



Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics

National Report - Cyprus

June 2020

WP2_D2.6_National Report - Cyprus



Funded by the European Union's
Rights, Equality and Citizenship
Programme (2014-2020)

The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Methodology	5
2.1 Desk research.....	5
2.2 Online survey.....	5
2.3 Limitations.....	6
3. Desk Research	8
3.1 LGBTQI+ rights and legal framework in the Republic of Cyprus....	8
3.2 LGBTQI+ rights and legal framework in regions out of the control of the Republic of Cyprus.....	12
3.3 Institutions working on LGBTQI+ issues.....	14
3.4 Public perception of LGBTQI+ rights.....	14
3.5 Discriminatory acts against LGBTQI+ individuals.....	16
3.6 Participation of LGBTQI+ individuals in politics.....	17
3.7 The need for policy reform.....	18
4. Online survey findings	20
4.1 Perceptions about LGBTQI+ rights.....	20
Awareness of rights	20
Opinions on rights	21
4.2 Occurrence of discrimination.....	22
4.3 Experiences of discrimination.....	23
4.4 Involvement of the LGBTQI+ community in politics.....	24
4.5 Need for policy reform.....	25
5. Discussion and recommendations	27
5.1 Discussion.....	27
5.2 Recommendations.....	30
6. References	33





Acknowledgements & Disclaimer

This document was produced within the framework of the Voicelt project: *Strengthening LGBTQI+'s Voice in Politics*, and is funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC 2014-2020) under the number 849107.

The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Authors

Andreas Avgousti, Cyprus
Elena Vasiliou, Cyprus

Project Partners



1. Introduction

In a speech delivered in August 2019, the Bishop of Morphou, a Greek Orthodox cleric, claimed that homosexuality is a negative trait passed on to the child from the parents: "they say it... happens when the parents [indulge] in erotic acts that are unnatural" (Smith, 2019). He was referring to anal intercourse during pregnancy. He then suggested that homosexual men give off a "particular odour". Costas Gavrielides, Adviser to the President of Cyprus for Multiculturalism, Acceptance & Respect to Diversity, asked for the bishop's statement to be investigated on the grounds of hate speech. Following a police investigation, the Cyprus Attorney General concluded that the bishop's statements "do not constitute an attempt to incite violence or hatred because of gender orientation or sexual identity nor can they be described as hate speech within the meaning of the law" (Hadjioannou, 2019).

The incident unfolded and concluded in a manner that was not at all surprising, given the present socio-political landscape in the Republic of Cyprus. It revealed the positioning of LGBTQI+ issues in the political arena, the gaps in the relevant legislation, the enduringly dominant voice of the Church in public discourse, and the growing resistance among LGBTQI+ rights advocates. The cleric's comments ultimately represent an institutional form of discrimination which can be analysed at different levels such as individual, interpersonal, societal (see, for example, Soshilou & Vasiliou, 2016).

No socio-political issue can be discussed in Cyprus without taking the island's bi-communality into consideration. Since 1974, Cyprus has been divided geographically and politically, with the Turkish-Cypriot community residing in the north and the Greek-Cypriot community in the Republic of Cyprus in the south. We review the differing contexts that have arisen as a result, stressing at the same time that the last decade has seen great progress on both sides of the divide.

Yet, there is still a long way to go. In Cyprus, "discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is a major issue that is currently not adequately dealt with and which has not been investigated so far" (Apostolidou, 2019: 2). Cyprus is ranked 29th among 49 European countries regarding legislation and policies that have a clear positive impact on





LGBTQI+ human rights, with a total score of 31%¹ (ILGA-Europe, 2020). A number of European surveys have concluded that Cyprus remains a country where intolerant attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people are prevalent (ECRI, 2016; FRA, 2014). In line with this, the limited scholarly research on the topic agrees that Cypriot society remains largely patriarchal and characterised by homophobic attitudes (Apostolidou, 2019; Shoshilou & Vasiliou, 2016; Kapsou, Christophi & Epaminonda, 2011).

