



# Conference Paper - Greece

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# 1. Introduction

The project 'Voiceit: Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics' aims to contribute to the inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in political decision-making processes in Greece, Cyprus and Italy. This publication, developed in the context of Work Package 5 (WP5), presents the research results regarding the situation in Greece in terms of discrimination, participation in politics and needs for policy reform.

## Legal Framework

- Constitution of Greece, Art. 2, par. 1**  
Ensures the respect for and protection of human dignity
- Constitution of Greece, Art. 5, par. 2**  
Ensures the protection of life, honour and freedom
- Constitution of Greece, Art. 25, par. 1:**  
Unrestricted exercise of individual and social rights with regard to the State and relations between individuals
- Law No. 4285/2014**  
Punishment of public acts that have the intention to cause, incite, stimulate or provoke actions that may lead to discrimination, hate or violence against a person or a group defined by reference to SOGI (amongst others) & all relevant acts with the intention to cause, incite, stimulate or provoke actions that will damage possessions that are in use by the abovementioned person(s)
- Law N. 4356/2015**  
Same-sex couples right to a civil union (co-habitation), in which the relationship of the two parties follows the provisions for married couples
- Law N. 4443/2016**  
Equal treatment of employees regardless of SOGISC & definition of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, discrimination based on relations, discrimination based on perceived characteristics, and multiple discrimination
- Law N. 4538/2018**  
Child fostering by couples that have entered a civil union (regardless of their sex)

Greece holds the highest rate (19%) of people who felt discriminated against due to being LGBTI when looking for work and is among the three countries with the highest rate of people (31%) that have been discriminated against at work in the 12 months preceding the latest FRA survey (2020). 33% has experienced harassment in the year preceding the survey. 9% reported to have experienced a physical and/or sexual attack for being LGBTI in the five years before the survey was conducted.

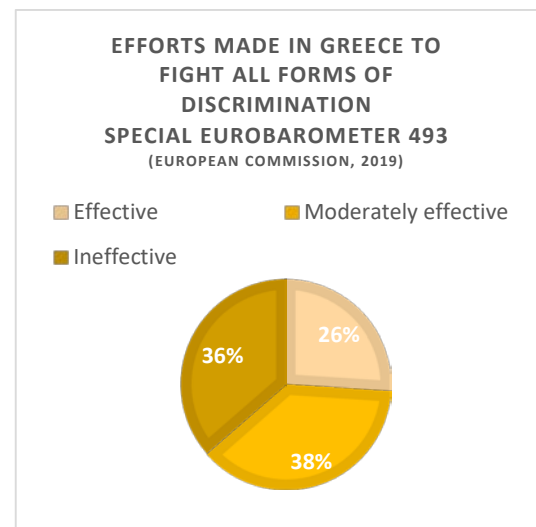


Special Eurobarometer 493 (2019)



- ➔ 70% of the Greek participants believe that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is widespread
- ➔ 57% believe that discrimination on the basis of being transgender is widespread
- ➔ 44% believe that a job candidate's identity as transgender would be a disadvantage if a company wanted to hire someone and had to opt between two candidates with the same skills and qualifications
- ➔ 42% believe that sexual orientation would pose a disadvantage in a similar situation

There is not enough data on needs for policy reform in terms of LGBTQI+ rights. Nonetheless, 66% of the Greek respondents in the Flash Eurobarometer 478 on the views of young people on how to build a stronger, more united Europe, indicated that fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities should be a priority for the EU.



## 2. Methodology

Research methodology	Sample	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review</li> <li>Online survey: run Jan-Apr 2020, using LimeSurvey, chi-square &amp; one-way ANOVA for the analysis of the results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>417 completed questionnaires</li> <li>85 incomplete questionnaires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>137 LGBTQI+ people</li> <li>31 government officials</li> <li>17 representatives of political institutions</li> <li>232 general public</li> </ul>

### Literature review

- LGBTQI+ rights and legal framework
- Perceptions of LGBTQI+ rights
- Discrimination against LGBTQI+ people
- Participation of LGBTQI+ people in politics
- Needs for policy reform

### Online survey

- Knowledge and perceptions of LGBTQI+ rights
- Perceptions and actual frequency of discrimination against LGBTQI+ people
- Participation of LGBTQI+ people in politics
- Needs for policy reform
- Discrepancies among the populations

Null hypothesis (H0) in terms of discrepancies was that the role of the respondents (i.e. which group they belong to) would not have a significant effect on their perceptions regarding LGBTQI+ rights, discrimination and needs for policy reform.

