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TRAININGS NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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UNIVERSITIES TOWARDS DIVERSITY

TRAININGS NEEDS ASSESSMENT (TNA) REPORT

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This training needs assessment report is a comparative report of the research results targeting LGBTI+ academic community members, both the students (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, PhD) and the academic staff (teaching, research, administrative etc.), and covers three project partner countries: Lithuania, Italy, and Greece. Due to the nature of the question, namely, what are the main needs for the upcoming trainings sessions in the respective countries, this report takes into account the results from the national surveys and national focus groups specifically addressing this particular question.

Considering methodological aspects, national surveys were circulated via a wide variety of channels (including academic community, university research groups, various Facebook groups and organisations/individuals that work in the field of LGBTI+ equality). In total, 81 respondents completed the survey in Lithuania, 60 in Italy and 135 in Greece with their responses being included in the further analysis. Considering focus groups, all participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method. In total, 21 members (10 students and 11 academic professionals) participated in Lithuania, 18 members (8 students and 10 academic professionals) in Italy and 18 members in Greece (8 students and 10 academic professionals).

PART A: TRAINING NEEDS SURVEY ANALYSIS

As indicated below, LGBTI+ academic community members perceive concrete teaching strategies of inclusive education and ways to integrate them in everyday work as the two main training topics needed (see Table 1). Further, respondents agreed that the situation of LGBTI+ rights in the national country as well as national academic environments are also among the most relevant topics, followed by examples of good practices implemented in other countries. Finally, the national legal framework, psychological effects of SOGISC related discrimination, various forms of discrimination and terminology/general information were chosen as less important, but that also highly depends on the particular country (see Table 1).

Table 1. Training needs as articulated by LGBTI+ students and academic staff (*strongly agree/agree* total responses)

	Lithuania	Italy	Greece
Teaching strategies to have a more inclusive approach	84%	79%	87%
Ways to integrate inclusive practices in everyday practices	90%	72%	85%
National situation of LGBTI+ discrimination in academic environments	82%	80%	81%
National situation of LGBTI+ rights	84%	71%	87%
Good practices implemented in other countries	86%	65%	89%
Legal framework	78%	69%	90%
Psychological effects of SOGISC-based LGBTI+ discrimination	84%	60%	92%
The various forms of discrimination of LGBTI+ based on SOGISC	82%	62%	87%
Terminology and general information	86%	37%	87%

Concerning, for instance, Lithuania, ways to integrate inclusive practices into everyday practice, good practices implemented in other countries and terminology/general information emerged as key topics, followed by teaching strategies on inclusive education, national LGBTI+ situation and psychological effects of SOGISC related discrimination. Generally, all the topics were perceived as highly relevant for the community. Greece demonstrates similar tendencies with psychological effects, legal framework, and good practices from other countries as being the most relevant themes and a number of others being equally important. Italy's respondents emphasized the need for topics related to national situation of LGBTI+ discrimination in academic environments, teaching strategies on inclusive approach as well as on how to integrate them in everyday life. A more detailed national picture can be observed in the table (see Table 1).

Some of the training needs were gathered via an open-ended question asking respondents to name what would be the main expectations. Respondents from Lithuania and Greece provided their views which are presented in the table below (see Table 2).

Table 2. Training needs as articulated by LGBTI+ students and academic staff (*open-ended question responses*)

Lithuania	Greece
“Demystification” of the bisexual identity and its inclusion. It was perceived that bisexual people are often assumed to be hetero/homo, and bisexuality does not really exist, or is a “phase”. Such an attitude comes even from LGBTI+ community. Thus, more education should be provided in concern to bisexuality.	Intersectional approach. There was a proposal for a training to have an intersectional approach, focusing on the discrimination faced by LGBTQI+ migrants, for example.
Inclusion of LGBTI+ people’s perspectives and attitudes into the education curriculum. Best practices on how it should be done bearing in mind national context, or best practices from other countries.	The history of the feminist and the LGBTQI+ movements and gender studies. Such a training should as well offer ways to assess the friendliness of the academic environment in relation to inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals and information on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), as a way to prevent and combat stigma and discrimination towards HIV and AIDS.
Victim support tools and special support in the crisis situation. This block of trainings should cover support strategies of what individuals as well as higher education institutions can do in order to support victims of hate crime, discrimination, homophobia etc.	Training to include information about the emerging forms of family.
Inclusion of real stories from LGBTI+ individuals themselves. Such a method may be beneficial in destroying prevailing myths about different persons from LGBTI+ spectre, for instance, bisexual or trans persons.	Information provision about discrimination in the workplace and how to handle such situations, so that students can be prepared and university staff remains informed.
	Training and awareness raising activities addressing the general public, in order for people to familiarise with scientific data regarding LGBTI+ issues, so as they stop perceiving LGBTQI+ individuals as ‘ <i>problematic, perverted, or outside normal reality</i> ’.
	Useful practices that should be applied, like non-binary toilets, provision of psychological support to all members of the academic community, especially for matters of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the establishment of a cultural group, recognised by the university and similar to the Committee for Gender Equality, so that students can intervene in discriminatory conditions of the university
	Full and essential respect towards LGBTQI+ people and the integration of LGBTQI+ issues in the university curricula, so as students of specific fields, like pharmacy and medicine, are prepared to address them in their work.

