



the choice
is **YOURS!**





Recommendations for potential employers and youth workers working with young LGBTIQ+



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Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. About the project	1
1.2. Project aims	3
1.3. Goals of the handbook	3
1.4. Partnership	4
1.5. Partners' perspective	9
1.6. EU policies	15
1.7. Barriers and issues faced by young LGBTIQ	17
2. Glossary	19
3. Youth worker training guide	23
3.1. Training activities	23
3.2. Job search	31
3.3. CV template	32
3.4. Application template	32
3.5. Interview preparation	33
3.6. Europass/Youthpass	34
4. Employer's guide	35
4.1. Recommendations	35
4.2. Non-biased recruitment	37
4.3. How to prepare an inclusive job description?	37
4.4. How to have a selection process in an inclusive manner?	38
4.5. Case studies	39
4.6. Being a responsible employer	40
4.7. Dealing with health and criminal check	43
4.8. How to deal with negative attitudes?	44
4.9. Privacy and confidentiality	45
4.10. Workplace environment	45
5. Best practices	47
6. Where can you ask for support?	49
References	51



*"Diversity is a fact, but inclusion
is a choice we make every day.
As leaders, we have to put out the
message that we embrace and not just
tolerate diversity."*

Nellie Borrero

Introduction

1.1. About the project

The Choice is Yours project is a small-scale partnership within the Erasmus+ programme that brings together organisations and institutions from **Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia and Greece**. It was developed to support LGBTIQ+ young people entering the labour market by educating youth workers and potential employers on how to support them and create a work environment based on both empathy and respect.

As part of the project, a number of activities took place, including a meeting of project partners which included a study visit to the "Stowarzyszenie Różnorodności Społecznej UP-DATE" in Wrocław, where we explored good practices in supporting the young LGBTIQ+ community. A 5-day training was held in Athens, where we learned the fundamental differences between gender identity, gender expression, sex, physical attraction, and emotional attraction. This gave us a deeper understanding of the community and its diversity. We also took part in workshops such as a living library, where LGBTIQ+ people shared their stories of coming out in their workplaces, and the difficulties and challenges they faced during job interviews. We then participated in a theatre workshop where we tried to step into the shoes of these people and face the emotions they faced in the labour market. We took part in a queer short film festival and the "Emfasis Foundation" invited us on a study visit to learn about the problem of homelessness in Athens, which includes LGBTIQ+ young people who are often excluded by family and society.

The above activities and experiences prepared our partnership to develop this publication.



PRIDE!

1.2. Project aims

The Choice is Yours project aimed to support young people with fewer opportunities, especially those **at risk of discrimination in y and social exclusion**, and to overcome the barriers they face in society, especially in the labour market. We were able to achieve this by learning together, raising awareness and knowledge and developing the skills of those working with LGBTIQ+ young people and potential employers hiring young people from this community just entering the labour market, as well as by developing unified standards for communication and cooperation with LGBTIQ+ young people, based on **respect, empathy, dignity and tolerance**, which can be found in this publication.

Through the project we have been able to:

- promote social inclusion, support equality and justice;
- promote active citizenship, tolerance and knowledge and appreciation of social diversity;
- promote equality for LGBTIQ+ people;
- prevent discrimination.

1.3. Goals of the handbook

The main aims of our handbook are as follows:

- **to structure the knowledge** - this is particularly the case in Chapter 2, which contains a glossary with the most essential concepts;
- **to support those working with LGBTIQ+ youth** - youth workers, teachers, and educators, who in Chapter 3 may find some useful training and workshop materials, sample documents such as CV, application, Europass / Youthpass, and information that can help them supporting young people before a job interview;
- **to support potential employers** who want to build LGBTIQ+ friendly working environments, with Chapter 4 providing answers to questions such as how to be a responsible employer, how to deal with negative attitudes, how to prepare an inclusive recruitment process as well as a number of recommendations or case studies;

- **to support young LGBTIQ+ people** - indeed, the content of Chapter 3 is not only useful for those who work with LGBTIQ youth, but also for young LGBTIQ people themselves, particularly information on how to build up a CV and application or how to prepare for a job interview. In addition, in Chapter 6 they can find a list of organisations and institutions where they can seek support not only when entering the labour market, but also in their everyday life in their home countries.

Our handbook is therefore first and foremost a guideline for those working with and employing LGBTIQ+ young people, pointing out ways to build a working environment as well as relationships and communication based on respect, empathy, dignity and tolerance. It is also a great support for young LGBTIQ+ themselves.

With the recommendations developed through an international and cross-sectoral partnership, we believe that our work has succeeded in providing unified standards that will work across Europe and beyond.

1.4. Partnership

Our partnership was made up of **4 organisations from different countries**, all brought together by the same challenge and desire to make a difference in their communities. We did not know each other before the project, but we very quickly fell into a common language. Each of us had experience in a different area, bringing this expertise into our project collaboration.





The applicant organisation that invited the others to work together was the Polish "**Fundacja Cooperacja**" which is a non-governmental organisation operating since November 2019, promoting mobility, multiculturalism, socio-cultural integration, tolerance, inclusion and European values such as equality and unity in diversity.

Our main activities:

- we support refugees and migrants in the integration process through free Polish language classes, counselling provided through a mobile infopoint for foreigners, organisation of cultural and animation activities as well as intercultural workshops;
- we increase access to culture (including so-called high culture) and expand the cultural offer in the region by organising workshops and study visits, reaching places where access to culture is limited;
- we promote and protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage by cultivating local traditions, legends and stories and their preservation;
- we stimulate social and civic activity and promote democracy by animating and supporting various communities, of all ages;
- we promote well-being, physical activity and contact with nature by organising outdoor initiatives and well-being trainings;
- we carry out educational activities using methods of non-formal education, mainly through the creation of international networks for important social issues;
- we join and initiate various anti-discrimination and equality activities, projects and campaigns, promoting social diversity.



www.coooperacja.pl



www.facebook.com/FundacjaCooperacja



fundacja.cooperacja@gmail.com



www.instagram.com/fundacjacooperacja



"Association of Ruse in help of society and young people" is an organisation that seeks to help people, young adults, in their development using non-formal education methods and its instruments. The organisation has existed for more than a year and has realised local and international projects in the field of Erasmus plus. Organisation mostly deals with training in socially significant topics such as discrimination, tolerance, good and healthy lifestyle, entrepreneurship and developing entrepreneurship abilities. Also, the organisation uses art and music as tools for interpreting socially relevant themes such as inclusion, multicultural environments, different hatred, intolerance. Also, our organisation strives to cover through its activities / courses, workshops, working groups / different parts of society which involve learning through informal methods. The organisation has experience both internationally through the participation of members of the organisation as participants and as partners who send participants in international projects Erasmus plus. The organisation also has very good relationships and works in formal education / partnerships with three schools in three different areas of Bulgaria and universities both at home and abroad. In the local aspect organisation organises charity campaigns and initiatives hyped tolerance and understanding, using music.



www.rapo2019.wixsite.com/rapo



www.facebook.com/associationofruse



associationofruse@gmail.com



"T.I.R Consulting Group" – espouses the benefits knowledge brings to society and through many of its activities encourages deeper knowledge and understanding within society. The founders of TIR have broad experience in such sectors as accounting, banking, education, information technology to even occupational hazards & safety standards within industry. The founders have also worked across a range of markets from, UK, Europe to Asia. It is this knowledge that TIR will capitalise on and promote a fairer, more knowledgeable society with its 3Es principles – EMBRACE diversity, ENHANCE knowledge and EMPOWER people – via collaborations with associated and sister organisations such as European Learning Network.



