

European city councils and the LGBT community

Analysis of the results

June 2009

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1. Purposes of the research

We can find the framework for this Research in the Municipal Plan for the LGBT Community, promoted by the Direction of Civil Rights of the City of Barcelona. It is based on the exploitation of data from the questionnaire *European city councils and the LGBT community*, disseminated amongst LGBT organisations of different European countries.

From the basic results obtained, whose main aim was to have a picture of the relationships between the LGBT organisations and their respective municipal authorities, we tried to exploit the results so that we can have a double view:

- On the one hand, identifying the dynamics and common problems in Europe, grouping together public policies for the community.
- On the other hand, providing information regarding the existing situation in Barcelona for all the participating cities, so that similarities can be identified, or if, on the contrary, we can say that a specific model for Barcelona exists.

2. Methodology

2.1. Views of analysis

The research is based on the exploitation, systematisation and analysis of the LGBT organisations' feedback. We have processed the answers by using a combination of either quantitative (exploitation of results) and qualitative (detection of speech) analysis methods.

We are presenting the results from two viewpoints:

- **From a global point of view:** by a diagnosis of reality at a European level.
- **According to cultural and geographical areas:** according to specific situations in Scandinavia, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

2.2. Selection criteria

When selecting the cities to participate in this research we have given priority to obtaining a diverse sample which includes all the possibilities and grades of relation (cooperation and rejection) of the city councils towards their LGBT local organisations.

As a guarantee of all different situations existing at a European level, we have used three criteria to select the cities to be analysed:

1. **Cultural and geographical criteria:** cities that, at least, are equivalent to Barcelona in population or are capital of the region or country. Also we had in mind four cultural regions which interact with LGBT organisations (in either a positive or negative way): Scandinavia, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.

In the specific case of Spain we wanted to further expand the research by choosing cities whose local governments belong to different political parties, all throughout the country and which are capitals of regions or provinces.

2. **Gender Criteria:** due to the invisibility of homosexual women, we made an effort to contact lesbian associations or mixed associations with a woman as president, which is quite common in Scandinavia and The Netherlands. It is worth noting that in Spain some of the groups participating in the research are mixed but have a lesbian as president.
3. **Ideological diversity:** an effort to contact local LGBT organisations with ideological diversity has been made, either because they are members of the ILGA, or not, or because they work in the same city but have different and sometimes opposing ideological criteria (this is the case in Rome, amongst others).

