

INCLUSION THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

WP2: Needs Assessment and
Mapping Challenges

**D2.1 Report on the
country situation**



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D2.1 REPORT ON THE COUNTRY SITUATION

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Report

This report examines the state of LGBTQI+ rights across Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Ireland and Lithuania, focusing on policy design, implementation, and inclusion of trans and intersex individuals. The findings are considered to support institutions, policymakers and advocates in promoting equality and advancing inclusion.

This report aims to understand the **challenges faced by trans and intersex people** in accessing **essential healthcare services and equal opportunities in the labor market** through a combination of detailed interviews and stakeholder engagement. The report aims to **provide an overview of the participating countries' legal frameworks, existing policies and initiatives**. The project partners conducted an in-depth analysis of the legal frameworks and existing policies on LGBTQI+ rights and the inclusion of trans and intersex people. This analysis examined the extent to which these policies protect the rights and well-being, including access to healthcare services, labor market opportunities, and protection against inequality and discrimination. In addition to policy analysis, the report assessed the implementation of existing policies in practice. It also considered the role of institutions, organizations, and stakeholders responsible for policy implementation. The mapping exercise enabled a comparative analysis of policies and practices across five countries.

Key findings

Vital progress has been made in the countries, with Spain standing out as the best country in LGBTQI+ rights. **Spain's Trans Law (2023)** (Sam Jones, 2023) allows self-identification for transgender people, while the **Law of Zero (2022)** (Council of Ministers, 2022) fights for anti-discrimination protections. In addition, Greece has introduced important legislation, including **same-sex marriage legislation (2024)** (James Gregory, 2024) and **bans on conversion therapy** (Maltezou, 2022). Lithuania has pioneered a structured approach to transgender healthcare with its **2022 medical guidelines** (Ministry of Health, 2023), though broader protections are still missing. Cyprus has **criminalized conversion therapy** (Groot, 2024) and initiated awareness campaigns, while Ireland's robust **legal framework explicitly protects gender identity and expression**, ensuring inclusion across healthcare, employment and education.



46% of LGBTI people are never open to medical staff or healthcare providers about being LGBTI.



19% of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, 35% of trans people and 32% of intersex people felt discriminated against at work in the previous year.

Despite this progress, challenges remain. Policy enforcement is inconsistent, particularly in conservative and rural regions. Trans and intersex people face **systemic barriers to accessing healthcare**, compounded by discriminatory attitudes and resource shortages. Furthermore, legislative gaps exist, especially in recognizing non-binary and intersex people and addressing intersectional forms of discrimination.

Opportunities for Improvement

The findings highlight the importance of leveraging cross-country learning. Spain and Ireland's legal frameworks can be used as a **model for enhancing protections**, while Greece's inclusive reforms demonstrate practical approaches to secure equality and intersex rights. Synchronising legal frameworks across countries could contribute to creating shared standards for self-identification, healthcare access, and anti-discrimination measures. Capacity-building efforts are crucial, including training for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and policymakers. These initiatives would ensure a greater understanding of LGBTIQ+ rights and improve policy enforcement. Public awareness campaigns should also be prioritized to fight stigma and promote societal acceptance, creating an inclusive environment.

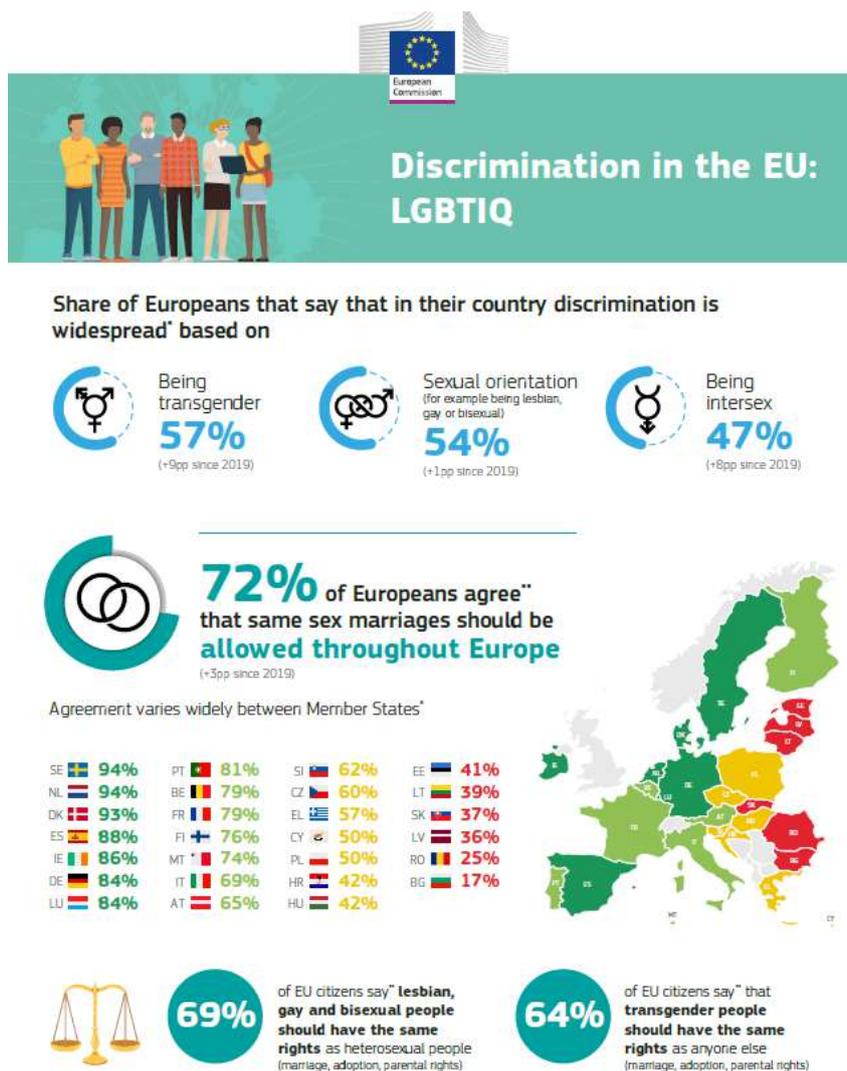
Introduction

Background and Context

LGBTIQ+ rights have gained increasing recognition across Europe as essential to fostering inclusive societies. While many European countries have made significant progress in advancing LGBTIQ+ protections, obstacles and challenges remain, especially for intersex and trans people, who often face barriers to accessing healthcare, rights and protection from discrimination. Addressing the inclusion of these people is not only a matter of equity but also of aligning with fundamental human rights principles.

The European Union (EU) plays an important role in **safeguarding human rights and combating discrimination**, providing a framework for countries to protect LGBTIQ+ people. EU guidelines and strategies, such as the **LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020–2025** (LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, 2024), aim to share efforts across Europe, ensuring that policies address the needs of all people

regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. Participating countries, including Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Ireland, contribute to this vision by implementing policies that protect LGBTQI+ people while addressing gaps in enforcement and societal acceptance.



Source: Special Eurobarometer 535: Discrimination in the EU, Infographics. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972> (Discrimination in the European Union, 2023)

This report is particularly up-to-date, given the growing international recognition of LGBTQI+ matters and the pressing need for inclusive policies that reflect diverse realities. By focusing on the inclusion of trans and intersex people, it seeks to highlight areas where additional action is needed to close the gap between practice and policy.

The objective of the Deliverable

This deliverable provides a comprehensive overview of LGBTQI+ rights and policies provided by this deliverable in the partners countries, with a focus on trans and intersex people. In this task, partners conducted a mapping exercise that involved a thorough review of legislative frameworks, policy initiatives, and their implementation in practice. It examined the extent to which existing measures safeguard the rights and well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly in critical areas such as healthcare access, workplace protections, and freedom from discrimination.

By analyzing these findings, the report identifies common challenges, opportunities, and best practices, enabling a comparative analysis of policies and practices across countries. The ultimate goal is to support cross-country learning and harmonization efforts, providing a roadmap for strengthening LGBTQI+ inclusion while addressing the specific needs of marginalized groups. This deliverable aligns with the broader objectives of the project, which aim to foster equality and ensure that no one is left behind.

Structure of the Report

The report is structured into several key sections to guide through its findings and recommendations. In continuation of this introduction, the Methodology section outlines the research approach, including desk-based policy analysis and insights from stakeholder interviews. The Country-Specific Analysis in-depth into each partner country's policies and legal frameworks, examining their strengths, gaps, and challenges. A Comparative Analysis identifies cross-country similarities, differences, and opportunities for harmonization, while the Recommendations section provides suggestions for improving LGBTQI+ rights and protections. The report concludes with a summary of key findings from the interviews with stakeholders and a vision for advancing LGBTQI+ inclusion across Europe. By providing a structured and in-depth exploration of the topic, this report aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to ensure **equality and dignity for LGBTQI+ individuals** in all participating countries.

Methodology

Research Approach

The research for this report was conducted through a combination of desk-based policy analysis and stakeholder interviews. **The desk-based research involved an extensive review of existing legal frameworks, policies, and initiatives relevant to LGBTQI+ rights in the participating countries.** This included examining anti-discrimination laws, healthcare access provisions, workplace protections, and mechanisms for gender identity recognition. Additionally, country-specific reports, academic studies, and governmental publications were analyzed to provide a thorough understanding of each nation's legislative and policy landscape. A detailed data collection template was developed to systematically gather information on policies, legal frameworks, and initiatives across the participating countries to support the mapping exercise. This structured tool ensured **a consistent approach to data collection and analysis, enabling the identification of gaps, strengths, and opportunities for harmonization.** The template included eight key sections, each focusing on specific aspects of LGBTQI+ policy design and implementation. It facilitated the documentation of essential details such as policy objectives, enforcement mechanisms, stakeholder feedback, and measurable outcomes. For example, Section 2 focused on summarizing policies, including their provisions, target populations, and implementation timelines. Sections 3 and 4 evaluated inclusivity, effectiveness, and the scope of policies, incorporating insights into intersectional discrimination and regional disparities. Furthermore, the template emphasized stakeholder perspectives, requiring partners to document feedback from LGBTQI+ communities, advocacy groups, and institutions. This qualitative input added depth to the analysis, highlighting practical challenges and successes in policy implementation.

Quantitative data, such as statistics on reported discrimination and case resolutions, was also included in Section 7 to provide measurable insights into the impact of existing frameworks.

Using this comprehensive template, the consortium ensured that data collection was thorough, standardized, and aligned with the project's objectives. This approach allowed for a robust comparative analysis across the participating countries, forming the foundation for the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

Stakeholder interviews complemented the desk research by offering qualitative insights into policy implementation and societal attitudes. Key stakeholders included government officials, representatives from LGBTQI+ organizations, healthcare providers, legal experts, and community advocates. **The interviews explored topics such as policy enforcement, challenges faced by trans and intersex individuals, and best practices for fostering inclusion.** The format included semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to share detailed perspectives while addressing key areas of interest. The partnership created a robust interview framework for trans and intersex individuals, medical professionals, and employers. **The framework focused on capturing everyday narratives of intersectional discrimination and inequality to mobilize stakeholders for systemic change.** Clear guidelines ensured informed consent, and interviewers adopted an intersectional lens to engage participants effectively. The interviews provided first-hand insights into the challenges faced by trans and intersex individuals while fostering stakeholder engagement.



INTERVIEW DESCRIPTION

T2.3 Intersectional Inequality in Everyday Narratives: insights from Stakeholder Focus Groups

The objective is to create a robust framework for conducting interviews with trans and intersex individuals, medical professionals, and employers while integrating stakeholder focus groups to promote sustainable change in the rights and opportunities of these communities.

Targeted questions explored healthcare access, discrimination, employment barriers, and societal attitudes. Focus groups facilitated discussions to identify strategies for inclusivity. Each partner conducted three group interviews with ten stakeholders per session, including trans and intersex individuals, medical professionals, and employers. Interviews lasted an hour, with registration forms, consent agreements, and post-meeting questionnaires completed. Sessions employed facilitated discussions, visual aids, and action planning for deeper engagement. A total of 225 stakeholders participated, divided among **trans and intersex individuals, medical professionals, and employers.**¹ Each partner will host a focus group to refine project goals and contribute to policy analysis. An intersectional approach ensured race, socioeconomic status, and other identities were considered.

