

2023 -
2027

LGBTIQ+

EQUALITY STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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2023 - 2027



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR REFORMS AND EQUALITY

**HUMAN
RiGHTS**
DIRECTORATE

LAB

THIO+

MESSAGE FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY

It is with great pleasure that I launch the third government LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This document marks a decade since as a government we committed ourselves in advancing the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, which is also proven successful by Malta's continuous top rankings on ILGA Europe's Rainbow Map Index. This strategy and action plan continues to build on its predecessors.



Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg

A lot has been accomplished in the past few years, especially in Malta's legislative framework, yet we are committed in mainstreaming these advances in the daily lives of everyone.

I hope that with the implementation of the actions listed in this policy document, as a country, we continue our progress in the acknowledgment of how sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics are just a facet of one's life intertwined with all the other identities that shape a person. And this document precisely does that, where we acknowledge how we cannot eliminate LGBTIQ+phobia within our society without addressing the additional intersectional inequalities faced by the community.

The Action Plan contained in this document is an ambitious one, but not impossible to be implemented with the collaboration of all stakeholders and interested partners. I look forward in continuing collaborating with the respective public entities and individuals from the private sector and civil society alike. Together we will ensure the advancement of equality for the LGBTIQ+ community in the years ahead.

This document establishes where we would like to see LGBTIQ+ equality in the next five years, but the way to get there depends on each and every one of us. I urge you all, from all walks of life, to join our efforts in securing an equal and just society irrespective of one's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Only together we can achieve 100% equality.

Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg

Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality

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**LAGBIQ+ EQUALITY
STRATEGY**

A | INTRODUCTION

Over the past eight years, government has systematically addressed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) equality through the adoption and implementation of the LGBTIQ Equality Action Plan 2015-2017 and the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022. Following a period of significant reforms between 2013 and 2018 in relation to Malta's legal and policy framework, the last four years were characterised largely by mainstreaming efforts in the fields of health, education, employment, asylum, policing and tourism among others.

Malta has continued to rank first on global indices measuring LGBTIQ+ legal and policy frameworks such as on the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex's (ILGA-Europe) Rainbow Index. It is encouraging to note that surveys conducted by the European Commission, primarily the latest Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the European Union (EU) and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) LGBTI II Survey, both of which were conducted in 2019, show some encouraging trends in relation to LGBTIQ+ acceptance and the safety and security of LGBTIQ+ persons.

To mention a few local positive findings, 83% of respondents to the Eurobarometer survey of 2019 agreed that transgender persons should be able to change their civil documents to match their gender identity, the highest at par with Spain; 67% also believe that in public documents, like passports and birth certificates, a third option like X or O (other) beside F (female) and M (male) should be available for those persons who do not identify as female or male – the highest percentage in the EU. Three out of every four respondents also supported inclusive curricula in education

and over 80% have no issue with working alongside LGBTIQ+ colleagues. The FRA LGBTI II Survey found the lowest levels of LGBTIQ-phobic harassment and violence reported among EU Member States. It also found that 83% of LGBTI respondents think that government is effectively working to combat prejudice and intolerance against LGBTI people.

While these signs of progress are welcome, we are still far from eradicating LGBTIQ+ prejudice in Malta. Based on the Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU survey results, one out of every five persons (20%) still believes that LGBTIQ+ persons should not have the same rights as heterosexual and cisgender persons; only 38% feel totally comfortable with same-sex couples showing affection in public (kissing or holding hands). Among the respondents of the LGBTI II Survey, 20% always or often avoid certain places for fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed because they are LGBTI. The under-reporting of harassment and violence to the police also continues to be a problem.

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027 builds on the previous efforts and seeks to address those areas where interventions have started but ongoing work is needed, such as in education and health. This Strategy also identifies gaps and areas where more targeted actions are required in order to effect change. The measures identified were formulated by the Human Rights Directorate (HRD) following several stakeholder consultations with LGBTIQ+ Civil Society organisations; government departments and public entities; academic institutions; trade unions; and the private sector. It was reviewed and confirmed by the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council.

