



## **The SOGICA newsletter: Issue 6 (5 June 2018)**

**Welcome to the [SOGICA project](#) newsletter.**

Here is our update on what we've been doing since February, as well as news from some of our Project Friends.

### **Publications**

We have just published [The reform of the Common European Asylum System: Fifteen recommendations from a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Perspective](#). The European Union (EU) institutions have been negotiating a new set of proposals for reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) since 2016. SOGICA has produced a policy brief that scrutinises these proposals, and assesses the extent to which they address, ignore or aggravate the issues that currently affect asylum seekers who identify as LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex). We put forward fifteen recommendations that [you can read here](#).

All recent publications – by the SOGICA team or individual members of it – can be found on the [SOGICA website publications page](#).

### **Recent and future events**

The SOGICA project held its second annual Advisory Board meeting in May in Forlì, at the University of Bologna, where we reviewed progress over the year and planned the next stages of the project. A [summary of the meeting is on the SOGICA website](#).

The Advisory Board meeting took place the day before a conference on [Vulnerability and Asylum: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims](#) organised by Carmelo Danisi and hosted by the University of Bologna in cooperation with SOGICA. The conference brought together more than 60 academics, representatives of local, national and international refugee NGOs and organisations, and individuals who had themselves claimed asylum on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Participants, discussed the application of the concept of vulnerability to this aspect of refugee protection, and heard from speakers from across the EU – including Nuno Ferreira and Nina Held from SOGICA. Individuals who had received refugee status or whose applications were pending shared their stories and highlighted the need to look beyond the legal asylum system and consider the many other difficulties that face people rebuilding their lives in a new country after fleeing homophobia and transphobia. As one individual said: 'the migration journey can never be finished'.

Many thanks to the Department of Political and Social Science at the [University of Bologna](#) and to SOGICA's friend [Professor Marco Balboni](#) for co-organising the Conference in Forlì with us.

The following week, Carmelo Danisi gave a presentation at [La protezione internazionale basata sull'orientamento sessuale e l'identità di genere](#), organised by ASGI – Associazione Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione, Verona, 25 May 2018. Congratulations to ASGI for holding this event affirming the right to freedom of expression, after the cancellation of an [academic workshop in Verona](#) raised concerns, reflected in many countries around the world, about censorship of activities by LGBTQI+ activists, academics and others.

Please also visit the [events page](#) of the website to see what else we have been doing.

### **Call for participants**

We would very much like to hear from people in Germany, Italy and the UK who are interested in taking part in our project, to help us better understand the diversity of experiences of asylum based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We are particularly keen to get in touch with LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees who would like to take part in an interview or focus group, and also decision-makers and judges who are involved in such cases. Please get in touch if you would like to participate or know someone who would, and please help us get the message out by circulating information about our project to your contacts. We give potential interviewees full information about the research, including important issues like confidentiality, to help them make up their minds about whether they would like to take part. See our [website for info](#).

Thank you to all the people who have already accepted our invitation and shared their experiences in an interview or focus group. We will keep you all informed about the next phases of our Project, including through these newsletters.

### **New website resources**

More than 60 new items have been added to the [SOGICA database](#) since our last bulletin – including case law, statutes, guidance notes, academic papers and NGO publications. One addition to the database is a [SOGICA – Case studies comparison](#) by the SOGICA project. This table maps some of the similarities and differences in SOGI asylum law and policy across our three case study countries - Germany, Italy and the UK - and at European level.

And it is now possible to download your database searches if you want to save the data for future use. When you have carried out your search you will see an option called 'Download Search Results'. Clicking on this will create a spreadsheet of the data from your search.

A new addition to the SOGICA website is a [Country Information](#) section alongside our other Useful Links. This is a list of online databases and organisational resources providing country-specific information in relation to the situation and treatment of LGBTQI+ individuals. It is a joint initiative of the [SOGICA project](#), [Asylum Research Consultancy](#) (ARC) and [UKLGIG](#). It is intended as a resource for legal representatives and advisors to people claiming asylum on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. However, we point out that we are not responsible for the accuracy of the content included nor are we providing any form of endorsement of the sources listed

here. More importantly, none of the information here should be taken as an endorsement of the safety of LGBTQI+ people in a particular country. We hope to keep this section updated so please [email us](#) if you have any new resources to contribute to this page.

We post regularly on Twitter and Facebook, so please let us know if you have items we should be telling people about in-between newsletter issues.

### **Other news, including from our Project Friends**

African Rainbow Family is calling for everyone to sign up to their [#WeAreHuman African Rainbow Family's Manchester Declaration](#) pledging to 'change the conversation' for LGBT people seeking refuge.

