



Annual Review

of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex
People in Greece covering the period of January to December 2018

Greece

Bias-motivated speech

On 15 March, the Metropolitan bishop of Kalabryta and Aigialeia Ambrosios was acquitted of the charges of incitement of hate speech and abuse of religious function. On December 2015, when the law of the cohabitation agreement was voted by the Greek parliament, he wrote on his personal blog that gay people are "abominations of society" and incited to "spit on them and blacken them". At court, he appeared unrepentant saying "If I had a gun and it was allowed by the law I would use it to get over with it" and "God detests them". The district attorneys of two superior courts appealed and Ambrosios will stand trial again, the exact date being undetermined.

Cross-disciplinary discussions were held in 2018 regarding sexuality and gender, including by the Childhood Psychiatry Society of Greece on 20 April. Events such as this one commonly contained homophobic and transphobic interventions, including by clergymen. The LGBTQI community condemned the hateful statements.

Bias-motivated violence

The Treaty of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating violence against women and domestic violence of 2011 was ratified by the Greek parliament on 5 April.

The district attorney of the Supreme Court has asked for an investigation to establish whether there was homophobic motive to the attack that led to the death of the activist Zak Kostopoulos (see more under **Human Rights Defenders**).

Data collection

On 17 May, Colour Youth published the results of a survey assessing the school climate in Greek schools. The survey gathered responses from 2000 LGBT high school students. The LGBTQI Inclusive Education Report of IGLYO ranked Greece among one of the least inclusive countries when it comes to LGBTQI issues in education.

In July, a 14-year-old died by suicide because of bullying, including because of their gender expression (article).

Family

On May 9, the Law on Adoption 4538/2018 was voted to include the right of same-sex couples to become foster parents. The opposition party expressed strong objection to this article. The right of same-sex couples to adopt is not covered by the law, even though members of the ruling party had made a commitment to include this to the LGBT community.

Freedom of expression

On 5 June, a Common Ministerial Decision of the Ministries of Digital Policy and Health was adopted, stating that broadcasting messages with social content, including regarding the rights of LGBT+ people, is free.

Human rights defenders

On 21 September, LGBT+ and HIV activist Zak Kostopoulos was trapped in a jewellery shop at Omonoia, Athens and was beaten to death by the owner, a second person and the police, while the crowd was watching the incident. The paramedics of the National Emergency Aid Service drove him handcuffed and unconscious to the hospital. Despite the fact that videos of the violence were made public, the media painted a completely misleading picture of the incident, suggesting that Zak was trying to rob the shop and that he was under the influence of drugs. Both of these accusations were proven false.

It took the district attorneys weeks to establish the biased motivation of the murder. The district attorney of the Supreme Court is now asking for an investigation to see whether there was any homophobic motive to the attack.

Legal gender recognition

On 26 June, the Magistrates Court of Thessaloniki accepted the request of a trans woman who had been recognised as a refugee in Greece, to correct her name and gender marker on her documents. Decision 444E/2018 acknowledged that not having ID documents in her gender, made the woman vulnerable, added to the stress she had already experienced, and did not allow her to be fully included in Greek society. The existing 2017 law on legal gender recognition procedures does not contain any provision for people who are not registered with a Greek registry office, and the Regional Asylum Office in Thessaloniki had originally refused her request. The decision creates legal precedent, which is guiding but not binding. The Hellenic League for Human Rights and NGO The Greek Trans Support Association supported the case. On 12 February, the Magistrates Court of Amarousion, Athens accepted the request of a non-binary person to hold two names, male and female ("Jason Antigone"). The deletion of the person's gender marker was rejected and there was an appeal against this part of the decision.

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