



National Action Plan to promote LGBTQI+ rights- Italy



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Introduction

VoiceIt Project: Strengthening LGBTQI+'s voice in politics

VoiceIt Project: Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics aims at increasing political participation and inclusion in decision-making processes of LGBTQI+ people in Cyprus, Greece and Italy. In addition, VoiceIt involves political institutions at different levels of governance, officials and civil servants, LGBTQI+ organisations, political and government representatives and LGBTQI+ people interested in political discourse. The main goal of the project is to raise awareness regarding the importance of inclusive participation and about the right of each individual to have a say in local, national and European decision-making.

Our goals

- Contribute to the **inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals in the political decision-making process.**
- **Co-create a shared vision** regarding LGBTQI+ inclusion in politics
- Increase **LGBTQI+'s participation in political decision-making.**
- **Strengthen national/international networks** for LGBTQI+ individuals interested in participating in the political decision-making process.
- **Raise the awareness of political parties and bodies** regarding the importance of promoting gender equality with a focus on LGBTQI+.

Results

- The development of National reports **regarding the misconceptions and needs about LGBTQI+ rights.**
- The establishment of National Priority Working Groups **to create a shared vision of the foreseeable future of LGBTQI+ rights.**
- The development of a LGBTQI+ Rights Information Program for civil society, **state/governmental officials and representatives of political institutions.**
- The development of a LGBTQI+ Rights Empowerment Program for LGBTQI+ individuals, **advocates of LGBTQI+ rights and other relevant professionals.**
- **The organisation** of LGBTQI+ Rights Information & Empowerment Seminars.
- **The organisation** of empowerment activities **for relevant stakeholders.**

More information is available on the web site:

<https://www.voiceitproject.eu/index.php/it/home-3/>

Methodology of the Priority Working Groups

In the framework of the VoiceIt project, the efforts of the Priority Working Groups (PWGs) were aimed at:

- creating a shared vision about LGBTQI+ rights;
- outlining the priorities in regards to policy reforms;
- drafting a National Action Plan, containing policy proposals and interventions to affirm LGBTQI+ rights in Italy;
- presenting it to relevant governmental bodies.

The participants of PWGs were composed of: LGBTQI+ individuals, members from civil society, institutional representatives and public officials.

During the PWGs, the participants established a collaborative agreement and explored intersectionality as a useful theoretical tool to deconstruct the complex "LGBTQI+¹" category and its multiple instances. PWG participants collected the materials provided by experts (who had been invited over the months with the objective to address LGBTQI+ rights and vulnerabilities of specific categories) and determined: 1) which policy levels to address; 2) the areas of intervention; 3) what intersections to include; 4) which rights to promote.

Moreover, the PWG members identified six different analytical categories through brainstorming techniques. In order to facilitate cooperation, the participants individually collected various materials through offline and online activities.

Objectives of the National Action Plan and Intersectional approach

The purpose of this document is to:

- identify national priorities regarding LGBTQI+ rights;
- identify policy proposals to address existing barriers, improve understanding and acceptance by society;
- promote LGBTQI+ political participation.

The proposals included in this National Action Plan are addressed to policy-makers at various levels of governance (local, regional, national and European).

¹ The Italian version of the NAP includes the "A for asexuality" in the LGBTQI+ acronym, as decided by the members of the PWGs.

The intersectional approach is intended as an analytical tool, useful for implementing active policies. In particular, intersectionality could allow to identify specific needs and problems faced by LGBTQI+ people who experience multiple discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, ethnicity, age, social class and disability.

In addition, this analytical approach could help identify appropriate forms of protection and policy proposals, aimed at eliminating unequal opportunities and encouraging LGBTQI+ participation in political, social and economic life. Hence, the Priority Working Groups members' intuition was to deconstruct the complex "LGBTQI+" category and to analyse some specific intersections, such as:

- **LGBTQI+ refugees and migrants**
- **LGBTQI+ second generations, including young Roma**
- **LGBTQI+ people with disabilities**
- **LGBTQI+ elderly people**
- **LGBTQI+ minors, young people and families**

1. LGBTQI+ people in Italy: general issues

In November 2020, the Chamber of Deputies approved a bill against homo/bi/transphobic discrimination and **hate crime against LGBTQI+ people**, also known as the "Zan Law" after the proposing deputy, Alessandro Zan. This bill, which is currently blocked in the Senate, provides for "measures to prevent and combat discrimination and violence on the grounds of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability".