As noted by students and academic staff in Lithuania, positive information provision on the bisexual identity is needed since it is often perceived as a “phase” and not an identity by LGBTI+ members themselves. Inclusion of LGBTI+ perspectives in education curriculum as well as real stories from these persons were also articulated in order to fight against the prevailing myths. Victim support channels should be also discussed during the session in Lithuania (and most likely in other countries) and what individuals as well as education institutions can do in order to support victims of hate crime, discrimination, -phobia.

Whereas in Greece respondents accentuated the necessity to integrate intersectional approach and talk about SOGISC based discrimination against LGBTI+ migrants, followed by short introduction to feminist/LGBTI+ movements. Topics such as emerging forms of family, information provision on discrimination in the labour market against LGBTI+ people, useful practices on how to make university environment more inclusive (non-binary toilets etc.) and integration of LGBTI+ issues in the curricula for wider spectre of students (pharmacy, medicine etc.) are also considered interesting.

PART B: TRAINING NEEDS FOCUS GROUPS ANALYSIS

Concerning focus groups with LGBTI+ students and academic staff, part of the questions covered their training needs. First, general results of the focus groups with students from Lithuania, Italy and Greece will be presented, followed by national key patterns discussed later in the chapter.

As shown below, Lithuanian students emphasized the importance of legal framework and the need to know about it more. Training could also focus upon strategies on how to defend one’s rights in the country as well as in academia if they have been violated. Furthermore, people are interested in hearing more about sex and gender, partly because this topic is extremely heated in Lithuania nowadays. Science-based information must be provided while discussing it, so no myths are reinforced. Then, participants also talked about the necessity for intersubjective topics, such as romantic relationships, love, affection etc. However, the “general” talk about everyone should be avoided so as not to underestimate specificities LGBTI+ people experience in developing mutual relationships. Emphasis should be placed on the wide variety of romantic relationships, emotions, feelings, and affections (see Table 3).

Italy’s focus group members accentuated additional aspects. They would like to hear more about appropriate definitions used to describe a/refer to person. Also, there is a need to know more about legal institutions in the country that deal with SOGISC based discrimination and to compare legislations with those better developed in Nordic countries and rather reactionary ones elsewhere in Europe. As in the case of Lithuanian students, some of the Italian students would like to know more about sex/gender conceptualisation and discrimination phenomenon in their country. Some noted that psychological aspects behind sexual orientation and gender perception are a relevant training topic, followed by best practices of educational inclusion from other countries/universities. Finally, a remark was made about the Italian language as being sexist and hard to make it inclusive, thus another topic could focus on language-related aspects of (anti)discrimination. A concern was expressed that some students, despite noticing acts of discrimination, are not very well-aware of what should be done, so experts could provide some strategies for bystanders (see Table 3).

Finally, Greek students talked about the need to create safe spaces in academic environments for LGBTI+ community. Besides, Greek focus group participants elaborated on the form of the trainings, suggesting them to be of a small-size experiential, arts-based workshops rather than traditional (oftentimes inactive) training session. It was also suggested to record the activity so other persons have an opportunity to see it later. Other relevant topics that are strongly related to SOGISC based discrimination, such as racism and sexism may be included in the curriculum. One more advice was to allow participants to make anonymous questions before the activity and

provide answers during it. Another relevant point was made, that of organising trainings for university staff (e.g. teachers) rather than students, because the staff often hold not only discriminatory attitudes, but the power which withdraws LGBTI+ persons from reporting the case. In other words, academic staff should be trained to avoid discriminatory language and acts more strongly (see Table 3).

