



## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum: A European human rights challenge – SOGICA

### The SOGICA conference – 7-9 July 2020

#### Biographies

**Sebastian Aguirre** is a queer human rights activist and theatre practitioner from the Chilean refugee diaspora. He trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. As well as running AFHR for ice&fire, he is a long-standing member of Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants.

**Vítor Lopes Andrade** is a doctoral researcher in Social Anthropology in the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex. His research – funded by the federal government of Brazil (CAPES) – is about people seeking asylum on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the UK and South Africa. His Master's thesis was awarded a prize by the UN Refugee Agency in 2017 and he is author of the book 'Refuge for reasons of sexual orientation: an anthropological study in the city of São Paulo' (Editora da UFSC, 2019), published in Portuguese. E-mail: [V.Andrade@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:V.Andrade@sussex.ac.uk)

**Bojana Asanovic** is the Chair of the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) and the author of Still Falling Short, UKLGIG's 2018 research report. Bojana is also a barrister at Lamb Building.

**Maria Avgeri** is currently completing her PhD in Law in Maynooth University working on transgender asylum claims assessment in the EU. She is a holder of the John and Pat Hume Doctoral Award. She has worked as a case worker at the Greek Asylum Service and as a member of the Appels' Committees.

**Prof Christel Balthes-Löhr** has a professorship at the University of Luxembourg; fields of research: gender, migration, plurality, continuum. Former member for Luxembourg of the EU-Helsinki Group on Women and Science, in the Experts Group of EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality); coordinator of the EMN-NCP-LU (2008-2015; European Migration Network-National Contact Point-Luxembourg).

**Masha Beketova** MA studied Gender Studies/Slavonic Studies in Berlin and Moscow. Masha is currently working on their PhD thesis in Slavonic Cultural Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. Their research focuses on queer migration and asylum, migrant literature, queer Ukrainian and Russian literature and intersectionality. Masha wrote their M.A. thesis about/for LGBTIQ refugees from the post-Soviet space in Germany. Masha worked as a psycho-social systemic counsellor and group facilitator with LGBTIQ refugees and migrants at an outreach project for queers (Lesbenberatung e.V.). They have also conducted multiple empowerment workshops for LGBTIQ refugees and awareness workshops for helping professionals. E-mail: [queerpostsoviet@gmail.com](mailto:queerpostsoviet@gmail.com).

**Avv. Mara Biancamano** has been a lawyer since 2004. Specialized in family law, juvenile law, immigration law, human and civil rights -LGBTQI rights. Legal consultant for Migra-Antinoo, help desk for LGBTIQ asylum seekers of Arcigay Napoli and consultant and legal operator in immigration law and expert in procedures for the recognition of international protection at ARCI Mediterraneo Impresa Sociale.

**Tina-Maleen Bölle** is a legal and social work scholar from Berlin holding a MA in Social Work as a Human Rights Profession from the Alice Salomon University. She is a legal volunteer at the Refugee Law Clinic Berlin since 2015 and joined the Queer RLC in 2019.

**Allan Briddock** is a barrister specialising in immigration and asylum law with a particular interest in LGBTQI+ cases. Briddock has represented many dozens of LGBT refugees at all levels of court. They are a former trustee of UKLGIG and the author of 'The Recognition of Refugees Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the UK: an Overview of Law and Procedure' published by the Birkbeck Law Review. (<http://www.bbklr.org/4-1-6.html>). They are a co-founder of the trans rights group, TELI (Trans Equality Legal Initiative).

**Dany Carnassale** has a background in anthropology and a PhD in social sciences. He is currently postdoctoral research fellow at University Ca' Foscari of Venice (Italy), where he is collaborating to a research project on vulnerabilities of protection seekers. His previous research ranges from transnational construction of genders and sexualities to SOGIESC-based asylum claims through qualitative research methods.