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admin@tirconsults.com



"Centre of Art, Culture and Social Empowerment Kallitechnio" is a place of engagement in the cultural and social fields that helps the local community to connect and integrate. It raises awareness about cultural sensitivity and community development in many ways, including seminars, workshops, projects, cultural and social education as well as training programmes. It has developed a network with a wide range of community organisations such as NGOs, social enterprises, schools, foundations, as well as universities, public and private enterprises and municipalities. Since its establishment, it has collaborated with many organisations to create joint events, festivals, social and educational projects and has designed and implemented research in local and European-funded projects. Its main objective is to work for collective and social benefit, through research, awareness raising, education and developing national, European and global networks.



www.kallitechnio.org



info@kallitechnio.org



www.facebook.com/kallitechnio



www.instagram.com/Kallitechnio

1.5. Partners' perspective

Poland

In Poland, more than half of people from the LGBTIQ+ community have experienced a hate crime based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but only 2.5% of such cases are reported to the police, according to data from the "Kampania Przeciwko Homofobii" (Campaign Against Homophobia). Experts point out that this is not only the result of politics and homophobic actions in the public space but also of deficiencies in current laws. For example, they do not currently protect LGBTIQ people from hate speech, even though other minorities, such as national or religious ones, can receive such protection.

In the "Rainbow Index of Europe" – a ranking of EU countries compiled by ILGA Europe – Poland is currently in **44th** place out of 49 countries included in it. As one example, the organisation's report points to the high number of extremely homophobic public actions and the fact that more and more LGBTIQ people are leaving the country as the political situation worsens.

The scale of discrimination against the LGBT+ community in Poland is illustrated, for example, by the establishment of more

than 100 "LGBT-free zones" in cities and municipalities, which collectively accounted for over a third of the country. It is true that some of them withdrew from this idea in 2022, but ILGA Europe also points to a number of other manifestations of homophobia in the public space in 2021, such as the 'Stop LGBT' legislative initiative, which gathered more than 140,000 signatures and has made its way to the Parliament (it calls for the introduction of legislation similar to one that is currently in force in Russia, such as banning public assemblies that promote the rights of LGBT+ people), a proposal for a law "protecting children from adoption by gay couples", the restriction of sex education in schools or violent attacks and hate crimes. According to the "Kampania Przeciw Homofobii", in 2019-2020 in Poland, as many as 98% of LGBTIQ+ people experienced some form of microaggression due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Nearly 70% also experienced at least one type of violent behaviour, and more than half (53%) were victims of a hate crime based on sexual orientation or

gender identity. 45% of those surveyed experienced cyberbullying, which is most commonly faced by transgender people, and a similar proportion (46%) witnessed other LGBTIQ people being cyberbullied on a daily or near-daily basis.

Research conducted by the "Kampania Przeciwko Homofobii" also found that, on average, one in four working LGBTIQ+ people (25%) felt the need to hide their gender identity or sexual orientation in the workplace, and more than a third of trans people (36%) experienced poorer treatment at work. Discrimination is also clearly felt in the Polish health service: as many as 48% of trans people whose gender identity was known to doctors faced worse treatment (report "The social situation of LGBTIQ people in Poland. Report for 2019-2020").

The lawyer of the Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law notes, however, that with each passing year, **there is a growing awareness in Polish society of the importance of this topic and an expectation to recognise the rights of LGBT+ people and to fill the gaps in current legislation.**



Bulgaria

Bulgaria legalised homosexuality in 1968, decades before most other countries in emerging Europe. Despite this early win for equality and the collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria, the newly established LGBTIQ organisations faced opposition similar to that seen in most of the Orthodox Christian societies of Europe. A large part of Bulgarian society has a fairly conservative attitude towards homosexuality.

According to a recent study published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 75% avoid often or always holding hands with their same-sex partner in Bulgaria; 27% felt discriminated against at work; 39% in Bulgaria say they were harassed. This somewhat becomes a big problem because discrimination affects many areas of life, such as going to a café, restaurant, hospital, or to a shop – and 45% of LGBTIQ people in Bulgaria often avoid certain locations for fear of being assaulted. In 2019, 52% felt discriminated against. Although 12% went to the police in Bulgaria to report physical or sexual attacks, because of their sexual orientation, often these complaints are not taken into account or the case is delayed for months. The positive side is that 34% in Bulgaria say that LGBTIQ prejudice and intolerance have

dropped in the country which is largely reflected in the growth and views of the young generation - 38% of LGBTIQ teenagers in Bulgaria say their peers or teachers have often or always supported LGBTIQ people. This is largely due to the acceptance of our country into the European Union. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is forbidden in the areas of employment, housing, education, and the provision of goods and services. In the last few years, there have been several instances of homophobia-related crimes – and no political party has openly expressed support for the equal rights of the LGBT community – even though some of them supported Sofia Pride.

Data from a survey conducted in the period 2017-2020 shows the following public opinion statistics:

Questions	Yes	No
Acceptance of homosexuals as neighbours	70%	30%
Social acceptance of homosexuality	68%	32%
Opinion on same-sex couples as parents	90%	10%
Perceived prevalence of discrimination against transgender people	40%	23%
Acceptance of same-sex relationships	71%	20%

Fortunately, things are gradually changing. Much of this change is because same-sex relationships are legal in Bulgaria, but same-sex couples and households are not eligible for the same legal protections available to opposite-sex couples. Discrimination based on sexual orientation has been banned since 2004. And discrimination based on "gender change" has been outlawed since 2015. But the same-sex marriage are forbidden. For 2020, Bulgaria was ranked 37 of 49 European countries for LGBTIQ rights protection by ILGA-Europe. A large part of LGBTIQ people in the country feel at the same time grateful that they have the freedom to be themselves, but being an LGBTIQ person in Bulgaria is quite conflicting and paradoxical, people

in leading management positions in the country share. The struggle for equality and freedom has always been difficult in Bulgaria because it includes not only the right of people to determine their sexual orientation but also a struggle for a normal life. Therefore, a large number of LGBTIQ+ organizations in the country direct their efforts to working with parents of LGBTIQ children, such as GLAS Foundation (Gays and Lesbians Accepted in Society), a non-governmental organization, which mainly focuses on working with parents of LGBT people, creating an integrated work environment and campaigning against homophobic hate crimes, as well as promoting tolerance. **More and more LGBT people in Bulgaria are living openly**, are coming out to their relatives, friends, and colleagues, and continue to live in Bulgaria with their partners, creating families, and raising children.

Croatia

The history of LGBTIQ communities in Croatia is marked by complex and far-reaching developments. Until 1977, male homosexual acts were criminalized, and LGBTIQ individuals faced repression under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since then, Croatia has made slow but

steady progress in improving conditions for LGBTIQ people. The country passed laws to expand their rights, including equalising the age of consent in 1998 and enacting anti-discrimination protection laws in 2003. In 2014, the Life Partnerships Act granted same-sex couples the most rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples, and a 2021 court verdict allowed them to adopt children. Croatia also allows legal gender transition without surgical intervention. However, challenges remain, as same-sex marriage is constitutionally banned and discrimination and violence against sexual minorities persist. Croatia's progress highlights the need for societal and governmental support to further advance LGBTQ rights. As the country continues its path towards European integration, maintaining tolerance and respect will be crucial for future social justice advancements. **While there is work to be done, Croatia's recovery from its past and the ongoing trajectory of progress inspire optimism for LGBTIQ rights in the country.**

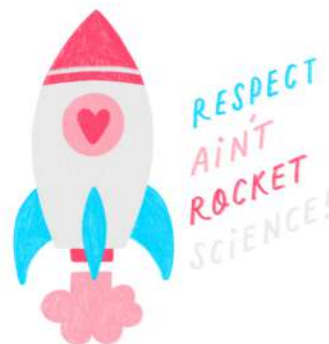
The City of Zagreb is home to initiatives such as Zagreb Pride, Iskorak, Kontra, LGBTIQ Initiative AUT, qSPORT and the recently initiated Ponosni Zagreb (Proud Zagreb). A bit of research placed Croatia as 39th on the list of 150 world's most popular countries for LGBTIQ+ travel.

