



Inclusive Universities Leading To Inclusive Societies

TRANSNATIONAL REPORT Italy, Lithuania, Greece



2024

Introduction

The INCLUSIES project aims to promote inclusion and diversity in higher education institutions, ultimately impacting society. It focuses on empowering witnesses of incidents of discrimination based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Sex Characteristics (SOGISC), recognizing their crucial role in preventing and addressing such issues. Through its activities, INCLUSIES seeks to create an inclusive climate within these institutions and broader society, upholding the European democratic values of equality, equity, inclusion, and non-discrimination. This will help combat barriers that hinder LGBTQI+ students' participation, academic performance, and overall well-being. Additionally, the project gathered up-to-date data on the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ people in universities and society, using the methods of photo elicitation (Harper, 2002) and autophotography (Hawkes, 2004; see also Appendix for sample photos of each country). Also, in this project relevant materials to bolster inclusion and active bystandership practices, tailored to the community's needs were developed.

In this transnational report the status of LGBTQI+ individuals in the academic environments of Italy, Lithuania, and Greece is examined. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the experiences and challenges faced by this community across these countries, encompassing various facets. Specifically, the report delves into the academic landscape, drawing upon statistics, surveys, and secondary data to provide a nuanced understanding of prevailing attitudes towards LGBTQI+ individuals within higher education institutions. As a comparative report, it aims to offer a detailed analysis of the distinct contexts within each country, providing insights into the prevalence of discrimination, the level of awareness regarding LGBTQI+ issues, and the implementation of good practices in their respective academic environments.

The Italian report leverages diverse sources, including ILGA-Europe and the Institution of International and European Affairs, to paint a comprehensive picture. Textual and sentiment analysis of the Italian university context reveals a range of emotions and attitudes among stakeholders, spanning from indignation and anxiety to concern and cautious optimism. Additionally, data from the ISTAT and UNAR in 2020-2021 highlights the presence of discrimination, particularly among Italian LGBTQI+ respondents in tertiary education. The Lithuanian report provides valuable insights through the lens of 17 individuals, studying or teaching in Lithuanian universities. By gathering opinions, stories, and experiences, it offers a

Transnational report

firsthand account of the lived experiences and social-demographic profiles of participants. The Lithuanian report highlights issues of securing equal opportunities for LGBTQI+ individuals in Lithuania and the existing discrimination based on sexual orientation. Also, the research reveals the crucial challenges faced by LGBTQI+ people in the academic environment and the lack of inclusive practices in Lithuanian universities. Lastly, leveraging a multidimensional approach, the Greek report delves into the Greek academic context to understand the status of LGBTQI+ individuals. Drawing from academic articles, surveys, and reports, the analysis explores prevailing attitudes, societal perceptions, and legal frameworks impacting LGBTQI+ individuals (Carpenter, 2021; European Commission, 2022). Notably, the Greek report serves as a critical resource, presenting an analysis of challenges and progress made in fostering inclusive and supportive academic environments for the LGBTQI+ community in Greece. Overall, this comparative report synthesizes a comprehensive understanding of the status of LGBTQI+ individuals in the academic environments of Italy, Lithuania, and Greece, offering valuable insights for policymakers, academic institutions, and advocacy groups.

Part A: Desk research results

The status of LGBTQI+ people in the national academic environment

Studies conducted in Italy, Lithuania, and Greece offer crucial insights into the prevalence of discrimination, the need for inclusive practices, and the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ individuals in their national academic environments.