**Dr S. Chelvan**, Barrister PhD Law, No5 Barristers' Chambers (London). He gained a First in Politics and Law (Southampton, 1998); called to the Bar (Inner Temple (Major scholar), 1999); Visiting Research Fellow, Centre for International Human Rights Law (Northwestern University, 2000); Master's degree in Law (Harvard Law School, 2001 (Kennedy Memorial Trust scholar)); and PhD in (Queer Refugee) Law (King's College London, 2019). Chelvan is currently pursuing a course at Said Business School, University of Oxford (Executive Leadership programme). He has been profiled as the UK's leading lawyer in LGBT+ asylum law since 2006, with the 2020 edition of Legal 500 recording 'His expertise in sexual identity-related asylum claims is world-renowned' (Band 1, Immigration, London Bar). Chelvan was appointed to the Government Equalities Office's LGBT Advisory Panel in March 2019 based on his expertise in international human rights and LGBT asylum cases. In October 2019, he was appointed the Independent Reviewer on UK Home Office SOGIE COI by the Independent Advisory Group in Country Information (400 plus page review on 31 COI reports with recommendations, due to be published late-2020).

**Florent Chossière** is third-year PhD student in geography at Université Gustave Eiffel and fellow at the French Collaborative Institute on Migration. His research deals with socio-spatial trajectories of people applying for SOGI asylum in France. It aims at analysing the various power relationships that shape queer migrants' life in Paris area on transnational, national and urban scales. He's also a member of ARDHIS, the main French support association for queer asylum seekers and refugees. E-mail: [florent.chossiere@u-pem.fr](mailto:florent.chossiere@u-pem.fr)

**Valentina Coletta**: Born in 1985, she has an academic background in dynamic and clinic psychology. She is a transfeminist activist, currently working for Mit(Trans Identity Movement) in Bologna, where she leads the reception area. Since 2008 she has been engaged in anti-racist movements and in movements for the rights of migrants and refugees.

**Elizabeth Cucco** holds a MA in International Cooperation and Protection of Human Rights with honours from the University of Bologna. She worked for numerous associations dedicated to the promotion and protection of gender equality and equal opportunities i.e. Associazione Orlando, Casa delle Donne, Trama di Terre and Caracò. Currently, she performs as social educator at Casa San Valentino for unaccompanied minors in Merano.

**Sofia D'Arcio** is a final year human rights student at University College Maastricht. Her research interests lie with women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights and refugee law. She is a former Amnesty International student group president and participant in the 2019 Leiden University Summer School on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in International Law.

**Fernando Damazio dos Santos:** Swedish Institute Scholar–Swedish Institute Scholarship for Global Professional, MSc candidate in International Development and Management –LUMID, Lund University, Sweden. Participant of the International Project Not Alone in Europe –Malmö.

**Carmelo Danisi, PhD:** Member of the SOGICA Project's Research Team, for which he has analysed the developments around SOGI asylum in international human rights law and in the Italian context. Before joining SOGICA at the University of Sussex, Carmelo has been employed at the University of Bologna where he teaches public international law. He has been an Endeavour Research Fellow at the Australian National University and he is author of a number of publications in the field of human rights law, especially in relation to non-discrimination and migration in the framework of the ECHR and the EU. In the context of the SOGICA research, Carmelo has developed a specific interest in jurisdictional issues and the extraterritorial protection of human rights, in the relation between refugee law and human rights as well as in asylum procedures under EU and certain domestic legislation across Europe. Email: [c.danisi@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:c.danisi@sussex.ac.uk)

**Letícia Vieira da Silva** is part of Rede Lesbi Brasil de Pesquisadoras e Ativistas Lésbicas e Bissexuais (Network of Lesbian and Bisexual Women Researchers). She has a Bachelor Degree on International Relations and is currently taking a MSc Public Policy on Human Rights focusing on juridical recognition of lesbians refuge demands. She works as a civil society organization consultant.

**Letizia De-Coll:** Psychologist graduated in Clinical Psychology with the thesis "Supporting the wellbeing of the gender variant child starting from the family". She deals with LGBTQI+ migration first in Spain where collaborated with ACATHI (Catalan Association for LGBTQI+ immigrants and refugees), and then in Italy collaborating with Il Grande Colibrì. Her last publication is "Health, Well-being and Social Inclusion of Transgender Immigrants and Asylum Seekers".