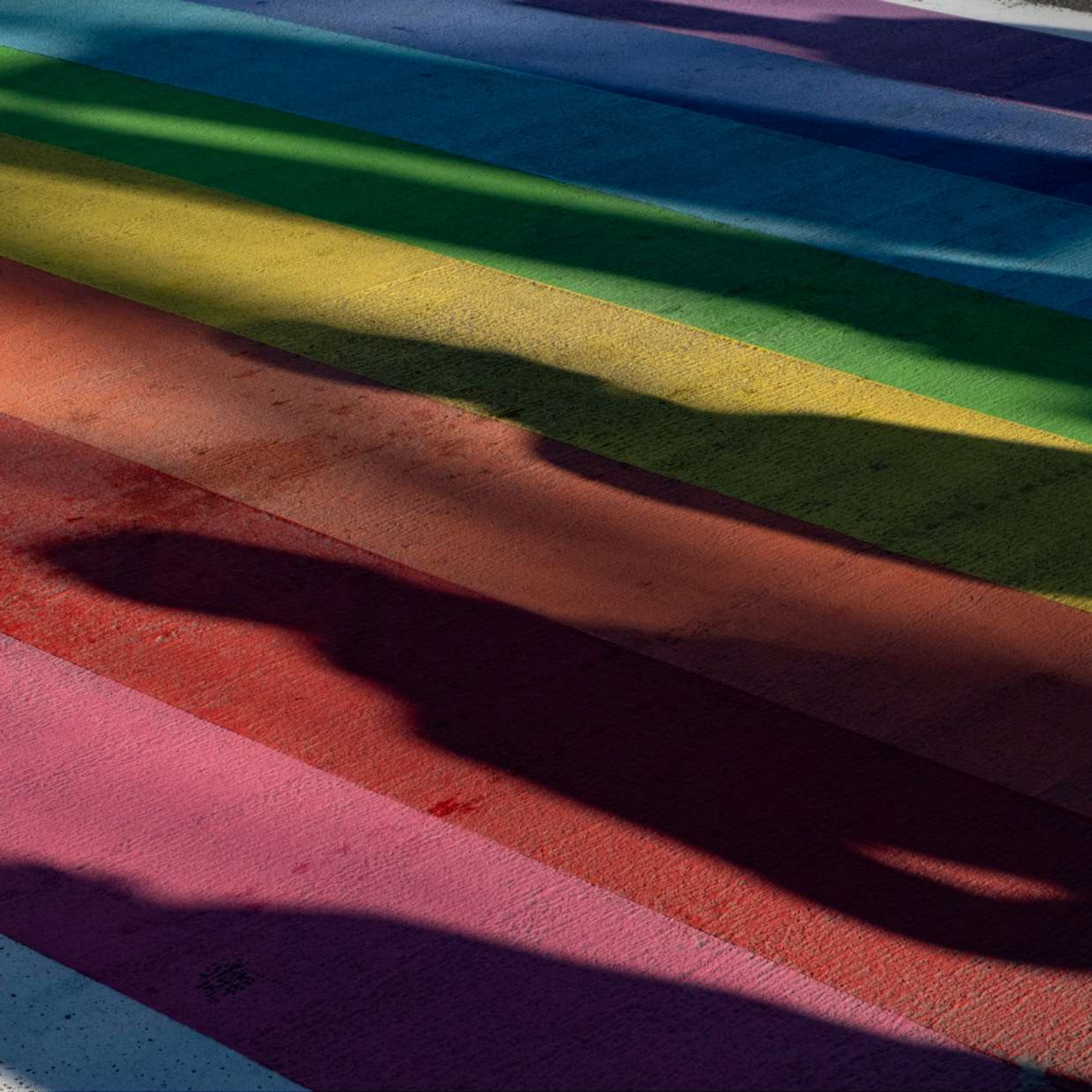
Hate speech against LGBTIQ+ people increased last year (2022), with public figures expressing discriminatory views and planning a "straight pride march" that targeted trans people. The event was eventually cancelled.

Greece

Although certain improvements have been observed in the last decade, Greece remains a highly conservative country, concerning LGBTIQ people. Conservatism regarding LGBTIQ issues is mostly shared among uneducated, aged or older people living in rural areas, but also among younger generations due to lack of awareness or education and even as a social stigma. According to a recent study published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, only 27% of the population is open about being gay in Greece, while the rest of the EU reaches 47% (FRA, 2019). Discrimination and harassment take different forms such as going to the hospital, getting a job, or going to a cafe, with the most common being discrimination at the workplace, a percentage which reaches 32% in Greece, compared to 21% in the rest of EU28 (ibid). Overall, 51% of LGBTIQ feel discriminated against in at least one area (ibid).

Legal protection for LGBTIQ people exists in Greece only in the area of employment and in compliance with the framework directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC in the national law through the Act 3304/2005 (Act Against Discrimination) issued in 2005 on the grounds of equal treatment in the field of employment and explicitly stating the equal treatment independently of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age, and sexual orientation (OLKE, 2010). Under this Act discrimination on any grounds, harassment, incitement to discrimination and victimisation is forbidden. A problem with this Act is that transsexual and transgender people are not protected from discrimination based on gender, gender identity or gender expression (ibid). Moreover, **same-sex marriage has not yet been legalised in Greece, but a positive step is that civil unions were allowed since 2015.**





1.6. EU policies

"LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025"

Our social, political and economic strength comes from our unity in diversity: Equality and non-discrimination are core values and fundamental rights in the EU, enshrined in its Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Commission, the Parliament and the Council, together with Member States, all share a responsibility to protect fundamental rights and ensure equal treatment and equality for all.

In recent decades, legislative developments, case law and policy initiatives have improved many people's lives and helped us build more equal and welcoming societies, including for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people. In 2015, the Commission presented the "List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality", the first policy framework specifically combating discrimination against LGBTI people.

Recent research also shows that even when greater social acceptance and support for equal rights is present, it has not always translated into clear improvements in LGBTIQ people's lives. In a 2019 survey, the the European Union Agency for

Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics was actually increasing in the EU: 43% of LGBT people declared that they felt discriminated against in 2019, as compared to 37% in 2012.

Discrimination against LGBTIQ people persists throughout the EU. For several LGBTIQ people in the EU, it is still unsafe to show affection publicly, to be open about their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (be it at home or at work), to simply be themselves without feeling to be threatened. An important number of LGBTIQ people are also at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Not all feel safe to report verbal abuses and physical violence to the police.

The European Union has to be at the forefront of efforts to better protect LGBTIQ people's rights. Therefore, the European Commission adopted on 12 November 2020 the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (in all EU languages).

This is the first-ever Commission strategy on LGBTIQ equality and delivers on the European Commission's commitment to

building a Union of Equality. **It strives to build a Union where diversity is celebrated as part of our collective richness, where all people can be themselves without risk of discrimination, exclusion or violence.**

The Strategy marks a new phase in our efforts to promote equality for LGBTIQ people while continuing to focus on priority areas. It sets out a series of measures to step up action, to integrate LGBTIQ equality in all policy areas and to help lift the voices of LGBTIQ minorities. It aims at bringing together Member States and actors at all levels in a common endeavour to address LGBTIQ discrimination more effectively by 2025.



www.commission.europa.eu

1.7. Barriers and issues faced by young LGBTIQ

"My boss is afraid that if I do an official coming out, it will affect the company's image externally."

