



GREECE

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The municipality of Athens renewed its financial support in September, to support 60 vulnerable LGBTQI+ persons and continue its cooperation with the Greek Transgender Support Association (GTSA) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Trans people continued to face discrimination in banks, with one person being requested to present the court order of her gender marker change. The law does not set out any such requirement and presenting the court documents would be a serious privacy breach.

ASYLUM

Civil society has remained concerned over asylum procedures in Lesbos for those seeking protection on grounds of SOGIESC. A report by Fenix highlighted difficulties based on 17 cases from 2021. In June, six NGOs submitted a report to the European Parliament, highlighting the issue of unlawful deportations and poor treatment. Some positive decisions were also documented this year, granting refugee status on grounds of sexual orientation.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech by political and religious leaders continued to be a serious issue. For instance, a group of Orthodox priests published a joint statement against marriage equality, calling same-sex relations a “deviation” and “perversion”. (see more under *Family*)

The lawyer of the former director of the National Theater, who is facing trial on charges of raping a 14-year-old child, went on a homophobic and transphobic rant on TV in February. GTSA filed a complaint with the Athens Bar Association, and the lawyer is currently being investigated.

In September, Intersex Greece presented the results of the first intersex-led research on hate speech against intersex people, showing that most incidents are perpetrated by the medical community.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May, two men were sentenced to the maximum

punishment of 10 years of prison for the murder of LGBT+ activist Zacharias Kostopoulos in 2018. Four police officers, who were also on trial for causing fatal bodily harm, were acquitted. A demonstration was held outside the court and public outcry followed the acquittal. LGBTQI+ civil society organisations published a joint statement. In July, one of the two men convicted earlier was released on parole. In October, the Disciplinary Body of the Hellenic Police cleared the police officers, triggering anger in the LGBTQ+ community.

The national hate crime monitoring body’s annual report, published in May, found that crimes against LGBTQI+ people continued to be very common in 2021.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, Greece banned so-called ‘conversion practices’ on minors and other ‘vulnerable persons’ that try to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. Civil society had been campaigning for the ban for years but expressed concern that adults could still undergo these practices if they consent to them. Psychologists and others who practise these so-called therapies can now face hefty finest or prison sentences, but only if they accepted money to perform them. The law does not cover cases where conversion practices are performed by priests or other religious/spiritual leaders, as well as “specialists” without official qualifications.

Intersex Greece’s report, published in May, documents abuses against intersex women in healthcare settings, including degrading medical examinations, medical staff photographing intimate body parts for the hospital’s use, examinations attended by big groups of doctors and medical students, painful exams, and derogatory comments from medical staff.

In July, the government banned non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children, becoming the fifth European country to do so and the second to prosecute doctors. A month earlier, ECRI’s country report on Greece highlighted this as a priority issue and in the same month, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child did the same. Doctors administering non-consensual medical interventions

can now be fined or sentenced to prison. Intersex children over the age of 15 will be able to consent to hormones or surgeries if that is the care path they want to take. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis apologised for the abuses carried out to date.

EDUCATION

A gender non-conforming high school student was harassed by their teacher in February for wearing a skirt, and was called “a shame on society”. The school has not taken action to date. A trans woman also faced harassment at a college this year, where staff refused to address her by her female name and verbally assaulted her.

GTSA reported that a private school’s graduate program on psychosexual therapies was running a course on ‘Gender Identity Disorders’, condoning the pathologisation of trans people.

ECRI’s recommended that Greece better address anti-LGBTI bullying and train teachers on how to prevent and respond to hostility.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Prime Minister Mitsotakis continued to support legal reform to advance LGBTQI+ rights, following the adoption of the National Strategy for Equality of LGBTQI+ people (2021-2023) last year and in the leadup to the 2023 elections.

The government is yet to set up a body in charge of addressing LGBTQ issues. Some programmes were introduced to raise awareness on LGBTQI issues, including the training programme ‘Diversity Awareness’ for those working in the private and public sectors, as mentioned by Alexis Patelis, the Chief economic adviser to the Prime Minister of Greece, during an interview for LGBTQI+ Voice Up: Project Greece. These trainings for civil servants are run by the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, but are not mandatory to take.

In March, civil society welcomed the amendments to the Charter of Ethics of the Judiciary that now includes SOGIESC in its non-discrimination clause.

FAMILY

The government has been considering introducing marriage equality, following the 2021 consultation on adopting a more progressive family law. The national campaign ‘Say Yes’ for marriage equality was launched in May, followed by a backlash from the Orthodox church.

The European Parliament’s Petitions Committee (PETI) examined the petition of a rainbow family, who are recognised as a family unit in Germany but would lose this recognition and relevant rights upon their move to Greece. The PETI affirmed that all families in the EU must be recognised across borders.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The first Pride march in Rodos was held on 25 June. Young people wearing neo-nazi symbols were reported to threaten, spit on and throw eggs at the participants while the police stood by. The first self-organised Pride march in Ioannina took place on 28 June.

HEALTH

In January, the Ministry of Health lifted the ban on men who have sex with men to donate blood. Civil society had been advocating for this step for years. Previously, men were completely barred from donating if they had same-sex relations.

The emergency measures regulation was changed in January, allowing trans people to self-declare their gender identity, irrespective of whether they have changed their legal gender. The previous regulation allowed both the police and also any citizen, to check ID documents.

Media coverage of monkeypox included misinformation and stigmatising content against LGBTQI people.

PrEP became available in September for HIV-negative persons at high risk of exposure. The details regarding provision and beneficiaries will be announced by Joint Ministerial Decision.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In November, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) signed with the LGBTQI organisations Rainbow Families, Rainbow Seniors and Intersex Greece and granted them several office spaces.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued to lobby for better legal gender recognition procedures, as LGR remains a very time-consuming, expensive, and bureaucratic judicial procedure. ECRI's report on Greece echoed these concerns.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Civil society held several training events for police officers on LGBTQI issues.

The police issued a guide on the prevention and response to hate crimes against LGBTQI people.

The new Correctional Code, adopted in October, protects trans people in prison from discrimination and allows them to be accommodated and receive uniforms in line with their gender identity. The clause for special treatment includes gender identity as one of the bases on which such special treatment might be justified.

PUBLIC OPINION

Polls this year showed that the majority of young Greeks support law reforms to advance LGBTQI+ people's rights.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Ministry of Health continued working on legal reform on medically assisted reproduction. Civil society has been advocating for the law to use gender-neutral language to avoid discrimination on grounds of SOGIESC.

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