



The SOGICA newsletter: Issue 13 (1 April 2020)

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

Here is the quarterly update from the SOGICA project team. Our apologies that it comes a fortnight later than planned. The Coronavirus situation has inevitably meant changes in the activities we had planned for the coming months that we needed to consider before updating you all, in particular relating to forthcoming events – see below.

In March, we released [‘I Am Who I Say I Am - No Place Like Home’](#) – the first in a series of SOGICA project videos. In this short film, ‘Angel’ describes her experiences of fleeing her home after she was discovered with her girlfriend by police during a house raid. Finally arriving in the UK, instead of refuge she was thrown into a complicated system that doubted her authenticity at every turn. How do you prove your sexual identity when you’ve lived in a country where it is forbidden and where revealing that you are gay can destroy your life?

SOGICA publications

[‘Queere Geflüchtete und die Coronakrise: “Ich habe mich noch nie einsamer gefühlt“](#)’, by Nina Held, Mengia Tschalaer and Danijel Čubelić, was published by Der Tagesspiegel, 31 March 2020.

SOGICA made a [Submission to EASO’s 2019 Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union](#) in March.

[‘How do I convince the Home Office I’m a lesbian?’](#), featured on the BBC News on 26 February and is based on interviews with ‘Angel’ – who features in [‘I Am Who I Say I Am - No Place Like Home’](#)

[‘The Wrong Turn; a conversation’](#), by Elceta Marsha Ennis and Nina Held, was published by shado on 16 February.

The SOGICA project contributed to the UKLGIG [Submission to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration inspection of the Home Office’s Presenting Officer function](#) in January.

Chapters by Nuno Ferreira, and by Moira Dustin and Nina Held will be in the forthcoming UCL Press publication ‘Queer Migration and Asylum in Europe’ edited by Richard Mole.

SOGICA team members are working on our monograph 'Queering Asylum in Europe' to be published by Springer later this year.

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

Future events

We will email all contributors and registered participants in the first week of May with information about changes to the SOGICA conference on 7-8 July 2020. We thank you all for your patience in the meantime.

The [Sussex Salon](#) event in Brighton that was to take place on 16 April has been cancelled. However, we hope to reschedule it on a future date with the same excellent line-up of speakers, so please watch this space.

The conference 'Under the European Asylum Rainbow: Intersectional Queer Challenges 2020' on 29 April has been postponed to [25 September 2020](#) and in its place you are invited to register for the [Online Symposium: COVID-19 and Queer Asylum](#) which is also free and takes place on 29 April.

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

New website resources

Since the last newsletter, we have added 49 new items to the [SOGICA database](#) and the database now contains more than 1,000 items, including academic and NGO articles, official reports, case law, statistics and other items.

The Life Stories section of our website contains some individual accounts of LGBTQI+ people claiming asylum, such as [Nadim's story](#). In this way, we hope to keep sight of the human cost of flawed asylum processes and provide a space for some of the people involved to share their experiences. If you are seeking international protection on sexual orientation or gender identity grounds, or have done so, feel free to send us contributions (by email to info@sogica.org) to be considered for publication on our website.

Since Christmas, we have updated the German and Italian translated sections of our website. If you wish to read items in these languages, please click on the relevant flag at the top of any page of the website.

Other news, including from our Project Friends

The University of Sussex is offering [two scholarships](#) per year to forced migrant students in UK higher education. The places are offered to 'an asylum seeker or applicant granted a temporary form of leave', to provide financial assistance in order to enable them to take up a place on an undergraduate degree at the University of Sussex. The deadline to apply for the scholarship (after receiving an offer of a place

at Sussex) is 12 April 2020.

UKLGIG's ['How to Apply For Asylum'](#) guide has been updated and is now available in 9 languages. The guide explains the process and possible types of evidence for asylum claims based on being LGBTQI+. The translations are available in PDF format and there are also videos to go alongside the written guide. The [PDF guide](#) is available in Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, French, Mandarin, Urdu, and Pashto. [Videos](#) with Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, French, Mandarin, Urdu, and Pashto subtitles are also available.

In Italy, Giulio and Nicola, with the help of the LGBT+ migrants that are part of [GAGA Vicenza](#), have launched ['Queer to Queer'](#), a podcast about minorities in the Italian LGBT+ community. The first two episodes (released on 14 and 24 March) are about SOGI asylum claimants. The protagonist of the first episode is Gift, a Nigerian lesbian woman, who talks about her journey from Nigeria to Italy and her experiences with LGBT+ support and migrant groups. After this first topic, the podcast will give space to other minorities from the LGBT+ community, with a new topic every month, and guests from the community and experts contributing. All episodes will be available on Spreaker, iTunes and Spotify as well as at www.queertoqueer.it

In December 2019, ACCEM published [Condiciones sociales y legales de las personas solicitantes de protección internacional y refugiadas LGTBI en España](#). The report focuses on three key areas: how credibility is analysed, integration and its relationship with social cohesion, and discrimination processes in Spain.

[Europe: Diversity and Migration](#) is an interdisciplinary summer school offering 'a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between migration and integration processes in a European context, based on theoretical perspectives, empirical case studies and several excursions and group work activities.' It takes place from 29 June-10 July 2020 and this year's summer school is going digital.

[Queer Muslim Asylum in Germany](#) has issued its first [newsletter!](#) Queer Asylum in Germany is a two-year (2018-2020) European Commission funded research project under the H2020 programme. The goal of this project is to provide new empirical insights into the experiences of LGBTQI+ asylum claimants and refugees with Muslim background in Germany. The project is hosted by the [University of Bristol at its School for Sociology, Politics and International Studies](#) and affiliated with [Migration Mobilities Bristol](#) and the [Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship](#).

Women for Refugee Women has published [Will I ever be safe? Asylum-seeking women made destitute in the UK](#). Among the key findings are that 16% of the women who became destitute in England or Wales after claiming asylum had been persecuted because they are or were suspected of being lesbian or bisexual.

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.

The next newsletter will be in June 2020. In the meantime, please feel free to [email us](#) with any questions or suggestions.

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