"Same-sex colleagues are distanced because they are afraid of being the object of my desire."

"I hate it when people don't address me the way I prefer to be addressed."

"I'm bi, and every woman I've been with has been afraid that I would cheat on her with a man. After all, heterosexual men cheat too - it doesn't matter whom you cheat with!"

"I live in a small town, here everything is even more difficult for me."

"I work in a school and I'm afraid to admit that I'm gay. I think I would not only become a laughing stock among my co-workers, but I also would lose my authority among the students."

"On a daily basis, I have to dress like a man, nobody knows what clothes I hide in my wardrobe. It's a nightmare. I feel like I have a split personality. I would like to work in a place where I could finally be myself."

"People are worried about their children - they would never leave them with me."

"People think that if I'm gay, I'm a paedophile."

"The thing I regret most in my life is that I once ended a relationship with my girlfriend because I let myself be pressured by society. Lesbians in a small town are always the object of constant rumours and comments. Now I have more confidence, but it's too late for that now."

"I think, despite my degree, I will be working in a bar for the rest of my life. Here, no one asks questions or judges."

"When I see a nice job advert, but on the application form they ask me about my gender, I immediately give up. I can already tell how it's going to look next. And I don't want to explain myself."



Glossary

- **Ally:** A person who confronts heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others out of concern for the well-being of LGBTQIA+ people.
- **Asexuality:** Generally characterised by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity.
- **Biphobia:** fear or hatred of people who are bisexual, pansexual, or omnisexual.
- **Bisexual:** A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender.
- **Coming Out:** Refers to voluntarily making public one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
- **Cisgender:** The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to call attention to the privilege of people who are not transgender.
- **Cross Dresser:** A word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially, as a member of a gender other than their assigned sex; carries no implications of sexual orientation.
- **Drag King:** A person (often a woman) who appears as a man. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.
- **Drag Queen:** A person (often a man) who appears as a woman. Generally in reference to an act or performance. This has no implications regarding gender identity.
- **Gay:** A sexual orientation toward people of the same gender.
- **Gender:** A social construct used to classify a person as a man, woman, or some other identity. Fundamentally different from the sex one is assigned at birth; a set of social, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations
- **Gender Expression:** How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress, mannerisms and/or behaviours that society characterises as "masculine" or "feminine."

- **Genderqueer:** A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.
- **Heterosexism:** The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and invisibility.
- **Heterosexuality:** A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.
- **Homophobia:** The irrational hatred and fear of LGBTQIA+ people. Homophobia includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence brought on by fear and hatred. It occurs on personal, institutional, and societal levels.
- **Homosexual/Homosexuality:** An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender.
- **Internalised homophobia:** The fear and self-hate of one's own LGBTQIA identity, that occurs for many individuals who have learned negative ideas about LGBTQIA+ people throughout childhood. One form of internalised oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group.
- **Intersex:** People who, without medical intervention, develop primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit "neatly" into society's definitions of male or female. Many visibly intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make the individual's sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly.
- **Lesbian:** A woman whose primary sexual orientation is toward people of the same gender.
- **LGBT:** Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term used to refer to the community as a whole.
- **Pansexual/Omnisexual:** Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.
- **Nonbinary:** A gender identity that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate with an individual. It may be an active resistance to binary gender

expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world.

- **Queer:** This can include, but is not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and asexual people. This term has different meanings to different people. Some still find it offensive, while others reclaim it to encompass the broader sense of history of the gay rights movement. Can also be used as an umbrella term like LGBT, as in "the queer community."
- **Sex:** a categorization based on the appearance of the genitalia at birth.
- **Sexuality:** The components of a person that include their biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual practices, etc.
- **Sexual Orientation:** An enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction. Sexual orientation is fluid. Asexuality is also considered a sexual orientation (See above definition of asexuality)
- **Transphobia:** The fear or hatred of transgender people or people who do not meet society's gender role expectations.
- **Transgender:** Used most often as an umbrella term, some commonly held definitions: 1. Someone whose gender identity or expression does not fit (dominant-group social constructs of) assigned birth sex and gender. 2. A gender outside of the man/woman binary. 3. Having no gender or multiple genders.
- **Transsexual:** A person who lives full-time in a gender different from their assigned birth sex and gender. Some pursue hormones and/or surgery while others do not. Sometimes used to specifically refer to trans people pursuing gender or sex confirmation.
- **Transvestite:** This is an outdated and problematic term due to its historical use as a diagnosis for medical/mental health disorders. Cross Dresser has replaced transvestite, see above definition.



Youth worker training guide

3.1. Training activities

The European Union was established in 1993 by founding members Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg to oversee their political and economic integration, and it has since grown to include 27 member countries. The EU is now the third biggest global economy after China and USA and generates about 1/6th of the global GDP. The EU has been successful in promoting human rights and equality through its Customs Union, Internal Single Market, Legal Framework, and Legislation. However, despite the strong legislation, discrimination against the LGBTIQ community still persists. In 2020, the EU formally established and embraced the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which is the first-ever Commission strategy on LGBTIQ equality and delivers on the European Commission's commitment to building a Union of Equality.

One of the agencies that promotes diversity and inclusion within the EU is SALTO Youth, which comprises 7 resources centres across the EU27. SALTO Youth encourages and promotes diversity at national and European levels and offers various opportunities for youth, such as training and resources, to support their development. Over the years, SALTO has organised many trainings and built a resource library spanning work done within areas such as inclusion, diversity, LGBTQ community, intergenerational learning, NEETs, and entrepreneurship. SALTO facilitates training across all EU27 countries and some neighbouring regions, such as Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, and Jordan, to name a few places.

For the training activities, SALTO Youth combines diversity and inclusion to support the LGBTIQ community, using resources from organisations such as IGLYO, a global network that provides support to the LGBTIQ community since 1984, Safezone, created by Meg Bolger and Sam Killermann in 2013, which provides resources and ideas for activities, and Lavender Health, which focuses on health issues within the LGBTIQ community. SALTO Youth's training activities for the LGBTIQ community cover various topics, such as leadership, advocacy, and empowerment, and provide a safe and inclusive space for youth to share their experiences and support one another. **These efforts are crucial in promoting equality and inclusion within the EU and beyond and has been adapted for The Choice Is Yours project.**



Training Activity 1	Storytelling Activity
Objective:	To provide a platform for LGBTIQ+ individuals to share their personal stories and experiences in a safe and supportive environment.
Duration:	60-90 minutes
Materials:	Flipchart paper, markers, sticky notes, and pens
Instructions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Start by introducing the activity and its objective. 2.Introduce a case study about Johan, a 15-year-old gay individual who has faced problems and difficulties at school and in the community at large. Provide a brief overview of Johan's story and invite participants to reflect on his experiences. 3.Ask each participant to share a personal story or experience related to their LGBTIQ identity. They can write it down on a sticky note and post it on the flipchart paper. 4.After everyone has shared, group the stories based on themes or similarities. 5.Facilitate a discussion around the common themes that emerged from the stories. Use the case study of Johan to anchor the discussion and ask questions such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a.What are some of the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals in the stories shared, including Johan's story? b.What are some of the common misconceptions people have about the LGBTIQ+ community, and how do they impact individuals like Johan? c.How can we support LGBTIQ+ individuals in our community, including Johan? 6.Conclude the activity by encouraging participants to celebrate their individual identity and reminding them that their stories matter.

Supporting Questions for Johan:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Can you tell us about a time when you felt proud of your LGBTIQ identity? 2.What are some of the challenges you've faced as a gay individual, and how have you coped with them? 3.What kind of support have you received from your community, and how has it helped you? 4.What do you wish your allies knew about your experiences, and how can they support you better? 5.How can we celebrate and honour your individual identity, and create a more inclusive and supportive community for LGBTQ+ individuals like yourself?
Additional comments:	Overall, the activity aims to create a safe and supportive environment for individuals to share their experiences and celebrate their identities. It also provides an opportunity for allies to understand the challenges faced by the LGBTIQ community, including those highlighted by the case study, and how they can offer support.