**Giorgio dell'Amico** has been a professional educator since 1992 and works for the social cooperative Caleidos in projects relating to immigration and asylum. Currently, for the cooperative, he coordinates one of the host projects welcoming approximately 1,200 people to the province. Since 2007 he has been the national representative for the Italian LGBTI NGO Arcigay on issues relating to immigration and asylum. He has participated in various national and European projects and is also involved in training for professionals working with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

**Paul Dillane:** The David Davies of Llandinam Fellow in International Relations, LSE, and Senior Advisor at Rainbow Railroad. In 2019, he was appointed an expert member of the UK government's LGBT Advisory Panel. His previous roles include Refugee Researcher/Adviser at Amnesty International UK and Executive Director of UKLIG.

**Renee Dixon** is a PhD candidate at the Australian National University. In their PhD Renee is building the first in the world queer digital archive of oral histories about LGBTIQ forced displacement. Renee's research interests are digital humanities, queer theory, feminist theory, and the intersection of gender, sexuality and refugee status. Renee is a co-founder of the Queer Sisterhood Project and a co-convenor of the first Australian conference on LGBTIQ+ asylum Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile.

**Tina Dixon** is a feminist academic and a policy professional, who has worked in the areas of LGBTIQ, refugee and women's rights both in Australia and overseas. Tina is a PhD candidate at the Australian National University researching lived experiences of LGBTIQ asylum-seeking and refugee women in Australia. Tina is a co-founder of the Queer Sisterhood Project and a co-convenor of the first Australian conference on LGBTIQ+ asylum Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile.

**Dr Moira Dustin** is a Research Fellow in the School of Law, Politics and Sociology at the University of Sussex, where she is the UK lead on the SOGICA project. She has a PhD in Gender Studies from the LSE and has worked for equality, human rights and refugee NGOs in the UK. Email: [m.dustin@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:m.dustin@sussex.ac.uk)

**Alana Eissa** is a trans refugee from Malaysia and was one of the first people to access Micro Rainbow's housing programme in 2017. After gaining refugee status, she continued her education at Birkbeck College and worked for Legal & General, while also becoming a board member for Micro Rainbow. Alana is passionate about trans healthcare.

**Haris Eloy** is the National Project Coordinator of "New Comers Youth and International Coordinator of "Not Alone in Europe" at RFSL Ungdom. Faculty of Architecture Skopje, SS. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. My own story starts with an escape. I don't "understand" the target group. I am the target group. I came to Sweden as a LGBTQ+ refugee and have experienced the asylum system from within. As an asylum seeker, as rejected, as a work visa applicant. As a migrant worker. I have those experiences within me -but I don't let them define who I am, and that is something that is also crucial in my work as a youth worker. I have been a volunteer and intern at RFSL Newcomers 2014-2016, working with mainly adults. At the end of 2016 I was employed as a youth worker and coordinator at Newcomers Youth where I use my experiences and creative skills in meeting the young refugees that participate in Newcomers Youths centre for young LGBTQ refugees.

**Dr Jade Cemre Erciyes** is a sociologist and associate professor working at the Department of Social Work, Istanbul Aydin University, and the coordinator of the Cins Monologes, an independent research and queer drama project collecting more recent and local stories of gendered identity formation. She has a PhD from University of Sussex, Migration Studies. She teaches gender and social work courses at Istanbul Aydin University, Turkey.

**Elceta Marsha Ennis** is a 38-year-old Jamaican Lesbian mother who has been in Germany for 3 years and 6 months, because of her own experiences as a SOGI claimant is interested in what we can do to improve the life of all SOGI claimants in Europe.

**Luca Falzea** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at University of Turin, with a thesis on masculinity and homosexuality in Islam. His research interests varies from LGBT and gender studies to masculinity studies and welfare systems studies. In 2018 he collaborated with the project Infact Changing Families, Changing Institutions? and carried out a research about social services and their relationship to new types of families in the city of Turin.

**Dr Carmela Ferrara** is a volunteer at Migra-Antinoo, LGBTIQ immigrants help desk. Graduated in International Relations with a dissertation on the LGBTIQ Strategic Plan of the Government of Malta, with a chapter on the situation of LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees on the Maltese archipelago. Author of the book "Orientamento Sessuale e Identità di Genere Immigrazione e Accoglienza", published by Pandemos, ISBN: 978-88-87744-85-9.