In Italy, the status of LGBTQI+ people in the national academic environment is characterized by the existence of discrimination and challenges. According to the ISTAT quantitative study *La popolazione omosessuale nella società italiana*, (ISTAT, 2012), 24% of LGB respondents reported that they experienced discrimination based on SOGISC in school or university (the percentage drops to 14.2% for heterosexual respondents). Despite this, there is a noticeable increase in the visibility of LGBTQI+ identities, along with the adoption of anti-discrimination policies and supportive organizations in Italian universities (e.g., the *University - Universities Towards Diversity* project; Stamile and Viggiani, 2022). However, there is still a prevalence of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression on some campuses, as highlighted by the source mentioning

Transnational report

deteriorating discrimination and harassment issues in many parts of the world. Additionally, the available support networks and planning of festivals and activities in Italian universities contribute to creating a more inclusive atmosphere.

On the other hand, the status of LGBTQI+ people in the national academic environment of Lithuania appears to have limited statistical data, analysis, and scientific articles available. However, the Lithuanian report cites various EU and Lithuanian studies and statistics confirming that discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender characteristics, as well as homophobic attitudes, is still prevalent among the Lithuanian population. Moreover, the report presents research conducted in 2022 that showed that LGBTQI+ individuals felt insecure and in precarious positions in the Lithuanian academic environment. Students, lecturers, and administration staff reported various forms of discrimination based on SOGISC and experienced intolerance within the academic environment. The mentioned study also highlighted an existing gap between the declarative openness to LGBTQI+ people within many Lithuanian universities and persisting stereotypes towards them (Ališauskienė et al. 2023). The Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania aims to ensure the implementation of individuals' equal rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. However, the Lithuanian report stresses the inherent challenges of conducting research on LGBTQI+ issues in hostile social environments, indicating a complex and potentially difficult situation for LGBTQI+ individuals in the academic environment.

Regarding Greece, the status of LGBTQI+ people in the national academic environment showcases both positive developments and remaining challenges. Positive developments include increased visibility of LGBTQI+ identities, the adoption of anti-discrimination policies, and supportive organizations in accordance with the National Constitution and European laws (Carpenter et al., 2021). Moreover, there has been a noticeable increase in the representation of LGBTQI+ individuals in universities, with the establishment of support networks and the organization of festivals and activities promoting inclusivity. However, despite anti-discrimination policies, discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression still occur on some campuses in Greece. The study suggests a need for comprehensive and inclusive policies that address the unique needs of LGBTQI+ students, including the implementation of support networks and educational initiatives to create a safer and inclusive space for these individuals to thrive academically and personally (Cooper et al., 2020; Ramos et al., 2023).

Transnational report

In summary, Italy, Lithuania, and Greece each present their own unique set of circumstances for LGBTQI+ individuals in their national academic environments. While Italy is making strides in creating a more inclusive atmosphere, it still faces prevalent challenges such as discrimination and harassment. The Lithuanian situation is characterized by limited data on the situation of LGBTQI+ people in the academic environment. Still, the statistics and research results show the high level of hostility in Lithuanian society towards equal rights for LGBTQI+ individuals and highlight the challenges that LGBTQI+ people face in the Lithuanian academic environment. Greece, on the other hand, shows both positive developments and remaining challenges, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive and inclusive policies and initiatives to support LGBTQI+ individuals in academia.

LGBTQI+ awareness sessions and good practices

In terms of LGBTQI+ awareness sessions and good practices, the three countries - Italy, Lithuania, and Greece - have taken different approaches based on the available information.

In Italy, despite the absence of a national standard, an increasing number of Italian universities are implementing initiatives aimed at creating a more inclusive environment. Some of the steps that several universities are taking include “alias career” (originally: “Carriera Alias”), which allows students and staff to be identified by their chosen gender regardless of their legal name. Additionally, these universities are adopting inclusive language, providing all-gender bathrooms, and promoting training on LGBTQI+ issues (as part of the Anti-discrimination protocols) and ACSO (Actions to Counter Sexism and Homophobia) training. ACSO training is a program designed for university staff to address sexism and homophobia, including the recognition of microaggressions. Other university initiatives include seminars, counseling services, and mandatory diversity training aimed at combating discrimination based on SOCSIG (Luppi et al., 2020) and student associations that advocate for LGBTQI+ equality.

