at shops (13%), and when showing identification documents (5%) (EUFRA 2020). On the other hand, the perspective of the general public shows increasing tolerance, though there is still much ground to cover. The 2019 Eurobarometer survey on social acceptance of LGBTI people in the European Union - EU - found that 72% of Europeans say there is nothing wrong in a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex, representing 5% increase from a Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2015 (European Commission - EC - 2019).

Despite the EU and Council of Europe - CoE - legal documents and policies promoting non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender

¹ The Acronym 'LGBTQI+' refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transexual, Questioning/Queer, Intersex. The '+' in the end implies the inclusion of other self-definitions that are not expressly mentioned. Throughout the report this acronym will be used when referring to the project and research analysis, while other ones will be used (e.g., 'LGBT') according to the quoted sources.

² Respondents of the FRA surveys were able to choose from the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex, therefore the acronym LGBTI is used in this report when referencing the survey.

identity, these pieces of law seem to have low or no effectiveness at local and national level. Society is not yet inclusive towards the LGBTQI+ community.

It has also to be pointed out that LGBTQI+ are perceived as a monolithic groups by "outsiders", while they are a very heterogeneous and with different stances, both in terms of specific needs within the group "LGBTQI+" (e.g., between lesbians and gays, transgender people etc.) and in terms of intersections between their sexual orientation or gender identity and other identity categories (e.g., migrant or minority background; disability, and age).

1.1 Existing needs

There is an urgent need to improve LGBTQI+'s formal and informal political participation, since their rights cannot be achieved without their active participation and voice. The project **VoiceIt - Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics** addresses the Rights, Equality and Citizenship - REC - Programme - AG-2018/Action Grants 2018: REC Work Programme's priority "Fighting against discrimination based on sexual orientation in society and promoting the rights of LGBTI people" of the European Commission. The project aims at contributing to this by engaging LGBTQI+ individuals to participate in the political discourse, state/government officials and representatives of political institutions in a constructive dialogue and by supporting them to liaise with each other for the integration of LGBTQI+'s concerns and needs in political decision-making processes.

1.2 Aim of the project

The VoiceIt project aims to help those who are motivated to participate in the political discourse be actively engaged, take part in political life and have a say. At the same time, VoiceIt aims to raise awareness and sensitise government officials, representatives of political institutions at different level of governance and the general public in Greece, Cyprus, and Italy about the enrichment deriving from the inclusive participation and the right of everyone to express their opinion with regards to local, national and European decision-making. The project concerns the need for a constructive dialogue

between LGBTQI+ individuals who wish to participate in the political discourse, government officials and representatives of political institutions. The ultimate objectives are the mutual understanding of the *status quo* of LGBTQI+ rights in the participating countries, a shared identification of potential solutions and initiatives for legal and political reform and the direct involvement of LGBTQI+ individuals in political decision making.

1.3 Aim of the WP2

The aim of the WP2 is to assess the needs and identification of misconceptions about LGBTQI+ Rights in Greece, Cyprus and Italy. It seeks to:

- pinpoint perceptions of LGBTQI+ rights held by individuals who identify as LGBTQI+, government officials, representatives of political institutions and civil society;
- pinpoint barriers hindering the rights of LGBTQI+ with minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- pinpoint the needs for law and policy reform as expressed by the four relevant groups of respondents;
- pinpoint discrepancies in the perception of all the above among individuals who identify as LGBTQI+, government officials, representatives of political institutions and the general public.

This report represents the main result of WP2 in Italy, together with those written by partner organizations in Greece and Cyprus. The three national reports were compiled on the basis of a common table of contents, in order to allow a comparative perspective. The report covers a part containing a summary of the secondary data on the perceptions of LGBTQI+ people's rights in the national context of reference, the discriminatory episodes, the national legal and policy framework and, lastly, the recommendations for the desired reforms (sections 3 - 3.6).

Sections 4 - 4.7 the data of the empirical research carried out in Italy are presented.

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk research: aim and objectives

The desk and field research aims are to identify:

- a. the existent legal and policy framework for ensuring and enforcing LGBTQI+ rights;
- b. the occurrence of discriminatory incidents against individuals who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQI+ as reported in secondary data (e.g., national and European research findings);
- c. the occurrence of discriminatory incidents against individuals who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQI+ as reported by themselves, government officials, representatives of political institutions and the general public in the survey;
- d. the discrepancy between the perceptions of LGBTQI+ individuals, government officials, representatives of political institutions and the general public regarding the above and regarding the inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals/organisation in political decision making.

More in detail, the desk research consists of a review and analysis of relevant legal and statistical data and resources (existing legislations, previous surveys and research etc.) in relation to four items:

1. the participation of LGBTQI+ in politics and the form that this has nationally;

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