**Nuno Ferreira** is a Professor of Law at the University of Sussex. Previously, he was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Liverpool and Lecturer at the University of Manchester. He has also been a Visiting Professor at Wuhan University and the University of Lisbon. Nuno is a Horizon 2020 ERC Starting Grant recipient, leading the project [SOGICA](#) (2016-2020), and co-director of the [Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research](#). Email: [n.ferreira@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:n.ferreira@sussex.ac.uk)

**Ernesto Fiocchetto** is an Argentinian sociologist whose interests revolve around the intersection between migration, religion, sexualities, and gender identities. He earned his Master's degree in Religious Studies at Florida International University (USA), where he is enrolled in the Ph.D. in International Relations program.

**Claire Fletcher:** Their PhD research (UCL) focuses on queer asylum seekers experiences with religion. They also work as a LGBTQ+ Asylum Seeker Support Worker at UKLGIG where they ensure our clients

have legal representation experienced in SOGI claims, provide emotional support, facilitate support groups and help people access safe housing and health services.

**Dr Nick Gill** is the ASYFAIR Principle Investigator, Project Leader. Political geographer, teaching Human Geography at the University of Exeter. He conducted ground-breaking research on justice and injustice in asylum adjudication in the UK, which impacted directly on the UK's migration and asylum policy and legal procedure. His previous research and methodology forms the foundation of ASYFAIR.

**Lara Goodwin** is the LGBTI Women's Outreach Officer at Micro Rainbow. Lara meets with LGBTI asylum seekers on a regular basis to facilitate access to Micro Rainbow housing and socio-economic inclusion programmes and to support them to access other services they need. Lara has also consulted for a number of international NGOs including being a researcher for ILGA World's updated 'Trans Legal Mapping Report'.

**Aino Gröndahl** has worked as RFSL's asylum lawyer, and as a public counsel specialized in LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers for about 8 years. In 2012 they wrote a thesis about the Swedish asylum authorities' assessment of sexual orientation as grounds for refugee status (at the time, gender identity was completely missed and misinterpreted as homosexual orientation, which was one of the main conclusions). For 2 years now, they have been working on a research report, which RFSL will be published in August (we postponed it due to the Corona-crisis). It examines the criteria in Swedish case law, in the credibility assessments of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as grounds for asylum. It is based on over 1500 individual asylum decisions from the Migration Agency and Migration Court rulings.

**Martin Guerin Kanouo Siegning** is currently an Engineering MSc Student at the University of Wolverhampton. He is an activist and leading member of Out & Proud African LGBTI, a London-based LGBTI asylum support group. Martin is a passionate campaigner and supporter of LGBTI and refugee rights. His commitment is informed by his life experiences as a refugee from Cameroon which he now uses to support other individuals fleeing persecution on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Paschal Gumadwong Bagonza** is a PhD student at De Montfort University, Leicester, in the Centre for LGBTQ Research. His research explores the lived and embodied experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. I have worked as a Visiting Lecturer, and Associate Lecturer on the BA/MA Social Work programme.

**Ilksen Gürsoy** is a transgender social worker who has worked at the Women Solidarity Foundation (KADAV) for the past 3 years dealing with primarily LGBTIQ+ applicants. Xe is a queer vegan transfeminist activist working as a musician in a queer folk music ensemble in Istanbul.

**Andrea Gustafsson Grønningsæter**: Her research 'Establishing a sexual identity' found that immigration officials in Norway expect LGB people to have undergone a process of self-actualisation regarding their sexual orientation, and similarly to the above-mentioned reports, that LGB people should be able to articulate detailed reflections on their sexual orientation.

**Stephina Gwetsa** is a gay refugee living in Coventry where she works as keyworker. She was given refugee here as a sexual and domestic violence survivor as well as fleeing from LGBT persecution, as being found out as gay in her country is punishable by both mob justice and imprisonment.

**Dr Nina Held** is a Research and Teaching Fellow at the University of Sussex. She is responsible for the German case study of the SOGICA project. Her research interests include intersections of sexuality, 'race' and space (as explored in her PhD thesis), human rights and LGBTIQ+ asylum. Before joining Sussex, Nina

worked in different voluntary organisations such as Trafford Rape Crisis, Freedom from Torture North West and the Lesbian Immigration Support Group in Manchester. Email: [n.held@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:n.held@sussex.ac.uk)

**Nicholas Hersh:** Immigration and refugee lawyer at Community Legal Services of Ottawa and Capital Rainbow Refuge. In 2017, he delivered trainings with members of all four divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada on Guideline 9: Proceedings before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression. E-mail: [hershni@lao.on.ca](mailto:hershni@lao.on.ca)

**Dr Nicole Hoellerer** is an anthropologist, with extensive research experience in migration and refugee studies. Her ethnography on refugee resettlement in the UK laid bare the practice-policy gap in the UK's migration service provision. She is the lead researcher for the ASYFAIR research project and is responsible for research conducted in Germany and Austria.