The **law against homophobia**, hate crimes and hate-speech could facilitate the creation of safe spaces for LGBTQI+ people's participation in politics. The results of the empirical research carried out within the Voicelt project showed that 59.15% of LGBTQI+ respondents believe they cannot participate in political processes in Italy without running the risk of suffering discrimination. Furthermore, 56% of LGBTQI+ respondents believe that if they were to engage in political processes in Italy, their positions would not be taken into consideration as much as those of cisgender heterosexual citizens². However, seven Italian regions have adopted **regional anti-discrimination laws**: Umbria, Emilia Romagna, Piedmont, Tuscany, Liguria, Marche and Sicily. Legislation at regional level could partly compensate for the lack of action on a national level, limited to the areas of competence of the regions.

² Voicelt project, July 2020, *Strengthening the voice of LGBTQI+ people in politics* - Policy Report.



Other gaps in the legislation concern the Law 164 of 1982 about **transsexuality and gender identity**, which sets out the rules on gender reassignment. This law was an important achievement for Italy. However, international changes in the field of human rights and the increasing number of people who self-identify as transgender are making it urgent to reform the law, in order to guarantee the full effectiveness of the right to gender identity and gender expression. In fact, the World Health Organisation has recently decided to remove gender dysphoria from the world classification of diseases and the Council of Europe has recommended member states to make procedures for gender reassignment less onerous, ensure access to health services on the basis of **informed consent**, while respecting the right to privacy and equal treatment for trans people.

Our proposals for LGBTQI+ political and social participation

- Dissemination of best practices of co-planning between local authorities and Third Sector, with particular attention to small towns and rural areas.
- The reception of intersectionality by Italian case law, with the aim of fighting discrimination through the definition and regulation of the intersectional approach.
- The adoption of intersectionality as an analytical tool for the implementation of active policies through cross-sectoral cooperation between different institutional bodies.
- The promotion of the intersectional approach, through the collection and dissemination of experiences and best practices at national and European level.
- Cross-sectoral support for organisations (especially community-based organisations) and NGOs working in the field of LGBTQI+ rights should be a priority. Projects aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of LGBTQI+ people should be funded, in order to provide support, raise awareness, create networks and meet multiple needs.

2. LGBTQI+ Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees

2.1 Asylum seekers and refugees

Our proposals:

- **Facilitate the recognition of asylum applications on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity**
Promote interventions and actions for the training of interviewers, who are in charge of the Territorial Commission's hearings with the asylum-seeker during the process of applying for international protection, with the aim of:





- i. *focusing on assessing the credibility of the interviewee's story instead of verifying their sexual orientation or gender identity;*
 - ii. *using an intersectional approach and recognise multiple discrimination during all the steps of the asylum application;*
 - iii. *training interviewers to remove respondent's hesitations and modesty when expressing a discriminatory condition;*
 - iv. *removing prejudice or suspicion towards LGBTQI+ asylum seekers by encouraging a neutral approach when assessing applications for international protection.*
- **Promote the inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in the entire reception system for applicants who are requesting international protection.**
 - a. Address the lack of guidelines and good practices in the reception of transgender and non-gender people, in order to create more inclusive environments and employ operators which are sensitive to specific needs.
 - b. Promote awareness-raising actions and interventions on LGBTQI+ issues, which target cultural mediators and NGO operators.
 - c. Support the collection of data on international protection requests and the migration phenomenon for the creation of policies and good practices addressed to professionals involved in the accompaniment of international protection requests.
 - **Eliminate stereotypes concerning LGBTQI+ refugees**
 - a. Promote communication campaigns on stereotypes and negative narratives about refugees and LGBTQI+ people, in order to combat misinformation.
 - b. Promote awareness-raising actions on LGBTQI+ issues and stereotypes towards refugees addressed to policy-makers and institutions, with the aim to give wide visibility to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ refugees.

2.2 Migrants

Our proposals

- **Promote a more inclusive migrant reception system for LGBTQI+ people**
 - a. Promote awareness-raising actions and interventions about gender and sexual orientation issues for migrant reception operators, encouraging the adoption of an intersectional perspective to identify the specific needs, vulnerabilities and stereotypes faced by LGBTQI+ migrants.