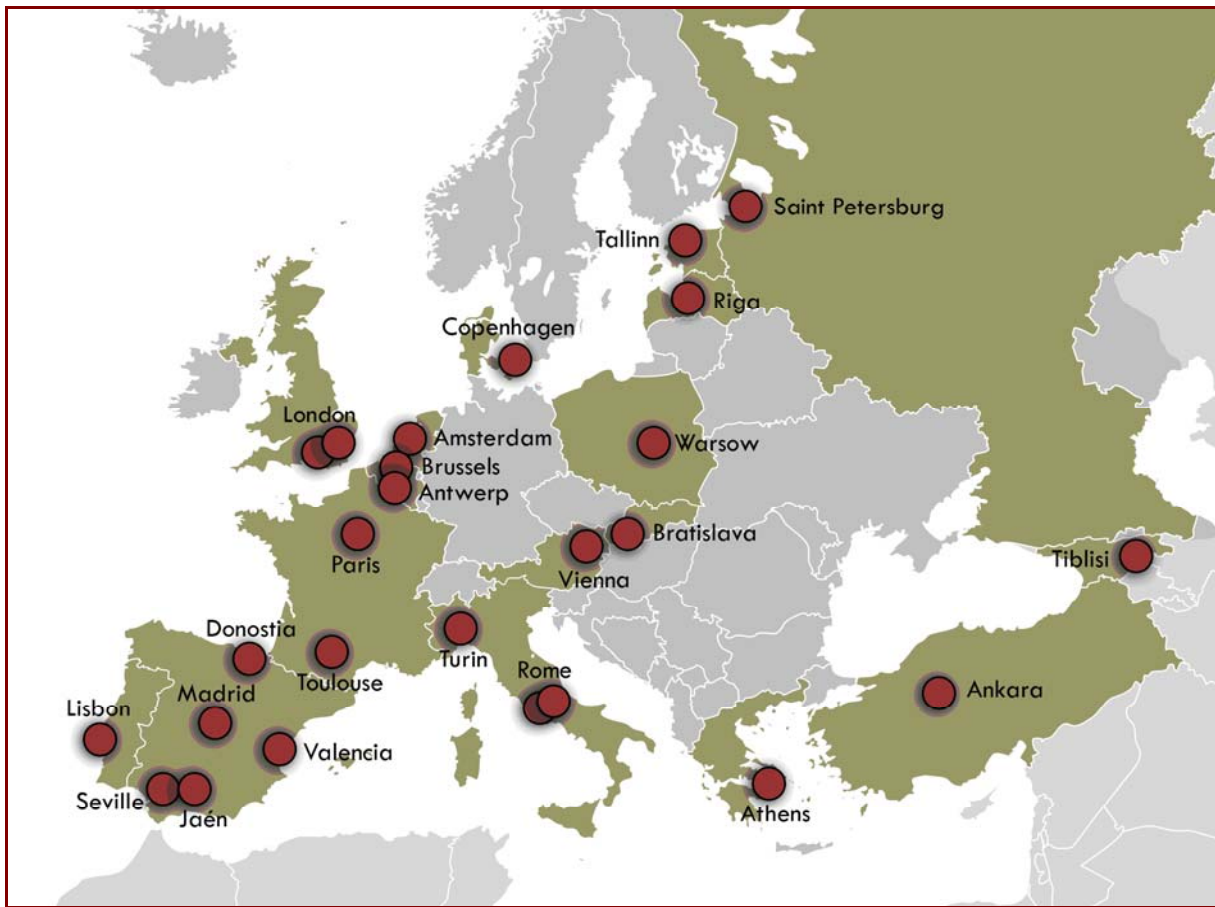
Also, we got in contact with federations that already have this internal diversity, as in Paris, Turin and Antwerp. In Scandinavia, including this diversity has been difficult, as the organisations are unique due to their longstanding tradition. On the other hand, in Eastern Europe diversity is not common as the organisations have been created recently.

2.3. Sample obtained

Out of 57 questionnaires submitted, we received an answer from 26 LGBT organisations from 17 different countries, which means a reply rate of 46%.

Geographically, this allowed us to obtain data from cities of all the regions mentioned: Scandinavia, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, as you can see in the following illustration:

Figure 1. European countries and cities that answered the survey



Source: own

Spain is the most represented country, with up to five cities (Madrid, Jaén, Valencia, Seville and Donostia-San Sebastian). We also received more than two responses from countries like Belgium (Brussels and Antwerp), France (Toulouse and Paris) and Italy (Rome and Turin).

Finally, in London and Rome we worked with the replies from two different local organisations.

Table 1. People and organisations that answered to the questionnaire

Interviewee	Organisation	City	Country
Kurt Krickler	Homosexuelle Initiative Wien (HOSI)	Vienna	Austria
Michel Duponcelle	Tels Quels asbl	Brussels	Belgium
Yves Aerts	Holebifederatie	Antwerp	Belgium
Steffen Jensen	LBL Denmark	Copenhagen	Denmark
Jan Benec	Iniciativa Inakost	Bratislava	Slovakia
Miguel Ángel González	COGAM	Madrid	Spain
Gonzalo Serrano	Colega Jaén	Jaén	Spain
Luisa Notario	Col·lectiu Lambda de LGBT del País Valencià	Valencia	Spain
Rosa Mena	DeFrente LGBT Sevilla	Seville	Spain
Sergio Íñiguez	Gehitu	Donostia-San Sebastian	Spain
Reimo Mets	Mtü Seky	Tallin	Estonia
Andreu Coll	Arc-en-ciel Toulouse	Toulouse	France
Hervé Caldo	Centre LGBT de Paris	Paris	France
Paata Sabelashvili	Inclusive Foundation	Tbilisi	Georgia
Dimitri Tsambrounis	Athens Pride	Athens	Greece
Tania Barkhuis	COC Amsterdam	Amsterdam	The Netherlands
Fabrizio Marrazzo	Arcigay Roma	Rome	Italy
Roberta Padovano	Coordinamento Torino Pride	Turin	Italy
-	Arcilesbica	Rome	Italy
Kristine Garina	Mozaika, Alliance of LGBT and their Friends	Riga	Latvia
Greg Czarnecki	KPH	Warsaw	Poland
Miguel Pinto	Associação ILGA Portugal	Lisbon	Portugal
Jane Standing	Kairos in Soho	London	United Kingdom
Jackie Lewis	UNISON Greater London Regional LGBT Committee	London	United Kingdom
Dmitri Bartenev	North-West Human Rights Center	Saint Petersburg	Russia
Ismail Alacaoglu	Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association	Ankara	Turkey