Table 3. Training needs as articulated by LGBTI+ students during focus groups

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
<p>Legal framework in Lithuania and how to defend one's rights within the legal/judicial system as well as in academia. Though, according to some of FG participants (Lithuania), such training might attract LGBTI+ persons and perhaps might be of a smaller significance for other students who do not identify with LGBTI+.</p>	<p>Some participants were interested in <i>"The topics that are absolutely necessary are those concerning the definitions (such as the question asked at the beginning) and the basic institutions of our legal system; for example, how sex is changed or how civil union is governed. In my opinion, the most interesting topics are two: 1. Studying the most advanced legislations (for example, the Northern European countries) for LGBTI+ rights in the world, 2. as well as the more retrograde ones, because they are more difficult, that is, you don't know many things due to the language barrier. (For example, African or Asian countries, their laws are unknown). Then because, in reality, as Europe we can have an awareness-raising role, a capacity building education"</i>. (28yo, Italy)</p>	<p>Creating "safe spaces" by both students and teachers during courses such as "trigger warnings", take into consideration the sensitivity of some students on some issues, thus creating a safe/inclusive space for all students.</p>
<p>Debates on sex vs. gender. Since this is an extremely heated topic in Lithuania for the past couple of years, it should be covered from a humanistic, science-based perspective and demystified. Sex vs. gender topic may be grounds to start a discussion about challenges LGBTI+ persons face in academia.</p> <p>However, participants also expressed that the risk remains that the topic will attract merely those who are otherwise familiar with the issue and those who do not and/or demonstrate hostility towards LGBTI+ would be again left excluded.</p>	<p>The participant is interested to participate or attend some training courses and especially <i>"I would like to learn more about the differences between gender and sex. I think in a training course the topic of discrimination, in general, should not be missing"</i> (28yo, Italy)</p>	<p>These training should take the form of small-sized experiential workshops.</p> <p>Also, the training activity should be recorded – more specifically, the part where the trainers speak - thus providing the opportunity for other people to watch the activity.</p> <p>Moreover, the training should include art activities such as theatre / drama.</p> <p>Finally, LGBTQI topics should be included in other more general activities such as training activities regarding racism (and introduce intersectionality concept in particular)</p>

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
<p>Love, relationships, and other significant intersubjective topics, with an emphasis that these are not exceptionally heterosexual. It strongly accentuated that if LGBTI+ community as such is not mentioned, the auditory will assume that it is being talked about merely heterosexual love/relationship/issues etc. Thus, it depends on the lecturers to give quality trainings about intersubjective issues and necessarily include LGBT+ perspective and specificities.</p>	<p>One of the participants expressed interest in taking part in the training and said <i>“probably I need to learn more about the gender studies because I only have a general knowledge and I know there is much more. From the courses or training organized, I can see that there is no contact with reality, that is, there are no testimonies of those who live the given situation every day. The things must be said as they are without fear of offending because then they can be explained. In addition, we need to train to people as well to culture so that these people can spread these things, the things they have learned.”</i> (26yo, Italy, post-graduate student)</p>	<p>Personal stories / experiences of LGBTQI people were articulated as relevant topics.</p>
	<p>LGBTI+ related terminology. The participant in Italy is interested to attend training course and agrees with the other participants on the necessity to focus on the basic terms concerning the definitions</p>	<p>LGBTI+ terminology was articulated in a number of FG participants’ accounts.</p>

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
	<p>One of the participants emphasized: <i>“I would like to deepen the psychological aspect behind sexual orientation and also gender differences and certain related social processes. Then, on the aspect that cannot be missing in a training course, I would say the practices of inclusion”</i>. (23yo, Italy, student)</p>	<p>Good practices implemented in other universities / countries</p> <p>These training activities should provide participants the option to make anonymous questions (e.g., sending them before the activity) and last more than just common 2hr seminars</p> <p>How to support and/or guide (e.g., finding support services, file a complaint) a LGBTQI person that was discriminated against?</p> <p>Training activities should target first and foremost university teachers, not students as the first ones “influence” and have the “power that what they say, is [considered] right”.</p> <p>Learn to think, understand and see through the eyes and experiences of LGBTQI people, like how these people would think, feel, react in a situation and/or in something that you may say.</p> <p>Learn to avoid “micro - aggressions” which may not be described as discriminatory behaviors, but they may be harmful and abusive to LGBTQI.</p>
	<p>FG member mentioned: <i>“I would like to study inclusive communication especially from the point of view of language and the Italian language (as it is complicated for inclusion, a strongly sexist language and therefore changing grammatical categories is hard). I would like to attend a course on concrete strategies for dealing with situations and acts of discrimination. I have often the impression that I am unable to react correctly to such discriminatory acts and I would like to have more tools to do my part. One thing that cannot be missing, and it is the basis in my opinion, is the topic of active listening to the other. In this way, who attends the course can have the tools to understand the point of view of the person in front of them. This is crucial. <...>”</i> (26yo, Italy, student).</p>	