Responsibility for implementation of the actions rests with the respective entities within the government outlined in the plan under the coordination and supervision of the Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIGESC) Unit within the HRD.

B | OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2018 AND DECEMBER 2022

In the past four years, the Maltese Government under the coordination of the SOGIGESC Unit and in collaboration with several public entities and private stakeholders took a number of initiatives which aimed at addressing persistent inequalities and mainstreaming the effects of current legislation and policies. Some highlights, categorised according to the thematic areas set by the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 are included here. A comprehensive list of initiatives implemented can be found in the Annual Reports published in 2019², 2020³, 2021⁴ and 2022⁵.

RIGHT TO EQUALITY AND FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION

- The Public Service adopted the Maltese Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex, Sexuality and Gender and started to roll out training on their implementation.
- Discriminatory policies and protocols in relation to the possibility of men who have sex with men donating blood were lifted.
- A targeted outreach campaign aimed at vulnerable trans persons, and their employers was conducted.
- The Malta Police Force (MPF) adopted a gender-neutral uniform, amended its recruitment criteria to be gender-inclusive and incorporated gender identity within its internal Standards of Procedure (SOPs) on the wellbeing of detainees.
- Training was delivered to professionals, care-workers and other staff working within the elderly care sector promoting LGBTIQ+ inclusive services.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

- Various Community of Professional Educators (CoPE) training sessions were conducted and attended by over 400 educators. Training participants included educators coming from Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD), Ethics, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Inclusion from State, Church and Independent schools.

²Human Rights Directorate (2019), LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan: Annual Report Sept 2018 – Sept 2019. Government of Malta.
³Human Rights Directorate (2020), LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan: Annual Report Sept 2019 – Sept 2020. Government of Malta.
⁴Human Rights Directorate (2021), LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan: Annual Report Sept 2020 – Sept 2021. Government of Malta.
⁵Human Rights Directorate (2022), LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan: Annual Report Sept 2021 – Sept 2022. Government of Malta.

- Measures aimed at making schools more inclusive of trans and intersex students was incorporated within a broader policy document launched by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR) which targets 2030.

RIGHT TO HEALTH

- Trans specific healthcare started to be rolled out for free as part of the NHS as from November 2018 with the setting up of the Gender Wellbeing Clinic (GWC). More than 350 referrals were received since the clinic's opening. The website transhealth.gov.mt was set up to provide information to healthcare practitioners on trans health.
- Training for reception and frontline staff, health care practitioners, practice nurses, general practitioners and family doctors and accident and emergency staff was provided through the TRANSFORM Project, reaching a total of 638 persons.
- An extensive social media awareness campaign aimed at the LGBTIQ community focusing on mental health, sexual health, and the services of the GWC was conducted.
- The formulary for HIV treatment was upgraded.

EQUALITY IN SPORT

- A roundtable discussion was held in 2019 aimed at identifying the challenges and barriers faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in participating in football.
- A campaign was held in 2019 in collaboration with the Malta Football Association (MFA) aimed at promoting visibility and equality of LGBTIQ+ persons in football including through rainbow laces and rainbow armbands.

RIGHT TO PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE

- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Clinic at Mater Dei Hospital extended its In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) treatment to anyone who can give birth (including lesbian couples, trans men, non-binary persons and single persons).
- Collaboration between the GWC and the ART Clinic now enables trans persons to preserve their gametes on the NHS.
- An inter-country adoption cooperation was established with Colombia, which allows for adoption by single persons and LGBTIQ+ couples.

FREEDOM FROM HATRED

- Training for police officers to respond to cases of hate crime and hate speech, including LGBTIQ+ victims is being offered through the Academy for the Disciplined Forces. A total of around 1,800 officers were trained in this period.
- Training to new recruits and other police officers on LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices was provided by the SOGIGESC Unit.

LGBTIQ CIVIL SOCIETY

- The LGBTIQ Consultative Council continued to serve in its advisory capacity and convened on a quarterly basis discussing a range of initiatives and processes.
- The Government of Malta continued to build the capacity of LGBTIQ+ Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) through:
 - funding of the Rainbow Support Services (RSS), through the PSP agreement with the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM).
 - financial support allocated each year towards the organisation of Malta Pride and EuroPride Valletta 2023.
 - provision of the Qawsalla Hub premises by the MGOZ from which LGBTI+ Gozo can operate and provide its services.
- Malta financially supported the Organisation Intersex International (OII) – Europe for a two-year period.