## 3. Results of the online survey

### 3.1 Knowledge about LGBTQI+ rights in Greece

		LGBTQI+ PERSONS	Government Officials	Representatives of Political Institutes	General Public
Same sex couples can form a civil union	Yes	95.6%	83.9%	100%	87.1%
	No	2.9%	0%	0%	3.0%
Same sex couples can get married	Yes	4.4%	9.7%	23.5%	5.9%
	No	93.4%	74.2%	70.6%	62.5%
	Not sure	2.2%	12.9%	5.9%	19.8%
Same sex couples can be foster parents	Yes	35.0%	19.4%	35.3%	22.4%
	No	42.3%	38.7%	47.1%	45.3%
Same sex couples can adopt a child	Yes	45.3%	9.7%	5.9%	10.8%
	No	87.6%	67.7%	70.6%	64.2%
	Not Sure	9.5%	22.6%	17.6%	25.0%
It is legal for people to change the gender marker on their legal documents	Yes	82.5%	83.9%	82.4%	59.1%
	No	7.3%	3.2%	0%	8.6%
	Not Sure	10.2%	12.9%	11.8%	31.9%



LGBTQI+ people are legally protected against discrimination	Yes	35.0%	48.4%	41.2%	34.5%
	No	51.1%	38.7%	41.2%	35.8%
	Not Sure	13.9%	12.9%	11.8%	28.9%
LGBTQI+ people are legally protected against hate crimes	Yes	45.3%	51.6%	52.9%	48.2%
	No	38.0%	32.3%	29.4%	52.8%
Intersex people are protected from "normalising" medical interventions	Yes	5.8%	29.0%	17.6%	13.8%
	No	48.2%	22.6%	35.3%	24.1%
	Not Sure	46.0%	45.2%	41.2%	61.2%

### 3.2 Perceptions about LGBTQI+ rights in Greece

The overall picture showed a positive stance towards LGBTQI+ rights

The majority of the sample stated that:

- voiceit People should be able to freely express their sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- voiceit LGBTQI+ people should have the same rights as cis-heterosexual people and be treated equally
- voiceit People should not be fired or not hired because of their SOGISC and it should be protected by law
- voiceit Same-sex marriage and child fostering by same sex couples should be legal
- voiceit People should be able to change their gender marker in their legal documents
- voiceit The LGBTQI+ community should be equally represented in politics

### 3.3 Perceptions on the occurrence of discriminatory incidents against the LGBTQI+ community

- voiceit The LGBTQI+ community is generally not accepted in Greece and negative comments towards the community are made in public.
- voiceit There is a climate of hate, discrimination and under-representation in media, institutions and employment, leading LGBTQI+ people to hide their identity.
- voiceit Intentional misgendering often or sometimes happens and people are often verbally harassed (LGBTQI+ - 64.96%; public - 68.97%; government officials - 64.52%; representatives of political institutions - 58.82%) or not treated equally (LGBTQI+ - 52.55%; public - 56.90%;

*'People simply tolerate and don't accept'*

*'We are treated as second class citizens [...]. We can't even walk holding our partner's hand'*

*'...The negative comments are many even from my own family.. (sic) they're calling us abnormal, confused and etc.'*

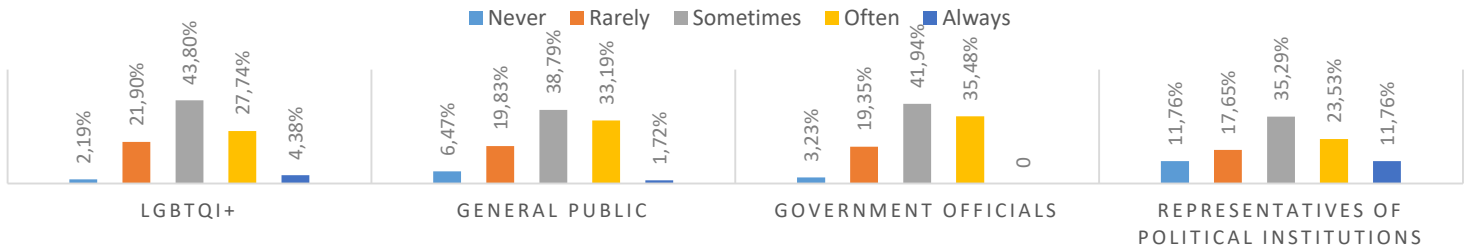
*'This has no beginning or end, it doesn't even affect those of us that are used to it, it has become a routine'*