Currently, there are no unified national regulations on the prevention, monitoring, and regulation of incidents of discrimination on SOGISC grounds in the academic environment in Lithuania. Most higher education institutions in Lithuania are guided by the principles of discrimination and equal rights management provided by the European Union and national legislation. However, desk research highlighted various initiatives that support LGBTQI+

Transnational report

equal opportunities and promote the creation of a safe and inclusive academic environment (e.g. EU-funded projects *Universities towards Diversity - UniDiversity* and *Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research -SPEAR*; also University LGBT+ Group that unifies LGBTQI+ students and academic staff; and Pride events).

Greece emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive environment within educational institutions and universities through various good practices (European Commission, 2022; Rand et al., 2021; Ward and Gale, 2016; World Health Organization, 2023). This includes the establishment of LGBTQI+ research centers on campus, which act as hubs for support services, information dissemination, and community-building (Ramos et al., 2023). Clear inclusive policies and non-discrimination statements signal institutional commitment to inclusivity. Counseling services affirming and knowledgeable of LGBTQI+ issues can help in preventing discrimination incidents and enhancing overall well-being. Moreover, partnerships with LGBTQI+ organizations for advocacy, support, and joint initiatives, as well as regular LGBTQI+ events and celebrations on campuses, contribute to a more inclusive campus culture.

In summary, while only the first initiatives to promote LGBTQI+ inclusion in academia are underway in Lithuania, Italy focuses on the celebration of LGBTQI+ milestones and visibility campaigns, and Greece emphasizes the importance of LGBTQI+ research centers, inclusive policies, counseling services, partnerships with LGBTQI+ organizations, and LGBTQI+ events and celebrations to foster an inclusive academic environment. Each country has implemented distinct strategies to promote LGBTQI+ awareness within educational settings.

Part B: Online research results

Sample Description

The sample characteristics for each country are presented separately in the following subsections.

Italy: The sample in Italy consists of 35 individuals with a broad age range, varying from 19 to 49 years, indicating good generational variety. In terms of sex, 19 individuals indicated their sex assigned at birth as male, and when exploring the category of ‘gender’, a greater

Transnational report

assortment is found, with the ‘male’ gender being the most common. There are six different gender identifications indicated in the sample. Regarding sexual orientation, the data reveal that the ‘homosexual’ orientation is the most common among the respondents, with 12 individuals identifying as such. However, the dataset presents “six distinct orientations represented”. The mode of questionnaire administration was CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing), and the interviews were also conducted in person in two instances.

Lithuania: In the case of Lithuania, a total of ten students from Lithuanian universities participated in the photo-elicitation interview. Participants aged between 20-40; five students were bachelor's students, two were master's, one was a PhD candidate, and two interview participants have just graduated from bachelor's and master studies. Two research participants were students from Russia and Georgia who were studying at the time of the study at Lithuanian universities. The students who participated in the research studied social sciences (sociology, psychology, regional studies, and public governance). Additionally, six students (aged between 19-27, four women, one man, one trans man) and one teacher (woman, age 52) from Lithuanian universities participated in the autophotography survey.

Greece: The study included participants affiliated with the LGBTQI+ community, and they were a diverse group with various demographic characteristics. Most of the participants, five out of the total, indicated residence in Athens, while one participant resided in rural areas. This suggests a concentration of participants in urban areas, specifically in Athens, which is the capital city of Greece. The study also detailed the age distribution of the participants. There were two participants in the 18-24 age group, one in the 35-44 age group, and one in the 45-55 age group. This distribution signifies a mix of younger and middle-aged individuals, reflecting a diverse age range within the participant pool. Regarding gender identity, the participants exhibited a range of self-identifications. One participant identified as a “woman”, one as a “man”, one as “genderqueer”, and one as “trans” (specifically as a trans man). This demonstrates gender diversity within the participant group, encompassing individuals with different gender identities and expressions. Furthermore, the study included participants from various educational backgrounds, as evidenced by the composition of one undergraduate student, one postgraduate student, and two university staff members. This suggests a varied educational profile among the participants, including both students and professionals.