Interview topics varied by stakeholder group. Trans and intersex individuals discussed healthcare access, legal recognition, employment, and societal pressures. Medical professionals addressed

¹ The participants weren't equally distributed between countries. Different numbers of participants participated in each country.

policies, barriers to care, and biases, while employers examined workplace inclusivity, hiring challenges, and misconceptions.

Interviewers were encouraged to adapt and expand discussions beyond the predefined questions to capture more profound insights. Flexibility allowed for organic conversations, uncovering valuable perspectives that might have otherwise remained unexplored.

Scope and Limitations

This research aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of LGBTQI+ rights and policies in Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Ireland. While significant efforts were made to include **a wide range of data and perspectives, certain limitations should be acknowledged**. First, data availability varied across countries, with some regions lacking detailed information on the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals or policy outcomes. This posed challenges in creating an equally detailed analysis for all countries. In addition, Spain and Greece had more organizations in the consortium and received more information and data from their side.

Additionally, the scope of the research focused on trans and intersex inclusion within broader LGBTQI+ policies. While this emphasis was necessary, it may have limited the depth of analysis for other LGBTQI+ subgroups. Geographic disparities also emerged as a boundary, with rural areas often underrepresented in data and interviews. Despite these limitations, the findings provide a robust foundation for understanding the current state of LGBTQI+ rights and identifying actionable pathways for progress.

Intersectionality and Compound Discrimination

LGBTQI+ individuals do not experience discrimination in isolation—many face compounded barriers due to intersecting identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, or migrant status. These overlapping factors can significantly shape access to rights, services, and safety.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities within LGBTQI+ communities often face double marginalization. For example, racialized trans individuals may be subject to additional stereotyping in employment or healthcare contexts, especially in countries where systemic racism remains under addressed. In some cases, racial or ethnic background may exacerbate societal rejection or invisibility, particularly in regions with limited anti-racism frameworks.

Migrant and asylum-seeking LGBTQI+ individuals face particularly acute challenges. Legal gender recognition may not be accessible for undocumented migrants, and asylum procedures often fail to adequately assess the risks faced by LGBTQI+ claimants in their countries of origin. Language barriers, fear of deportation, and inconsistent legal protections further compound their exclusion, especially when healthcare access and legal recognition depend on residency status.

Persons with disabilities who are also LGBTQI+ may experience compounded barriers when seeking appropriate services. Discrimination in healthcare or education is often intensified by ableist assumptions, creating exclusion even within systems nominally designed to protect minorities. Inclusive training for service providers rarely addresses both disability and gender/sexual diversity, leaving significant gaps in intersectional care and recognition.

Currently, few countries systematically collect disaggregated data on these intersecting identities. This lack of visibility impairs policy development and hinders the creation of targeted, equitable interventions. To address this, national strategies must incorporate intersectional indicators, ensure accessibility in services, and actively engage organizations representing multiply marginalized communities.

Key Recommendations:

- Incorporate intersectional categories in national LGBTQI+ data collection and monitoring systems.
- Include migrant, disability, and racial justice organizations in LGBTQI+ policymaking and consultations.
- Fund targeted outreach and services for LGBTQI+ individuals from marginalized subgroups.

Data Gaps and Ethical Considerations

While this report strives to provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of the lived experiences of trans and intersex individuals across the five participating countries, several data and ethical limitations must be acknowledged. First, the availability and granularity of data related to intersex individuals remain notably limited. In many contexts, intersex populations are not recognized as a distinct demographic group in official statistics, and their experiences are often conflated with those of other LGBTQI+ identities, obscuring specific vulnerabilities and healthcare needs.

Moreover, the stigmatization of intersex and trans identities, combined with fears of discrimination or outing, may have led some individuals to opt out of participation or to underreport personal experiences. This introduces the potential for response bias, particularly in regions where LGBTQI+ rights are less recognized or where institutional trust is low.

From an ethical standpoint, great care was taken to ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality, especially in interviews involving marginalized or legally unrecognized groups. Nonetheless, ethical constraints limited access to some highly vulnerable subgroups, such as undocumented migrants or youth without guardian consent. These absences may have created gaps in the representativeness of the qualitative data.

Lastly, due to disparities in the number and capacity of partner organizations across countries, data volume and depth were not equally distributed. Spain and Greece contributed more extensively due to greater institutional support and higher stakeholder engagement. These differences are reflected in the relative richness of the country-specific analyses.²

² An AI-powered tool was employed to assist in the refinement of this report and the presentation of results. Its use was conducted in accordance with the principles of Transparency, Accountability, and Data Protection, as outlined in the EU Guidelines on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Research.

Country-Specific Analysis



Executive Summary

Spain has made significant strides in advancing the rights of the LGBTQI+ community over the past few decades, becoming one of the most progressive countries in Europe in terms of legal protections and societal acceptance. In 2005, Spain legalized same-sex marriage through **Ley 13/2005**, making it one of the first countries in the world to do so. The **Gender Identity Law** (Ley 3/2007) followed in 2007, allowing individuals to change their gender legally without the requirement of surgery or sterilization, a major step forward for transgender rights. The **Comprehensive Law on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination** (Ley 15/2022), also known as the Zerolo Law, enacted in 2022, is a landmark anti-discrimination law that protects LGBTQI+ individuals from discrimination in various areas, including employment, education, housing, and access to public services. It also includes provisions for addressing hate crimes against the LGBTQI+ community. Additionally, Spain has introduced important reforms aimed at protecting and supporting LGBTQI+ individuals, including the **Democratic Memory Law** (Ley 20/2022), which acknowledges and compensates LGBTQI+ people persecuted during the Francoist regime, and the **Trans Law** (Ley 4/2023), which allows transgender individuals to self-identify and access gender-affirming healthcare.

Policy Name/Legal framework: Comprehensive Law 15/2022 (Ley Integral para la Igualdad de Trato y la No Discriminación) (Parliament S. , Comprehensive Law 15/2022, 2022)

Date of Enactment: July 12th, 2022

Responsible Institution: Spanish Parliament

Target Population: LGBTQI+ individuals

Overview and Objectives

The Comprehensive Law 15/2022, known as the Zerolo Law, is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at ensuring equal treatment and protection against discrimination for LGBTQI+ individuals in Spain. The law prohibits discrimination in various spheres of life, including employment, education, housing, and public services, and introduces harsher penalties for hate crimes against LGBTQI+ individuals. Its objective is to foster a more inclusive and equal society, ensuring that LGBTQI+ people can live without fear of persecution, discrimination, or violence. The law also emphasizes the importance of raising public awareness to combat societal prejudice. This law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity across various sectors, including employment, education, housing, and access to public services. It treats hate crimes targeting LGBTQI+ individuals as aggravated crimes with stricter penalties. It aims to provide stronger legal protection and promote equality for LGBTQI+ individuals, raising public awareness and fostering an inclusive society.

Policy Name/Legal framework: Ley 3/2007 on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (Ley 3/2007 sobre identidad de género y orientación sexual) (Spain, 2007)

Date of Enactment: July, 2007

Responsible Institution: Government of Spain

Target Population: Transgender individuals, intersex individuals

Overview and Objectives

Ley 3/2007, enacted on July 15, 2007, represents a transformative milestone in Spain's commitment to advancing transgender rights. This law grants legal recognition to transgender individuals' gender identity without requiring invasive medical procedures such as surgery or sterilization—a progressive approach unparalleled in many parts of Europe at the time. By focusing on self-determination, the law has significantly improved the social integration and quality of life for transgender individuals in Spain. Its objectives include safeguarding equality, preventing gender-based discrimination, and fostering societal acceptance of diverse gender identities. Ley 3/2007, known as the "Trans Law," marks a significant step in recognizing gender identity by allowing transgender individuals to amend their personal data on official documents without requiring gender-affirming surgery or sterilization. This groundbreaking provision upholds the principle of self-determination, ensuring that legal identity aligns with lived experience. At the constitutional level, the law enforces anti-discrimination measures, extending protections in employment, education, and public services to guarantee equal treatment and inclusion. It also addresses gender-based violence by implementing protective measures and support programs, particularly for intersex individuals who are vulnerable to discrimination. In the labor market, the law mandates equality plans in large companies to remove barriers faced by transgender and intersex individuals in recruitment and career advancement. Additionally, it promotes education and cultural awareness through programs that dismantle gender stereotypes and foster acceptance in schools and media. Healthcare accessibility is also a priority, ensuring comprehensive care, including gender-affirming treatments while combating discrimination within medical institutions. To safeguard individuals reporting unequal treatment, the law includes retaliation protections, particularly in workplaces, guaranteeing legal recourse and impartial proceedings. Furthermore, Ley 3/2007 enhances cultural representation by encouraging gender balance in decision-making bodies within the arts and media, increasing the visibility and inclusion of transgender and intersex individuals in society.

Policy Name/Legal framework: Trans Law (Ley para la igualdad real y efectiva de las personas trans y para la garantía de los derechos de las personas LGTBI, Ley 4/2023) (Parliament S. , Trans Law, 2023)

Date of Enactment: February, 2023

Responsible Institution: Spanish Parliament

Target Population: Transgender individuals

Overview and Objectives

The Trans Law (Ley 4/2023) passed in March 2023 in Spain is a transformative piece of legislation aimed at ensuring the rights and protection of transgender individuals. It allows individuals over 16 to self-identify their gender and change it on official documents without the need for medical approval. Minors aged 14 to 16 can also self-identify with parental consent. The law facilitates easier access to gender-affirming healthcare, such as hormone therapy, and bans harmful practices like conversion therapy. Additionally, it enhances protections against discrimination in key areas such as employment, education, and public services, while still excluding non-binary recognition and imposing limitations on younger minors. The law ensures equal rights for transgender individuals, including the ability to self-identify their gender on official documents without medical approval (for those over 16). It provides minors aged 14 to 16 the right to self-identify with parental consent. The law also facilitates access to gender-affirming healthcare, such as hormone therapy, without the need for parental consent for individuals over 16. It bans conversion therapy and strengthens anti-discrimination protections in employment, education, and public services. While significant, it does not allow for non-binary recognition and imposes limitations on minors under 14.

Policy Name/Legal framework: *Law 2/2016, of 29 March, on the protection, effective equality and non-discrimination of transsexual and intersex people in the Community of Madrid. (Madrid, 2016)*

Responsible Institution: *Presidency of the Autonomous Community of Madrid*

Target Population: *Mainly trans and intersex individuals as well as their families and support networks.*

Overview and Objectives

The Law establishes measures directed to guarantee the respect of identity and gender expression, including the gender recognition in administrative documents without medical or psychological requirements. It also fosters the implementation of specific programs in certain areas such as health, education and employment in order to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination situations. This Law also forces public institutions to develop sensibilization and training activities in order to guarantee its enforcement and to promote a coexistence based on respect. Guarantees access to health services tailored to the specific needs of trans and intersex individuals, including gender-affirming care.

Policy Name/Legal framework: *Ley 20/2022, de 19 de octubre, de Memoria Democrática (legislation), 2022)*

Date of Enactment: 2022

Responsible Institution: *Spanish State (state legislation)*

Overview and Objectives

The Law on Democratic Memory serves as a crucial legislative framework aimed at recovering, safeguarding, and disseminating Spain's historical memory. Its primary objective is to promote knowledge and awareness of the struggles for democratic values and fundamental rights throughout

Spain's contemporary history. The law fosters cohesion and solidarity among generations by emphasizing constitutional principles, shared values, and the defence of freedoms. At its core, the law recognizes and addresses the injustices suffered by individuals and groups during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the subsequent Francoist Dictatorship (1939–1978). This period witnessed widespread persecution and repression for political, ideological, religious, or personal beliefs, including violence against those based on their orientation or sexual identity. The law officially acknowledges these wrongs, offers reparations to the victims, and preserves their legacy as part of Spain's historical conscience.