LGBTQI+ PARTICIPANTS - VOICEIT ONLINE SURVEY



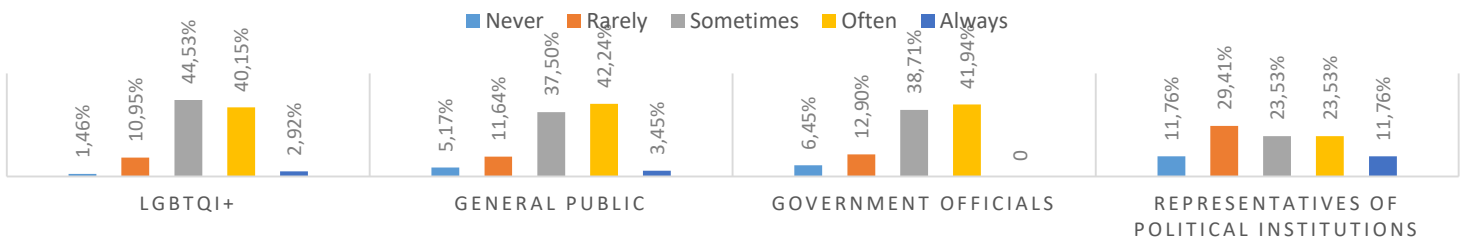
government officials – 54.84%; representatives of political institutions – 64.71%) because they are or are perceived to be LGBTQI+.

### FREQUENCY OF PEOPLE BEING EXCLUDED FROM AN EVENT OR ACTIVITY BECAUSE THEY ARE OR ARE PERCEIVED TO BE LGBTQI+



41.61% of LGBTQI+ believe that physical attacks sometimes take place and 40.88% of LGBTQI+ believe often take place; 41.81% of the public believe they take place often while 38.36% believe they are less frequent; 41.94% government officials believe these attacks occur sometimes and 35.48% believe that they happen more often; 35.29% of representatives believe they take place sometimes and 23.53% of representatives believe that they rarely occur.

### FREQUENCY OF PEOPLE BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED BECAUSE THEY ARE OR ARE PERCEIVED TO BE LGBTQI+



### 3.4 Occurrence of discrimination

Fourteen LGBTQI+ people reported to consider themselves LGBTQI+ with minority ethnic and cultural background.

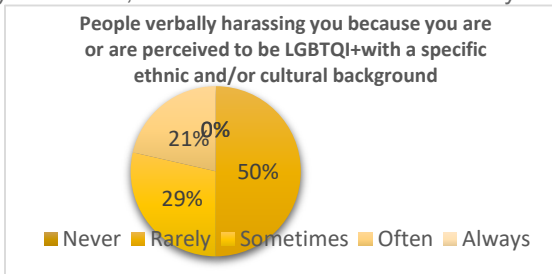
**voiceit** 57.14% reported that people rarely intentionally misgender them and 42.86% reported that people make negative comments about them in general and online, because they are or perceived to be LGBTQI+ and have a minority ethnic and/or cultural background.

**voiceit** Four suggested that negative comments are sometimes made due to their LGBTQI+ identity and three that they sometimes hear such remarks due to both identities.

**voiceit** Five are often or sometimes being excluded from an event or activity because of both identities.

**voiceit** 35.71% are sometimes physically attacked because of both identities. One is often sexually harassed, three sometimes and four rarely.

On average, ethnic/cultural minority LGBTQI+ participants were more likely to report higher frequency by 0.5-1 point on the



five-point scale. They were more likely to report higher frequency of *negative comments, verbal harassment, exclusion from events/activities, physical attacks and sexual harassment*, compared to non-minority participants.