- b. Include a gender-based perspective in the analysis of migration processes, in order to develop adequate reception policies and understand the specific needs of LGBTQI+ migrants.
 - c. Facilitate LGBTQI+ migrants' access to the services offered by cooperatives, associations and NGOs that receive migrants and provide funding and support to these entities, in order to create safe environments that are sensitive to the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants.
- **Remove stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour towards LGBTQI+ migrants and fighting social discrimination**
 - a. Launch a wide-ranging communication campaign to remove stereotypes and negative narratives regarding migrants and LGBTQI+ people, and counter the spread of fake news and misinformation for the benefit of the native and foreign population.
 - b. Promote inclusive urban policies, that facilitate inter-ethnic coexistence in urban spaces: recognise migrants as legitimate inhabitants of cities; ensure safe and discrimination-free urban environments; raise awareness of the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants.
 - c. Promote policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion, which both affect foreign population and LGBTQI+ people, as well as render these categories vulnerable to further forms of discrimination, through:
 - i. *the definition and the implementation of housing policies against ghettoisation and other forms of social segregation;*
 - ii. *the definition and implementation of social interventions to facilitate access to housing and essential services against social inequalities.*

3. LGBTQI+ second generations, including young Roma

3.1 Second generations

Our proposals

- **Facilitate political and social participation of LGBTQI+ second generations of migrants**
 - a. Facilitate access to Italian citizenship in order to guarantee the right to active and passive voting and encourage the inclusion of LGBTQI+ second generations in political life as decision-makers on all levels of governance.
 - b. Raise awareness among LGBTQI+ communities and grassroots movements of the issues faced by second generations who are



motivated to participate in active political life through specific actions and interventions.

- c. Guarantee access to education and employment, ensure discrimination free and safe environments.
- **Remove the risk of discrimination within ethnic communities and Italian society**
 - a. Develop actions and interventions aimed at acquiring knowledge about sexual orientation and gender identity, addressed to parents and relatives of second-generation LGBTQI+ people, in order to prevent homotransphobic attitudes within the family and the ethnic community.
 - b. Develop a wide-ranging information and awareness-raising campaign about the issue of second generations, addressed to a broad audience with the aim of preventing discriminatory behaviour based on ethnicity.
 - c. Include diversity education in school curricula (by including it among the educational activities planned in the civic education programme) and promote training activities for teaching staff about LGBTQI+ issues and multiple discrimination.

3.2 Young Roma

Our proposals:

- **Improve political and social participation of LGBTQI+ young Roma**
 - a. Facilitate access to Italian citizenship for young Roma in order to facilitate the participation in politics and decision-making processes of LGBTQI+ second generations.
 - b. Facilitate access to Welfare State services for people of Roma ethnicity who do not have a residence permit, ensuring access to health facilities (e.g., essential for people wishing to undertake gender transition).
 - c. Guarantee the right to housing, access to education and employment for young people of Roma ethnicity, in order to: overcome economic inequalities; assure personal fulfilment and economic independence; promote inclusion of LGBTQI+ Roma people in society.





- **Eliminate social stigma related to ethnicity and discriminatory behaviour towards LGBTQI+ people**
 - a. Protect young LGBTQI+ Roma who live in "Roma camps", where social control and relational constraints make it difficult to express their sexual orientation or gender identity. They also run the risk of being marginalised by the community without any alternative outside the camp. This can be achieved, through:
 - i. *awareness-raising actions and interventions concerning the specific vulnerabilities of young LGBTQI+ people of Roma ethnicity, addressed to social workers and decision-makers. It is advisable to adopt an intersectional approach in order to identify discrimination, stereotypes and oppressions acting on several levels at the same time;*
 - ii. *awareness-raising actions and interventions about gender identity and sexual orientation addressed to Roma associations;*
 - iii. *awareness-raising actions and interventions about Roma youth issues within LGBTQI+ associations and communities, in order to provide a voice and a safe space for discussion to LGBTQI+ people of Roma ethnicity;*
 - iv. *actions and interventions aimed at improving young Roma people's skills and knowledge about their sexuality;*
 - v. *support and mediation actions by institutions and associations towards LGBTQI+ Roma young people and their families.*
 - b. Recognise Roma cultures in Italy and promote information and awareness-raising campaigns with the objective of removing stereotypes and stigmas based on ethnicity.
 - c. Improve media and political narrative about Roma people.