GREECE

Executive Summary

Greece has taken significant steps toward improving the legal and social standing of LGBTQI+ individuals through a series of progressive laws addressing crucial areas such as marriage equality, adoption rights, workplace protections, and the autonomy of intersex minors, demonstrating a growing commitment to equality and human rights. The **Law on Civil Marriage Equality (Law No. 5,089, 2024)** legalized same-sex marriage, granting LGBTQI+ couples the same rights and recognition as heterosexual couples. This law also opened the door to **joint adoption** for same-sex couples, correcting a longstanding inequality and affirming the legitimacy of LGBTQI+ families. Additionally, parental benefits, such as maternity allowances, were extended to same-sex couples, providing essential support for these families. The **ban on "conversion therapies"** under the 2022 **Health for All Law** protects LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly minors and vulnerable adults, from harmful and discredited practices aimed at altering their sexual orientation or gender identity. Similarly, the **Law on Medically Assisted Reproduction Reforms (Law No. 4,958, 2022)** restricts non-essential medical interventions on intersex minors, ensuring that such decisions are deferred until the individual can provide informed consent. Workplace protections, established under **Law No. 4808/2021**, safeguard LGBTQI+ employees from discrimination, harassment, and unequal treatment in employment, vital for fostering inclusivity and ensuring that LGBTQI+ individuals can participate fully and equally in the workforce.

Law No. 4808/2021 and Its Relevance to LGBT People (Parliament G. , 2021)

Law No. 4808/2021 is an important step forward in protecting individuals in Greece from workplace discrimination. It explicitly includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender characteristics among the protected categories, ensuring equal treatment and rights for all public and private employees.

The law guarantees:

- Equal access to job opportunities, recruitment, and promotions.
- Fair treatment in salaries, dismissals, health and safety measures, and re-employment.
- Inclusion in vocational training and apprenticeships.

- The right to participate in labor unions and professional organizations.
- Individuals who experience discrimination can file complaints with the Greek Ombudsman or the Labor Inspectorate. These bodies have the authority to investigate claims and impose penalties.
- The law defines harassment as any unwanted behavior related to protected characteristics (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity) that creates an intimidating, hostile, or humiliating work environment.
- Employers must provide reasonable accommodations for employees with specific needs, such as disabilities, unless doing so creates an excessive burden.

This law is especially significant for LGBT individuals as it ensures their right to equal treatment in the workplace. Addressing sexual orientation and gender identity directly helps combat discrimination, harassment, and unequal opportunities that LGBT employees often face. It also provides precise mechanisms for addressing violations, giving LGBT individuals a way to seek justice and hold employers accountable.

Article 62 of the " (Health for All, Equal and Quality Access to the National Health System Law, 2022)

Article 62 of the 2022 law explicitly prohibits "conversion therapies," defined as any treatment aimed at changing or suppressing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. The prohibition applies to both professionals and non-professionals performing or promoting such practices. The law was enacted in 2022, marking a critical step in protecting the rights of LGBT individuals in Greece.

The legislative framework criminalizes the provision and promotion of conversion practices for vulnerable persons, which include Minors (children under 18) and vulnerable adults, such as those under judicial guardianship.

Conversion practices, which have been widely discredited by medical and psychological organizations, are deemed harmful and unethical. The law ensures that no individual can undergo such practices without explicit consent. Even with consent, conversion therapies targeting minors or vulnerable adults remain prohibited.

Banned Practice is any practice that attempts to alter or suppress an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression without explicit consent. Banned Practitioners are licensed professionals, unlicensed individuals, and those promoting or advertising conversion practices, regardless of their professional status. Penalties include imprisonment, fines, disciplinary and administrative sanctions. Repeated violations are treated as aggravating circumstances, leading to stricter penalties.

Additionally, professionals are prohibited from promoting, displaying, or advertising conversion practices for themselves or others. They are also barred from encouraging or referring individuals to conversion practices.

This law is a significant advancement for LGBT rights in Greece, as it acknowledges and addresses the harm caused by conversion practices. By banning these practices for minors and vulnerable adults, the law protects individuals from coercive, abusive, and pseudoscientific treatments that undermine

their well-being. Prohibiting promotion and advertising further ensures that these harmful practices are not normalized or accessible.

Law on Civil Marriage Equality (Law No. 5,089, 2024)

As of 2024, marriage is legal for same-sex couples. Civil Unions, which offer comparable rights to marriage, have been available since earlier legislation.

The law was enacted on **February 16, 2024**, after passing in Parliament and being immediately signed by the President. This legislation, known as the **Law on Civil Marriage Equality**, grants same-sex couples the right to marry under the same terms as heterosexual couples, marking a milestone in LGBT equality in Greece.

The journey toward marriage equality began in 2008 when two same-sex couples were married by the mayor of Tilos, exploiting a legal loophole. This sparked legal and social controversy, with the marriages ultimately annulled by the Supreme Court in 2017, citing "Greek societal values" and "moral traditions." Civil unions were introduced as a compromise, offering some legal protections to same-sex couples but stopping short of full equality. A draft bill for marriage equality, including adoption and co-parenting rights for same-sex couples, was proposed in 2021 but stalled. In 2023, renewed political support emerged, with the Prime Minister advocating for marriage equality after re-election. Public consultations were held in January 2024. The government introduced the marriage equality bill on February 1, 2024, which passed in Parliament by 175 votes to 77 on February 15, 2024.

The enactment of Law No. 5,089 represents a historic advancement in the rights of LGBT people in Greece. By granting same-sex couples the right to marry, the law provides:

- Full legal recognition of relationships.
- Equal rights to adoption and co-parenting.
- Protections for transgender individuals within marriage, removing previous discriminatory requirements (e.g., forced divorces).

While the law reflects significant progress, it follows decades of resistance rooted in societal conservatism and opposition from influential entities such as the Church of Greece. Its successful passage signals a shift in societal attitudes, though challenges remain in fostering full acceptance and eliminating stigma.

Law No. 5,089 (2024) and the Legalization of Joint Adoption for Same-Sex Couples

Joint Adoption was legalized for same-sex couples in 2024.

- February 16, 2024: Acting the Law on Civil Marriage Equality (Law No. 5,089) made joint adoption possible for same-sex couples.
- April 2024: Parental benefits were extended to same-sex couples who adopt children.

Article 1545 of the Civil Code previously restricted joint adoption to married couples, effectively excluding same-sex couples due to the absence of legal marriage rights. With the passage of Law No.

5,089, same-sex marriage became legal, automatically granting same-sex couples the right to adopt jointly. In 2018, the Child Adoption Law (Law No. 4538) allowed same-sex couples to foster children but not to adopt them. Fostering was positioned as an altruistic act, with the child maintaining ties to their natural parents. Adoption remained limited to married couples, excluding same-sex couples due to the lack of legal marriage recognition. In 2021 and 2022, the opposition party SYRIZA proposed bills to legalize same-sex marriage and extend adoption rights, but these efforts stalled. In 2023, the government and Prime Minister endorsed marriage equality, leading to public consultations and the eventual passage of the Law on Civil Marriage Equality in February 2024.

Joint adoption rights were granted to same-sex couples as part of the broader marriage equality law. Parental benefits, including maternity allowances, were extended to same-sex couples in April 2024, ensuring financial and social support for adoptive families. The legalization of joint adoption is a transformative milestone for LGBT families in Greece. It recognizes the equal capacity of same-sex couples to provide loving, stable homes for children. This change:

- It affirms the dignity and legitimacy of LGBT families.
- Provides adopted children of same-sex couples with the same legal protections and parental benefits as those in heterosexual families.
- Enhances social acceptance and reduces stigma against LGBT parenting.

Despite legal advancements, societal attitudes and resistance from conservative groups, including the Church, may continue to challenge full acceptance. Continued efforts are needed to educate the public and ensure the smooth implementation of these rights.

Law No. 4,958 (2022) and Restrictions on Non-Vital Medical Interventions for Intersex Minors (Law No. 4,958, 2022)

The law prohibits medical interventions aimed at modifying the sex characteristics of intersex minors unless the following conditions are met: The minor must be at least 15 years old. The minor must provide free, prior, and fully informed consent.

For minors under 15, non-deferrable interventions require authorization from a local Magistrate Court. The court must consider the opinions of the minor and the Interdisciplinary Committee before granting permission. Immediate medical interventions are allowed without court permission if they are necessary to prevent life-threatening or severe health risks that cannot be delayed. Penalties for Violations: Doctors who perform unauthorized surgeries face criminal consequences, including fines and imprisonment. This law seeks to protect intersex minors from non-vital, irreversible medical procedures performed without their informed consent. Historically, intersex individuals have faced surgeries or treatments aimed at aligning their physical characteristics with societal expectations of male or female bodies, often resulting in long-term physical and psychological harm. The 2022 reforms prioritize the bodily autonomy and rights of intersex minors by delaying non-urgent interventions until they are old enough to make informed decisions about their bodies.

This legislation is a significant step forward in protecting the human rights of intersex individuals in Greece. Key aspects include:

- Recognizing intersex minors' right to decide about medical procedures involving their bodies.
- Limiting unnecessary surgeries reduces the risk of psychological trauma and physical complications.
- By involving intersex minors and an Interdisciplinary Committee in decisions, the law ensures their voices are heard in medical and legal processes.

The law's success depends on its enforcement and the proper functioning of the judicial and medical systems. However, social stigma and a lack of awareness about intersex issues may hinder full implementation. This legislation shows Greece's commitment to aligning its policies with international human rights standards, particularly for vulnerable and historically marginalized groups. Let me know if this works for you or if you have the following law!

Policy Name/Legal framework: *Anti-Discrimination Legislation (Law 4443/2016, 2016)*

Date of Enactment: 2016

Responsible Institution: *Ministry of Labour and Social Security*

Target Population: *Groups that may face discrimination, including trans and intersex individuals*

Overview and Objectives

Law 4443/2016 represents a significant legislative step toward fostering an inclusive and equitable society in Greece. By incorporating European Directive 2000/78/EC, the law ensures equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Its comprehensive scope covers various sectors, including healthcare, employment, education, and access to goods and services. The law's objectives include protecting workers' rights, combating market abuse, and establishing mechanisms for investigating arbitrary conduct within law enforcement and detention facilities.

Policy Name/Legal framework: *Anti-Hate Crime Legislation (Law 4577/2018, 2018)*

Date of Enactment: 2018

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Transparency, and Human Rights

Target Population: Individuals targeted based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other personal characteristics.

Overview and Objectives

Enacted in 2018, Law 4577/2018 enhances Greece's legal framework for addressing hate crimes and hate speech. This legislation imposes stricter penalties for crimes motivated by bias, expanding protections to include race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and other protected categories. By criminalizing both violent acts and speech inciting hate or violence, the law seeks to provide robust protection for marginalized and vulnerable groups. It also focuses on offering victim support and creating a safer, more inclusive society.

Policy Name/Legal framework: Ban on Conversion Therapies (Law of 2022)

Date of Enactment: 2022

Responsible Institution: *[Government agency, ministry, or organization]*

Target Population: LGBTQI+ individuals, specifically those who may be subjected to conversion therapy practices

Overview and Objectives

In 2022, Greece took a significant step toward protecting LGBTQI+ rights by enacting a law that bans conversion therapies. These harmful practices aim to change or suppress an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity and are widely regarded as pseudoscientific and dangerous. By criminalizing conversion therapies, the law seeks to safeguard the mental and physical well-being of LGBTQI+ individuals while reinforcing their human rights. Specific provisions target healthcare professionals, psychologists, and counselors, prohibiting their involvement in these interventions and introducing prison sentences for violators.

The law explicitly bans conversion therapy practices, recognizing any treatment aimed at altering or suppressing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity as a violation of human rights. This prohibition applies across all healthcare settings, ensuring that such harmful interventions are eradicated. To reinforce the seriousness of the offense, the law criminalizes participation in conversion therapy, subjecting health professionals, psychologists, religious counselors, and others involved to prosecution, including prison sentences and other legal consequences. Additionally, it establishes support mechanisms for victims, enabling them to report incidents and access necessary services for justice and recovery.

Policy Name/Legal framework: Legal Gender Recognition Law (Law 4491/2017, 2017)

Date of Enactment: 2017

Responsible Institution: Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

Target Population: Transgender individuals

Overview and Objectives

Enacted in 2017, the Legal Gender Recognition Law (Law 4491/2017) marked a significant milestone for LGBTQI+ rights in Greece. The law allows individuals to change their legal gender based on self-determination without requiring invasive medical procedures, such as surgeries or hormone treatments, or undergoing psychiatric evaluations. This legislative framework aligns with international human rights standards, emphasizing personal autonomy and dignity. Applicable to individuals aged 15 and older, it includes provisions for minors under specific conditions, ensuring that younger individuals also have their gender identity respected.