### OCCURANCE OF DISCRIMINATION

LGBTQI+ people with no minority ethnic and/or cultural background - 123 out of the total 137 LGBTQI+ participants

- 1 INTENTIONAL MISGENDERING**

18.70% reported to have rarely experienced it
- 2 NEGATIVE COMMENTS DUE TO THE LGBTQI+ IDENTITY**

39.02% have rarely experienced it, 30.89% sometimes & 9.76% often
- 3 EXCLUDED FROM AN EVENT/ ACTIVITY**

26.83% have rarely experienced it, less stated it sometimes happen
- 4 VERBAL HARASSMENT**

32.52% have rarely experienced it, less stated it sometimes happen
- 5 PHYSICAL ATTACKS**

11.38% stated it rarely happens and 7.32% it sometimes takes place
- 6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

21.95% rarely experience it, 8.95% sometimes or often experience such events

### 3.5 Involvement of LGBTQI+ people in politics

**voiceit** The LGBTQI+ community is not equally represented in political life in Greece, e.g. in political parties, institutions and organisations.

**voiceit** The vast majority of LGBTQI+ people agreed that there are not enough openly LGBTQI+ people involved in politics. Most of the other three groups reported the same.

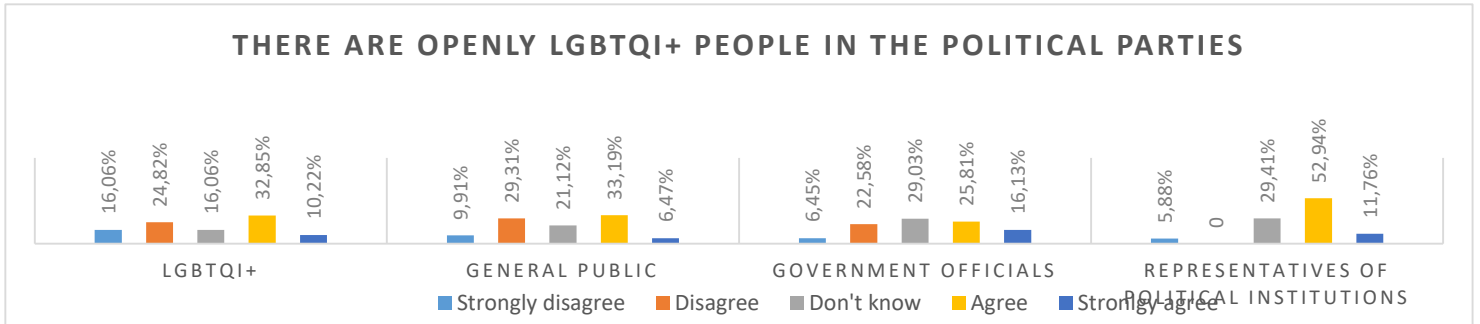
**voiceit** LGBTQI+ people can participate in politics as parliamentary candidates and/or candidates for national, local, regional, European elections, in public offices, local or regional positions, activism, university political unions. *'Attending a pride parade is a political act. Being out is a political act'* - LGBTQI+ respondent.

**voiceit** One LGBTQI+ respondent stated that discrimination might come from people with the same political positions as theirs. Another participant reported that *'politics in Greece entail a lot of machoism and conservatism'*.





**voiceit** An LGBTQI+ participant further elaborated on the privileges of the different LGBTQI+ identities; *'I am a cis high femme bisexual woman, therefore I am more privileged than transgender and gender-non conforming individuals, feminine gay/bi men and masculine lesbian/bi women, but still less privileged than cis straight-passing men'*.



**Of the total 137 LGBTQI+ respondents:**

- ➔ **70.07% reported not feeling they can engage in political processes without risk of discrimination.**
- ➔ **71.53% felt that if they engaged in politics their positions would not be taken into account as much as a cisgender heterosexual citizen.**
- ➔ **There are not enough opportunities for LGBTQI+ people to engage in politics.**

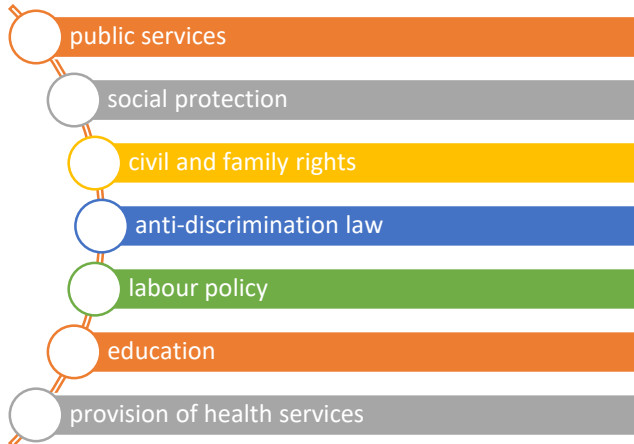
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*'It would be a political suicide to admit it [their identity, editor's note] in public, considering the situation of the country regarding this topic' – Representative of political institutions*