Training Activity 2	Norm Criticism: Challenging Societal Pressures
Objective:	To help youth workers and LGBTIQ youth recognize and challenge societal norms that may limit self-expression and hinder progress.
Duration:	60-90 minutes
Materials:	Flipchart paper and markers, sticky notes, handout on norm criticism (optional)
Instructions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction (10 minutes) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Welcome participants and explain the objective of the activity. b. Create a safe and non-judgmental space by emphasising the importance of respecting each other's opinions and experiences. c. Ask each participant to introduce themselves and share one thing they hope to learn from the activity. 2. Understanding Norms (20 minutes) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write the word "NORM" in the centre of a flipchart. b. Ask participants to share examples of norms they are familiar with and write them on sticky notes. c. Group the sticky notes according to categories of norms (e.g., gender, sexuality, race, religion). d. Discuss the impact of norms on individuals and society, and how they can be limiting. 3. Introduction to Norm Criticism (20 minutes) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Write the heading "Norm Criticism" on a new flipchart. b. Explain that norm criticism is an approach to examining norms and their impact on individuals and society. c. Discuss the difference between examining norm breakers versus examining

	<p>norms themselves.</p> <p>d. Emphasise the importance of recognizing the power dynamics and privileges that certain norms create.</p> <p>4. Group Discussion (20-40 minutes)</p> <p>a. Facilitate a group discussion on norm criticism and its implications.</p> <p>b. Ask questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. How can norm criticism help individuals and society? ii. What are some potential challenges of norm criticism? iii. How can norm criticism be applied to support LGBTQ youth? iv. How can we use norm criticism to create a more inclusive and accepting society? <p>5. Conclusion (5-10 minutes)</p> <p>a. Summarise the key takeaways from the activity.</p> <p>b. Thank the participants for their contributions and encourage them to continue exploring norm criticism in their work and personal lives.</p> <p>c. Provide resources for further reading or support (e.g., handout on norm criticism, LGBTQ support organisations).</p>
Additional comments:	<p>This activity can be adapted to include case studies or personal stories of youth who have experienced the negative impact of societal norms.</p>

Training Activity 3	Mapping Our LGBTIQ Identities
Objective:	To create a safe and inclusive space for LGBTIQ youth to explore and discuss their identities, promote empathy and understanding of different LGBTIQ experiences, and identify ways to create a more inclusive environment for all LGBTIQ individuals.
Duration:	90-120 minutes
Materials:	Flipchart paper and markers, sticky notes
Instructions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Start by introducing the objective of the activity and setting ground rules for respectful communication and confidentiality. Explain that the goal is to create a safe and inclusive space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their experiences. 2.Divide participants into small groups of 3-4 people and give each group a large sheet of paper and markers. 3.Ask each group to draw a map of their LGBTIQ identities, including different aspects of their identity such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, romantic orientation, etc. Participants can use symbols, colours, or words to represent different parts of their identity. 4.Once the maps are completed, ask each group to share their map with the rest of the participants. Encourage them to explain what each symbol or word represents and how it relates to their identity. 5.After all the groups have shared their maps, ask the participants to write down on sticky notes any commonalities or differences they noticed across the different maps. They can place the sticky notes on a large board or wall. 6.Facilitate a group discussion around the similarities and differences that were identified. Ask participants to share their thoughts and experiences related to these commonalities and differences.

	7. Discuss ways to create a more inclusive environment for all LGBTIQ individuals, based on the commonalities and differences that were identified. Participants can write down their ideas on sticky notes and place them on the board or wall.
Debrief Questions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you learn about yourself and others through this activity? 2. How did this activity help you understand different LGBTIQ experiences? 3. What can we do to create a more inclusive environment for all LGBTIQ individuals?
Wrap-up:	Thank everyone for participating and sharing their experiences. Encourage participants to continue exploring their LGBTIQ identities and to be open to learning from others. Remind them that we all have unique experiences and it's important to respect and celebrate our differences.



*ALL IN THIS
TOGETHER!*

3.2. Job search

Job searching can be a daunting process, especially for LGBTIQ youth who may face additional challenges and discrimination in the workplace. It is important for LGBTIQ job seekers to know their rights and to look for employers who prioritise diversity and inclusion. The Eures portal (<https://bit.ly/3Zu6WXS>) is a great starting point for job searching in Europe, as it offers resources and guidance on living and working within the EU. Additionally, LGBTIQ job seekers may find it helpful to look for job search portals and resources specific to their community. For example,

- **LGBTjobs:** a job board specifically focused on promoting job opportunities for LGBTIQ individuals across Europe (<https://www.lgbtjobs.eu/>);
- **Pride.Careers:** a job board that focuses on promoting job opportunities from employers who actively seek to create an inclusive work environment for LGBTIQ individuals (<https://pride.careers/>);
- **OUTBÚRO:** a professional social networking site that connects LGBTIQ professionals with employers and career opportunities across Europe (<https://outburo.com/>).

In order to keep focused and find the right job for the skills one possesses, it is vital that the job seeker keeps a number of things in mind in order to succeed and then of course, also maintain that job once found. There are recruitment agencies who can help you when finding the right job and there are many resources available via various search engines such as bing, google, yahoo and so forth. Professional associations and groups, such as the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.nglcc.org/>) and Out & Equal Workplace Advocates (<https://outandequal.org/>), can provide networking opportunities and resources for LGBTIQ job seekers.

According to Caroline Ceniza-Levine and Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio there are six steps to job search which everyone must adapt to in order to get the right job which matches your skills set and also one which may allow you to develop further. These six steps are:

- identifying your target,
- creating a powerful marketing campaign (these days social media tools are easily available for this activity),
- researching,

- networking and interviewing (many recruitment websites will post interviewing techniques and skills to develop),
- staying motivated,
- negotiating and closing the job offer (again recruitment websites may help and also there may be links to other websites via EURES and Euro Desk within Europe).

In addition, LGBTIQ job seekers should be aware of their legal rights in the workplace. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (<https://fra.europa.eu/en>) provides information on discrimination laws and resources for reporting discrimination or harassment in the workplace. It's also important to research potential employers and job postings for red flags, such as a lack of diversity and inclusion policies.

If you are transgender or non-binary, you may face unique challenges during the job search process. The Transgender Europe network (<https://tgeu.org/>) offers resources and support for transgender and non-binary individuals across Europe. The EURES website (<https://bit.ly/3Zu6WXS>) also helps with statistics and data about potential jobs within Europe.

3.3. CV template

Within Europe there is a standard CV that helps job seekers across the EU27. This is the **Europass CV** template which allows you to share your skills and achievements. It is possible to create your CV via this website from the EU - <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>

3.4. Application template

The Europass CV is an excellent document that will help you to create your application template. While many items within your application may be standard it is important to remember that the application is geared towards the employer and the skills they are looking for. Therefore, each application will be unique and cannot be a standard application letter as you will need to tell the potential employer how and where you can add value to their organisation with the skills you possess. Also, do not be afraid to say that you wish to learn and grow within the organisation and benefit the organisation while learning. All employers like such proactive attempts and visions from potential employees.

There are a number of questions you need to ask yourself in order to develop your application letter and gear it towards each specific employer. These questions are:

- How do you write a strong job application?
- What is the employer looking for?
- What skills do I have that match all or most of the criteria listed in the employer's job description.
- How can I enhance and contribute to the employer's organisation / department?

