



The SOGICA newsletter: Issue 12 (12 December 2019)

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

Here is the last quarterly update for 2019 from the SOGICA project team – we hope you enjoy it. The main news item we have concerns our conference taking place at the University of Sussex on 7-8 July 2020. We are delighted to tell you that conference registration is now open ([conference details on the SOGICA website](#) and registration on the [University of Sussex website](#)) and you have until 22 January to respond to our [call for submissions for the conference](#). We hope you will consider responding to both to help us make the conference as thoughtful, engaged and inclusive as it can be. And please also consider contributing to our bursary fund. In contrast to most academic conferences, this event has no registration fee but we would very much like to express our thanks to some of the many individuals who have contributed to our research by covering the costs to enable them to attend.

SOGICA publications

[Crossing Borders between International Refugee Law and International Human Rights Law in the European context: Can Human Rights Enhance Protection against Persecution based on Sexual Orientation \(and beyond\)?](#) by Carmelo Danisi appears in the latest issue of the [Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights](#), Vol. 37, Issue 4, December 2019, as part of a Special Issue on Gendered Borders edited by Eva Brems, Ellen Desmet and Lourdes Peroni.

[Policy Briefing: Queer Asylum in Germany: Better visibility and access to legal and social support needed for LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum in Germany](#) by Nina Held and Mengia Tschalaer was published by the University of Bristol, October 2019

The SOGICA Project contributed [written evidence](#) to a UK parliamentary inquiry earlier this year. Our evidence was cited in [Brexit: refugee protection and asylum policy](#), 48th Report of Session 2017–19, House of Lords, European Union Committee, UK Parliament, 11 October 2019.

[LGBTQI+ asylum claimants face extreme social isolation in Germany](#) by Mengia Tschalaer and Nina Held was published on Open Democracy on 26 November.

All publications by the SOGICA team and individual members can be found on the [SOGICA website publications page](#).

Future events

On 17 December 2019, Carmelo will be giving a lecture titled ‘Vulnerability as a “revolutionary” concept in international and European human rights law for the protection of migrants and refugees?’ at the University of Bonn. The lecture is part of a series on [Arriving, Returning, or Modern Nomadism](#).

Nuno has been invited to speak at the [Socio-Legal Studies Association \(SLSA\) Annual Conference, hosted by the Portsmouth Law School](#), as part of a panel of speakers for the plenary session on 1 April 2020, on the theme of ‘gender equality and queer rights in an age of populism’.

Nuno has also been invited to speak at the public seminar series of the [Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford](#), UK, where he will present on 'An intersectional approach to policy and decision making on SOGI asylum claims in Europe' on 26 February 2020.

Recent events

On 21 November, Carmelo and Moira gave a joint presentation on 'SOGI asylum in Italy and the UK: worlds apart?' and shared highlights from the forthcoming SOGICA project videos at 'Sussex meets GenSeM. Frontiers in research'. This was the first workshop of the recently established Gender and Sexuality in Migration Research IMISCOE Standing Committee.

Nuno presented at the [Rete Lenford conference](#) in Trieste, Italy, on 15-16 November 2019, on 'As if in a labyrinth: SOGI asylum requests in Italy', following the kind invitation to our project to present.

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

New website resources

We have added 59 new items to the [SOGICA database](#) since the last newsletter, including academic research, NGO reports, case law and book reviews.

We continue to highlight individual narratives of LGBTQI+ people claiming asylum on the [Life Stories](#) section of our home page. We hope this helps us remain aware of the human cost of flawed asylum processes for the people involved. If you are seeking international protection on sexual orientation or gender identity grounds, or have done so, and would like to be involved in SOGICA, feel free to send us a story to be considered for publication on our website.

Other news, including from our Project Friends

Interview with UN SOGI expert

An [interview with Victor Madrigal-Borloz](#), the UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity since 2018, provides his insights into how to improve LGBTIQ+ rights globally, and his dream 'to see a world free of criminalization of same-sex relations by 2030'.

Call for donations: MIT - Movimento Identità Trans Associazione ONLUS

In Italy, the not-for-profit organisation MIT, set up to promote the rights of trans people, is doing important health and welfare work supporting trans people seeking asylum. To ensure the continuity of these services to trans people, including those with a refugee background, MIT needs your help! Please, support MIT by giving donations through this [PayPal link](#) or via a bank transfer (IBAN IT 96 X 03069 09606 100000062737).

New book: 'Refúgio por motivos de orientação sexual: um estudo antropológico na cidade de São Paulo'

[Refuge for reasons of sexual orientation: an anthropological study in the city of São Paulo](#) by Vítor Lopes Andrade, was published in October 2019. The book is an ethnography that will be of great interest to students, researchers, activists and professionals in the areas of International Migration and Refuge, Gender and Sexuality, Anthropology, Public Policy and Human Rights. Vitor is doing a PhD at the University of Sussex and has worked as research assistant on SOGICA providing invaluable support for the project.

Queer Spaces. The sexual asylum story

[Queer Spaces. The sexual asylum story](#) by Dr Mengia Tschalaer appeared in the multidisciplinary journal *Diaphanes* in [English](#) and [German](#) in 2019.