RIGHT TO SEEK ASYLUM

- An information leaflet translated in six primary languages used by migrants in Malta was produced and disseminated. The leaflet gives an overview of Maltese legislation in relation to LGBTIQ+ equality and asylum procedures.
- Amendments to the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations (S.L.420.07) extended protection to those fleeing persecution on the grounds of their gender expression and sex characteristics and now cover all four SOGIGESC grounds.
- The SOGIGESC Unit trained 30 professional and managerial staff, and 120 security and administrative personnel working for the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS).



photo courtesy: Dragana Rankovic

PROMOTION OF LGBTIQ EQUALITY ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- Malta shared best practices in the field of LGBTIQ+ equality at the regional and international levels including through participation in various intergovernmental platforms, conferences and meetings, roundtables, EuroPride events, and the hosting of study visits by international delegations.
- Malta joined the United Nations (UN) LGBT Core Group in partnership with North Macedonia in November of 2020.
- To commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Malta's Embassies, High Commissions and Representations around the world hoisted the rainbow flag each year.

OTHER LGBTIQ MEASURES

- The SOGIGESC Unit together with the Department of Gender and Sexualities at the University of Malta (UM) and Europe Direct hosted two LGBTIQ+ Research Symposiums. The proceedings of both symposiums were published in two research publications entitled 'Mapping the Rainbow'⁶⁷.
- A roundtable discussion between representatives of the media and LGBTIQ+ civil society was facilitated by the HRD. The discussion focused on LGBTIQ+ representation and portrayal in the media. The feedback was gathered and published as a local Media Reference Guide⁸.

C | ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LGBTIQ EQUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2018-2022.

From the onset, the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 was intended to address pending systemic inequalities within policy and legislation while also mainstreaming the changes brought about through the first strategy and action plan. The 2018-2022 strategy and action plan saw great strides forward in ensuring the mainstreaming of LGBTIQ+ equality legislation and policy in practice, both within the public administration as well as in some spheres of the private sector. This is even more encouraging to note given the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022 which entailed a degree of disruption and required adaptation and new ways of working.

⁶Naudi & Azzopardi Lane (2020), Mapping the Rainbow Vol I: Researching the diverse colours of the LGBTIQ community. Government of Malta.

⁷Azzopardi Lane, Naudi & Harwood (2021), Mapping the Rainbow Vol II: Researching the diverse colours of the LGBTIQ community. Government of Malta.

⁸Human Rights Directorate (2023), Media Reference Guide: Your referencing tool when portraying or reporting about members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Government of Malta.

It is estimated that around 80% of the targets listed in the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 were achieved and in some instances surpassed, as can be seen in Section B of this chapter. Those efforts related to capacity building of public administration employees are ongoing and can never be truly exhausted. In some instances, it was not possible to implement the measures within the set timeframe, despite considerable efforts. In areas such as LGBTIQ+ inclusion in sport, efforts were minimal and somewhat sporadic mainly due to insufficient resources. While considerable efforts were made in promoting LGBTIQ inclusive educational approaches particularly through the training of educators, these fell short of introducing an intra-curricular approach.

Some positive developments which were not strictly envisaged in the previous action plan include equal access for LGBTIQ+ persons making use of IVF services to the additional vacation leave entitlement, the LGBTIQ+ Research Symposiums and follow-up publications and the various training and capacity building sessions facilitated by the SOGIGESC Unit.

Most of the measures which were expected to be implemented remain in the pipeline, with a clear commitment to be implemented in the period of this new Strategy and Action Plan.

A definite outcome of the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022, is that the format of the document has adequately worked and served its intended purpose. As such a similar format is adopted here with some revision of the thematic areas.

