



The SOGICA newsletter: Issue 14 (16 June 2020)

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

Below is the regular quarterly update from the SOGICA project team.

Our main news is a reminder that the [SOGICA project final conference](#) is taking place (online now) from 7-9 July. We have an exciting and full programme of 3 keynote speakers, 22 panels, 2 workshops and a performance at this free event. We do hope you are able to join us and ask you to [register](#) before 30 June. We'll be recording most of the event to post on our website subsequently for those who are unable to attend.

SOGICA publications

The [SOGICA project team video](#) was launched in April. In it, we explain what the project is about and why it matters, alongside contributions from Caroline Lucas MP about why SOGI asylum should be a concern for everyone.

Working with *The Grande Colibri*, the main provider of news about SOGI asylum in Italy, we also published the [project's Italian video](#) in June. Lyas Laamari of *Grande Colibri* introduces the video in an interview with Carmelo from SOGICA.

In May, Carmelo shared an analysis of the European Court of Human Rights case of *M.N. and Others v. Belgium*: '[A formalistic approach to jurisdiction in the European Court of Human Rights' approach to humanitarian visas: was another interpretation possible?](#)', was published on the *SIDI (Italian Society of International and EU Law) blog*.

In April, Nina wrote an article in collaboration with Mengia Tschalaer (University of Bristol) and Danijel Benjamin Cubelic (Office for Equal Opportunities of the City of Heidelberg) on how '[Coronavirus exacerbates LGBTQI refugees' isolation and trauma](#)', which was published in *Al Jazeera*.

The SOGICA team has sent our monograph 'Queering Asylum in Europe' off to Springer for publication later this year and we will of course update our subscribers as soon as we have a publication date. The book will be open access and fully available online.

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

Events

Please remember to register for our [conference](#) and we hope to see as many of you as possible online between 7-9 July.

On Saturday 20 June, to mark World Refugee Day, Carmelo on behalf of SOGICA will join a panel of Italian migration experts in an online Conference organised by UNIRE (the National Italian Network for Refugees and Exiled). The event is titled '[Pandemia, e non solo. L'eterna emergenza in cui vivono i rifugiati](#)' (The pandemic and beyond. The eternal emergency in which refugees live) and will be streamed [on Facebook](#) from 11 am to 12.30 pm (CEST).

Following the highly popular online symposium 'COVID-19 and Queer Asylum' led by Mengia Tschalaer with SOGICA's Nina Held on 29 April, recordings from the event have been published on the project [website](#).

On 1 June, Carmelo presented: *Le richieste di asilo SOGI: profili europei e italiani* at the Università di Napoli – L'Orientale in Naples, Italy.

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 a further 20 items to the [SOGICA database](#) which 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. 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.

Other news, including from our Project Friends

The SOGICA team were pleased to have the opportunity in June to sign [Asylum Support's letter](#) to the UK's Home Secretary demanding an increasing in asylum support rates. You can [contact Asylum Aid](#) if you'd like your organisation to be added to the list of signatories.

[Rainbow Railroad's](#) report on [The Impact of COVID-19 on Displaced LGBTQI Persons](#) was published in June and has four recommendations for policy-makers.

In May, the University of Sussex was granted [University of Sanctuary status](#), in recognition of its efforts to welcome and support forced migrants, including the work of the SOGICA project. It means we can encourage the University to do more to support refugees and migrants in the future, so we'd like to thank all our participants for making this happen, and an especially big thank you to Martin Guerin Kanouo Siegning for taking part in the University's assessment by the Sanctuary team panel.

Leila Zadeh's (UKLGIG) piece '[Putting the Most Marginalised at the Centre. Lessons for the COVID-19 Response from the HIV Epidemic](#)' was published on 28 May on the Global Dashboard platform for ideas.

Also by Leila Zadeh, an [article in Gay Star News](#) on 12 May shows the impact of government policy for LGBT+ asylum seekers.

Sarah Houston's working paper '[From Caravan to the Courts: A Practical Guide to Matter of A-B-'s Implication for Transgender Women on the Northern Triangle](#)', examines the history of transgender asylum claims in the U.S. and the systemic violence facing transgender women in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, as well as being a practical guide for attorneys representing transgender asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle after Matter of A-B-.

Getting involved

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 September 2020. In the meantime, please feel free to [email us](#) with any questions or suggestions.

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