Once you have answered these questions your application will stand out from others and the potential of an interview are increased. It is at the interview stage where you can impress the employer and get hired.

3.5. Interview preparation

Many people get worried and nervous about interviews. You need to remember that the best person who knows you is yourself so during the interview while being courteous and professional stay calm and just be yourself. Smile often when answering the questions without giving the impression you are overconfident.

Interviews do need some preparation and these days there are many places from where you can find out more about the interview preparation. Many employers these days follow a system of interviewing known as the **STAR method**. This means their questions will be based on:

- specific situation,
- task,
- action,
- result.

For this they may have standard questions such as:

- "Can you tell me about yourself?"
- "What attracted you to our company?"
- "Describe your greatest accomplishment in your previous role."
- "What are your strengths?"
- "What are your goals for the future?"
- "Why do you want to leave your current employer?"

If you have been unemployed or fresh out of college / university the last question may be a little

different related to your current situation. If you prepare yourself and give potential answers to these 6 questions the likely success at an interview will increase greatly. During the interview it is good to remember some key issues and follow this guideline:

- Structure your answer in a way that makes sense. Stick to the past-present-future format, and you're all good!
- Keep it relevant and brief (1-2 minutes max). No one wants to hear your whole life story.
- Mention any of your top achievements and relevant work experiences.

Planning for an interview is very important. Get a friend or relative to work with you and practise the answers to the above 6 questions. **"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail"** Benjamin Franklin.

3.6. Europass/Youthpass

As mentioned above, the **Europass will enable you to highlight your skills and achievements in one document.** Depending on your experience and where you are in your current stage of career, the Europass/Youthpass can be several pages long. Generally, it is around 3-6 pages, unless you are an academic and prolific researcher, in which case the CV will run into multiple pages where you highlight all your publications and work.

The Europass/Youthpass is a useful document even when you are looking to study within the EU27 or volunteer for certain positions. Those who may want to hire you will see your skills and achievements and will be able to decide if your current competences match what the organisation is looking for in the tasks they may have advertised.

In addition to providing a clear overview of your skills and accomplishments, the Europass and Youthpass can also help demonstrate your language abilities, as they allow you to describe your proficiency in different languages using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Overall, having a well-structured Europass or Youthpass can help you stand out from other applicants and increase your chances of being selected for the opportunity you're applying for.

Employer's guide

4.1. Recommendations

Creating a comprehensive human resources policy that includes LGBTIQ employees is an important step in creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Such a policy can help to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Here are some key components that a good LGBTIQ-inclusive human resources policy might include:

- **Non-discrimination:** The policy should explicitly prohibit discrimination against employees on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This should include language that covers all aspects of employment, such as hiring, promotions, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. It's important to note that many countries and states have laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, so it's important to consult with legal experts to ensure that the policy is in compliance with all applicable laws.
- **Harassment:** The policy should prohibit harassment of LGBTIQ employees and provide guidance on what constitutes harassment and how to report it. Harassment can take many forms, such as verbal abuse, physical assault, or posting offensive materials. The policy should make it clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that there will be consequences for engaging in such behaviour. It's also important to provide resources, such as an employee assistance program or a named person to go to, for employees who experience harassment.
- **Benefits:** The policy should ensure that LGBTIQ employees have access to the same benefits as their non-LGBTIQ colleagues, including health insurance, family leave, and other benefits. This includes ensuring that health insurance covers services related to gender transition, if an employee has requested it.

- **Dress code:** The policy should allow employees to dress in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, while still adhering to the company's professional standards. This means that transgender employees should be able to wear clothing that is consistent with their gender identity, and should not be required to conform to traditional gender-specific dress codes.
- **Restrooms and other facilities:** The policy should ensure that employees have access to restrooms and other facilities that are consistent with their gender identity. This means that employees should be able to use the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity, regardless of the sex listed on their identification documents.
- **Support:** The policy should provide a resource for employees seeking support for discrimination and support for mental and physical health.
- **Education and Training:** Regular training for management and employees to be educated on the policy and importance of inclusivity. These training sessions should aim to educate employees on LGBTIQ issues and to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities under the policy.
- **Communication:** Regular company-wide communication of the importance of inclusivity and the policy. This could include regular updates on the company's website or newsletters, as well as company-wide meetings to discuss the policy and to provide updates on its implementation.
- **Celebrate diversity & inclusivity:** Celebrating LGBTIQ History Month, Pride Days or as any other national and important days in the calendar. This would be a great boost among employees to raise awareness on LGBTIQ issues throughout the year. Involving LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ employees in celebrating those events can increase the impact of inclusion policies and improve understanding between each other.

It's also important to remember that policies alone aren't enough to create a truly inclusive and equitable workplace. As I mentioned earlier, it's also important to actively work to create an inclusive culture, which includes educating the organisation on LGBTIQ issues, regularly seeking feedback from employees, and taking steps to make sure that everyone feels safe and respected at the workplace.

4.2. Non-biased recruitment

Non-biased recruitment is an important concept in the hiring process that helps to ensure that **all candidates are given an equal opportunity to succeed**. This includes taking steps to eliminate bias at all stages of the recruitment process, from job posting and applicant screening to final interviews and hiring decisions.

Some common practices used in non-biased recruitment include:

- Using job postings that avoid language that could be seen as discriminatory or exclusive.
- Screening resumes "blind" so that the hiring team does not see the name or other identifying information of the candidate.
- Developing structured interview questions that are job-related and avoid asking about sensitive topics that have no relation to the position.
- Conducting diverse hiring panels.
- Using consistent evaluation criteria across all candidates.
- Provide unconscious bias training to all involved in the recruitment process to become aware of the unconscious biases they may have and how to overcome them.
- Asking interviewees how they would prefer to be called or referred to prior commencing a job interview.

A non-biased recruitment process is important **to ensure fairness, transparency, and a level playing field for all candidates**. This is important for the organisation to attract a diverse and talented workforce, that can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas, and ultimately benefit the organisation.

4.3. How to prepare an inclusive job description?

Here are a few steps you can take to prepare an inclusive job description:

- Use **language that is gender-neutral** and avoids stereotypes. For example, instead of using "he/him" or "she/her," use "they/them" or simply avoid using pronouns altogether.
- Be specific about the **qualifications** required for the job and avoid using overly broad or vague language that could be interpreted in different ways.
- Avoid using words or phrases that could be seen as exclusionary, such as "culture fit" or

"ideal candidate."

- Avoid using terms such as husbands/wives assuming gender identification but replace them with "spouses/partners" which are more inclusive.
- Avoid listing "maternity/paternity leave" in job descriptions, as it can be considered discriminatory based on sexual orientation. But use expressions like "parenthood leave" or "parental time off" which are more accepted.
- Include a statement indicating that the company is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from all qualified individuals, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other characteristics protected by law.
- Include a statement about how diversity and inclusion are important to the company, and how the company values a diverse workforce.
- Use inclusive terminology and imagery in job ads, such as images of diverse groups.
- Be inclusive in your job posting and recruitment channels.
- Be inclusive in your interviewing process, questions, and assessments, avoiding bias and stereotype.

Remember, inclusive job descriptions can increase the diversity of your applicant pool, which can lead to a better team and better outcomes for your company

4.4. How to have a selection process in an inclusive manner?

When interviewing job candidates, it's important to avoid asking questions that discriminate against them on the basis of their protected characteristics, such as their sexual orientation or gender identity. **Here are some examples of interview questions that are appropriate and do not discriminate:**

- Can you tell us about your experience and qualifications for this position?
- How do you handle challenges in your work?
- How do you prioritise and manage your tasks and responsibilities?
- Can you describe a time when you had to work with a team to solve a difficult problem?
- Can you give an example of a project you have led and the outcome? Could you describe your management style?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge facing this industry/ field and how would you address it?