UKLGIG paper on HJ (Iran) and HT (Cameroon)

In December 2019, UKLGIG [published a paper](#) about the use of the UK Supreme Court's judgment in HJ (Iran) and HT (Cameroon) v SSHD [2010] UKSC 32 in Country Policy Information Notes on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression.

Interview: representing trans asylum cases

In [an interview](#) published by Micro Rainbow, Ana Gonzalez, Partner at Wilsons Solicitors LLP shares her experience in representing trans asylum cases and the challenges they may involve.

Report on the Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile conference

The first conference in Australia solely dedicated to the issues of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement took place in November 2019, and was attended by 150 participants (academics, service providers, policy makers, government officials and LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees). Full scholarships were provided to 27 refugees to be at centre of the event. This was a historic event. It was organised by queer refugee women and centred the voices of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers. The [full report of the conference](#) is now available.

The Canberra Statement: call for signatories

Organisations and individuals are being asked to sign [the Canberra Statement](#) on access to safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees. The Canberra Statement was produced as an outcome of the Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile, the first Australian conference on LGBTIQ+ asylum that was held in November 2019 (item above). It details the ongoing human rights abuses and discrimination that LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing not only in their countries of origin but en route to safety and in host countries. The statement sets out reforms needed to ensure access to safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees. It is a policy document for organisations and individuals to use in their work. Current signatories can be [seen here](#).

COC Netherlands survey

COC Netherlands is asking people to [complete a survey](#) of LGBTI Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Europe. The survey is for self-organized organization or group working with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees and individual activists who work with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. It is part of a needs assessment that will be used in order to develop a training program for self-organized groups and individuals who work with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. The training program will help facilitate networking and knowledge sharing between organizations and activists to help improve the situation of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in Europe. It contains 25 questions and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Fund supporting LGBTI migrants in detention

Micro Rainbow, an organisation that supports LGBTIQ+ people in the UK, including in accessing employment, training, financial services and housing, is creating a dedicated fund to support LGBTI migrants in detention and is [calling for allies](#). The fund will be used to: reserve some places in Micro Rainbow's safe housing scheme to provide an address for LGBTI migrants in detention so that they can obtain bail; reduce violence and discrimination towards LGBTI people in detention centres; increase the chances for LGBTI migrants to win their immigration claims.

Letter to Il Corriere della Sera

Following widespread concerns about the biased nature of a report about sexual-orientation based asylum claims in Italy's *Il Corriere della Sera*, SOGICA joined other stakeholders in [writing to the paper's editor](#) to contest the report's findings and urge improvements to the paper's ethical standards in the area of asylum.

Support for Kenyan LGBTIQ business project

ORAM is supporting a new soap-making business run by LGBTIQ refugees in a Kenyan refugee camp and [asking for help](#). LGBTIQ refugees will produce and sell soap and shampoo at affordable prices, yet still make a profit and build a sustainable business. Through this program, LGBTIQ refugees will provide a service to the local community in the camp, build connections with the wider community and develop commercial skills they can use in the future.

Conference: Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020

Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020 will take place at the Goethe University in Frankfurt on 29 April 2020. The conference is committed to putting the lived experience of queer asylum at the centre of the conversation. It will bring together LGBTIQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum, key academic scholars, activists practitioners, politicians, policy and civil society stakeholders to discuss and develop the relevance of the experiences of LGBTIQ* asylum practices in Germany for the EU. Interactive panel discussions, workshop roundtables, keynotes, and performances will guide the conference's programming. Contact mengia.tschalaer@bristol.ac.uk and visit [her website](#) (where the conference details will be posted in the New Year).

GenIUS - Open Call for Contributions

The Editorial Board of the Italian Review on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity – [GenIUS](#) is pleased to invite submissions in English for its seventh and eighth volumes (Issues to be published in 2020 and 2021). The Board welcomes long articles, short articles and case notes that engage with current themes in relation to SOGI at national, European and international level. All submissions are subject to double-blind peer review and, if accepted, will be published open access. For submissions, discussing a proposal and/or receiving further info, please contact the Editorial Board at info@geniusreview.eu.

Cartoon: Being Queer and Refugee

Finally, a striking new cartoon '[Being Queer and Refugee](#)' produced by the Queer Sisterhood Project in Australia in 2019 is online and contains personal accounts set to images. There is also [a brochure](#) that expands on the cartoon and provides 30 tips for service providers on inclusive service provision.

Getting involved

Please encourage colleagues and contacts who might be interested to [subscribe to our growing mailing list](#) – it's free and we send updates to subscribers every three months approximately.

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.

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, including resources that might be useful for LGBTIQ+ refugees and people seeking asylum. 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. And please feel free to [email us](#) with any questions or suggestions.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported our work in recent months, in particular Isabel Soloaga and Vitor Lopes Andrade.

The next newsletter will be in March 2020. In the meantime, we wish you a relaxing holiday. Please feel free to [email us](#) with any questions or suggestions.

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