The law allows transgender individuals to amend their gender marker on official documents, such as ID cards and passports, through a judicial process, eliminating previous requirements for medical interventions or infertility and affirming their autonomy while reducing stigma. However, the judicial process can be costly and time-consuming, creating accessibility challenges for marginalized individuals, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. Advocacy groups have called for

simplifying this process and introducing financial support mechanisms to address these barriers. Additionally, the law's binary framework, recognizing only male or female genders, excludes non-binary and intersex identities, highlighting the need for future legislative efforts to ensure comprehensive gender identity recognition.



Executive Summary

Lithuania has taken incremental but meaningful steps to address transgender healthcare and combat discrimination, primarily through institutional reforms and policy initiatives. Key actions include the establishment of a standardized diagnostic and treatment framework for transgender individuals, development of hate crime investigation protocols, and the formation of a governmental working group to improve legal status and protections for trans people.

However, systemic gaps persist. Legal frameworks still fail to explicitly recognize gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics as protected grounds, leaving transgender and intersex individuals vulnerable to discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Action Plan (2024–2026) and broader equality laws fall short of creating cohesive or enforceable standards for LGBTQI+ inclusion, especially in healthcare, education, and employment. Non-binary and intersex individuals remain particularly unprotected under current policy frameworks.

Civil society plays a pivotal role in advocacy, but fragmented implementation, a lack of long-term strategies, and insufficient institutional capacity hinder progress. Lithuania must now move toward codifying gender identity protections, standardizing inclusive healthcare access, and closing the legal gaps affecting the most marginalized LGBTQI+ groups.

Initiative Name: *Order on Approval of the Description of the Procedure for Diagnosis and Treatment of Gender Identity Disorder (Transsexuality) (Procedure for Diagnosis and Treatment of Gender Identity Disorder, 2022)*

Lead Organization: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania

Target Population: Adult individuals with suspected or diagnosed gender identity disorder (transsexuality)

Overview and Objectives

This policy is Lithuania's first comprehensive framework specifically addressing transgender healthcare. It establishes standardized procedures for diagnosing and treating gender identity disorder, ensuring a multi-disciplinary approach involving psychiatrists, endocrinologists, psychologists, and other healthcare specialists. The policy focuses on creating a clear pathway for accessing hormone therapy and other gender-affirming treatments while setting consistent guidelines for healthcare institutions across the country.

The policy establishes clear diagnostic and treatment procedures through a multidisciplinary approach, involving psychiatrists, endocrinologists, and psychologists in evaluating, diagnosing, and managing treatment plans. Standardized guidelines ensure consistency in initiating and monitoring hormone therapy, while healthcare facilities must maintain detailed records and conduct regular follow-ups to assess patient outcomes. To promote equitable healthcare access, the policy mandates that all institutions adhere to its provisions regardless of ownership, aiming to reduce disparities in healthcare delivery for transgender individuals. However, while it provides a structured medical framework, the policy does not explicitly address LGBTQI+ rights or broader social issues. Its focus on binary transitions leaves gaps in recognizing non-binary identities and the specific needs of intersex individuals. Advocacy groups have called for a more inclusive approach that acknowledges gender diversity beyond medical interventions.

Initiative Name: *Methodological Recommendations on Investigation of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech*

Lead Organization: Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania

Target Population: Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and investigators handling hate crimes and hate speech cases

Overview and Objectives

This framework represents Lithuania's most thorough approach to addressing hate crimes and hate speech, incorporating detailed procedures for law enforcement. It aligns with European Union (EU) standards and OSCE/ODIHR guidelines, ensuring adherence to national and international best practices. The framework emphasizes victim protection, detailed protocols for online hate speech investigation, and systematic case monitoring. Its overarching goal is to enhance access to justice for marginalized groups, particularly those targeted based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersecting characteristics.

Initiative Name: *Order on the Formation of Working Group for Improving Legal Status of Transgender Persons*

Lead Organization: Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania

Target Population: Transgender persons in Lithuania

Overview and Objectives

An official ministerial order in Lithuania has established a multi-stakeholder working group to develop proposals for improving the legal status of transgender individuals. This group unites representatives from key government ministries, human rights institutions, and civil society organizations. By addressing the legal and social challenges faced by transgender persons, the working group aims to align Lithuania's policies with European standards on human rights and LGBTQI+ protections.

The working group adopts a multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together representatives from government institutions, human rights bodies, and civil society organizations. Participants include the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Social Security and Labor, alongside the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office. Civil society groups

such as the Lithuanian Gay League, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, and Trans Autonomy contribute valuable insights. This diverse representation ensures a well-rounded examination of transgender rights, fostering balanced and informed policy recommendations.

Initiative Name: *Equal Opportunities Implementation Action Plan 2024-2026*

Lead Organization: *Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania*

Target Population: All residents of Lithuania, with fragmented attention to protected groups including LGBTIQ+ persons, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups

Overview and Objectives

Lithuania's current policy framework promotes equal opportunities by introducing measures addressing LGBTIQ+ rights and combating intersectional discrimination. However, the initiatives remain fragmented, appearing as isolated interventions rather than components of a cohesive, sustainable strategy for systemic change. The framework focuses on healthcare access, public awareness, and institutional capacity building but lacks a strategic vision to achieve long-term impact.

The policy only partially includes LGBTIQ+ rights, with limited provisions under Objective 7. While basic healthcare measures, such as one-off training programs for providers, are introduced, there is no comprehensive approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Public awareness efforts are short-term and lack sustainable funding, reducing their long-term effectiveness. Transgender and intersex rights receive minimal attention, with limited healthcare training but no systemic reforms or legal gender recognition framework, leaving intersex protections absent. Intersectional discrimination is acknowledged but lacks concrete implementation measures and sustainable funding. Additionally, protections against discrimination in critical areas remain fragmented, with limited healthcare access, a lack of inclusive education policies, weak workplace protections, uneven public service accessibility, and inadequate mechanisms for ensuring justice access for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Policy Name: *Law on Equal Opportunities (consolidated version from January 1, 2024)*

Lead Organization: Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania

Target Population: All residents of Lithuania, but with significant gaps in protected characteristics

Overview and Objectives

Lithuania's primary legal framework for equality aims to address discrimination and promote equal opportunities across society. However, it significantly underrepresents LGBTIQ+ protections, recognizing only "sexual orientation" as a protected ground. The absence of explicit provisions for gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics leaves transgender and intersex individuals particularly vulnerable to discrimination. This limited scope undermines the law's effectiveness in addressing systemic inequities and ensuring comprehensive protections.



Executive Summary

Cyprus has begun laying a foundation for LGBTQI+ inclusion through a mix of legal reforms and community-driven initiatives. The landmark 2023 law banning conversion therapy marked a pivotal step in protecting LGBTQI+ individuals from harmful practices, aligning Cyprus more closely with international human rights norms. Complementary efforts, such as the SAFE-R and Health4LGBTI initiatives, focus on improving inclusive healthcare access, professional training, and public awareness. Civil society organizations, particularly Accept LGBTI Cyprus, have led innovative projects like “Colorful Meetings” and “Perform to Reform,” which empower youth, build community resilience, and promote LGBTQI+ visibility through creative engagement. These projects demonstrate the transformative potential of grassroots activism in challenging stereotypes and fostering inclusion.

Nonetheless, the national policy framework remains fragmented. There is a lack of comprehensive protections for trans and intersex individuals, particularly in areas such as healthcare policy, workplace inclusion, and legal gender recognition. Most reforms rely on temporary funding or isolated initiatives without systemic enforcement or continuity. To ensure lasting change, Cyprus must strengthen institutional accountability, create nationwide inclusion strategies, and integrate LGBTQI+ rights into its public policy infrastructure.

Initiative Name: *Safeguarding LGBTIQ+ People’s Right to Health (SAFER, n.d.)*

Overview and Objectives

The SAFE-R project is a groundbreaking initiative in Cyprus designed to prevent and address health discrimination and stigma against LGBTIQ+ individuals. By promoting equitable healthcare practices, the project aims to prioritize the rights and well-being of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. SAFE-R aligns with the CERV call’s core objectives, particularly in challenging gender and sexuality stereotypes.

The project aims to improve LGBTIQ+ healthcare by assessing knowledge gaps, training professionals, raising awareness, and promoting best practices. It will evaluate existing knowledge and experiences through interviews and surveys with healthcare professionals and LGBTIQ+ individuals to identify barriers and discrimination in healthcare access. To enhance professional competence, 100 healthcare providers and 75 medical and nursing students will receive accredited training on inclusive care. The project also seeks to combat stigma by reaching 500,000 individuals through targeted social media campaigns and public events, highlighting transgender and intersex experiences in healthcare. Finally, training packages and best-practice guidelines will be developed and distributed to ensure long-term impact, fostering sustainable improvements in LGBTIQ+ healthcare services.

Policy Name/Legal framework: *Prohibition of the conversion therapy*

Date of Enactment: 2023

Responsible Institution: *Cyprus Government*

Target Population: *LGBTQIA+ community*

Overview and Objectives

The newly enacted law in Cyprus marks a significant milestone in protecting the rights and dignity of LGBTQ+ individuals by explicitly criminalizing conversion therapy practices. By amending the penal code, the legislation aims to shield vulnerable populations from harmful interventions, hold practitioners accountable through legal penalties, and enhance safeguards by banning the advertising of such practices and ensuring legal guardians cannot subject individuals to them. This progressive framework reinforces Cyprus's commitment to LGBTQ+ rights and aligns with international human rights standards.

The new law in Cyprus takes a firm stance against conversion practices, explicitly criminalizing any techniques aimed at altering or suppressing an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression to protect individuals from coercive interventions. It also prohibits the advertising or promotion of these practices, preventing their spread and normalization. Additionally, legal guardians who refer individuals to conversion therapy can be held accountable, reinforcing protections for minors and vulnerable individuals. Strict penalties are outlined, with general violations punishable by up to two years in prison and/or a €5,000 fine, while offenses involving minors carry increased penalties of up to three years in prison and/or a €10,000 fine. This legislation marks a significant advancement in LGBTQ+ rights and protections.

Initiative Name: *Health4LGBTI - Reducing Health Inequalities Experienced by LGBTI People* (Health4LGBTI, n.d.)

Overview and Objectives

This initiative aims to bridge significant gaps in healthcare access and equality for LGBTQI+ individuals by equipping healthcare providers and policymakers with the knowledge and tools needed to support diverse communities. By addressing the unique health challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals, the initiative fosters inclusivity and improves public health strategies across participating countries, including Cyprus.

A key aspect of the initiative is the development of user-friendly training modules for healthcare providers, equipping them with practical knowledge on LGBTQI+ health concerns, strategies to combat biases, and tools to create safe and inclusive environments for patients. The initiative also works to integrate LGBTQI+ health needs into broader public health strategies by collaborating with policymakers to prioritize equality in healthcare access and address specific challenges like mental health disparities and barriers to preventive care. Additionally, collaborations with local advocacy groups, such as Accept LGBTI Cyprus, ensure that training tools are culturally relevant, refined through community feedback, and used to advocate for systemic changes in healthcare policies and practices.

Initiative Name: *Colorful Meetings: LGBTQ+ Self-Help Groups*

Lead Organization: *Accept LGBTQ+ Cyprus*

Overview and Objectives

"Colorful Meetings" by Accept LGBTQ+ Cyprus is a community-driven initiative designed to empower LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies by fostering self-acceptance, resilience, and mental well-being. It provides a safe, inclusive space for open discussions on personal and community issues, ensuring confidentiality and mutual respect. The initiative focuses on empowering LGBTQ+ individuals by promoting self-acceptance and strengthening resilience in areas like coming out and mental health. It also works on strengthening family relationships through specialized sessions that help parents better understand and connect with their LGBTQ+ loved ones. Additionally, community education and social connections are enhanced through experiential exercises, expert-led discussions, and external activities, fostering visibility, awareness, and solidarity among LGBTQ+ individuals and allies.

"Colorful Meetings" provides safe and inclusive self-help groups, led by trained facilitators, where participants can openly share experiences while ensuring mutual respect and confidentiality. These sessions focus on resilience, mental health, and coming out, fostering support and understanding among attendees. To strengthen family relationships, the initiative offers specialized sessions for parents, guiding them on how to foster acceptance and communication with their LGBTQ+ loved ones. Additionally, experiential exercises and expert-led discussions enhance awareness of mental health and community issues, promoting visibility and acceptance within the LGBTQ+ community.