Considering LGBTI+ academic professionals, it is noticeable that some of the topics were already echoed in students' accounts while others were not yet mentioned. Lithuanian academic professionals emphasized the importance of placing LGBTI+ discrimination in the context of medical, psychological, philosophical, and religious context and the need to destroy prevailing myths. Since the Catholic Church holds a prestige and recently has been one of the most significant actors against gender neutral partnership legalisation in Lithuania, there is a need to provide for a clear Christian interpretation in which all persons are accepted. Terminology was also accentuated as an important factor, especially to some of the academic community members who may be not aware of the different terms and conceptions. This relates to the trans and intersex persons whose rights and general situation in society should be discussed. Academic staff members also mentioned that special trainings should be organised for university ethics commissions as these are responsible bodies for investigating possible discrimination acts. Finally, research participants would like to hear more about best experiences applied in foreign universities on practising inclusive education (see Table 4).

In Italy, some academics mentioned they would like to introduce several distinct courses that would discuss same sex relationships. For instance, a tutor in Italy said that they would be eager to make a comparative law course on egalitarian marriage in Europe and various legal forms. Another one mentioned to be persuading colleagues to teach comparative constitutional law course dealing with the issue of same sex unions in a comparative perspective at least for a few hours. Research participants also disclosed wanting to have a separate course dedicated to these kinds of topics. In the longer perspective, that would definitely create a positive outcome for students. Speaking about relevant training topics, intersexuality as well as gender related aspects were articulated as important (see Table 4).

