



The SOGICA newsletter: Issue 7 (17 September 2018)

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

Here is our update on the SOGICA project's development, plus news from some of our Project Friends.

SOGICA survey

Last month we launched our online survey. We would be very grateful if you would complete it if you have not yet done so, and also forward it to anyone you know who might wish to contribute. We hope that the information we receive in this way will complement our qualitative fieldwork and we would like to have as many survey responses as possible between now and March next year when the survey closes.

The survey is divided into two – one part for people claiming or who have claimed asylum, and one for people who work with or support them. We know that a lot of people do both, and that many LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum also work with organisations providing services, advice or campaigning, so please complete whichever one you prefer (or both from different perspectives if you wish).

- [Survey for people who have claimed asylum because of sexual orientation or gender identity, or for LGBTQI+ people claiming asylum in Europe](#)
- [Survey for people who work with or support LGBTQI+ people claiming asylum](#)

Publications

SOGICA published [The reform of the Common European Asylum System: Fifteen recommendations from a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Perspective](#) earlier this year, suggesting key improvements that we think would be beneficial for LGBTQI+ people claiming asylum in the EU. We are promoting these recommendations widely through our European contacts.

Nina from the SOGICA team led the data analysis and drafted the report for a recent project by a network of different LGBTIQ* projects and organisations in North Rhine-Westphalia. The project evaluated 51 questionnaires on the experiences of LGBTIQ* refugees with the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees) asylum hearing. The project found that LGBTIQ* refugees face discrimination during the hearing and that persons who are accompanied to the hearing and advised in advance are more likely to be successful in the asylum procedure. The [full report](#) will be available on our website shortly.

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

In July, members of the SOGICA team (Carmelo, Moira and Nuno) presented findings from the Project at the [2018 International Association for the Study of Forced Migration \(IASFM\) Conference](#), Thessaloniki, while in August Nina took part in a panel at the [EuroPride Human Rights Conference](#) in Stockholm.

Earlier this month, Nuno presented 'Queering asylum across Europe: The legal and social experiences of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) asylum seekers', at the 'LGTB asylum seekers and refugees in Spain' project meeting of ACCEM in Madrid. Also in September, Nuno and Nina spoke at the [10th European Feminist Research Conference](#) in Göttingen. Nuno's paper was called 'An exercise in detachment: The Strasbourg Court and sexual minority refugees', while Nina gave a paper titled 'They sent me to the mountain': LGBTIQ* refugees' intersectional experience of 'integration' in Germany'.

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

Call for participants

The SOGICA project is nearing the end of our fieldwork phase and we would all like to say a big thank you to everyone who has participated in interviews and focus groups so far. We are still keen to observe SOGI court hearings in the UK, Germany and Italy, and would also like to interview judges and decision makers in the UK and Germany (on an anonymous basis if preferred). Please [email us](#) if you may be able to help with this. We hope to complete our fieldwork by the end of October.

New website resources

We have added to and updated the SOGI asylum case law resources on our database with a new table of [German case law](#) and updated tables of [UK case law](#) and [European case law](#).

An [updated list](#) of Home Office country policy and information notes on sexual orientation and gender identity was added to the website in August. It will be updated as new country policy and information notes are published by the Home Office.

In addition, we have added more than 100 new items, including resources in German, Italian, French and Spanish, to the [SOGICA database](#) since the last newsletter – including items by some of our Project Friends described below.

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. And 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

Our friends Giulio Farronato and Nicola Noro, from GaGa (Vicenza), will be involved in the conference [Richiedenti asilo. Orientamento sessuale e Identità di genere](#), hosted by the University of Verona and taking place on 21 September 2018.

In [‘Trots of schaamte?’ \(‘Pride or shame?’\)](#), published this year, Sabine Jansen analyses the fixed criteria used in the Netherlands to assess whether people fleeing persecution because of their sexual identity are LGBTI.