**Stephanie Huber** is ARC Foundation Director, and a COI specialist with over 12 years' experience of conducting COI research for use in the refugee status determination process, and over nine years' experience of undertaking COI reviews for various national and international bodies. E-mail: [steph@asylumresearchcentre.org](mailto:steph@asylumresearchcentre.org)

**Katrin Hugendubel** is in charge of the overall coordination of the policy and advocacy work of ILGA-Europe. Katrin's task include managing the policy team and as well as leading the advocacy work of ILGA-Europe towards the EU institutions, EU Presidencies, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN. Katrin holds a master degree in political science and English language and literature from the University of Freiburg, Germany. Since 2002, Katrin worked as political advisor and assistant to a member of the European Parliament, as well as with several NGO networks on EU level and in Uganda.

**Sabine Jansen** was the main researcher of the Fleeing Homophobia report, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ebba7852.pdf> and she was involved in the gay asylum cases XYZ and ABC at the CJEU. In 2018 her report Pride or Shame? was published, a research on LGBTI asylum practice in the Netherlands, on behalf of COC. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5c6eb3344.html>

**Amandine Le Bellec** is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Trento and Sciences Po Paris. Her thesis analyzes how the politicization of gender and migration has contributed to the reorientation of the EU Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to include LGBT+ identities as an asylum category.

**Mag Mach** (they/them) is a trans nonbinary writer and consultant from Austria, who has been involved in intersectional queer activism in Tunisia, the UK and Austria. Their MA research at the University of Sussex was a critical analysis of queer asylum in the current political context of rising right-wing extremism in Austria and conducted with the support of the local organisation Queer Base. In continuation of this, they collaborated on 2 more research articles with Queer Base.

**Victor Madrigal-Borloz** is the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In this capacity, he assesses the implementation of international human rights law, raises awareness, engages in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, and provides advisory services, technical assistance, capacity-building to help address violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity. Victor Madrigal-Borloz, a Costa Rican jurist, is a senior visiting researcher at the Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program. Until June 2019 he served as the Secretary-General of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT); from 2013 to 2016 he was a member of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture; and prior to this he acted as Head of Litigation and Head of the Registry at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and worked at the Danish Institute for Human Rights and at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Mr Madrigal-Borloz is a founding member of the Costa

Rican Association of International Law (ACODI), a founding Board member of the International Justice Resource Centre (IJRC), and a founding Board member of Synergia-IDH. E-mail: [ie-sogi@ohchr.org](mailto:ie-sogi@ohchr.org)

**Irene Manganini:** Currently working with IOM Bangladesh and writing her PhD proposal on queer theories applied to international migration law, winner of the Prix Ladislas Mysyrowicz, awarded “to a high-quality PhD thesis or Master dissertation dedicated to the issue of refugees *stricto sensu*” of the Graduate Institute of Geneva. E-mail: [irene.manganini@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:irene.manganini@graduateinstitute.ch)

**Mazen Masoud** is an intersex, trans and queer person and refugee living for four years in Italy, and a trans-feminist activist. They work as social operator in MIT (Movimento Identità Trans) Association to help other LGBTIAQ refugees and asylum seekers.

**Thomas McGee** is a PhD Student at the Peter McMullin Centre on Statelessness at Melbourne Law School (Australia). Part of his current research focuses on the lived experiences of stateless LGBTIQ+ persons within different world jurisdictions. Thomas has worked for a decade within the humanitarian/protection sectors and published widely on statelessness.

**Dr Siobhan McGuirk** is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Anthropology at Goldsmiths, University of London, working on the GlobalGRACE project. My research focuses on gender & sexuality, migration, law & society, and social justice activism. I am an Editor at Red Pepper magazine and Executive Producer of the AnthroBites podcast series.