The motivation of the current study is to expand the evidence base, to study the changing attitudes, and help determine the extent to which LGBTQI+ groups participate in public life and politics. The study targeted four groups: LGBTQI+ persons, government officials, representatives from political institutions, and the general public. The study primarily aimed to identify perceptions on LGBTQI+ rights by the four groups, as well as the obstacles faced by LGBTQI+ persons with minority ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Additionally, we investigated opinions regarding policy reform, as well as the participation of the LGBTQI+ community in the political arena. This project seeks to engage with the four target groups in an effort to develop collaborative strategies to overcome discrimination and exclusion and to promote the rights and political voice of LGBTQI+ groups.

¹ 0% indicates gross violation of human rights & discrimination, whereas 100% denotes respect for human rights & equality.





2. Methodology

2.1 Desk research

The desk research was conducted by reviewing relevant literature on LGBTQI+ rights at the national and regional level. Given that the topic has been inadequately documented and researched in Cyprus, especially with regards to discriminatory incidents against LGBTQI+ individuals, and Cypriots' perceptions on the role of LGBTQI+ individuals/organisations in political decision-making processes, available literature and data is scarce. Further research in addition to this study is required for substantial and accurate conclusions to be made.

2.2 Online survey

The main objective of the online survey was to map the status of LGBTQI+ individuals and issues in Cypriot society and politics. A questionnaire had been prepared by the project partners and then translated into the respective official language(s) of each of their countries (for Cyprus, in English, Turkish and Greek). An online platform was used to run the survey and collect data.

In Cyprus, the following outreach methods were used: a) social media (posts and paid advertisements), b) direct emailing using organisational mailing lists, c) a press release, and d) a live-streamed online event.

Accept-LGBT Cyprus (Accept) disseminated an invite to participate in the survey through organisational social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram), with follow-up posts a week later. Emails were sent to mailing lists that included Accept members, ministries, municipalities, commissioners, political institutions, unions, and other civil society organisations (e.g. NGOs). Reminder emails were sent every two weeks (a total of three reminders) until the survey deadline had been reached.

Accept also disseminated a press release, which one local online magazine helped disseminate by publishing on their website. In order to achieve the





minimum participation rates required², especially regarding participant quotas of government officials and representatives from political institutions, a paid advertisement was published on social media (target group was set to Cyprus residents aged 18-65+, with the interest field indicating "civil service", "government", "politics" and "politicians"). The ad was successfully posted on a second attempt, as the first was rejected on the grounds of "mention[ing] politicians, topics that could influence the outcome of an election, or existing or proposed legislation". Once adjustments were made, Accept were able to promote the survey to the under-represented categories required to reach participant goals. The live-streamed online event, which took place in April 2020 and centred on a discussion of the project as a whole, was the final method used to promote the survey. Representatives from four of the largest political parties in Cyprus took part in a panel discussion around LGBTQI+ rights and the involvement of LGBTQI+ individuals in the political sphere. The parties also laid out their agendas on a micro and macro level.

The online survey was undertaken by 658 participants, from which 427 fully completed the survey and 231 left the survey incomplete. For the statistical analysis we only included completed responses, while incomplete responses were excluded. For hypothesis testing, we mainly used chi-square and one-way ANOVA.

2.3 Limitations

The most important limitation of the survey lies in the low participation of government officials and representatives of political institutions, a fact that could be the result of the voluntary participation in the survey as well as the attention given to LGBTQI+ issues by such groups. In absolute numbers, 19 representatives from political institutions and 22 government officials participated in the study. The questionnaire was answered mainly by younger individuals (82% aged between 19-45) with an advanced educational background (almost 80% had completed tertiary education). As a result, the sample comprised a narrow range in terms of diversity, with little input from people with a more basic educational background or aged older than 45. Another

² Minimum quotas from the four target groups was set at: 5% government officials, 15% representatives from political institutions, 25% LGBTQI+ individuals and 25% general public.





limitation is the quantitative method, which on the one hand allows for generalised trends to be inferred, but on the other hand does not do justice to the complexity of the role of LGBTQI+ issues in politics. With regards to the desk research, the researchers are both Greek-Cypriots, a fact that influences the positionality of the researchers.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_20646