[Queer Base](#) is a small NGO based in Vienna, Austria that supports LGBTIQ* refugees. An essential part of the organisation’s work is legal representation before the Austrian authorities and administrative courts. Many of Queer Base’s clients come from Iraq, the Russian Federation and Nigeria and are currently in the process of appealing. Because of the lack of case law in relation to these countries, Queer Base is currently eagerly looking to find international positive decisions of administrative and Supreme courts in order to back its cases. Please email [Marty at Queer Base](#) if you can help.

[UKLGIG](#) published two reports over the summer: [Still Falling Short: The standard of Home](#)

[Office decision-making in asylum claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity](#) and a study of the lead case in the UK about claims for asylum based on sexual orientation, [Applying HJ \(Iran\) and HT \(Cameroon\) to asylum claims based on sexual orientation](#). The organisation is now holding free quarterly [workshops for LGBTQI+ women and trans people who are seeking asylum](#). These interactive workshops are led by UKLGIG's legal officer who will discuss evidence, statements and the interview process and are a safe space for women and trans people only, where people can ask questions and share their experiences. The next workshop is on 2 October. People can arrive from 2.15 pm - no booking needed. Women and trans people are also welcome to attend UKLGIG's [monthly asylum meetings in London](#) – which are open to all LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum.

The [IARS International Institute](#) is proud to announce the conclusion of its two-year Erasmus+ funded LGBT- led 'Epsilon' programme. Epsilon's [final report](#) is available on the project website. As part of the project, IARS has launched [an online training programme](#), which is CPD accredited and aims to increase the knowledge and capacity of professionals and adult learners to improve their support for LGBT migrants. The platform consists of three modules: Being LGBTI, LGBTI Asylum Seekers and Refugees, and LGBTI Inclusive Environment for Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

[Micro Rainbow International](#) provides safe temporary housing for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in the UK and recently expanded its service provision of housing in the West Midlands. MRI now runs two safe homes exclusively for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in the area.

The [Last Rights Project](#) sets out to create a new framework of respect for the rights of missing & dead refugees and migrants and bereaved family members. The Project's purpose, since its inception, has been to produce a set of clear and above all practical guidelines, grounded in international law, which everyone working with and having responsibilities to the missing, the dead and their families, can use to help ensure that their rights are guaranteed, whether this is at an immediate, local level or in the development of national and transnational working arrangements and systems.

Another recent initiative that SOGICA is happy to publicise is [Lift the Ban](#): People seeking safety in the UK are banned from working. They are unable to provide for themselves and their families and often left to live in poverty. The Lift the Ban coalition is working to change this.

In a [blog for the Runnymede Trust](#) published in July, writer and performer Clare Summerskill concludes that 'current inadequacy in the lines of questioning conducted by the Home Office when assessing LGBTQI asylum cases must be addressed and reformed' in order for the UK to be able to respect its commitments under international and European human rights and refugee law.

[The Future of Legal Gender](#) is a three-year project funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council and based at King's College London. In a blog marking the project's launch, Professor Davina Cooper asks [Diversifying, Abolishing, Equalising Gender... Can the Law Do All Three?](#)

Following the Indian Supreme Court ruling that gay sex is no longer a criminal offence in the same week that two Malaysian women convicted of attempting to have lesbian sex were caned in a religious court, Woman's Hour [discussed LGBT rights](#) with Laura Carter from Amnesty International and Leila Zadeh from UKLGIG.

UKLGIG is recruiting [a full or part-time legal officer](#). The closing date for applications is 9.30am on Monday 24th September.

Getting involved

Our mailing list continues to grow and if you're reading this then you're probably already a subscriber, but please encourage colleagues and contacts who might be interested to subscribe – 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 LGBTQI+ 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.

Finally, we would like to again ask that you please complete the SOGICA survey highlighted above, and encourage other people to do so.

The next newsletter will be in December 2018. Until then, best wishes from [Nuno](#), [Carmelo](#), [Moira](#) 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 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](#).