The setting up of the SOGIGESC Unit and its coordinating and supporting role in the implementation of the 2018-2022 strategy were essential to its success. A clear commitment towards the continuous strengthening of the SOGIGESC Unit, investing in its capacity and expertise is necessary moving forward.

D | COMMITMENT TOWARDS FURTHER ACTION

Great progress was achieved during the past years, which contributed towards Malta's top ranking on ILGA Europe's Rainbow Index since 2015. This document aims at continuing Malta's efforts in reaching full equality for LGBTIQ+ persons.

Much of these advancements rest on the efforts of LGBTIQ+ advocates who worked tirelessly throughout the years and who continue to play an active role in bringing to government's attention areas that need to be addressed and in providing support to the LGBTIQ community and their families. The government remains committed to listen to and take into consideration concerns raised by LGBTIQ+ civil society.

This strategy and action plan sets ambitious targets that aim to ensure that existing laws are fully translated into practice.

While this document continues to build on its predecessors, it also draws on the lessons learnt from their implementation. It recognises the importance of collecting equality data that can assess the effectiveness of our efforts, assist in the identification of needs and lead to the development of evidence-based policy and initiatives. It also recognises the need to ensure that mainstreaming efforts reach beyond the public administration. Special emphasis is placed on employment spaces in a push to make them more inclusive and welcoming.

This strategy and action plan also aims at further acknowledging the different lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ persons. One of the areas in this strategy and action plan recognises the role that intersectionality can play in the disparate access to rights and aims at eliminating specific barriers experienced by minorities within the LGBTIQ+ community itself.

E | CROSS CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

In efforts to ensure that the lives experiences of all LGBTIQ+ persons are being taken into consideration, this strategy and action plan seeks to take an intersectional approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion in all measures being implemented. As such, this document also recognises the double insularity experienced by the LGBTIQ+ community in Gozo, and as much as possible ensures that measures implemented are mainstreamed and felt by the community living on the island.

The SOGIGESC Unit is also tasked at ensuring that LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion considerations are included in the development and review of public sector policy, which is to be informed by targeted consultation where necessary. The Unit will also seek to continue to provide feedback on the progress made in reaching the set targets and effective implementation of this strategy and action plan.

F | COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

In order to ensure the implementation of the targets set in this document, collaboration between different entities and organisations is required. These are the main stakeholders tasked with ensuring the functioning and achievement of the set measures.



THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORATE

The Human Rights Directorate (HRD), under the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality (MHSE), from its conception was set up with the aim of reaching national objectives in the areas of civil liberties, equality and non-discrimination, as well as the integration of migrants.

As part of its mandate, the Directorate is tasked with ensuring that proposals and initiatives uphold everyone's fundamental human rights, as enshrined in Maltese and international law, and, wherever possible, further the creation of an equal and just society.

The Directorate is home to the SOGIGESC Unit which remains the primary liaison point in the implementation of this strategy and action plan and other matters related to LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion.

the SOGIGESC UNIT

The SOGIGESC Unit, was set up in June of 2018 to coordinate government policy in the field of LGBTIQ+ equality and provide support to other Ministries, Departments and Entities where required.

Similarly, to its function in previous years, it will assume responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the strategy and action plan. It will continue its purpose in being the main governmental coordinating body that liaises with different entities, imparts information and feeds the LGBTIQ+ perspective to ongoing processes.

Furthermore, the Unit will seek to continue and explore different sources of funding for the enhancement of existing services, the development of new ones, the provision of training, awareness raising and community building.

THE LGBTIQ+ CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council is an advisory body set up in 2013 by the then Minister for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties. The aims of the Council are to advise government on those issues which impact on LGBTIQ+ persons and to put forward legislation, policies, and other measures to advance the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons in consultation with the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary. The Consultative Council is now an advisory body within the MHSR.

The members of the Consultative Council are appointed by the responsible Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary from among those persons active in LGBTIQ+ organisations.

In the context of this strategy and action plan, and similarly to previous years, the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council and the SOGIGESC Unit within the HRD will continue to work hand in hand in ensuring the correct implementation of the listed actions, while reaching their desired outcomes.