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### 3.6 Needs for policy reform

The majority of all four groups agreed that there is a need for policy reform, in terms of protection of LGBTQI+ implementation in:



LGBTQI+ respondents agreed the most that there is a need for policy reform in these areas, whilst representatives of political institutions had the lowest percentages in terms of the need for policy reform in the mentioned areas of life. **Family rights protection** and **education** are the sectors where more people agreed there is a need for policy reform.

A few LGBTQI+ respondents commented that reforms need to be made towards equality, inclusiveness, acceptance of diversity and the elimination of institutional racism. One suggested that education on SOGI should be provided from early school years, as well as training to mental health professionals, educators, social workers, etc. One respondent reported that trans people are usually refused services, thus an inclusive law for the protection against discrimination is needed.





One participant from the general public stated that LGBTQI+ rights should not differ from other people's rights, as they are also protected by law. Participants also mentioned that educational curricula should include information about SOGISC, while preventive measures against bullying should be taken. Others added that LGBTQI+ people should be equally represented in the political life and all rights should be protected by law.


One representative of a political institution focused on the need *'to establish an open society and free market'*, while another one suggested that reforms need to be made in the sectors of education, health and rights, as there are many retrogressions taking place at national and EU levels. One government official elaborated that policy reforms care needed in Greece, in order for all people to be able to exercise their rights, while awareness raising campaigns are needed for the public to understand the importance of such reforms. Furthermore, they suggested that medical staff, administrative officers, police officers and journalists should be trained and relevant courses should be added in their respective education centres.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

Even though the majority of responses revealed a generally positive stance towards LGBTQI+ people and their rights, it remains evident that discrimination and lack of inclusion still prevail in Greek society. Participants supported the acquisition and protection of LGBTQI+ rights. However, it was also clear that many participants were not familiar with the current legal framework and the established LGBTQI+ rights. The majority believe that the LGBTQI+ community is generally not accepted in Greece. The majority of LGBTQI+ respondents have, at least once in their life, experienced different forms of discrimination and violence. At the same time, the political context in Greece is not at all encouraging for LGBTQI+ people, as the majority of respondents reported not feeling they can engage in political processes and policy reforms need to be made in all spectra of everyday life.

### Limitations

-  Lack of homogeneity of the sample & small number of participants in two of the target groups: results cannot be generalised, but they provide an insight into the national situation.
-  Although the responses of LGBTQI+ people with minority ethnic and/or cultural background were homogenous, the number of participants with these characteristics was limited.
-  Targeted dissemination of the survey might have had an influence on the results: it was promoted through the project's, KMOP's and UNRISD's websites, as well as social media and targeted emails, increasing the possibility of bias.
-  Many of the participants seemed to be confused regarding LGBTQI+ identities, even though definitions were provided in the demographics section.



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 POLICY REFORM** in public services, social protection, civil and family rights protection, anti-discrimination law, labour policy, education and provision of health services should be initiated and implemented, in order to be more inclusive and protective of LGBTQI+ rights
- 2 TRAINING** front line professionals (such as police officers, health professionals, educators) should be trained on the needs and rights of LGBTQI+ people, in order to prevent and combat mal-/mistreatment and discrimination
- 3 AWARENESS RAISING** awareness raising campaigns on the existing legal framework should be implemented, in order for LGBTQI+ people to familiarise with the rights that are foreseen by the law and foster their political participation; campaigns addressing the public should focus on the discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ people
- 4 INCLUSION IN EDUCATION** LGBTQI+ content should be included in school books and educational curricula, while students should be introduced to SOGISC diversity from early age; preventive measures and clear guidelines should be integrated in education addressing bullying, violence and discrimination against LGBTQI+ students
- 5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK** clear references protecting LGBTQI+ rights should be integrated in the legal framework, in order to cover all forms of discrimination in all spectrums of everyday life

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