**Maria Mpasdeki** is a lawyer currently working for NGO SolidarityNow in Greece. She provides legal assistance to vulnerable persons, among whom a significant number of LGBTQI asylum seekers. The past year she also collaborated with IRC's Refugee.Info web platform team as a legal counsellor. E-mail: [mmpasdeki@solidaritynow.org](mailto:mmpasdeki@solidaritynow.org)

**Prof Vitit Muntarbhorn** M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.); Lic. Spec. en droit europ. (Brussels); Barrister of the Middle Temple (London) is Emeritus Professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. His CV includes the following achievements and appointments: Independent Expert on UNESCO Advisory Board for Global Education Monitoring, representing the Asia-Pacific Region (2018-present); Member of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Recommendations and Conventions, International Labour Organisation (2009-present); UN Independent Expert on the Protection against Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (2016-17); Commissioner of the (UN) Commission of Inquiry on Syria (2012-2016); Member of the Advisory Board, (UN) Human Security Fund (2011-2016); Chairperson of the (UN) Commission of Inquiry on the Ivory Coast (2011); Former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UN Human Rights Council (2004-2010); Former Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee of UN Special Procedures (2006-07); Former member of Advisory Board, UN Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation on Human Rights, Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, UN Human Rights Commission (1990-94); Recipient of the 2004 UNESCO Human Rights Education Prize.

**Edward Mutebi** is an LGBTIQ\* Human Rights Activist, He is the founder of an LGBTIQ\* Human rights organisation “LET’S WALK UGANDA. Based in Uganda (East Africa.). His Commitment and love for the safety of others put him in danger Himself and prompted him to escape from Uganda, seeking asylum in Germany. During his time in Uganda, Edward worked selflessly to fight for equality of the LGBTIQ\* persons in his country. Among his achievements was the start of an organisation which became a safe housing project, saving many LGBTIQ\* homeless youths.

**Barry O’Leary** is an immigration and nationality lawyer at Wesley Gryk Solicitors LLP in London and he has represented asylum seekers with SOGI claims since the early 2000’s. He is a member of the SOGICA

project Advisory Board, a director of Micro Rainbow, and a volunteer for the UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group.

**Ornella Odituro** studied the Italian asylum system and worked with refugees from the Western Balkan route in Trieste and has a strong commitment in defending human rights since she has started her career in foreign affairs and international cooperation as a humanitarian worker in Cameroon, Brasil and Palestine.

**Rafaela Pascoal:** Fellow Researcher of the Project Provide of the University of Palermo. She has written articles on the subject of migration, violence, and human trafficking with Springer, Peter Lang and FrancoAngeli. She will soon publish her monograph Motherhood in the Context of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation -A Case Study on Nigerian and Romanian Women in Italy with Springer.

**Gerardo Petrillo:** born in 1992 in Italy. Graduated in “Languages and Intercultural Communication in the Euromediterranean Area” in 2019, thesis on LGBTIQ asylum seekers issues in EU, a paper in Italian published by February 2020. Currently attending a post-grad master’s in “International Cooperation”.

**Alexandra Politidis Palm** is a lawyer and migration policy expert at RFSL Ungdom. Her work consists of supporting LGBTQI asylum seekers; conduct research and doing advocacy work. She has previous experience from the Swedish Migration Agency as an executive officer and educator in human rights and equality issues.

**Lucas Ramón Mendos:** lawyer, lecturer and researcher, specialized in international human rights law and sexual and gender diversity issues. He earned his LL.B. degree with a focus on international law from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) and his LL.M. degree on sexuality and the law from the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). He has worked as an attorney with the LGBTI Rapporteurship of Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (OAS) and the Williams Institute International Program. He has served as a defence attorney for asylum seekers with the Office of the Defender General (Argentina) and as an adviser on SOGIESC issues to the Human Rights Secretariat of the Province of Buenos Aires.

**Gabriele Roth:** degree in Middle Eastern Studies and has been a COI researcher for four years at ACCORD (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation), a department within the Austrian Red Cross that provides COI to all parties involved in asylum procedures.