Source: own

2.4. Processing data

From the obtained sample, statistical data was extrapolated, whose results will be shown in this document.

In some cases, we have processed questions with an open answer by grouping together different themes or making groups based on similarity, so that comparisons can be made without multiple cases of analysis that would make it difficult to detect general trends. However, in most of the questions we have shown disaggregated results that give an idea of the different nuances and of each local context.

Finally, in the cases of London and Rome (with replies by two groups from each city) we only counted one reply for each city regarding participative and relation channels, so as to ensure that an unbiased picture of each city is being given. In exchange, in relation to the evaluative elements and the future challenges, two replies per city counted, so as to show that the two cities represent an increased diversity for the whole group.

2.5. Structuring results

The results of the research have been structured according to the following criteria:

- 1. Considering the LGBT community in the local policies:** in this first paragraph a description is given of the situation according to the relationships between the city councils and the LGBT community, the existence of institutional relation channels or consultative committees, and the definition of specific policies.
- 2. Assessment of political actions:** we identify the positive and negative aspects of the city councils' policies towards the LGBT community and how these are perceived.
- 3. Future challenges:** lastly, there is a third criterion of analysis consisting in the identification of the challenges that the cities will have to face in the future regarding the LGBT community.

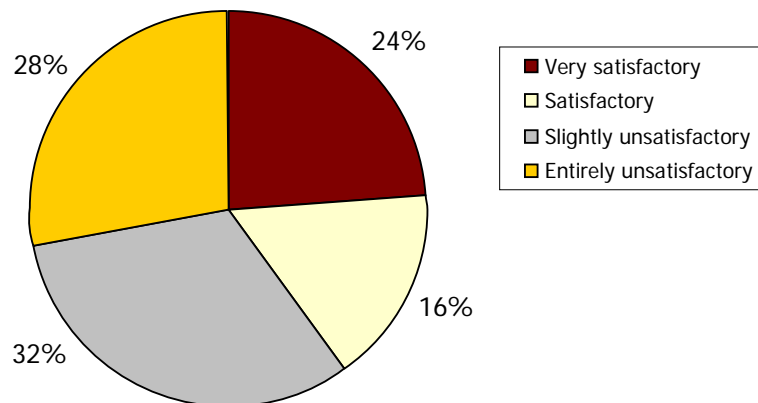
3. Obtained results

3.1. Considering the LGBT community in the local policies

3.1.1. Relationships with LGBT associations and the LGBT community

From the total of the LGBT groups surveyed, 24% say that the relationships of their city council with the community are very satisfactory and another 24% say they are satisfactory. But a majority of them (60%) believe that the city council does not have a good relationship with the LGBT organisations (*Graph 1*).

Graph 1. Assessment of the relationship of the city council with the LGBT associations and the LGBT community