Initiative Name: *"Perform to reform" ROUTES*

Overview and Objectives

This initiative merges performing arts with LGBTQI+ activism to foster inclusion, acceptance, and awareness among youth. By equipping youth workers and artists with innovative tools, it explores creative ways to address gender and sexual identity topics while promoting diversity. In collaboration with Accept LGBTI Cyprus, the project follows the "Nothing About Us Without Us" principle, ensuring that the LGBTQI+ community remains central to its design and impact. Key objectives include capacity building, helping youth workers and artists creatively engage with LGBTQI+ issues, and raising awareness by expanding outreach beyond activist circles through performances. The initiative also fosters collaboration among activists, artists, and youth organizations, develops a user-friendly toolkit for integrating diversity into performing arts, and empowers emerging activists to engage in LGBTQI+ and human rights advocacy.

The initiative successfully expanded awareness beyond traditional LGBTQI+ advocacy spaces, reaching diverse audiences and fostering greater understanding among individuals previously uninvolved in LGBTQI+ issues. A comprehensive toolkit was developed, equipping youth workers and artists with practical exercises, creative methodologies, and discussion tools to address diversity, inclusion, and intersectional discrimination. Through capacity building, participants gained new skills in performing arts techniques and soft skill methodologies, enabling them to tackle complex social issues effectively. The project also strengthened collaborations between organizations, activists, and artists, fostering a sustained network for advocacy. By integrating arts and activism, it demonstrated the power of creative expression in inspiring empathy, challenging stereotypes, and promoting social cohesion. Additionally, the initiative empowered emerging activists, equipping them with tools for effective LGBTQI+ and human rights advocacy. Its intersectional approach ensured that overlapping forms of

discrimination—related to gender, race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status—were addressed, fostering a nuanced and inclusive understanding of marginalization.

IRELAND

Executive Summary

Ireland stands out for its strong legal protections for LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly in the areas of gender recognition and anti-discrimination. The Gender Recognition Act (2015) was among the first in Europe to permit legal gender change based on self-identification, and the Equality Acts explicitly protect against discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and expression. These frameworks contribute to Ireland's reputation as a progressive leader in LGBTQI+ rights.

The LGBTI+ Youth Strategy has also addressed historic inequalities by expanding survivor pension rights and providing a strategic vision for supporting LGBTI+ youth. However, gaps remain in areas such as intersectional discrimination, healthcare equity, and workplace inclusion. Health legislation like the Risk Equalization Act supports general equity but does not directly address LGBTQI+ healthcare disparities.

Ireland's existing policies do not yet fully address the compounded challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals who also belong to other marginalized groups. Further reforms should prioritize intersectionality, enhance inclusive healthcare strategies, and extend targeted protections beyond youth demographics to ensure that all trans and intersex individuals experience equality in both law and practice.

Initiative Name: *Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 (Equality Act, 2015)*

Date of Enactment: *December 2015*

Lead Organization: *Department of Justice and Equality, Ireland*

Target Population: *All individuals, with specific provisions affecting LGBTI+ individuals*

Summary of Provisions

This Act amends existing equality legislation to prohibit discrimination on various grounds, including gender identity and expression, thereby strengthening protections for LGBTI+ individuals in employment and the provision of goods and services.

Overview and Objectives

The Gender Recognition Act 2015 enhances Ireland's equality framework by explicitly protecting individuals against discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Its primary objective is to enable transgender individuals to self-declare their gender identity without requiring medical intervention or assessment, thereby facilitating changes to official documents such as birth certificates and passports. Individuals aged 18 and over can self-declare, while those aged 16 to 17 can apply with a court order. The Act aims to promote dignity, autonomy, and inclusivity for transgender individuals.

Initiative Name: Gender Recognition Act 2015 (Gender Recognition Act, 2015)

Lead Organization: *Department of Social Protection, Ireland*

Target Population: *Transgender individuals*

Overview and Objectives

The Gender Recognition Act 2015 enables transgender individuals in Ireland to have their preferred gender legally recognized by the state. This landmark legislation facilitates changes to official documents such as birth certificates and passports, emphasizing dignity and inclusivity. Legal recognition is based on self-declaration for individuals aged 18 and over, while minors aged 16 to 17 can apply with a court order.

The Act acknowledges intersectional discrimination but does not explicitly address overlapping inequalities related to gender, race, and socioeconomic status, leaving gaps in tackling systemic marginalization. While it includes anti-discrimination measures in employment and education and promotes inclusive healthcare, it lacks specific provisions for individuals facing multiple forms of discrimination. Advocacy groups have called for a more comprehensive intersectional approach to ensure equitable policy implementation and address compounded challenges effectively.

Initiative Name: *Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2013 (Health Insurance Act, 2013)*

Lead Organization: *Department of Health, Ireland*

Target Population: *All individuals accessing health insurance*

Summary of Provisions

The Act primarily focuses on adjustments to risk equalization in the health insurance market contributing to a more equitable health insurance system.

Overview and Objectives

The Risk Equalization Act aims to ensure fairness in the health insurance market by implementing risk equalization measures. These measures are designed to promote equitable access to health insurance for all citizens, fostering inclusivity and reducing healthcare disparities. While the Act emphasizes fairness in healthcare access, it does not explicitly address specific groups such as LGBTQI+ individuals. The Act indirectly promotes equity by encouraging equitable healthcare access. Still, it lacks explicit measures to address systemic inequalities related to gender, race, or socioeconomic status, limiting its effectiveness in tackling compounded vulnerabilities. Additionally, while it aims for general equity, it does not explicitly address LGBTQI+ healthcare challenges, creating a gap in comprehensive inclusivity for marginalized groups.

Initiative Name: *LGBTI+ Youth Strategy (LGBTI+ Youth Strategy , 2021)*

Lead Organization: *Department of Children and Youth Affairs*

Overview and Objectives

This legislation addresses historical inequalities by ensuring that same-sex couples have equal access to survivor pensions. It recognizes committed relationships that predate marriage equality, providing

financial security and acknowledging the legitimacy of these partnerships. The legislation aims to advance equality and inclusivity within the social welfare system by addressing these disparities.

The legislation partially addresses overlapping forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status. However, implementation mechanisms remain limited, leaving some individuals without adequate protection or access to resources.

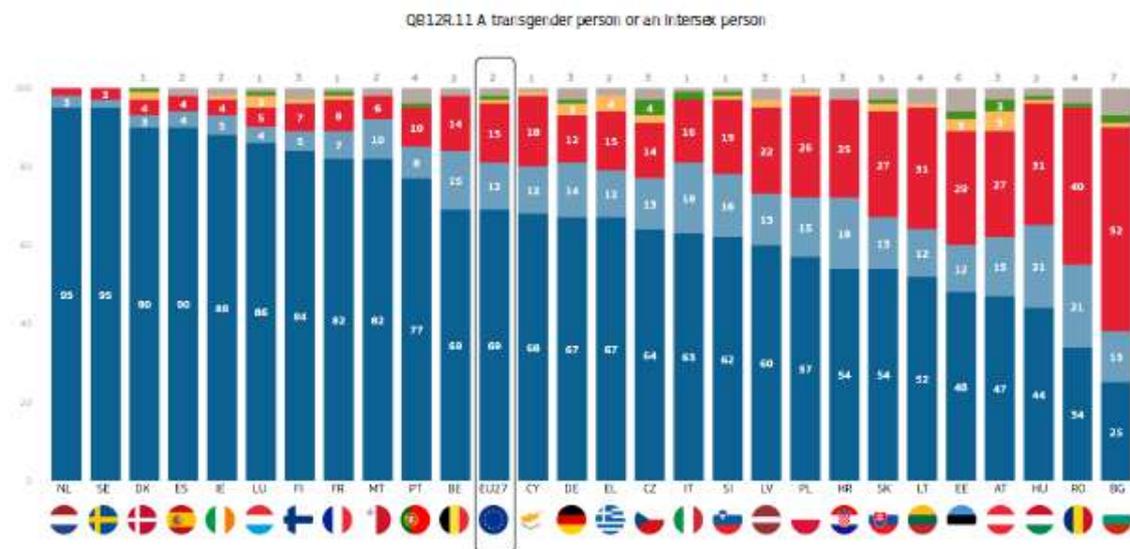
Comparative Analysis

Cross-Country Similarities and Differences

The five countries studied—Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Ireland—share several overarching similarities in their efforts to promote LGBTQI+ rights. All countries have **adopted legislative measures to protect LGBTQI+ individuals, reflecting broader alignment with European Union directives and international human rights frameworks**. These efforts include laws addressing anti-discrimination in employment, healthcare, and education, as well as protections against hate crimes. Spain and Ireland, in particular, have been frontrunners in embedding LGBTQI+ protections into their legal systems, while Greece has made rapid progress in recent years by passing landmark legislation on same-sex marriage and banning conversion therapy.

Despite these shared commitments, there are notable differences in the scope, implementation, and cultural reception of LGBTQI+ rights across these countries. Spain’s position as a trailblazer is evident through its progressive laws, such as the **Trans Law (2023)**, which grants transgender individuals the right to self-identify without medical approval. Ireland has taken a similarly progressive approach, with anti-discrimination protections covering a broad spectrum of gender identities and expressions. In contrast, Lithuania and Cyprus lag behind, with more limited protections for LGBTQI+ individuals, often confined to narrow policy areas like healthcare or anti-hate crime measures. Greece, while making strides, continues to face resistance in conservative regions, where societal acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals remains inconsistent.

QB12R. Regardless of whether you're actually working or not, please tell me, using a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable would you feel, if a colleague at work with whom you are in daily contact, belonged to each of the following groups? '1' means that you would feel 'not at all comfortable' and '10' that you would feel 'totally comfortable'. (%)



One critical similarity across all countries is **the gap between policy and practice**. Even in nations with advanced legal frameworks, such as Spain and Ireland, the implementation of policies often **falls short due to resource constraints, regional disparities, or insufficient public awareness**. For instance, autonomous regions in Spain sometimes struggle to enforce national-level LGBTQI+ protections uniformly, reflecting broader challenges in decentralization. Similarly, Greece and Cyprus face significant hurdles in enforcing anti-discrimination laws, particularly in rural or religiously conservative areas where **stigma against LGBTQI+ individuals remains pervasive**.

Institutional capacity is another area of divergence. Countries like Ireland and Spain benefit from robust equality bodies, such as Ireland's Equality Authority, which monitors compliance and enforces anti-discrimination laws. In contrast, Lithuania and Cyprus have fewer resources and less established institutions to oversee policy implementation, leading to inconsistent outcomes. This institutional disparity is further compounded by variations in public attitudes, with Lithuania and Cyprus reporting **higher levels of societal stigma** compared to Spain and Ireland. Greece occupies a middle ground, with **progressive urban centers showing increased acceptance but rural areas still struggle with entrenched biases**.

Cultural and religious factors also play a significant role in shaping these differences. For instance, the influence of the Catholic Church in Spain has waned significantly in recent decades, allowing for the advancement of LGBTQI+ rights without substantial opposition. Conversely, the Orthodox Church in Greece and Cyprus continues to exert considerable influence over public opinion and policymaking, often impeding the implementation of progressive LGBTQI+ measures. In Lithuania, the legacy of Soviet-era conservatism and limited public discourse on LGBTQI+ issues contribute to slower progress in societal acceptance and policy development.