4. LGBTQI+ people with disabilities

Our proposals:

- **Promote more inclusive care services for LGBTQI+ people with disabilities**
 - a. Raise awareness and provide training for formal and informal caregivers about the specific needs of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities.
 - b. Promote interventions and policies that incorporate the innovations put forward by the "biopsychosocial model" and by the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), while also taking into account the sexual orientation and gender identity of people with disabilities.
 - c. Promote more inclusive social and healthcare services for LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, by:





- i. *promoting medical, scientific and social research that is more aware of gender and sexual orientation issues, with a particular focus on LGBTQI+ people with disabilities;*
 - ii. *developing guidelines for healthcare professionals with the aim of promoting correct information and a conscious use of language;*
 - iii. *encouraging the existing support networks outside the family and generating attention to multiple forms of vulnerability;*
 - iv. *implementing training and awareness-raising actions for healthcare professionals about the specificities of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities;*
 - v. *building a regional social health plan that can direct interventions towards the inclusion of LGBTQI+ with disabilities and elderly people throughout the territory.*
- d. Promote interventions and awareness-raising actions to remove stereotypes towards the sexuality of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, such as:
 - i. *training and awareness-raising activities for caregivers, as well as health and social workers about the importance of sexual wellbeing for people with disabilities;*
 - ii. *recognising the right to sexuality for LGBTQI+ people with disabilities.*
- **Develop inclusion policies at various levels that are not merely medical and assistance-oriented, but that promote the full enjoyment of rights, equality, complete political and social participation and planning of an autonomous life. An intersectional approach is recommended in order to give proper space and dignity to each disability and to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ people**
 - a. Include LGBTQI+ people with disabilities in decision-making processes and in the creation of policies targeted at LGBTQI+ people with disabilities.
 - b. Promote welfare interventions that facilitate the autonomy and economic independence of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, so that they won't have to rely exclusively on the family environment (which, in the case of people who define themselves as LGBTQI+, might be hostile) and to recognize their right to housing and access to employment.
 - c. Provide LGBTQI+ social facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities.
 - d. Encourage a change in the planning of services for people with disabilities, moving from an approach focused on reducing deficits to one aimed at developing the contexts of coexistence, analysing the desires and constraints of people with disabilities.
 - e. Include within local Area Plans social and health interventions related to LGBTQI+ people with disabilities and targeted at their specific needs.
 - f. Promote actions against online violence, making the virtual environment safer for LGBTQI+ people with disabilities.
- **Remove stigma and prejudice related to disability of LGBTQI+ people**





- a. Promote information and awareness campaigns in order to:
 - i. *encourage the recognition and removal of multiple discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices related to LGBTQI+ people's disability, especially from a sexual perspective;*
 - ii. *recognise the duality of discrimination against people with disabilities, who are seen at the same time as highly sexualised and vulnerable to sexual violence, and as asexual without the right to sexuality.*
- b. Give visibility to LGBTQI+ people with disabilities within the communication campaigns of the LGBTQI+ communities.
- **Promote associationism among LGBTQI+ people with disabilities**
 - a. Incentivize the creation of an Italian association for LGBTQI+ individuals with disabilities.
 - b. Facilitate physical access to associations (including anti-violence centres and non-governmental organisations), remove physical barriers and raise awareness about gender and sexual orientation issues and the specific needs of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities.

5. LGBTQI+ elderly people

Our proposals:

- **Promote actions and interventions intended to tackle stereotypes towards sexuality in older age**
 - a. Training and awareness-raising measures to overcome the stigma attached to sexuality in old age (e.g., by encouraging exchange and interaction between different generations about the changes in the ways of experiencing sexuality and affection).
 - b. Actions aimed at giving visibility and normalising LGBTQI+ older people.
 - c. Promote the visibility of older people within the specific communication campaigns of LGBTQI+ communities and normalise the possibility of coming out at any age.
- **Promote sociality of LGBTQI+ older people**
 - a. Ensure more accessible social facilities for LGBTQI+ elderly people.
 - b. Promote forms of associationism that combine sexual orientation/gender identities and age.
- **Promote research and studies about LGBTQI+ ageing and caregiving at national level**

Investigate the specific risks and issues related to the intersection of ageing/disability & LGBTQI+ from a legal, health, psychological and sociological perspective.





- **Integrate the dimension of sexual orientation and gender identity into the design of public facilities and services for the elderly, through the recognition of subjective and enforceable rights, that are not left to the individual sensitivity of the operators**
 - a. Recognise the expression of sexuality as a personal right.
 - b. Demand the implementation of inclusive and non-discriminatory practices in the services designed for older people.
 - c. Include within local Area Plans social and health interventions related to LGBTQI+ elderly people and targeted at their specific needs.
- **Promote inclusive care services for all identities and orientations**
 - a. Include "families of choice" among the interlocutors recognised by social and health services.
 - b. Raise awareness and train caregivers:
 - i. *raise awareness among care workers, family caregivers and professionals about LGBTQI+ ageing issues;*
 - ii. *train care professionals about the specific needs of LGBTQI+ elderly people and, in particular, transgender elderly people.*
 - c. Avoid the adoption of hetero-normative approaches by social and health services in the forms and procedures for the reception of elderly guests.
 - d. Promote LGBTQI+ social co-housing projects for single elderly people.
 - e. Take into consideration the specific impact of dementia on LGBTQI+ elderly and their coming out (e.g., risk of loss of self-determination in regards to revealing gender identity and/or sexual orientation; possible difficulty in participating in reminiscence-based interventions etc.).