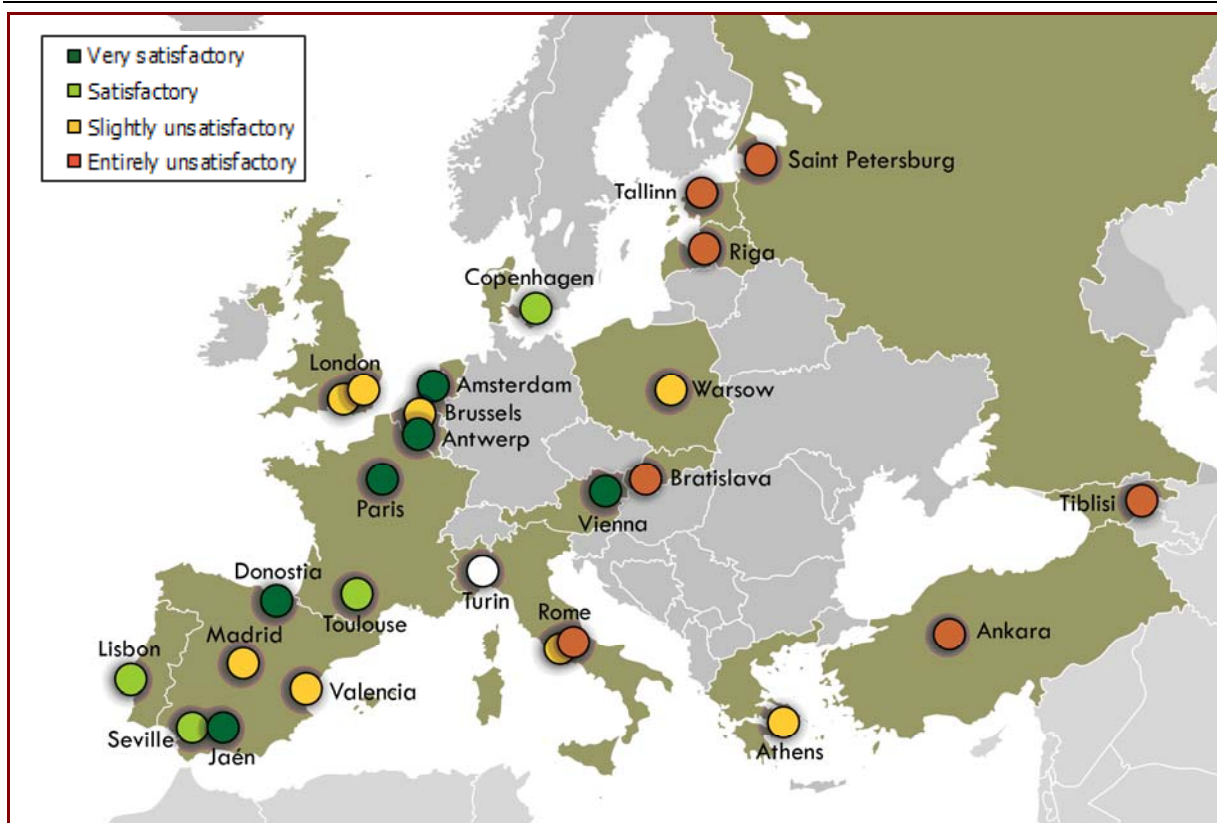
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If one looks at the different regions, we see that **there is a positive trend in Scandinavia and Central Europe** (with the exceptions of Brussels and London). On the other hand, **in all the cities analysed from Eastern Europe, the relationships are slightly satisfactory or not satisfactory at all, while in the Mediterranean area both trends are present.** (*Figure 2*):

- On the one hand, a group of Spanish cities with good or very good relationships (Seville, Jaén and Donostia-San Sebastian), and also Lisbon.

- On the other hand, a group of cities like Rome, Athens, Madrid and Valencia where the LGBT groups evaluate these relationships negatively.

Figure 2. Assessment of the relationship of the city council with the LGBT associations and the LGBT community



Source: own

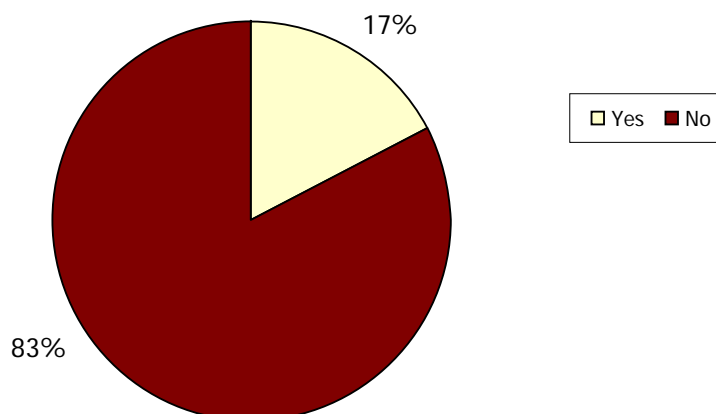
3.1.2. Existence of consultative and representative channels