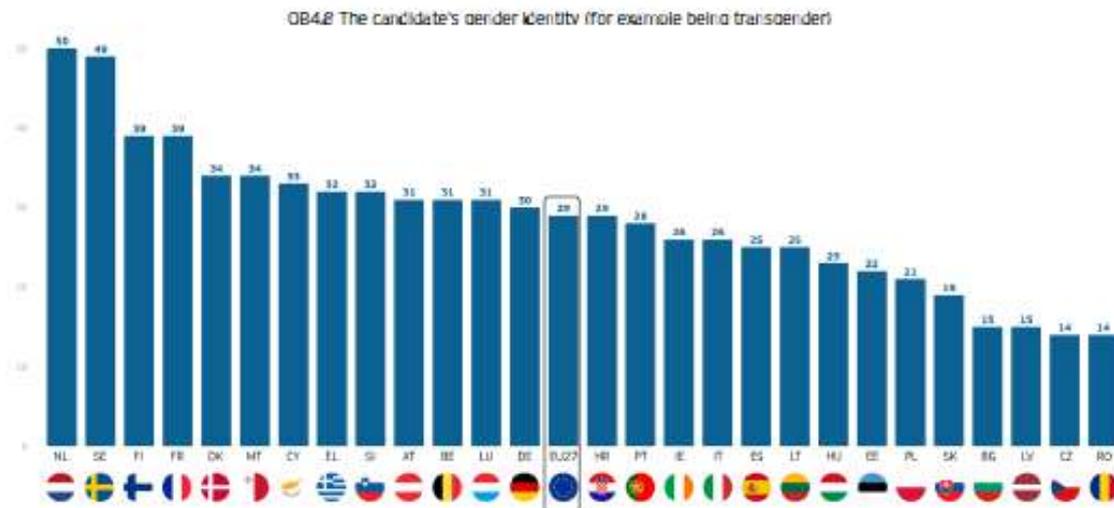
Despite these differences, there are shared opportunities for cross-country collaboration. Countries can learn from Spain's and Ireland's legislative successes, such as Spain's gender self-identification law and Ireland's robust anti-discrimination framework. Similarly, Greece's reforms in intersex protections and bans on conversion therapy could serve as models for Lithuania and Cyprus, where these issues remain under-addressed. Participating countries can work together to advance LGBTQI+ rights across Europe by leveraging these commonalities and addressing disparities.

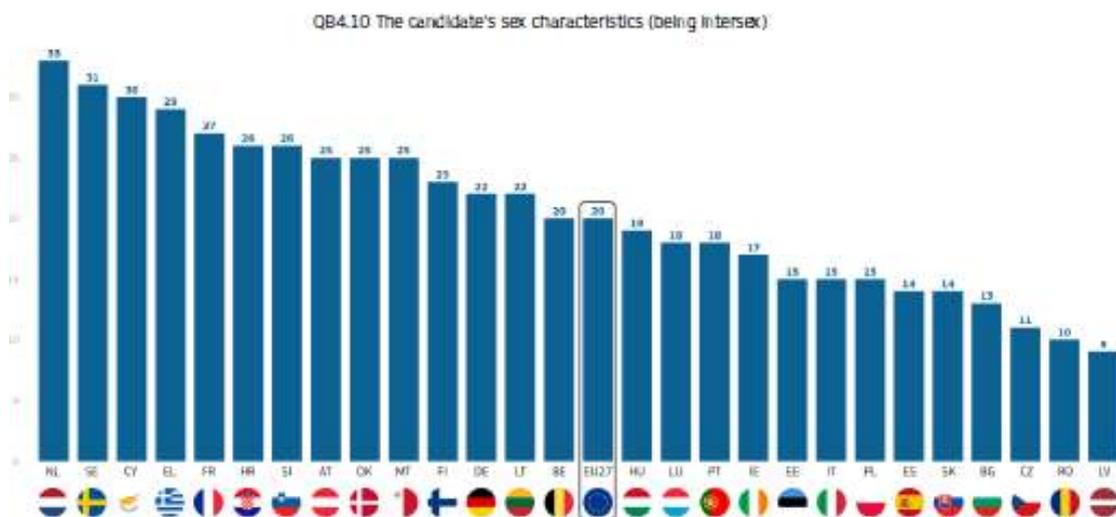
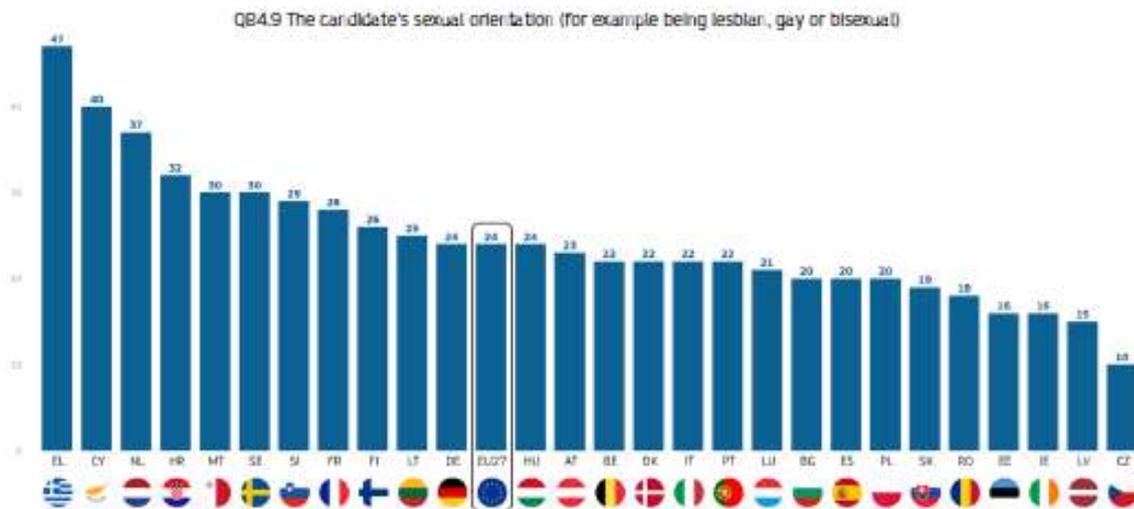
Identification of Gaps

Although significant progress has been made, **several critical gaps persist across the five countries**, undermining the realization of full equality for LGBTQI+ individuals. One of the most pressing gaps is **the lack of comprehensive healthcare access for transgender and intersex individuals**. While Lithuania has introduced structured guidelines for gender-affirming healthcare, these provisions are limited to adults and do not adequately address the needs of minors or provide psychological support. In countries like Cyprus and Greece, access to gender-affirming care remains sporadic, with few specialized providers and inconsistent funding. Even in Spain, where gender self-identification is legally recognized, practical barriers such as long waiting times and regional disparities hinder access to care.

Another significant gap lies in workplace inclusion. While anti-discrimination laws exist in all five countries, enforcement is uneven, and **LGBTQI+ individuals often face workplace stigma and limited opportunities for advancement**. In Cyprus and Lithuania, the absence of widespread employer training and monitoring mechanisms further exacerbates these challenges. Greece has taken steps to address workplace discrimination through **Law No. 4808/2021**, but societal biases and insufficient reporting mechanisms continue to hinder progress. Below in the images, you can see the place of Greece, Cyprus, as well as Lithuania, when it comes to trans and intersex people in the working environment. People believe that being trans and intersex is a disadvantage for hiring someone, according to the EC report “Discrimination in the European Union”.

QB4. When a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (%)





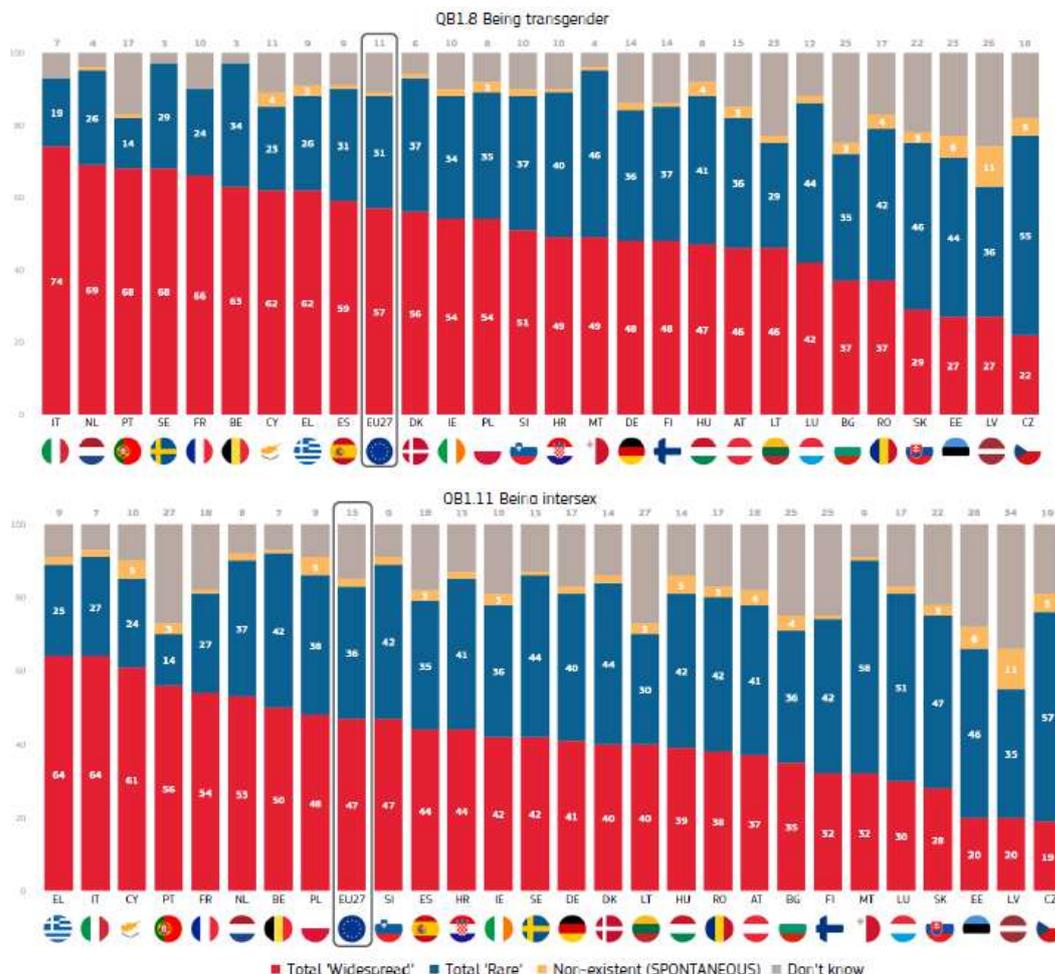
Source: *Discrimination in the European Union, Summary Report, Special Eurobarometer 535, April-May 2023.*
<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>

Protections for intersex individuals also remain inadequate across the board. Greece is one of the few countries to have enacted specific protections for intersex minors, **banning non-essential medical interventions**. However, other countries lack similar measures, leaving intersex individuals vulnerable to unnecessary surgeries and societal stigma. Public awareness campaigns on intersex rights are scarce, further compounding this issue.

Intersectional discrimination is another area that requires urgent attention. While countries like Ireland and Spain have adopted broad anti-discrimination frameworks, few explicitly address the compounded challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals who belong to other marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, or low-income communities. The absence of data on intersectional experiences further limits policymakers' ability to develop targeted interventions. Implementation gaps are a pervasive issue across all five countries. Even in nations with comprehensive legal protections, such as Spain and Ireland, **enforcement mechanisms are often underfunded or understaffed, leading to uneven application of the laws**. Regional disparities exacerbate this issue, particularly in decentralized states like Spain, where autonomous regions vary in their capacity to enforce national-level protections. In Lithuania and Cyprus, limited institutional

capacity and societal stigma create significant barriers to effective implementation, leaving many LGBTQI+ individuals without recourse when their rights are violated. Finally, public attitudes and societal acceptance remain significant challenges. In Lithuania and Cyprus, conservative cultural norms and religious influence contribute to widespread stigma against LGBTQI+ individuals, deterring them from accessing rights and protections. While Spain and Ireland have made considerable progress in reducing societal prejudice, pockets of resistance persist, particularly in rural areas. Greece faces a similar divide, with urban centers demonstrating greater acceptance than rural communities.

QB1. For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (%)



Source: *Discrimination in the European Union, Summary Report, Special Eurobarometer 535, April-May 2023.*
<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>

Addressing these gaps will require targeted action in several areas. **Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, increasing funding for implementation, and expanding public education campaigns are critical first steps.** Additionally, improving data collection on intersectional discrimination and creating tailored interventions for marginalized subgroups will help ensure that no one is left behind. By tackling these gaps, participating countries can move closer to achieving full equality for LGBTQI+ individuals.

Alignment with EU Frameworks

The European Union’s **LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020–2025** outlines a comprehensive roadmap to promote equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer individuals across all Member

States. Its key pillars include fighting discrimination, ensuring safety, building inclusive societies, and advancing LGBTIQ+ rights globally. The strategy emphasizes the need for **legal recognition, inclusive healthcare, anti-discrimination enforcement, and data collection**—all benchmarks against which national progress can be evaluated.