6. LGBTQI+ minors, young people and families

Our proposals:

- **Recognise intersex minors and provide assistance to parents of children with DSD (disorder of sexual differentiation)**
 - a. Give legal recognition to intersexuality.
 - b. Promote actions and interventions to tackle social stigma and stereotypes towards intersex children:
 - i. *training and awareness-raising interventions in school and recreational settings, to eliminate stigma against intersex children and promote safe and discrimination-free access to educational and leisure facilities;*
 - ii. *training and awareness-raising interventions addressed to medical staff, which encourage the use of a multidisciplinary therapeutic approach,*





- where necessary, while avoiding unnecessary surgical treatment and mutilation of children with DSD without their consent;*
- iii. *Training and awareness-raising actions for social workers and family members.*
 - c. Provide assistance and support to parents of children with DSD from a psychological point of view, in their daily life and in their relationship with institutions.
- **Raise the profile of minors and gender identity**
 - a. Fill regulatory gaps on gender transition processes for individuals under 18 years of age through a clarifying legislative intervention concerning rectification of sex attribution of minors and name, self-determination of minors and consent to medical treatment.
 - b. Promote studies about the effects of hormone therapies and transition in young people, raise awareness and sensitivity in medical, scientific and social research about the issue of minors' gender identity.
 - **Promote access to more inclusive education**
 - a. Promote the implementation in all Italian Universities of the "Alias Career", eliminating the heterogeneity of application methods.
 - b. Provide training and awareness-raising actions for teachers and students about gender and sexual orientation issues in universities and secondary schools.
 - c. Promote, support research on and teach about gender studies involving, if necessary, associations dealing with LGBTQI+ issues.
 - d. Promote the dissemination of experiences and good practices among universities and schools.
 - e. Prevent discrimination in schools of all levels, by including diversity education in the school curriculum and by training future teachers on this topic.
 - f. Carry out interventions targeting educational systems to address bullying, violence and discrimination against LGBTQI+ students. School professionals should have concrete and structured guidelines to help them deal with incidents of discrimination against LGBTQI+ students and promote their inclusion. At the same time, guidelines should also be provided to students on how they can: contribute to an inclusive school environment; support their classmates; report cases of bullying/violence/discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation/ gender identity that they may witness or be victims of. In addition, schools should implement support services for victims of bullying/violence/discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation/ gender identity.





- **Promote access to healthcare for LGBTQI+ young people with chronic illnesses**
 - a. Promote a different narrative of illnesses affecting LGBTQI+ people.
 - b. Promote actions to address invisibility, violence and discrimination against LGBTQI+ people in the healthcare field:
 - i. *promote medical-scientific and social research that is more aware of gender and sexual orientation issues, with a special focus on LGBTQI+ people's chronic illnesses;*
 - ii. *develop a Guide for medical staff, with the objective of: promoting correct information and conscious use of language, encouraging networks outside the family environment and generating attention to multiple forms of vulnerability;*
 - iii. *training and awareness-raising actions for medical staff about the specificities of LGBTQI+ people with chronic illnesses;*
 - iv. *creation of visibility paths for LGBTQI+ patients and medical staff as well;*
 - v. *promote a network of LGBTQI+ associations centered around the issue of access to healthcare for LGBTQI+ people;*
 - vi. *screening, awareness and information programmes focusing on LGBTQI+ population segments.*
- **Recognise homo-parental families and allow fostering to same-sex couples**
 - a. Provide assistance and support to homo-parenting families and their specific needs, through:
 - i. *Training and awareness-raising actions and interventions for social workers;*
 - ii. *The definition of procedures in order not to let the operating method be influenced by the attitude of the operator;*
 - iii. *The re-orientation of public services, favouring access to families with same-sex parents.*
 - b. Legally recognise families with same-sex parents and children of homo-parenting couples, fill regulatory gaps and allow marriage, fostering and adoption for same-sex couples in Italy and abroad.
 - c. Allow same-sex couples access to assisted fertilisation techniques on Italian territory.
 - d. Tackle social stigma and invisibility affecting children of same-sex couples, through:
 - i. *Information and awareness-raising interventions about the effects of stigma on the psychological development of children of same-sex couples.*





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