Discriminatory Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors Based on SOGISC in the Academic Environment. The empirical research results from Italy, Lithuania, and Greece provide insights into the experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals in the academic environment.

In Italy, the key findings included discrimination, hate speech, and inappropriate behavior based on SOGISC in the academic environment. The study highlighted the importance of visibility, issues, and support for LGBTIQ+ individuals in Italian universities. This empirical research sheds light on the challenges and experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals within the academic setting in Italy. Participants reported various forms of discrimination, including:

- *Harassment*: Both verbal and physical harassment emerged as a major concern, particularly impacting women due to power dynamics.
- *Limited inclusion*: While initiatives like gender-neutral bathrooms are seen positively, resistance towards transgender and non-binary individuals remains.
- *Homophobic violence*: This is a significant issue undermining student safety and well-being, despite the university's values.
- *Open discrimination*: Demonstrations against LGBTIQ+ rights highlight the need for universities to counter such actions.
- *Importance of inclusion training*: Identified as crucial for raising awareness and creating a supportive environment.
- The study also emphasizes the importance of inclusion training to raise awareness and create a supportive environment for all students.

Furthermore, personal narratives through auto-photography reveal the subtle and indirect ways discrimination manifests in the academic sphere, making it difficult for students to express their authentic selves. Participants shared personal experiences highlighting the difficulty of living authentically due to subtle and indirect forms of discrimination; examples included feeling unsafe in restrooms and experiencing isolation due to a lack of understanding and prejudice. These experiences underscore the need for a cultural and structural shift within universities towards genuine inclusivity and freedom from discrimination.

In Lithuania, the study presented key results on discrimination, hate speech, and inappropriate behavior based on SOGISC in the academic environment. Additionally, the

Transnational report

research highlighted the level of visibility of LGBTQI+ individuals, issues, and support in Lithuanian universities. The findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals and the challenges they face within the Lithuanian academic environment. One of the most common responses is limited overt discrimination, as most participants reported not experiencing or witnessing overt acts of discrimination in their academic environment, but covert ones. In addition, some participants even highlighted supportive and inclusive experiences, particularly in social science departments. However, despite the lack of open incidents, participants identified subtler forms of discrimination and bias which they called “hidden” discrimination. These included a lack of inclusive language and practices, such as discomfort with open discussions about LGBTQI+ identities, limited use of gender-neutral pronouns, and offensive jokes by students and staff. Also, a heteronormative focus within the university was noted, with curriculum and discussions often emphasizing heterosexual relationships, potentially alienating LGBTQI+ individuals. Apart from that, participants reported fear of coming out due to potential negative reactions and loss of friendships. Lastly, a transgender participant specifically mentioned experiencing ‘silent’ discrimination in the form of misgendering, dead-naming, and negative comments regarding their appearance.

Participants also cited broader societal homophobia as impacting the academic sphere. They noted societal discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals, including legal limitations, public backlash, and negative portrayals of LGBTQI+ identities in the media. All of these factors underline the need for improvement. Participants emphasized the importance of increased awareness and education on LGBTQI+ issues within the university community, calling for the creation of a truly inclusive environment where individuals feel safe and accepted regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In Greece, the research presented key findings on discrimination, hate speech, and inappropriate behavior based on SOGISC in the academic environment. This included:

- **Microaggressions and Stereotyping:** Participants faced frequent subtle but hurtful comments and assumptions, reflecting prejudice and societal bias.
- **Exclusion and Isolation:** This discrimination led to feelings of exclusion, both socially and professionally. Older participants also felt the impact of ageism alongside SOGISC-based discrimination.

