

LGBTIQ+ Rights

Submitted by: The Advocates for Human Rights and Thessaloniki Pride

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Summary: Although Greece has recently adopted many laws meant to protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, implementation remains inconsistent, leaving many LGBTIQ+ people vulnerable to ongoing discrimination, harassment, and violence. This discrimination is especially prevalent in educational and healthcare settings, where LGBTIQ+ people routinely report being able to fully exercise their rights to education and health.

Implementation gaps leave LGBTIQ+ people vulnerable to harassment and violence.

- Despite laws criminalizing discrimination in the provision of goods and services based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, 45% of Greek respondents to a 2024 EU-wide survey reported experiencing discrimination in at least one area of their life over the last year, compared with 37% of respondents across all EU Member States.
- Transgender and gender-diverse individuals face severe exclusionary practices, frequently reporting harassment, direct denial of services, and systematic misgendering by both private providers and public officials.
- In the same survey, 13% of Greek respondents reported that they had experienced physical violence because they were LGBTIQ+ in the five years prior to the survey; 54% reported that they had been harassed within the past year.
- Despite this violence, LGBTIQ+ people are reluctant to report violence. Nearly all survivors express a deep-seated certainty that they will not be taken seriously or will be subjected to “victim-blaming” by law enforcement officers.
- In 2022, Greece banned so-called “conversion therapies” for children, but permits them for adults if they provide consent. The law ignores that many families coerce young, dependent adults or threaten homelessness if they refuse to consent to these “therapies.” The ban does not include ban’s on religious so-called “conversion therapies.”

Pervasive bullying at school interrupts LGBTIQ+ students’ right to education.

- Although Greece passed a law in 2023 prohibiting bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, 70% of respondents to the 2024 survey reported experiencing bullying in school because they were LGBTIQ+.

- Severe, unchecked victimization—coupled with a lack of supportive interventions from educators—frequently leads to chronic absenteeism, deteriorating academic performance, and dropouts among LGBTIQ+ youth under 18 years old. The Ministry of Education also removed without any official justification all LGBTIQ+-inclusive educational materials from the official state platform for educators.
- LGBTIQ+ students cannot anonymously report bullying, as the digital reporting platform requires authentication from parents or the students' credentials. Thus, reporting harassment often forces students to involuntarily "out" themselves to potentially unsupportive parents or school administrations. Student engagement with the platform is extremely low; as of late 2024, only 7.9% of total reports were initiated by students.

Stigma against LGBTIQ+ people limits their access to adequate healthcare.

- LGBTIQ+ people report experiencing discrimination in healthcare settings, which routinely takes the form of "institutional refusal" of care; intentional misgendering; and invasive, non-relevant questioning by medical staff.
- Despite a 2022 law that nominally criminalizes unnecessary medical interventions on intersex minors, intersex human rights defenders note that there are significant loopholes, including continued pathologization of intersex bodies being used as a medical exception to perform invasive surgeries and Magistrate Courts lacking the specialized human rights training necessary to prioritize a child's future autonomy over parents' or doctors' desires for anatomical conformity.

Recommendations

- **Implement robust, specialized training to combat bias for law enforcement officers responding to allegations of violence, hate crimes, and hate speech against individuals because of their actual or perceived SOGIESC.**
- Adopt anti-discrimination protections in mental health law.
- Establish compulsory, ongoing training programs for healthcare professionals on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and rights and the mitigation of social prejudices, stigmatization, harassment, discrimination, and violence against individuals because of their actual or perceived SOGIESC.
- **In collaboration with LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations, draft and adopt legislation closing the loopholes in Law 4958/2022 to strictly and unconditionally prohibit non-medically necessary interventions aimed at altering or modifying intersex minors' sex characteristics to better comply with binary understandings of male and female sex characteristics without their informed consent.**
- **Ensure freedom of expression in education by reinstating and officially endorsing LGBTIQ+ inclusive educational materials (such as those by Rainbow School) within the national public school platforms.**