LABTIQ+ EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

A | LABTIQ+ EQUALITY MEASURES

AREA 01:

MEASURES TO PROMOTE AND GUARANTEE EQUAL
TREATMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AND SERVICE PROVISION

MHSR

01.01

Continue to build the capacity of the public administration to be inclusive of LGBTIQ+ employees and service users through ongoing training provision on and updating of the Maltese Government Guidelines on Sex, Sexuality and Gender and the integration of equality, diversity and inclusion perspectives in leadership, induction and customer service training of public administrators;

MHSR/NCPE

01.02

Promote LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplaces for employees and service users including through awareness campaigns and the provision of information, guidelines and training to the private sector and those providing Employee Assistance Programmes as part of the broader NCPE work on the promotion of equality in society;

MHSR/NCPE

01.03

Enhance the capacity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro enterprises to adopt LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices through the organisation of LGBTIQ+ awareness and information events in the context of the assistance offered by the NCPE to the private sector on improving the inclusion of different social groups as well as preventing and addressing cases of discrimination and harassment;

MHSR

01.04

Support Malta's participation in the EU Platform of Diversity Charters and encourage the signatories to put in place actions targeting LGBTIQ+ equality issues;

MHSR/NCPE

01.05

Enhance awareness of equal treatment in employment rights, encourage reporting of harassment and discrimination at the workplace and signpost avenues for reporting and support service provision for victims ensuring that these are inclusive of Malta's increasingly multi-cultural workforce;

MHSR

01.06

Support the Chamber of SMEs and the Chamber of Commerce in the setting up of a committee composed of LGBTIQ+ business owners/leaders, to act as a forum for support and discussion while also serving as an advisory body on LGBTIQ+ inclusion in/to the private sector;

01.07

Raise the profile of, and explore initiatives and opportunities to promote Malta further as an LGBTIQ+ friendly destination and integrate LGBTIQ+ perspectives in training provision, policies and standards for service providers in the tourism sector;



AREA 02:

EQUALITY DATA AND RESEARCH THAT CAPTURES
THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF LGBTIQ+ PERSONS

NSO

02.01

Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders in an effort to address data gaps in official statistics on the socio-economic situation of the LGBTIQ+ population residing in Malta by exploring possibilities of collecting relevant disaggregated data on this population sub-group from existing surveys and/or alternative data sources;

MHSR/UM

02.02

Address knowledge-gaps on lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ persons through research on their family life, wellbeing, barriers encountered, living conditions, and other social determinants;

MHSR

02.03

Develop a section on the Human Rights Directorate's website providing key data relating to LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

UM/MHSR

02.04

Continue to support and publish the dissertations and academic papers on LGBTIQ+ related issues;

MHSR

02.05

Map LGBTIQ+ related content in the training of educators, psycho-social professionals; health professionals; cultural mediators; and other relevant fields and identify gaps that need to be addressed;

NSO

02.06

The National Statistics Office (NSO) to act as the National Contact Point in the collation, from various sources, of existing hate crime related data with regards to the reporting, prosecution and sentencing of such crimes;

MHSR/MFAA/ODPM

02.07

Gather data on access and barriers to Legal Gender Recognition and trans specific health services of older trans persons;

MEYR/MHSR

02.08

Gather data that can shed light on the impact of LGBTIQ+ inclusive policies and practices in schools;

MEYR/MHSR

02.09

Conduct an audit of school textbooks to assess for LGBTIQ+ inclusion and representation;

MHSR

02.10

Develop guidelines on LGBTIQ+ inclusivity in relation to gendered spaces, such as public bathrooms and changing rooms;

ODPM

02.11

Conduct research on the mental health needs, wellbeing and service satisfaction of LGBTIQ+ persons and those engaged in chemsex.