Transnational report

- Institutional Barriers: Lack of inclusive policies and support structures within academia allowed these discriminatory practices to thrive.
- Cyberbullying and Harassment: Participants even experienced targeted online discrimination, highlighting the need for digital safety measures within academic environments.

Participants also mentioned some important consequences of these discriminatory incidents. First and foremost, they mentioned the negative impact on mental health, reporting that these experiences contributed to anxiety, depression, and a struggle for self-acceptance among participants.

The level of visibility of LGBTI+ individuals, issues, and representation in the academic environment

Overall, the visibility and representation of LGBTQI+ individuals remain uneven within academia based on all three reports. While progress has been made, systemic prejudice, ignorance, and lack of education hinder full inclusion. This underscores the need for continued efforts to create a truly welcoming and affirming academic environment.

In the Italian study, student experiences reveal a complex picture of LGBTQI+ visibility and representation within academia. While they mentioned that progress has been made, many challenges remain. Participants suggested that certain inclusive steps, like gender-neutral restrooms, coexist with incidents of discrimination and homophobic acts. This reflects both advancements and persistent struggles towards equality. Students reported feeling safe in some academic spaces, yet they perceive a lack of awareness and education on LGBTQI+ issues. This calls for broader efforts toward inclusivity. Student experiences included narratives highlighting 'deadnaming,' prejudice from peers and even educators, and the alienation that comes with being perceived as 'other.'

The visibility and representation of LGBTQI+ individuals and issues in the academic environment are indicated through personal experiences and struggles, as mentioned by a 32-year-old non-tenured researcher. The researcher expressed facing discrimination and doubt about their identity as a researcher due to prevailing discrimination. The emphasis is placed on the need for a cultural and structural change in universities to create truly inclusive and discrimination-free spaces. Additionally, the document acknowledges some progress

Transnational report

towards inclusivity and acceptance, such as the recognition of gender diversity and the presence of gender-neutral restrooms within academic settings. However, incidents of discrimination and prejudice, like acts of homophobic vandalism and assaults, point to the persistent need for concerted efforts to promote equality and safety within the LGBTQI+ community in the academic environment.

The Lithuanian academic environment seems to have made some progress toward LGBTQI+ acceptance, yet systemic challenges remain. The lack of clear policies, lingering conservative attitudes, and fear of coming out highlight the need for further change to create a truly safe and inclusive academic space. Participants acknowledge improvements in LGBTQI+ rights within Lithuanian society. However, they highlight persistent conservative attitudes, influenced by a Soviet legacy, that hinders full equality and legal protections. They believe progress in academia depends on changes at the national level, stating that *"As long as the state as a state is not safe, the academia is not safe either."* Participants note that, while Lithuania may be safer for LGBTQI+ people compared to some Eastern countries, there's still significant progress needed to match the standards of Western nations. Within academia specifically, participants' experiences are mixed, as some participants report open discussion of LGBTQI+ topics in their coursework, while others find it avoided by educators. The willingness to include such topics seems heavily dependent on individual teachers. Also, many participants were found to be unaware of any university-level inclusion policies or their implementation. This leads to uncertainty about the rights and opportunities available to LGBTQI+ individuals in academia. Lastly, the lack of openness and clear protections makes coming out a risky decision for some participants, creating a climate where LGBTQI+ individuals feel invisible and unsure of their basic rights.

Greek academia shows signs of progress toward LGBTQI+ inclusion, but significant challenges persist in representation across curriculum, research, and leadership. To foster a truly inclusive environment, a concerted effort is needed to address these issues and amplify LGBTQI+ voices within the academic community. In the following paragraph, the key issues and proposed solutions for increasing LGBTQI+ visibility and inclusion within Greek academia are highlighted. While some gender studies courses exist, participants find a lack of LGBTQI+ topics across various disciplines, even in Psychology. This reinforces invisibility and gaps in understanding diverse experiences. Participants also reported research gaps: despite international studies on LGBTQI+ issues, research specific to Greece is less visible.