- How do you approach working in a diverse environment?
- How do you see yourself contributing to our company's mission and values?

These questions focus on the candidate's qualifications, skills, experience, and work style, rather than their personal characteristics or lifestyle. They also do not ask about any protected characteristics under laws of discrimination. Keep in mind that laws vary by country and region and you should consult with legal experts to ensure your interview questions comply with the law.

It's also important to avoid making assumptions or stereotypes about a candidate based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Do not judge a candidate's appearance to see if it can be a good fit for your business.

Be mindful of your own biases, and treat all candidates with respect and fairness.

4.5. Case studies

There are many employers that have taken steps to create inclusive and equitable workplaces for LGBTIQ employees. Some examples of companies that are considered to be good LGBTIQ employers include:

- **Google:** Google has been recognized for its efforts to create a supportive and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ employees. The company offers domestic partner benefits, gender-neutral bathrooms, and employee resource groups for LGBTIQ employees. Google also scores high on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index.
- **IBM:** IBM has been recognized for its efforts to create a supportive and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ employees. The company offers domestic partner benefits, gender-neutral bathrooms, and employee resource groups for LGBT employees. IBM also scores high on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index.
- **Deloitte:** Deloitte has been recognized for its efforts to create a supportive and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ employees. The company offers domestic partner benefits, gender-neutral bathrooms, and employee resource groups for LGBTIQ employees. Deloitte also scores high on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index
- **Amazon:** Amazon has been recognized for its efforts to create a supportive and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ employees. The company offers domestic partner benefits, gender-

neutral bathrooms, and employee resource groups for LGBTIQ employees. Amazon also scores high on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index

It's worth noting that this is not an exhaustive list and that there are many other companies that are considered to be good LGBTIQ employers. Additionally, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Corporate Equality Index, mentioned in most of the examples, is considered a benchmark for LGBT-inclusive policies and practices for US companies. Also, these companies provide a good example of an inclusive environment that can be adopted by smaller firms as not all businesses are large.

4.6. Being a responsible employer

If you're a large or a small firm working with employees, here is some advice to help create an inclusive and equitable workplace and to be a responsible employer:

- Understand and comply with laws and regulations related to LGBTIQ rights: Familiarise yourself with local, state, and federal laws and regulations related to LGBTIQ rights, such as laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. This will help ensure that your company is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Develop a comprehensive policy on employee rights that includes LGBTIQ: Develop a comprehensive policy on LGBT rights that clearly sets out the company's commitment to non-discrimination, prohibits harassment, and ensures that all employees have access to the same benefits and facilities. Even though you have few employees, having a clear policy can help you create an inclusive workplace and make it clear that discrimination is not accepted.
- Create an inclusive workplace culture: Create an inclusive workplace culture that welcomes and supports all employees. This could include offering employee's training on LGBTIQ issues, creating employee resource groups for employees, and regularly seeking feedback from all employees to ensure that they feel safe and respected at the workplace.
- Be mindful of language and terminology: Be mindful of the language and terminology used when recruiting and working with LGBTIQ employees. Use inclusive and respectful language, and avoid using language that could be considered offensive or derogatory.
- Familiarise yourself with LGBTIQ rights and freedoms: Learn and increase awareness about LGBTIQ rights and freedoms among your employees, embrace diversity and acceptance and

provide opportunities for people to feel welcomed, recognised and accepted in their workplace.

- Be open-minded and flexible: Be open-minded and flexible when working with all employees. For example, if an employee requests time off for a gender transition-related surgery, be willing to accommodate that request.
- Be aware of and actively promote LGBTIQ inclusion: Be aware of the rights and needs of LGBTIQ employees, actively promote LGBTIQ inclusion and be an ally. Make sure that all employees know that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated, and that LGBTIQ employees are protected by the company's non-discrimination policy.
- Be mindful of privacy: Respect employee's privacy and do not share personal information related to their sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent.
- Be a resource for your employees: Be a resource for your LGBTIQ employees and help them connect with organisations and resources that can provide them with support.
- Lead by example: Lead by example and make sure that all employees know that discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated, and that LGBTIQ employees are protected by the company's non-discrimination policy.

Remember that creating a truly inclusive and equitable workplace takes effort and commitment, and that it is an ongoing process. Be open to feedback and be willing to make changes to improve the workplace for all employees. And don't hesitate to seek external support or advice, such as consulting with legal or HR experts, or finding local LGBTIQ organisations to help guide and enhance the process.



4.7. Dealing with health and criminal check

Employers may conduct background checks on job applicants or current employees for a variety of reasons, such as to verify education and employment history, to check for criminal records, or to ensure that the individual is legally eligible to work in the country.

Here are a few steps that an employer can take when conducting background checks:

- Obtain written consent from the applicant or employee before conducting a background check. This can be done through a background check authorization form.
- Limit the scope of the background check to information that is relevant to the job. For example, if the job does not involve handling sensitive or confidential information, there may be no need to check for financial history or credit.
- Comply with all applicable local laws and regulations related to background checks.
- Be consistent in how background checks are conducted for all job applicants and employees. For example, if a background check is conducted for one job applicant, it should be conducted for all applicants for the

same position.

- Follow all guidelines and principles of non-discrimination and privacy. Keep the records and reports strictly confidential, with access only to authorised personnel.
- Inform the applicant or employee of any negative information found in the background check, give them the opportunity to review and dispute any inaccuracies and consider alternative solutions to the situation.
- Have a policy on how to deal with the negative information obtained and how it would be used.

It is important for employers to understand that not all information found in a background check is necessarily relevant or reliable, so it should be considered as a piece of a bigger picture when assessing an applicant or employee.

4.8. How to deal with negative attitudes?

Dealing with negative attitudes in the workplace can be challenging, but there are steps that can be taken to address the issue:

- Identify the source of the negative attitude. Is it coming from a specific individual or is it a more general problem within the team or organisation? Understanding the root cause can help to determine an appropriate course of action.
- Communicate openly and honestly with the individual or team. Encourage them to share their concerns and try to understand their perspective. Acknowledge their feelings, and assure that the company is committed to providing a positive and productive work environment.
- Encourage positive and constructive feedback. This can be done through regular performance evaluations, team meetings, or suggestion boxes.
- Look for ways to improve the work environment. This can include things like offering additional training and development opportunities, providing a better work-life balance, or improving communication and collaboration within

the team or organisation.

- Address any issues that may be contributing to the negative attitudes, such as poor management, unrealistic workloads or lack of clarity on expectations and communication.
- Lead by example, showing positive attitude and behaviour, which will help in creating a culture of positivity.
- If the negative attitude persists, it may be necessary to set clear performance expectations and consequences for not meeting those expectations. This can include coaching, counselling, or disciplinary action, if necessary. Provide consultation sessions free-of-charge if you have identified that an employee has been affected by harassment, discrimination or any negative attitude and experience.

It's important to remember that changing attitudes takes time and consistency, and while it may not be possible to completely eliminate negative attitudes, taking steps to address them can help to improve the overall work environment.

4.9. Privacy and confidentiality

There are several steps that can be taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality in a workplace:

- Implement clear policies and procedures for handling sensitive information.
- Educate employees on the importance of maintaining confidentiality and the consequences of breaches.
- Limit access to sensitive information to only those who need it to perform their job duties.
- Use encryption and other security measures to protect sensitive information stored on computers and other devices.
- Regularly audit access to sensitive information and monitor for suspicious activity.
- Have an incident response plan in case of accidental or unauthorised disclosure of information.
- Regularly train employees regarding the updated policies, guidelines, laws and trends in security and privacy.
- Have a designated privacy officer to handle any compliance and breach issues that may arise.
- Have an employee agreement with NDA (non-disclosure agreement) to protect the company's sensitive information.
- Always follow the laws and regulations, such as the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in case of sensitive personal data.