AREA 03:

INCREASED VISIBILITY OF AN INCLUSIVE SERVICES
FOR LGBTIQ+ ELDERLY; PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY;
MIGRANTS; CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE;

03.01. LGBTIQ+ Elderly:

FSWS/MHSR/ MFAA

03.01.01

Raise awareness and conduct outreach programmes to foster LGBTIQ+ inclusion in day and residential centres frequented by the elderly;

FSWS/MHSR/ MFAA

03.01.02

Continue to build the capacity of those working and volunteering in the elderly care sector to provide inclusive care that meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ elderly;

MHSR/MFAA

03.01.03

Develop and disseminate guidelines for the elderly care sector on how to better address LGBTIQ+ inclusion;

03.02. Children and Young People

CFC

03.02.01

Conduct awareness raising initiatives targeting children on LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

AZ

03.02.02

Conduct awareness raising initiatives targeting young people on LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

CFC

03.02.03

Engage LGBTIQ+ children, and children from rainbow families in public consultations;

AZ

03.02.04

Engage LGBTIQ+ youth in public consultations;

AZ/MHSR

03.02.05

Develop and deliver training and capacity building of youth workers on the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ youth;

03.03. LGBTQ+ Migrants and Asylum Seekers

AWAS/MHSR

03.03.01

Provide ongoing capacity building and staff development of AWAS psycho-social professionals as well as others working with migrants and asylum seekers;

IPA/MHSR

03.03.02

Develop in collaboration with the International Protection Agency (IPA) a glossary of LGBTQ+ terms in various languages to be used by interpreters and cultural mediators;

MHSR

03.03.03

Initiate discussions with relevant authorities to ensure better family reunification practices extending to all couples in stable relationships.

MHSR

03.03.04

Extend access to legal gender recognition to migrants who are living and working in Malta;

MHSR/FSWS

03.03.05

Establish relationships between the LGBTIQ+ Hub and migrant communities and raise awareness on LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

03.04. LGBTIQ+ Persons with a Disability:

SAPPORIT

03.04.01

Establish a sexuality and relationships advisory centre for persons with intellectual disabilities within Agencija Sapporit that is inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities;

CRPD

03.04.02

Conduct an audit on the extent of and the accessibility to current information and services relating to sexuality and relationships to persons with disability;

DDI/MHSR

03.04.03

Facilitate communication between government entities and NGO's working in the LGBTIQ+ and the disability sector;

SUPPORT

03.04.04

Provide training and support to families of persons with a disability on sexuality and relationships and how to approach these issues with their relatives in an appropriate manner;

MHSR

03.04.05

Ensure that the LGBTIQ+ Hub is accessible for persons with an intellectual and/or physical disability, while providing spaces that meet their specific needs;

MHSR/CRPD

03.04.06

Ensure visibility of LGBTIQ+ persons with a disability in awareness raising campaigns and enable their participation in public/stakeholder consultations.



AREA 04:

FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION,
HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES

MHSR

04.01

Extend anti-discrimination provisions on the grounds of SOGIGESC to ensure protection and equal treatment in the provision of goods and services;

MHSR/BA/MIVC

04.02

Continue to build on the Media Reference Guide launched in 2022, to enhance the standards in the portrayal of and reporting on LGBTIQ+ persons in the media;

MHSR

04.03

Extend legal gender recognition to those who do not identify with the gender binary and mainstream the effects of a third gender marker in both the public administration and the private sector;

MHSR

04.04

Adopt the Equality Act to effectively tackle discrimination in all spheres of life on the grounds of SOGIGESC as well as intersectional discrimination;

MPF

04.05

Improve relationships between LGBTIQ+ persons and the MPF and promote reporting of LGBTIQ+ related crimes;

MPF/MHSR

04.06

Continue to provide training to police recruits and police officers to enhance LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices including in the investigation and prosecution of hate speech and hate crimes;

MHSR

04.07

Develop an equality and diversity training module for security guards to be included in the training required in order to obtain their licence;

VSA/MHSR

04.08

Conduct an awareness campaign on the impact of LGBTIQ+phobic language on social media and increase monitoring for hate speech;

AREA 05:

FACILITATE ACCESS OF LGBTIQ+ PERSONS TO
THE RIGHT TO PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE

MHSR

05.01

Ensure that public policy is inclusive of LGBTIQ+ perspectives and avoids heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions;

MHSR/MSPC

05.02

Enhance the visibility and celebration of diverse family forms;

MHSR/FSWS

05.03

Set up, develop and promote the psycho-social services and community outreach team within the LGBTIQ+ Hub;

SCSA

05.04

Continue to seek third countries with whom protocols for adoption can be developed;

05.05

Counter domestic violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ persons particularly high-risk groups such as trans and intersex persons and continue to raise awareness on same-sex intimate partner violence.