Transnational report

Much of it exists as theses, not in widely circulated publications. This limits accessibility and impact. Lastly, participants noted the absence of openly LGBTQI+ faculty and leaders. This hinders representation, mentorship, and sends a negative message about career possibilities. To overcome these challenges, participants proposed solutions including the establishment of inclusive spaces like student groups, counseling services, and dedicated LGBTQI+ research centers to build community and visibility. They also emphasized increasing the number of supportive faculty who actively champion inclusivity in teaching and research, serving as mentors and advocates for LGBTQI+ rights.

Characteristics of discriminatory incidents and strategies employed for overcoming / subsiding these incidents

The Italian participants who reviewed images for a photo elicitation project reported varying reactions to discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community. While they haven't personally witnessed significant discrimination on campus, female students expressed the need to remain vigilant against potential harassment within a misogynistic culture. A transgender student experienced a particularly upsetting incident as their transition was insensitively discussed in a philosophy class. This highlights the lack of support channels and procedures within the university to address such events. To ensure a more inclusive environment in the university, the Italian report recommends:

- Establishing clear protocols for reporting discrimination incidents.
- Providing training and awareness for faculty on diversity and inclusion issues.
- Promoting education within the university fosters understanding and respect for diversity and combats prejudice.

The Lithuanian academic environment lacks clear guidance on how to handle discrimination incidents. This leads to uncertainty for victims and witnesses, who often rely on less effective individual strategies. Firstly, both victims and witnesses face challenges in reacting appropriately to discrimination. Common strategies include pressuring the perpetrator or warning them about their language. Secondly, reporting barriers exist. While most participants would report incidents to administrators, few are aware of formal channels like University Ethics Committees. Participants believe many victims wouldn't seek help due to unawareness of their rights and procedures, or fear of not being able to prove the incident.

Transnational report

According to research participants, this lingering fear presumably stems from the Soviet era, which discouraged reporting discrimination. Finally, participants expressed a sense of public indifference. They feel the public is unlikely to help LGBTQI+ individuals facing discrimination.

In the Greek report, despite being surveyed about their responses to discrimination, few participants reported actively addressing such incidents. This hinders creating a more inclusive environment. One participant described feeling powerless and unimportant when facing discrimination. Some attempted to address the issue by: (a) keeping records of incidents and reporting them to faculty, but without success, (b) seeking advice from LGBTQI+ advocacy groups, (c) promoting dialogue on diversity and inclusion within the university and (d) seeking mental health support and engaging in relaxing activities to cope with the emotional toll. These strategies are supported by research, but the low response rate from participants suggests these incidents are likely underreported.

Perceptions regarding collective actions for advocating LGBTQI+ rights and relevant awareness/sensitivity activities at university

While the Italian study focuses on specific incidents and strategies within the academic environment, the Lithuanian and Greek studies delve into the perspectives and experiences of the individuals involved, shedding light on the challenges they face in seeking support and addressing discriminatory incidents in their respective settings. Each research study provides valuable insights into the discriminatory incidents and the strategies employed for overcoming and subsiding these incidents in the academic realm in their respective countries.

In Italy, perceptions regarding collective actions for advocating LGBTQI+ rights and relevant awareness/sensitivity activities at the university are driven by the need for inclusive practices and support for the LGBTQI+ community. Participants in Italy emphasize the importance of visible signs and actions that demonstrate support and acceptance of LGBTQI+ people's human rights. There is a call for the implementation of various initiatives such as separate recreation areas for LGBTQI+ individuals, professional counselors to provide support, lectures and seminars addressing LGBTQI+ challenges, and inclusive language training for teachers and students. Additionally, there's a focus on developing equality plans, anti-discrimination campaigns, non-binary facilities, and the use of LGBTQI+ merchandise in university premises to promote visibility and acceptance. Further, participants highlight the

Transnational report

significance of social events, university participation in standalone events, visibility campaigns, and the celebration of LGBTQI+ milestones and contributions to foster pride, visibility, and understanding.