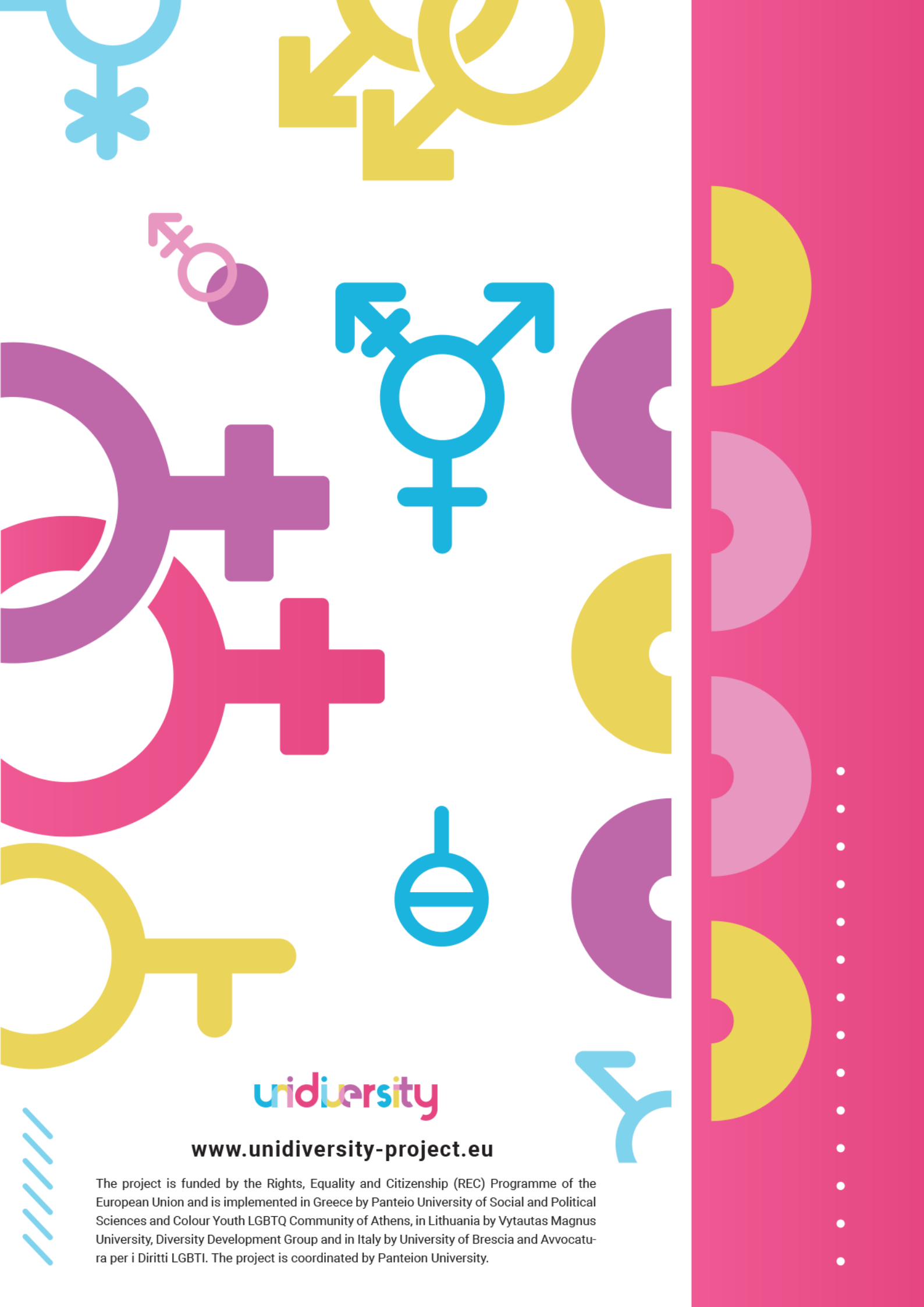
Greek academic staff emphasized the importance of understanding homophobia beyond its physical attacks, but rather what the rejection means and where it derives from. Awareness raising through art and movie screenings were also emphasized as well as the need to combat stereotypes so that all people feel equal and safe. Additionally, academics would like to see outdoor campaigns and art events on LGBTQI issues being organised. Others would like to hear on how to include LGBTQI people in a male-dominant academic field (e.g. mechanics), whereas others are keen on increasing visibility of famous LGBTQI scientists. Some are interested in key concepts, terminology, legal framework, and data/statistics gathering regarding discrimination incidents and certified seminars specifically for administrative staff. The importance of giving voice to LGBTQI people themselves was echoed in training needs by emphasizing real incidents and experiences these people face in academic environments or examining multiple discrimination cases (e.g. LGBTQI students of migrant background). Finally, FG participants reiterated that the conference format would be mostly suitable (see Table 4).

Table 4. Training needs as articulated by LGBTI+ academic professionals during focus groups

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
<p>Consideration of medical, psychological, philosophical, and religious aspects. Some FG members noted that by discussing LGBTI+ issues through these aspects it is possible to destroy prevailing myths as well as educate the broader academic community about the matter. One FG member specified that it is very important to cover religious aspects because Christianity is often used as a justification for homophobia. This member noted that the careful interpretation of Christian teaching accepts all persons and should not be used to justify hatred and discrimination. Training considering this aspect should be of great relevance in the society where the majority identifies as catholic.</p>	<p>The participant expressed: <i>"I would like to learn more on gender identity that I personally have never explored. From a legal point of view, I would like to do a comparative law course regarding the discipline of egalitarian marriage in Europe and in the various legal systems. Now, for example, the Cirinnà law on civil unions could not be missing in the course of training. In my opinion, we should include the Cirinnà law into the manual of civil law."</i> (28yo, Italy, tutor).</p>	<p>Deeper understanding of homophobia beyond common homophobic attacks, slurs etc: what is rejection? The law may allow me to marry a person of the same gender but will other people (e.g., my family) be happy for me? (43yo, Greece, Adjunct lecturer)</p>
<p>Appropriate ("up-to-date") terminology in discussing LGBTI+ situation. This topic would benefit lecturers who have a direct contact with students and communicate with them in their daily work, but also researchers and other academics as well. However, participants also noted that some of them are very well familiar with the terminology, thus these trainings should be based on several levels in order to meet expectations of various participants.</p>	<p>The participant said to be interested but at the same time <i>"I am not interested in being a representative of the LGBT issue as a gay man, but I would be much more interested in having colleagues who also deal with these topics and who are sensitive to these topics regardless of their sexual orientation. The problem is the way in which knowledge is organized, the disciplinary sector, that is, as if the lawyer were not interested in these themes or as if the doctor cared about these themes only if or as if the anthropologist should only deal with ancient peoples or as if the sociologist who deals with social or family immobility should not also know about these issues. It is an essential part of human knowledge"</i>. (45yo, Italy, associate professor)</p>	<p>Terminology; Understanding key concepts;</p> <p>Recommended methods/activities:</p> <p>Before organizing training / awareness activities in another university, first find a contact person (in that university) who will "shape / prepare the climate" for you and facilitate the delivery of the activities (61yo, Greece, associate professor).</p> <p>Proposed method / activities: raise awareness through discussions as well as art, movies etc. (68yo, Greece, associate professor)</p> <p>Identify and combat stereotypes, whatever topics LGBTQI people want/suggest; Awareness campaigns for students, training seminars for professional staff, events organized by LGBTQI people (23yo, Greece, research associate)</p> <p>Challenges / problems LGBTQI people face (57yo, Greece, professor)</p> <p>Raise awareness that all people are equal and should feel "safe" (52yo, Greece, ssociate professor)</p>