Across the five countries in this report, **alignment with EU frameworks varies significantly**, particularly in the legal treatment of gender identity and intersex protections:

- **Spain** demonstrates strong adherence to the EU strategy's goals, especially with its **Trans Law (2023), Zero Law (2022)**, and protections for intersex individuals under various national and regional frameworks. Spain also exemplifies the EU's emphasis on self-identification, healthcare access, and anti-discrimination.
- **Greece** has made notable strides through its **ban on conversion therapy, legal recognition of same-sex marriage, and protections for intersex minors**—aligning closely with EU standards. However, challenges persist in enforcement and rural acceptance, particularly regarding institutional sensitivity and access to services.
- **Ireland** largely aligns with EU standards in terms of legal gender recognition and youth protection. However, **intersectionality and healthcare equity** remain under-addressed, leaving gaps in comprehensive inclusion, particularly for adults, migrants, or racialized individuals.
- **Lithuania** demonstrates partial alignment, notably through healthcare reforms for trans individuals and legal initiatives like **the working group on gender status**. However, it falls short in fulfilling the EU strategy's calls for comprehensive anti-discrimination protection, particularly by excluding **gender identity and sex characteristics from national equality laws**.
- **Cyprus** has taken steps toward alignment, including the criminalization of conversion therapy and the SAFE-R project, but lacks a **cohesive national LGBTIQ+ strategy**. It does not yet fully meet EU expectations on legal gender recognition, comprehensive healthcare provision, or institutional accountability.

Additionally, the **Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)** and **Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)** require member states to prohibit discrimination in employment and vocational training. While all countries have introduced some form of anti-discrimination law, **implementation gaps remain** substantial, especially for trans, non-binary, and intersex individuals.

Key Gaps in EU Compliance:

- Lack of legal gender recognition for non-binary persons (all countries except partially in Spain and Ireland)
- Limited or absent intersex-specific protections (except Greece)
- Uneven enforcement of anti-discrimination laws
- Insufficient intersectional data collection and disaggregated reporting

For the EU strategy to realize its transformative potential, national governments must go beyond basic compliance and embed these principles into **coordinated, well-funded, and enforceable national action plans**—backed by **civil society participation** and **independent oversight**.

Recommendations

Policy Improvements

To close identified gaps in policy frameworks and implementation, participating countries **must prioritize revising and expanding their legal protections for LGBTQI+ individuals**. Policymakers should ensure that trans and intersex individuals are explicitly included in anti-discrimination laws and that legal recognition of gender identity encompasses non-binary and intersex individuals. Countries like Cyprus and Lithuania, where legislative progress has been slower, can adopt measures inspired by Spain's Trans Law (2023), which allows for self-identification without invasive requirements. **Comprehensive healthcare reform is another critical area**. Governments should establish national guidelines for gender-affirming care, incorporating best practices such as Lithuania's multidisciplinary framework for transgender healthcare. These guidelines must include access to psychological support, hormone therapy, and surgical interventions, as well as safeguards against unnecessary medical interventions for intersex minors. Special attention should also be given to addressing regional disparities, ensuring equal access to healthcare services in rural and underserved areas. **Inclusivity in the labour market should be improved by implementing robust workplace anti-discrimination policies**. Countries should consider mandating diversity and inclusion training for employers, with specific modules on LGBTQI+ issues. To support LGBTQI+ employees, governments could incentivize businesses to adopt inclusive policies, such as providing workplace benefits for same-sex couples and accommodating trans employees' needs during gender transition.

Institutional Strengthening

Building institutional capacity is essential for ensuring the effective implementation of LGBTQI+ policies. Governments should allocate resources to strengthen the capacities of equality bodies and human rights commissions tasked with monitoring and enforcing anti-discrimination laws. For example, Spain and Ireland, which have well-established equality institutions, could offer guidance on creating or enhancing similar bodies in Lithuania and Cyprus. Training programs for public officials, healthcare providers, educators, and law enforcement officers should be expanded to address gaps in understanding LGBTQI+ rights. These programs should focus on reducing bias, promoting cultural competency, and equipping institutions with the tools to address discrimination effectively. Greece's recent initiatives in banning conversion therapy could serve as a model for training mental health professionals on the dangers of harmful practices.

Additionally, governments should establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track the enforcement of LGBTQI+ policies. This includes collecting disaggregated data on discrimination cases, healthcare access, and workplace inclusion. Transparent reporting systems will enable institutions to identify gaps in implementation and respond more effectively to the needs of LGBTQI+ communities.

Cross-Country Learning Opportunities

Cross-country collaboration presents a valuable opportunity to share best practices and align policies across the region. Spain's leadership in self-identification laws and Ireland's comprehensive anti-discrimination framework are examples of legislative models that could be adopted by other countries. Similarly, Greece's intersex protections and Lithuania's healthcare guidelines highlight specific areas

where collaboration could yield positive results. Regional workshops and conferences can facilitate knowledge-sharing among policymakers, advocates, and institutions. These events should focus on exchanging strategies for addressing shared challenges, such as improving healthcare access and reducing societal stigma. The EU could play a coordinating role in organizing such initiatives, leveraging its LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 to encourage alignment with European standards. Digital platforms could also be developed to connect stakeholders across countries. These platforms could include resource libraries with case studies, legislative templates, and training materials, enabling countries to learn from each other's successes and avoid common pitfalls. Cross-border partnerships among NGOs and community organizations could amplify advocacy efforts, creating a unified voice for LGBTIQ+ rights in Europe.

Future Research Directions

Further research is **essential for addressing gaps in data and informing evidence-based policy development**. Governments and research institutions should prioritize studies on the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals, particularly trans and intersex persons, in areas such as healthcare, education, and employment. Comparative studies examining the effectiveness of different legal frameworks and implementation strategies across countries would provide valuable insights for harmonizing policies.

Intersectionality should be a focal point of future research. Understanding how factors such as race, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location intersect with LGBTIQ+ identities will help policymakers design targeted interventions to support the most marginalized groups. Additionally, more data on intersex individuals' experiences and needs is crucial for developing inclusive policies and healthcare protocols.

Pilot programs and longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the impact of new policies or initiatives, providing evidence to support scaling up successful models. For instance, pilot projects in rural areas could test strategies for improving healthcare access or combating stigma, with findings informing national strategies. Governments should also invest in developing tools for monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes, ensuring that progress is measurable and sustainable.

Appendices

Interview Summary

SPAIN

The interviews conducted in Spain by 3 different organisations (Somos, Instituto Ikigai and Solidaridad Sin Fronteras) provided insightful perspectives from 35 employers, 32 health professionals and 50 trans/intersex individuals regarding workplace inclusion, healthcare access, and broader societal challenges. This report synthesizes insights from interviews and questionnaires conducted in Spain with employers, healthcare professionals, and trans and intersex individuals. The findings explore the

state of workplace inclusion, access to healthcare, and broader structural challenges facing trans and intersex communities.

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Employers generally characterized their workplaces as **inclusive environments**, attributing this mainly to generational values rather than formalized diversity policies. While many expressed a genuine commitment to inclusivity, this commitment often relied on personal goodwill rather than structured, institutional support. **Inclusivity was frequently assumed rather than actively cultivated**, with most employers admitting they had never knowingly employed a trans or intersex person. Nevertheless, there was a clear openness and willingness to learn, with many recognizing the need for leadership, regular training, and clear anti-discrimination protocols. The questionnaire responses echoed this, showing that only a minority of organizations had specific procedures addressing the needs of trans and intersex employees. Actions taken to promote inclusion were typically internal and informal, with few organizations engaging in partnerships with LGBTQI+ groups or offering targeted communication or education initiatives. Knowledge gaps also emerged, particularly around legal procedures such as updating name and gender markers in employment records, highlighting a need for better legal literacy and structured guidance.

In contrast, trans and intersex individuals painted a more difficult picture of their lived realities. Many reported **significant barriers to employment**, with some turning to sex work due to a lack of legal recognition or job opportunities. **Submitting resumes often yielded no responses**, and social integration programs led by NGOs were sometimes the only pathways to employment. Respect in both healthcare and the workplace was described as inconsistent, often perceived as a matter of luck rather than a guaranteed right. In healthcare, participants described challenges such as misgendering, judgmental attitudes—particularly concerning sex work or sexuality—and limited access to gender-affirming care. Migrants faced even more significant obstacles, including the inability to obtain healthcare cards or legally update their gender markers.

The questionnaires reinforced these narratives. **A large majority of trans respondents reported having experienced discrimination during hiring or at work**, and many avoided disclosing their identity out of fear. Awareness of legal protections was low, with two-thirds of participants unaware of their rights or how to pursue them. Many expressed hesitation or fear about seeking legal recourse for discrimination. Those who did find work were often in informal or precarious positions, and mental health support was either inadequate or inaccessible. A few individuals reported better experiences in NGO-affiliated clinics, but access to such care was inconsistent.

Interviews with healthcare professionals revealed a strong commitment to providing care for trans and intersex patients but also **exposed widespread institutional unpreparedness**. Many **professionals acknowledged having received little to no training on trans-specific issues** during their medical education or in their current roles. This lack of structured training and guidance often led to uncertainty and unintentional exclusion or harm. While intentions were often positive, the absence of clear protocols, inclusive tools, and continuing education resulted in care that frequently

failed to meet the needs of trans and intersex patients. Questionnaire data showed that only a tiny percentage of respondents felt healthcare professionals were adequately informed about the needs of trans and intersex individuals.

Despite these challenges, the overall tone of the interviews was one of resilience and cautious optimism. Trans participants emphasized that their experiences, though difficult, had fostered strength and a strong sense of identity. They called for systemic reforms, including early education about trans identities, mandatory training for healthcare and HR professionals, and better coordination across public institutions to ensure that trans rights are consistently upheld. Both employer and healthcare professional interviews revealed a growing cultural openness and willingness to support trans and intersex inclusion. Still, this shift in attitude is not yet matched by policy or infrastructure. The assumption of inclusivity without concrete action may actually hinder progress, as it can create a false sense of accomplishment.

The findings from this study **highlight the urgent need for structured and sustainable inclusion strategies**. In both employment and healthcare, meaningful progress will require not only open attitudes but also the implementation of comprehensive policies, inclusive training, and better legal and institutional support to bridge the gap between good intentions and the lived experiences of trans and intersex individuals.

Employers

- **Inclusivity Perception:** Generally perceived as inclusive due to generational values, not formal policies.
- **Policy Gaps:** Few organizations had specific trans/intersex inclusion policies or HR protocols.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Lack of understanding about legal gender/name changes in employment records.
- **Engagement:** Limited collaboration with LGBTQI+ organizations or structured training.

Trans and Intersex Individuals

- **Employment Barriers:** High unemployment, experiences of discrimination; some resorted to sex work.
- **Legal Awareness:** 2/3 unaware of legal rights or how to exercise them.
- **Healthcare Experiences:**
 - Misgendering and stigma prevalent.
 - NGOs provided better experiences but were unevenly accessible.
- **Mental Health:** Inadequate, inaccessible support; strong demand for specialized care.

Healthcare Professionals

- **Training:** Very limited education on trans/intersex issues.
- **Readiness:** Willing to improve but need structured protocols, tools, and guidance.

Key Takeaways

- Inclusivity often assumed rather than institutionalized.
- Structural reforms and education needed in employment and healthcare.

The interviews conducted with professionals across the employment and healthcare sectors as well as trans and intersex people in Greece shed light on the challenges and opportunities surrounding the inclusion of trans and intersex individuals. Socialinnov and Prolepsis implemented interviews with 24 employers, 24 health professionals and 13 trans/intersex individuals regarding workplace inclusion, healthcare access, and broader societal challenges.

Healthcare professionals reported **a widespread lack of specialized training on trans and intersex healthcare needs**. Most have never received formal instruction on gender identity issues, and many are unfamiliar with appropriate protocols or inclusive communication practices. This lack of preparation often results in misgendering, discomfort, or outright denial of appropriate care. Structural obstacles, such as **the exclusion of gender-affirming procedures from public health coverage and bureaucratic mismatches after legal gender changes, further complicate access to necessary services**. There is also a strong need for mental health services that are specifically tailored to the experiences of trans and intersex individuals.