It should be noted that in Italy, a co-occurrence matrix with clustering was used to analyze qualitative data from student responses after viewing images related to LGBTQI+ discrimination. The matrix visually represented thematic analysis, showing how often two terms appeared together in student responses. Darker shades indicated higher co-occurrence, while lighter shades indicated lower. This analysis identified major clusters of words, revealing cognitive associations and prevailing themes perceived by students. The study used a convenience sample across Italy, encompassing diverse demographic and educational backgrounds. Photo elicitation and auto-photography were employed as methodologies. Data analysis revealed a multifaceted sociodemographic landscape among the participants. The Italian investigation yielded data of significant scientific interest for the debate on LGBTQI+ inclusion. The research highlighted diverse feelings and attitudes, ranging from indignation and anxiety to concern and moderate optimism. It suggested that despite progress, significant barriers to inclusion and discrimination persist in the university context.

In Lithuania, the perceptions regarding collective actions for advocating LGBTQI+ rights and relevant awareness/sensitivity activities in the academic environment reflect a similar need for inclusive practices. Research participants in Lithuania express the lack of inclusive practices in the academic environment, as well as the absence of activities aiming at inclusivity for LGBTQI+ individuals. To address this, participants share a range of ideas for implementation, including separate recreation areas, professional counseling, training for teachers on inclusive teaching methods, development of equality plans and anti-discrimination campaigns, non-binary facilities, use of LGBTQI+ merchandise, social events, and university participation in standalone events. Moreover, visibility campaigns, artistic displays, and accessible counseling and support services tailored to the unique needs of LGBTQI+ individuals are emphasized. Overall, the perceptions underscore the necessity for significant actions to create a safe and open environment for all members of the academic community.

In Greece, the perceptions regarding collective actions for advocating LGBTQI+ rights and relevant awareness/sensitivity activities at the university emphasize the multifaceted strategies employed to foster understanding, dismantle stereotypes, and normalize diverse

Transnational report

identities within the academic setting. The insights from the research in Greece highlight the significance of student-led initiatives, collaboration with allies, inclusive policies, and a diverse range of awareness activities. Participants stress the importance of celebrating LGBTQI+ milestones, events, and contributions to foster pride, visibility, and understanding. Furthermore, visibility campaigns, including awareness weeks, pride events, artistic displays, and accessible counseling and support services tailored to the unique needs of LGBTQI+ individuals, are emphasized. The perceptions from Greece reflect a comprehensive approach to advocating LGBTQI+ rights and implementing awareness-sensitivity activities at the university level, recognizing the diverse needs of the LGBTQI+ community.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the investigation into the inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals in the Italian university context suggest a diversity of feelings and attitudes. For Italy, the research conducted focused on discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors based on SOGISC, as well as the visibility of LGBTQI+ people and their rights in the academic environment. The survey results highlighted the existence of discriminatory incidents in the form of negative comments, the use of LGBTQI+ terms in an insulting way, and unequal treatment. These incidents point to an environment where LGBTQI+ individuals face prejudice and discriminatory behavior, affecting their experience within the academic setting. In terms of strategies for overcoming or subsiding these incidents, the report emphasizes the training needs of respondents. It is suggested that providing education and raising awareness among faculty and staff members on diversity and inclusion is fundamental. Reacting to discriminatory incidents is also addressed, with participants mentioning creating social pressure and shame, warning individuals using non-inclusive language, and seeking guidance from departmental administrators or deans. The responses also reflect the need for clear mechanisms and protocols within universities to address and prevent discriminatory situations, ensuring an inclusive and respectful study environment for all.