AREA 06:

ENSURE THAT THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION CAN BE
EFFECTIVELY ENJOYED BY LGBTIQ+ INDIVIDUALS,
FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION

MEYR/MHSR

06.01

Develop and pilot intra-curricular approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools;

MEYR/MHSR

06.02

Develop educational resources for schools that can be accessed online as well as printed materials such as posters and other audio-visual resources for teachers promoting anti-bullying messages; being an ally; consent in relationships; among others;

MEYR/MHSR

06.03

Provide training for educators and SMT's on promoting intra-curricular and whole school approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion and enhance their capacity to counter LGBTQ+ phobia;

MEYR/MHSR

06.04

Continue to invest in training and capacity building of school-based psycho-social service professionals including on risk and protective factors, resilience and the mental health needs of LGBTQ+ students;

NLA

06.05

Continue the dissemination of LGBTIQ+ inclusive literature through the 'Aqra Kemm Tiflaħ' programme and expand their reach to middle and secondary school libraries;

MHSR/MEYR

06.06

Develop a toolkit for schools that can assist them in evaluating inclusive practices against set criteria and indicators;

ODPM/ MEYR

06.07

Review the current sexuality and relationships education curriculum that is being implemented in schools and address gaps;

MEYR

06.08

Ensure that Awareness Days organised by schools also address LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

MEYR/MHSR

06.09

Ensure that Awareness Days organised by schools also address LGBTIQ+ equality and inclusion;

AREA 07:

FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF LGBTIQ+
PERSONS IN SPORTS

MHSR/MEYR

07.01

Conduct a national awareness campaign to raise visibility of LGBTIQ+ persons in sport;

MHSR

07.02

Build the capacity of sports organisations to mainstream LGBTIQ+ inclusion through training to athletes, coaches, administrators, and other sports professionals;

MHSR/MEYR

07.03

Develop guidelines for the inclusion of trans, gender variant and intersex athletes including in the planning of sport infrastructure;

MEYR/MHSR

07.04

Extend the protected characteristics in the Sports Act (CAP 455) to the grounds of SOGIGESC;

MHSR/MEYR

07.05

Develop a policy on the participation of trans and intersex students in school sporting activities and competitions.

AREA 08:

IMPROVE LGBTIQ+ PERSONS' GENERAL WELLBEING
AND ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES

ODPM

03.01

Set up an LGBTIQ+ inclusion working group within Mater Dei Hospital composed of interested health practitioners who can review current practices, put forward recommendations for consideration and who can act as multipliers;

ODPM

03.02

Continue to expand the health services offered to trans people through the GWC through the inclusion of gender affirmation surgeries as part of the NHS;

ODPM

03.03

Ensure continued resourcing and capacity building of the GWC through adequate financing, human resources and staff development;

ODPM

03.04

Increase the treatment choices available to trans persons accessing the GWC's services;

ODPM

08.05

Finalise and put in place the intersex treatment protocol review and setup an intersex health interdisciplinary team to support intersex children and their parents, monitor medical interventions on intersex children and their outcomes and raise awareness among healthcare professionals on the rights and health needs of intersex persons accessing mainstream services;

ODPM

08.06

Promote awareness of mental health among the LGBTIQ+ community;

ODPM

08.07

Build the capacity of psycho-social professionals forming part of community mental health teams to better support trans persons;

MHSR/ODPM

08.08

Organise biannual stakeholder meetings between LGBTIQ+ Civil Society and representatives from the relevant health sectors to encourage the identification of needs, sharing of concerns and information exchange and facilitated by the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council;

08.09

Promote the sexual health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ persons through:

ODPM/MHSR

08.09.01

The mainstreaming of LGBTIQ+ sexual health in the new National Sexual Health Strategy;