The social cooperative [Anziani e non solo](#) is organising an event in collaboration with [MigraBo LGBTI](#) as part of Bologna Pride 2018 where they will present their [Epsilon research](#). The event, Pride and Prejudice: Being LGBTIQ migrants, is a seminar examining themes connected to migration for sexual orientation and/or gender identity in Italy. It will take place Friday 15 June from 10-2 at the Cassero LGBT Center in Bologna (via Don Minzoni 18). During the event, the research project Generations in progress (G.I.P.) will be presented by Cinzia Laconi (MigraBo LGBTI) and Elisabetta Ferrari (A.G.E.D.O.) regarding second generation LGBTQIA+ migrants. The event is free to attend but please email [info@anzianienonsolo.it](mailto:info@anzianienonsolo.it) to register.

Islington MIND in London has [an LGBTQ+ asylum seekers project](#), providing one-to-one crisis intervention, advice and advocacy, group therapy and more.

A specialist LGBTQ+ counselling service, a peer support group and a befriending programme (peer support) to tackle social isolation outside the project.

The Odysseus Network is holding the 18th edition of its [Summer School](#) on EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy, which will take place in Brussels from 2-13 July. Selected PhD researchers will have an opportunity to participate in a [dedicated seminar](#) and present their PhD project to a panel composed of experts from the Odysseus Academic Network. Four grants are available on the basis of academic merit/financial need. The Network has a [blog](#) on EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy, and other resources on its [website](#).

On 20 June, the London Metropolitan Archives proudly hosts the [launch of the Rainbow Pilgrims archive collection](#). The evening will also feature the launch of the **educational resource** packs for schools and FE, as well as speeches, exclusive archive & collection tours, drinks & schmooze.

SOAS is calling for donations to a five-year scheme, [the SOAS Sanctuary Scholarships](#), to improve access to higher education for displaced people. The scholarships support six undergraduate and one postgraduate student for displaced people, who cannot access student finance.

Clare Summerskill's article, [The importance of being gay: the perils and possibilities of LGBTI asylum seekers' involvement in "Rights of Passage"](#), examines how the positionality of the

playwright/interviewer and the identity of the audience can refigure the ethical terrain of verbatim theatre processes.

In April, [the UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group \(UKLGIG\) made a submission](#) to the Home Affairs Select Committee [Immigration Detention Inquiry](#). A blog the same month by Joanna Cherry QC called on the UK government to [stop detaining LGBTQI+ people fleeing persecution](#).

You can [subscribe to UKLGIG](#) or follow them on [Twitter](#) for news of their work, including forthcoming research on decision-making in SOGI asylum claims and new quarterly workshops for women and trans asylum seekers.

UNRISD is holding an open event on 19 June at the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva called [Where Do We Go From Here? Safeguarding Trans\\* People's Rights](#). It will convene experts from governments, civil society and international organizations from Northern and Southern contexts, and contextualize trans\* rights within the context of the sustainable development agenda.

### **Getting involved**

The Project's mailing list has grown to approximately 900 individuals working on or supporting LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in some capacity – mainly in Europe but also beyond. If you're reading this then you're probably already a subscriber, but please encourage anyone you know who would be interested to join our mailing list.

Information about getting involved, including how to sign up to receive future newsletters if you are not already on our mailing list, can be found on the [Get Involved](#) section of our website.

In the course of our fieldwork, we are meeting LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers rebuilding their lives and looking for work, accommodation and a supportive environment. If you know of any resources or sources of support that we can pass on to people we meet or communicate through social media, please [email us](#).

If you know of any items that should be included on our website or in our mailings, we would be very grateful if you would [send them to us](#). And please feel free to [email us](#) with any questions or suggestions.

Finally, an alert about the *online surveys* we are working on. As part of our project, we will be carrying out two online surveys to complement the information we have from our interviews and focus groups. We hope you will complete the surveys and send them to your contacts. We will be in touch with details shortly.

### **Data protection**

You will probably be aware of the new GDPR regulations that came into force last month and we would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are following the University of Sussex guidance and legal requirements in our use of personal data. We will only use the information you have given us to keep you informed about the SOGICA project and SOGI asylum developments. If you would like to remain on our email groups – and we hope you do - you don't need to do anything

and you'll continue to hear from us from time to time. However, if you would like to be removed from our email groups, please use the unsubscribe option below. Should you choose to unsubscribe, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support.

Best wishes from [Nuno](#), [Carmelo](#), [Maira](#) and [Nina](#) at SOGICA

**[SOGICA](#) – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum: A European human rights challenge (2016-2020)**

This project, funded by the European Research Council (ERC), explores the social and legal experiences of asylum-seekers across Europe claiming international protection on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI). Focusing on Germany, Italy and the UK as case studies, the project aims to determine how European asylum systems can treat asylum claims based on the claimant's SOGI more fairly.

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Email us at [info@sogica.org](mailto:info@sogica.org) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

As well as updates on how the project is progressing, we may also send you information about other refugee studies related matters, including research and events at the University of Sussex and elsewhere.

We hope you find this information useful, but if you do not wish to receive future updates, please [unsubscribe from this list here](#).