The research conducted in Lithuania and Greece primarily focuses on the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the academic environment. In Lithuania, the study indicates that academic communities do not provide accurate, concrete information on what to do in the case of discrimination, inappropriate behavior, or where to report discriminatory incidents. Participants express difficulty in knowing their rights, procedures, or actions and

Transnational report

feeling that they are not worthy enough to seek help or report incidents of discrimination. Fear of reporting incidents and the belief that seeking help would be futile are also highlighted. Additionally, there is an acknowledged lack of public inclination to intervene in such cases. In Greece, research participants' reactions to images of homophobic graffiti reflected feelings of dismay, pain, and concern for persistent discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community. However, this also showcased the participants' strong desire to combat homophobia and promote values of welcome and respect. The need for a safe and open environment for LGBTQI+ individuals is emphasized, as participants express uncertainty about coming out and facing discrimination. It should be noted that conducting research on LGBTQI+ issues in Greece presents unique challenges, particularly in environments with social hostility. This became apparent in the autophotography study where, despite recruitment efforts, the response rate was lower than expected. Several factors likely contributed to this, including survey fatigue among LGBTQI+ individuals, the demanding nature of the autophotography method, and a general lack of familiarity with this approach. Additionally, the current negative climate in Greece towards LGBTQI+ individuals, fueled by homophobic rhetoric, likely creates a sense of insecurity and reluctance to engage in LGBTQI+ related research.

Overall, the conclusions from Italy, Lithuania, and Greece each reflect the unique challenges and efforts concerning the inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals in their respective academic and societal contexts. While Italy indicates a complex interplay of inclusion and discrimination, Greece demonstrates a focus on providing support services, and Lithuania highlights the need for more comprehensive statistical data and insights on LGBTQI+ challenges in academia and more initiatives focusing on creating a safe and inclusive academic environment.

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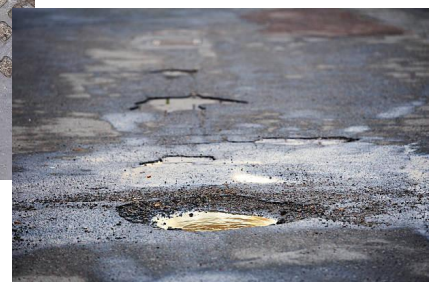
Transnational report

Appendix. Samples photos provided by the participants for the autophography method of each country

Question 1: How do you see yourself when experiencing different forms of discrimination at the University?

**Italy****Lithuania****Greece**

Question 2: How do others see you when experiencing different forms of discrimination at the University?

**Italy****Lithuania****Greece**

Transnational report

Question 3: What makes it hard for you to be who you are? What challenges do you face when trying to be yourself?



Italy



Lithuania



Greece

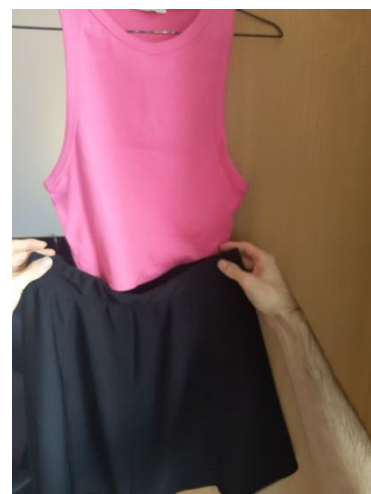
Question 4: What helps you be who you are? What gives you strength in the face of challenges?



Italy



Lithuania



Greece

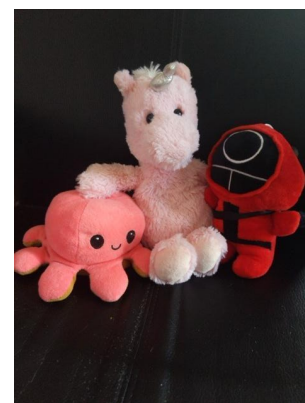
Question 5: In these experiences of discrimination, what kind of help would you find appropriate from others?



Italy



Lithuania



Greece