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
<p>Trainings on various discrimination forms for academic community, especially for academic ethics commissions. Since these commissions are usually responsible in deciding of whether there was a discrimination act, members' capacities to identify homophobic incidents should be regularly strengthened. This would prove the quality of assessment of incoming complaints.</p>	<p>The participant asserted no, but giving the reason as follows: <i>"I am a member of the Lenford Network and for this reason I attend several events a week. However, I find the debate on gender self-determination and the risk of neutralizing male/female differences particularly interesting. The condition of intersex people should not be missing in the training course"</i>. (36yo, Italy, collaborator)</p>	<p>Inclusion of LGBTQI people in specific "male" scientific / academic fields e.g., mechanics, through good practices (29yo, Greece, administrative/support staff)</p> <p>Recommended topics: terminology, legal framework, data and statistics regarding discrimination etc.; Recommended methods/activities:</p> <p>Include experiential exercises.</p> <p>Also, organize outdoor campaigns and art events (e.g., movies' screenings) on LGBTQI issues in the University's campus.</p> <p>Provide certified seminars for administrative staff as an additional motivation to participate (enrich their CVs).</p> <p>Take into consideration that some staff members may want to participate but may not have permission from their supervisors due to the lack of staff (option: time flexible seminars). (61yo, Greece, professor and president of the University's Gender Equality Committee);</p>

Lithuania	Italy	Greece
<p>Best practices from foreign universities in creating a safe and supportive environment for LGBTI+ individuals. Some FG members expressed that they would like to be informed about other countries' best practices and what university administrations do to create better conditions to report homophobic incidents, protect LGBTI+ members as well as what power universities hold in safeguarding LGBTI+ persons' rights, especially bearing in mind Lithuanian context.</p>	<p>The participant noted: <i>"And I've always encouraged to organize meetings. Every year, I convince my colleagues who teach the comparative constitutional law course to dedicate two hours of their courses to deal with the issue of the recognition of same sex unions in a comparative key. On the one hand it helps students to understand how the comparative method works in analysis; on the other hand it helps them to understand how the principle of equality works, how we can answer to the principle of equality with different formulas of recognition and what is the means of reasonableness and how it is dealt with in different legal systems. I am already trying to do this thing but I would love to have a course dedicated to these topics, even a course of 6 credits. It is a very broad topic and one that deserves due attention. Starting from gender, passing through what sexual orientation is and arriving at gender identity".</i> (40yo, Italy, researcher).</p>	<p>Making visible famous scientists who were LGBTQI (62yo, Greece, professor)</p> <p><i>"Give emphasis to real incidents"; include "experiences" of LGBTQI people;</i></p> <p>examine cases of multiple discrimination e.g., students who are both LG-BTQI and have a migrant background (38yo, Greece, associate professor)</p>
<p>Trainings on trans and intersex people situation and rights. Throughout FG, various participants mentioned that situation concerning trans people and intersex people, their challenges, needs and overall situation in Lithuania (and in other countries, to compare) would be significant to cover during trainings. Academic community should be familiarised with the terminology that is fully in respect to these persons. While there are prevailing myths and stereotypes about them, trainings should also serve as a myth-breaking tool.</p>		



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