ODPM

08.09.02

The introduction of free Pre Exposure Prophylaxes (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxes (PEP) as part of the national formulary;

ODPM/MHSR

08.09.03

The continued resourcing and capacity building of the Genitourinary (GU) Clinic services including through the introduction of community sexual health clinics and mobile clinic services and the setting up of a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) checkpoint as part of the LGBTIQ+ Hub services;

ODPM/MHSR

08.09.04

The improved access to sexual health services for migrants in detention and open centres;

ODPM

08.09.05

Improved access to mental health support services for persons newly diagnosed as HIV+ and combatting the continued stigma experienced by HIV positive persons;

ODPM

08.09.06

An improved condom distribution programme for high-risk groups;

ODPM

08.09.07

Improved access to interpreters, translators and cultural mediators for the GU Clinic required to effectively address the needs of drop-in clients;

ODPM

08.09.08

Encouraging the use of self-testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs);

ODPM

08.09.09

Continuous monitoring and updating of the sexual health website;

ODPM/UM

08.09.10

Improved sexual history taking across health care provision also through training of allied health professionals;

ODPM

08.09.11

Improved clinical pathways for men who have sex with men (MSM) that addresses their higher risk of contracting anal cancer.



AREA 09:

CONSOLIDATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
GOVERNMENT AND LGBTIQ CIVIL SOCIETY

MHSR

09.01

Continue to enable the effective function of the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council and facilitate funding for LGBTIQ+ NGO's where necessary;

MIVC/ MSPC/ MHSR

09.02

Continue to build the capacity of civil society organisations by ensuring access to mainstream funding schemes as well as through public social partnerships that enable the provision of community led support service provision;

MHSR

09.03

Ensure that LGBTIQ+ persons are positively visible across all sectors of society including through the support of large-scale events such as Pride Week;

MHSR

09.04

Provide financial and organisation support for the hosting of EUROPRIDE 2023.

AREA 10:

PROMOTE LGBTIQ+ EQUALITY ON
AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

MFET/MHSR

10.01

Raise the need to achieve LGBTIQ+ equality and share human rights best practices on the grounds of SOGIGESC at the regional and international levels and cooperate with other states or relevant intergovernmental organisations to tackle discrimination and LGBTIQ+ phobia including through platforms such as the United Nations, the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC), the Commonwealth and other intergovernmental fora;

MFET/MHSR

10.02

Where appropriate, continue to encourage other countries to introduce provisions aimed at the recognition of the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, including through:

MFET/MHSR

10.02.01

The decriminalisation of homosexuality and the equalisation of the age of consent;

MFET/MHSR

10.02.02

The adoption of anti-discrimination and anti-hatred legislation;

MFET/MHSR

10.02.03

The introduction of bans on conversion practices;

MFET/MHSR

10.02.04

Recognition of the right to gender identity and the right to physical autonomy and bodily integrity;

MFET/MHSR

10.02.05

Depathologisation of trans identities and intersex bodies;

MFET

10.03

Depending on the situation on the ground, ensure that Maltese Embassies, High Commissions and Permanent Representations take an active role in the promotion of LGBTIQ+ equality in line with national policy and in liaison with other EU Embassies in line with the European External Action Service (EEAS) guidelines entitled Guidelines to Promote and Protect the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Persons.



photo courtesy: Dragana Rankovic

B | MONITORING AND EVALUATION

At the end of each quarter within the time period covered by this document, the SOGIGESC Unit within the HRD will draw up a report focusing on the progress achieved in the implementation of this strategy and action plan. The report will also indicate whether the implementation of the listed actions is on track or otherwise, and if not, propose remedial action from the implementing entity.

In the event that issues in implementation persist, the SOGIGESC Unit through the HRD and the responsible Ministry will proceed at raising concerns at a higher level, as they deem relevant.

An annual report documenting the progress of this strategy and action plan will be presented during an annual conference organised by the SOGIGESC Unit, with the participation of its stakeholders.

In the eventuality that future research or developments indicate persisting gaps that are not adequately addressed in this strategy and action plan, supplementary measures may be included as an Annex to this document.

Human Rights Directorate

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