Employers, on the other hand, often operate with broad non-discrimination policies but lack targeted strategies for gender diversity and inclusion. Trans and intersex individuals remain largely invisible in the workplace, and their absence is sometimes misunderstood as a lack of interest or qualification, rather than a result of systemic exclusion. **Employers pointed to a lack of staff awareness, societal stigma, and uncertainty about how to support trans employees as key challenges**. Despite this, there is increasing openness to receiving training, developing inclusive policies, and working with LGBTQI+ organizations to build more welcoming work environments.

Overall, the findings emphasize the need for structured, ongoing education, practical support tools, and meaningful collaboration between institutions and communities. Building inclusive systems in Greece will require coordinated efforts across healthcare, employment, and public policy sectors, grounded in empathy and expertise.

Beyond institutional limitations, the personal stories collected reveal the emotional, physical, and social toll of navigating everyday life as a trans or intersex person in Greece. **Several participants recounted experiences of blatant disrespect in healthcare settings**—from being misgendered to having their identities questioned or dismissed by professionals. The lack of affordable gender-affirming procedures, as well as untrained or unwilling healthcare staff, often forces individuals to seek care abroad or delay necessary treatment. Others described how deeply ingrained social stigma prevents them from using basic public facilities or compels them to conceal their identity in professional environments. Intersex voices expressed profound frustration at being misunderstood by both the public and medical professionals alike, highlighting a need for visibility, education, and acceptance. Despite these challenges, many participants also voiced a desire for change—emphasizing the importance of family support, education, and legal reforms that respect their identities and ensure access to dignified healthcare and equal employment.

Employers

- **Policies:** Broad anti-discrimination policies exist, but gender diversity strategies lacking.

- **Awareness:** Employers lacked understanding of specific needs of trans/intersex staff.
- **Willingness:** Open to training and collaboration with LGBTQI+ groups.

Trans and Intersex Individuals

- **Healthcare Challenges:**
 - Misgendering and denial of services is common
 - Cost barriers for procedures; travel abroad for care.
- **Social Stigma:** Leads to concealment of identity, especially at work.
- **Mental Health:** Lacks specialized services; feelings of invisibility.

Healthcare Professionals

- **Training Deficits:** Little to no formal training.
- **Barriers:** Bureaucratic mismatches post-transition; public coverage gaps.

Key Takeaways

- Institutions are open but underprepared.
- Need for education, visibility, and legal clarity.

CYPRUS

In Cyprus, Wisefour implemented interviews with 10 employers, 10 health professionals and 9 trans/intersex individuals regarding workplace inclusion, healthcare access, and broader societal challenges.

This report presents findings from interviews and questionnaire responses gathered in Cyprus, offering insight into the current state of workplace inclusion and healthcare access for trans and intersex individuals. It reflects the experiences of both employers and healthcare professionals, as well as the lived realities of trans and intersex people navigating these systems.

In the workplace, efforts to foster inclusion remain inconsistent and often superficial. While some companies do organize diversity and inclusion workshops, participation is voluntary, which significantly limits their overall impact. **Structured systems for addressing discrimination are largely absent**, meaning that employees who face harassment or exclusion often have no safe or effective means of reporting these issues. This gap in accountability creates a climate of silence, where many individuals are reluctant to speak out due to fear of retaliation or being further marginalized.

Psychological support services are generally available in some organizations, **but they are not tailored to the specific needs of LGBTQ+ employees**. As a result, trans and intersex individuals often find it difficult to access appropriate mental health care. The situation **is even more limited in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, which typically **lack formal inclusion policies or awareness-raising initiatives altogether**. While larger companies may have some policies on paper, they frequently struggle to implement these measures in ways that truly support their trans and intersex employees.

When asked about their commitment to recruiting diverse talent, employers offered varied responses, suggesting a spectrum of engagement with LGBTQI+ inclusion. While 60% of organizations reported having conducted some form of diversity and inclusion training, 40% had not. These figures reveal a clear opportunity for more systematic and widespread implementation of such training, particularly with a focus on gender diversity.

The healthcare sector in Cyprus faces parallel challenges. **Healthcare professionals report receiving little to no formal training on trans and intersex health needs once they begin working.** Although some may have encountered related topics during their studies, these sessions were often optional and not integrated into the core curriculum. Medical guidelines on trans and intersex care do exist, but **they are frequently neglected or underutilized**, leaving many professionals without the knowledge or confidence to provide competent, affirming care. Beyond the clinical knowledge gap, there **is also a lack of awareness regarding the legal rights of trans and intersex patients**, which further compromises the quality of care.

Healthcare facilities themselves are often not designed to be inclusive or respectful of diverse gender identities. **Many lack the necessary resources, infrastructure, or private spaces** to ensure patients feel safe and respected. This lack of inclusivity contributes to widespread negative experiences, particularly for those seeking gender-affirming care or support in mental health settings. When asked about training on the specific health needs of trans and intersex individuals, 80% of healthcare workers reported never receiving any formal instruction. However, the vast majority expressed a strong desire for more training, recognizing the need to improve their understanding and service delivery.

Trans and intersex individuals continue to face severe limitations in employment opportunities. Many encounter **discrimination during the hiring process**, where stereotypes and biases often lead to immediate rejection. For those who do manage to find employment, wage disparities are a common issue, with trans and intersex employees earning noticeably less than their cisgender peers. In the absence of clear and enforceable legal protections, **they remain highly vulnerable to mistreatment and inequality in the workplace.** While some employers express good intentions and a willingness to foster inclusive environments, they often cite broader societal resistance as a significant barrier to enacting meaningful change.

Healthcare access is similarly fraught with obstacles. A substantial majority—77.8%—of trans and intersex respondents reported difficulties in accessing the services they need. These experiences range from denial of care to a lack of understanding from medical staff. The data also suggests a widespread perception that **existing mental health services are not adapted to the realities of trans and intersex people**, further underlining the urgent need for specialized support structures and training.

The findings from Cyprus reveal systemic shortcomings in both employment and healthcare contexts. While there are individual examples of commitment and interest in inclusion, these are not yet supported by the institutional structures, legal frameworks, or training programs necessary to turn intent into impact. Moving forward, a stronger focus on mandatory education, the development of inclusive workplace and healthcare policies, and the establishment of clear legal protections will be essential in addressing these deep-rooted gaps.

Employers

- **D&I Programs:** Workshops exist, but mostly voluntary.
- **Lack of Policies:** SMEs often have no formal inclusion structures.
- **Recruitment:** 60% conducted some diversity training; 40% had not.

Trans and Intersex Individuals

- **Workplace Discrimination:** Common in hiring and wage inequality.
- **Mental Health Access:** Existing services poorly adapted to needs.
- **Healthcare Barriers:** 77.8% reported difficulties; misgendering and poor understanding.

Healthcare Professionals

- **Training:** 80% had no formal training on trans/intersex issues.
- **Legal Knowledge:** Limited awareness of patient rights.

Key Takeaways

- Good intentions not matched by policies.
- Mandatory training and legal protections urgently needed.

LITHUANIA

In Lithuania, LGL implemented interviews with 33 employers, health professionals and trans/intersex individuals in total regarding workplace inclusion, healthcare access, and broader societal challenges. This report presents an overview of inclusion efforts in the workplace and healthcare sectors based on responses from employers, healthcare professionals, and trans and intersex individuals. The findings indicate positive developments alongside persistent challenges that continue to affect the well-being and equitable treatment of trans and intersex people.

Several employers reported active engagement in diversity and inclusion initiatives in the employment context. A significant majority—75%—confirmed that their organization had conducted diversity and inclusion training, though the remaining 25% indicated "maybe," suggesting uncertainty about how systematic or formal these trainings are. Encouragingly, 75% of employers also reported having actively hired or promoted trans and intersex individuals within their organizations. This reflects a meaningful level of commitment to inclusivity, even if it is not yet universal.

Despite these efforts, other findings revealed variability in how consistently LGBTQI+ inclusion is prioritized. When asked whether their organizations prioritize the recruitment of diverse talent, responses ranged across the scale, revealing that while some companies are proactive, others **lack structured policies or a clear focus on this goal**. A similar pattern emerged in assessments of leadership awareness: Scores varied when participants were asked whether their management teams were well-informed about the specific challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals. These mixed results suggest that while inclusion is valued in some spaces, leadership across sectors still requires more education and engagement to ensure a consistent and informed approach to diversity.

In the healthcare sector, **inclusion remains limited by a lack of formal training**. Two-thirds of healthcare professionals reported that they had not received any structured education on the healthcare needs of trans and intersex individuals. Only 33.3% had received such training,

underscoring a significant gap in professional development. This deficit contributes to inconsistencies in care, with some professionals lacking essential knowledge on gender-affirming practices and the rights of trans and intersex patients. Nevertheless, most healthcare workers expressed a strong desire for further training. Ratings were consistently high when asked whether additional education would help them better understand the needs of trans and intersex individuals, signalling a willingness to grow and improve, even where training has so far been lacking.

From the perspective of trans and intersex individuals, access to healthcare continues to present serious challenges. A significant 80% of respondents reported having faced difficulties accessing medical services. These difficulties often stem from **discriminatory behaviors, misgendering, or a lack of knowledge on the part of healthcare providers**. In particular, mental health services were perceived as poorly adapted to the unique needs of trans and intersex people. Respondents generally rated these services unfavorably, indicating a strong need for mental health support that is both inclusive and affirming.

In terms of broader community and peer support, responses were mixed. While some individuals acknowledged having access to community networks or LGBTQI+ organizations, others indicated limited or no visibility of such resources in their area. This uneven access reflects disparities between different regions or communities and reinforces the importance of expanding and promoting community-based services.

Together, the data points to a complex picture. On one hand, there are promising signs of institutional openness, with many employers and healthcare professionals demonstrating interest and effort in supporting LGBTQI+ inclusion. On the other hand, **significant gaps persist—in leadership awareness, consistent training, and infrastructure**—that prevent this inclusion from being fully realized. Addressing these issues will require a coordinated effort, including implementing mandatory training programs, greater leadership accountability, and investment in inclusive community support systems.

Employers

- **Inclusion Efforts:** 75% had training; 75% had hired trans/intersex individuals.
- **Leadership Gaps:** Varied awareness among management.

Trans and Intersex Individuals

- **Healthcare Access:** 80% faced barriers; misgendering and discrimination common.
- **Mental Health Services:** Rated poorly; lack of cultural competence.
- **Community Support:** Inconsistent visibility of LGBTQI+ resources.

Healthcare Professionals

- **Training:** 66.7% received no structured education.
- **Willingness:** Strong interest in further training.

Key Takeaways

- Openness exists but implementation gaps remain.
- Invest in leadership training, infrastructure, and community support.

Conclusion

This report highlights significant progress made by Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Cyprus, and Ireland in advancing LGBTQI+ rights while identifying persistent gaps and challenges. **Key findings underscore the importance of robust legal frameworks**, such as Spain’s Trans Law and Ireland’s anti-discrimination measures, as well as the need for improved implementation, particularly in rural or conservative regions. Common barriers, such as limited institutional capacity and insufficient healthcare access for trans and intersex individuals, demonstrate the critical need for continued action. Cross-country collaboration is essential to accelerate progress. Sharing best practices, such as Greece’s intersex protections and Lithuania’s structured transgender healthcare guidelines, offers a path toward harmonized approaches. Regional cooperation can foster alignment with EU strategies, enabling countries to address challenges collectively and amplify their impact. Safeguarding LGBTQI+ rights requires sustained commitment from policymakers, institutions, and society. By prioritizing policy improvements, strengthening institutions, and fostering public awareness, participating countries can build a more inclusive Europe where all individuals, regardless of their identity, are protected and empowered.

Country	Policy Improvements	Institutional Strength
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enshrine protections for non-binary identities - Address regional inconsistencies in law enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand training for healthcare and public sector staff - Improve coordination between autonomous regions
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand protections for intersex individuals beyond current medical laws - Tackle conservative societal resistance in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train health professionals on trans/intersex needs - Collaboration between trans/intersex communities and employment companies - Strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include gender identity/expression in equality laws - Address lack of legal gender recognition for non-binary/intersex individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the capacity of equality bodies - Provide consistent, state-supported training
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a national LGBTQI+ inclusion strategy - Improve legal recognition of gender identity and workplace rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make inclusion training mandatory in healthcare and public services - Establish reporting and accountability mechanisms
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance intersectionality in existing laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand targeted training for healthcare professionals

	- Improve access to inclusive healthcare for adults, not just youth	- Strengthen monitoring of workplace discrimination
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