**Katja Schröder** works for the organisation Rubicon in Cologne, Germany. In addition she is board member of Rainbow Refugees Cologne -Support Group. Katja developed a training program for people working in refugee camps or with refugees. Recently she started a new training program in order to sensitize translators for SOGI. She gives training in different settings. E-mail: [katja.schroeder@rubicon-koeln.de](mailto:katja.schroeder@rubicon-koeln.de)

**Chiara Scissa** holds an MA in International Cooperation and Protection of Human Rights with honours from the University of Bologna. She has collaborated with the Global Campus of Human Rights and the University of Milano-Bicocca in the development of migration- and refugee-related projects. Currently, she is Project Assistant at the University of Bologna as well as Human Rights and Migrant Protection Focal Point at UN Major Group for Children and Youth

**Inka Söderström** is a second-year PhD candidate in social work at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Their main research interests centre on anti-oppressive and critical social work, queer studies, and migration research as well as queer and decolonial research methodologies.

**Isabel Sologa** is a Master’s student at the University of Sussex, studying Migration and Global Development. Her dissertation research examines how SOGI asylees settle in the UK and how governmental policies shape their decisions to move. Prior to coming to the University of Sussex, she



worked in immigration law in the United States. She completed her BA at the University of California, Berkley and is originally from just outside of San Francisco.

**Dr Petra Sußner** is a post-doc researcher at Humboldt University Berlin. She finished her PhD on reception conditions, refugee status and the LGBTIQ spectrum (to be published 2020). Beyond that she spent research visits at the Amsterdam Center for Migration and Refugee Law and used to practice as a lawyer in Vienna. E-mail: [petra.sussner@rewi.hu-berlin.de](mailto:petra.sussner@rewi.hu-berlin.de)

**Dr Mengia Tschalaer** is Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies at University of Bristol, UK. She taught courses related to gender and sexuality law, identity and culture, and intersectionality at City University of New York and Columbia University. She was also a visiting scholar at the Centre for Gender and Sexuality Law at Columbia University and has published extensively on sociolegal resistance, human rights, and gender and Islam in India and on queer asylum politics and practice in Germany. She is currently leading an EU-funded project that examines the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people with Muslim background within Germany's asylum system.

**Dr Zafeiris Tsiftzis** is currently working for Thompsons Solicitors (United Kingdom) as a legal executive. He has a solid background in human rights law, international law and humanitarian protection. He has a high interest in SOGI-related human rights, refugees right and other contemporary challenges in international human rights law and practice'

**Ayşe Uzun** graduated in 2012 from Istanbul University with a B.A. and completed an LL.M at HKU. Currently in the thesis semester at Istanbul Bilgi University Cultural Studies M.A. and a lawyer in the NGO supporting LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers in İstanbul.

**Marlen Vahle** is working for the Kölner Flüchtlingsrat (Cologne Refugee Council). She is also board member of Rainbow Refugees Cologne –Support Group. Marlen is legal advisor for asylum procedure and the right of residence. She is giving trainings for people working in the legal advice sector concerning SOGI and asylum procedure. E-mail: [vahle@koelner-fluechtlingsrat.de](mailto:vahle@koelner-fluechtlingsrat.de)

**Adriana van den Berg** is COI Information Officer with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). She has a PhD in social anthropology and history, with a specialisation in gender and Africa. Previously, she has been working with the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service as a COI officer, and as a consultant in international development.

**Willemijn van Kempem** is a queer woman of trans origin and more, schooled and active as a physical therapist and sculptor, involved in emancipation of trans identities since 2011, with activities ranging from grass roots self-help support to organisation and advocacy, and support for trans asylum seekers leading to the current research.

**Denise Venturi:** Ph.D. researcher at the KU Leuven Faculty of Law. Her research investigates whether the concept of vulnerability can contribute to fairer and more harmonised RSD procedures in relation to SOGI asylum claims. Currently, she works as Reporting Associate with UNHCR in Italy. Previously, she has worked on strategic litigation in asylum matters with ECRE and UNHCR.

**Carolina Vesce:** An ALSOS research fellow adjunct professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Siena. She holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Historical-Linguistic Sciences from the University of Messina. She did fieldwork in Italy (Naples and Bologna), Samoa and New Zealand. She's interested in anthropology of the body, of genders and person with a focus on non-heteronormative gender experiences. She contributed with articles and essays to edited books and journals and she authored "Other transition. Bodies, practices and representation of femminielli and trans people" (Mimesis 2017).

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