4.10. Workplace environment

Maintaining diversity without a workplace which is really inclusive is not sustainable. **In today's workplace, it is essential to ensure that diversity, equality and inclusion go hand-in-hand with policies and behaviour which is acceptable and can be tolerated by all employees and is based on the principles of the company.**

- Use the right terminology to call an LGBTQI person; Let an LGBTQI person to be identified and always listen and respect them; Some transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals use pronouns other than he/him/his or she/her/hers, such as they/them/theirs or

her/his. Even it might not come naturally, how this person wants to be called, should be respected by others;

- Update company's policies, ensuring that all anti-harassment, bullying and non-discrimination policies include and respect LGBTQI individuals; Some of these examples might include dress-code and bathroom use which permit self-identification according to LGBTQI people gender;
- Communicate the business policies related to LGBTQI inclusive practices to all employees including upper-level management; Those policies need to be widely accessible to all levels of employees;
- Provide training to employees to recognise and eliminate discrimination in the workplace;
- Trainings should be continuous to new staff and incorporated in on-going staff trainings;
- Encourage reporting harassment or negative attitude towards an LGBTQI person in the workplace to upper managerial levels; Reporting harassment can be encouraged not only to persons that have been harassed but also among colleagues who have identify such a behaviour;
- Review job postings to ensure gender neutral language and inclusivity; Remove any references to only male/female options in hiring materials;
- Sponsor and encourage the organisation of inclusive events in your business environment;
- Inspire celebration of difference and acceptance.

Best practices

Good practices – internal actions:

- Top-down communication to all employees on the importance of the non-discrimination and diversity policy (including LGBTIQ people) and why it is important for the success of the company.
- Diversity policy procedures in place within the company available in the form of brochures or on the website for every employee.
- Internal communication about the company's participation in events on LGBTIQ issues in the workplace.
- Creation of products and services aimed at LGBTIQ customers.
- Actions to support the creation of employee groups that support the LGBTIQ movement (ERG=Employee Resource Group).
- Special programmes to support transgender people in the company in the gender adjustment process.
- Social programmes are also available for male and female employees in same-sex relationships.
- Support for male and female employees sent by the company on long-term contracts abroad who are in same-sex relationships.
- Regular training for managers and employees in general.
- Designation by the company's management of a person or team responsible for implementing a policy of non-discrimination against LGBTIQ people in the workplace.
- Create and make available to employees tools to facilitate the implementation of the non-discrimination policy, as well as to monitor the progress of implementation in the company.
- Regular monitoring and creation of a corrective action plan in the implementation of the non-discrimination policy for LGBTIQ persons.

- In the case of companies operating in different countries, a consistent non-discrimination policy for LGBTIQ people in the workplace in general, taking into account the legal situation in each country.
- Introduction of a 'zero tolerance for discrimination' practice.
- Meetings with LGBTIQ persons or experts organised in the company to enable all employees to better understand, empathise with the subject matter (Reverse Mentoring).

Good practices – external actions:

- Information on the company's policy towards LGBTIQ employees during recruitment.
- Public information on the non-discrimination policy (including the LGBTIQ group) on the company's website.
- Active participation of the company (speakers, sponsorship) in events on LGBTIQ issues in the workplace.
- Marketing activities targeting the LGBTIQ customer group.
- Official participation of the company (logo, banners, media) in LGBTIQ community events (Equality Parade, LGBTIQ Film Festival, Pride Month).
- Informing customers and business partners about the company's non-discrimination policy for LGBTIQ people.
- Joint projects with NGOs working on LGBTIQ issues.
- Participation of the company in independent surveys checking the degree of implementation of the company's LGBTIQ diversity policy.
- Collaboration with other companies on a business platform to share experiences on LGBTIQ in the workplace.
- LGBTIQ supplier diversity programme.

Where can you ask for support?

Poland

Kampania Przeciw Homofobii

Address: Aleje Jerozolimskie 99/40, Warsaw

Email: info@kph.org.pl

Phone: +48224236438

Website: www.kph.org.pl

Stowarzyszenie Miłość Nie Wyklucza

Address: ul. Wspólna 61/102, Warsaw

Email: kontakt@mnw.org.pl

Website: www.mnw.org.pl

Fundacja Trans-Fuzja

Address: Stanisława Noakowskiego 10 lok. 66, Warsaw

Email: kontakt@transfuzja.org

Phone: +48510853634

Website: www.transfuzja.org

Grupa Stonewall

Address: św. Marcin 80/82 (pok. 341), Poznań

Email: kontakt@grupa-stonewall.pl

Website: www.grupa-stonewall.pl

Stowarzyszenie Kultura Równości

Address: ul. Kniaźewicza 28/2, Wrocław

Email: kontakt@kulturarownosci.org

Phone: +48797721189

Website: www.kulturarownosci.org

Stowarzyszenie Różnorodności Społecznej UP-DATE

Email: stowarzyszenie.update@gmail.com

Phone: +48693145674

Website: www.up-date.org.pl

Bulgaria

GLAS

Address: 1000 Sofia, 11 Gladston, str
Email: help@glasfoundation.bg
Website: www.glasfoundation.bg

BGO Gemini

Address: 1142 Sofia, b „Vasil Levski“ № 3,
ap. 7
Email: office@bgogemini.org
Phone: +359029876872, +3590887304804
Website: www.bgogemini.org

Croatia

Zagreb Pride

Address: Ulica Andrije Žaje 43a, 10000
Zagreb
Email: info@zagreb-pride.net
Phone: +385(0)15806560

Udruga Domino – Queer Zagreb

Address: Petrinjska 38, 10000 Zagreb
Email: udrugadomino@gmail.com,
queerzagreb@gmail.com
Phone: +385(0)13820019

Iskorak

Address: Petrinjska ulica 27, 10000 Zagreb
Phone: +385(0)912444666

Greece

Support Call line 11528

Email: management@11528.gr
Website: www.11528.gr

Lesbian and Gay Community of Greece (OLKE)

Address: 25 Halkokondyli street, GR-Athens
104 32, Greece
E-mail: info@olke.org
Phone: +306947434353, +302105237408
Website: www.olke.org

Colour Youth

Address: Sachtouri 3, Psiri Athens, 105 53,
Greece
Email: info@colouryouth.gr
Phone: +306945583395
Website: www.colouryouth.gr

Orlando LGBT

Email: contact@orlandolgbt.gr
Website: www.orlandolgbt.gr

The Greek Ombudsman

Address: 17 Chalkokondyli str. 104 32
Athens
Email: press@synigoros.gr
Phone: +302131306600

References

- European Agency for the Fundamental Rights (2019), LGBTI Survey country data Greece, Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/lgbti-survey-country-data_greece.pdf
- <https://biznes.newseria.pl/news/polska-w-europejskim,p752042523>
- https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en
- <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>
- <https://fra.europa.eu/enCIY>
- <https://glasfoundation.bg/en/about-us/>
- <https://lgbt.ucsf.edu/glossary-terms>
- <https://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/OtwierajacSieNaRoznorodnosc.pdf>
- <https://outandequal.org/>
- <https://outburo.com/>
- <https://pride.careers/>
- <https://tgeu.org/>
- <https://www.angloinfo.com/how-to/bulgaria/family/lgbt>
- <https://www.facebook.com/bgo.gemini/>
- <https://www.lgbtjobs.eu/>
- <https://www.nglcc.org/>
- <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/59866-lgbtq-rights-in-croatia>
- OLKE (2010), Greece: The status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session11/GR/OLKE_LesbianandGayCommunityofGreece-eng.pdf