The large majority of cities (83%) do not have official consultative councils or committees where LGBT groups are represented, such as the Consell Municipal de Gais, Lesbianes i dones i homes Transsexuals (GLdhT) (Municipal Council of gays, lesbians and transgendered men and women) existing in Barcelona

In exchange, **they do have a channel with similar characteristics in Rome, London, Brussels and Copenhagen.** Among this group (representing 17% of the total) **there is no consensus as to the level of satisfaction regarding the way this forum works¹.**

¹ The organisation LBL Denmark did not assess how the council works, and for this reason it has not been included in Graph 2.1.

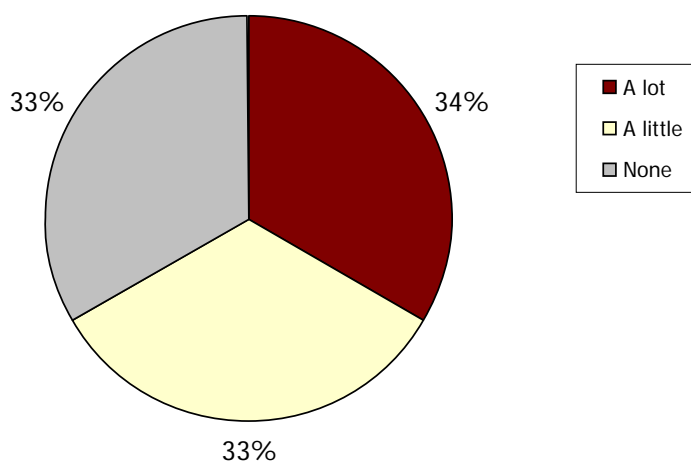
Graph 2. Existence of an official consultative council or committee where LGBT groups are represented



Source: own

Graph 2.1. Level of satisfaction

Base: replied YES to the question about the existence of an official consultative council or committee



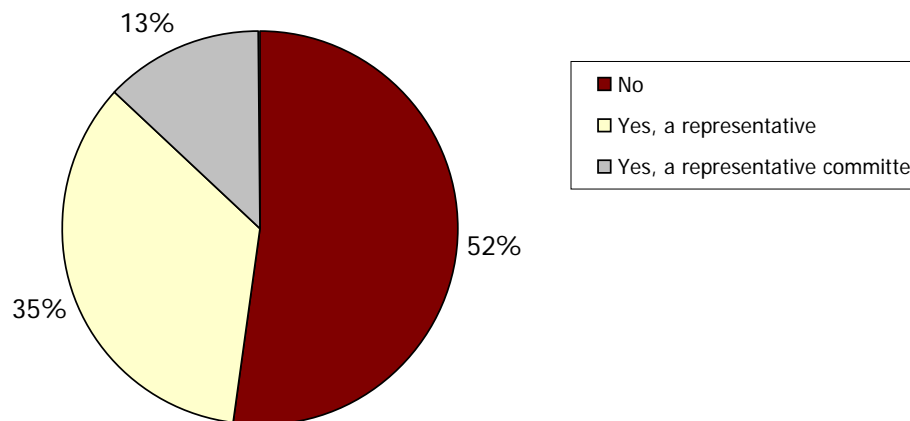
Source: own

3.1.3. Existence of relations channels

Over half of the city councils in the cities analysed do not have any specific internal structure which is aimed at communicating with local LGBT organisations. In the councils where such structures exist, they are divided into:

- A group of cities where relations are established through a representative, which makes up 35% of the total. Within this group there are some Mediterranean cities (Jaén, Seville and Donostia-San Sebastian²), but there are **also some cities in Central Europe and Scandinavia** (Paris, Brussels, Antwerp and Copenhagen).
- A second, much smaller group (13%) is made up of cities of Central Europe (Toulouse, Vienna³ and London) where there are **representative committees**.

Graph 3. Existence of a certain specific internal relations channel with LGBT organisations



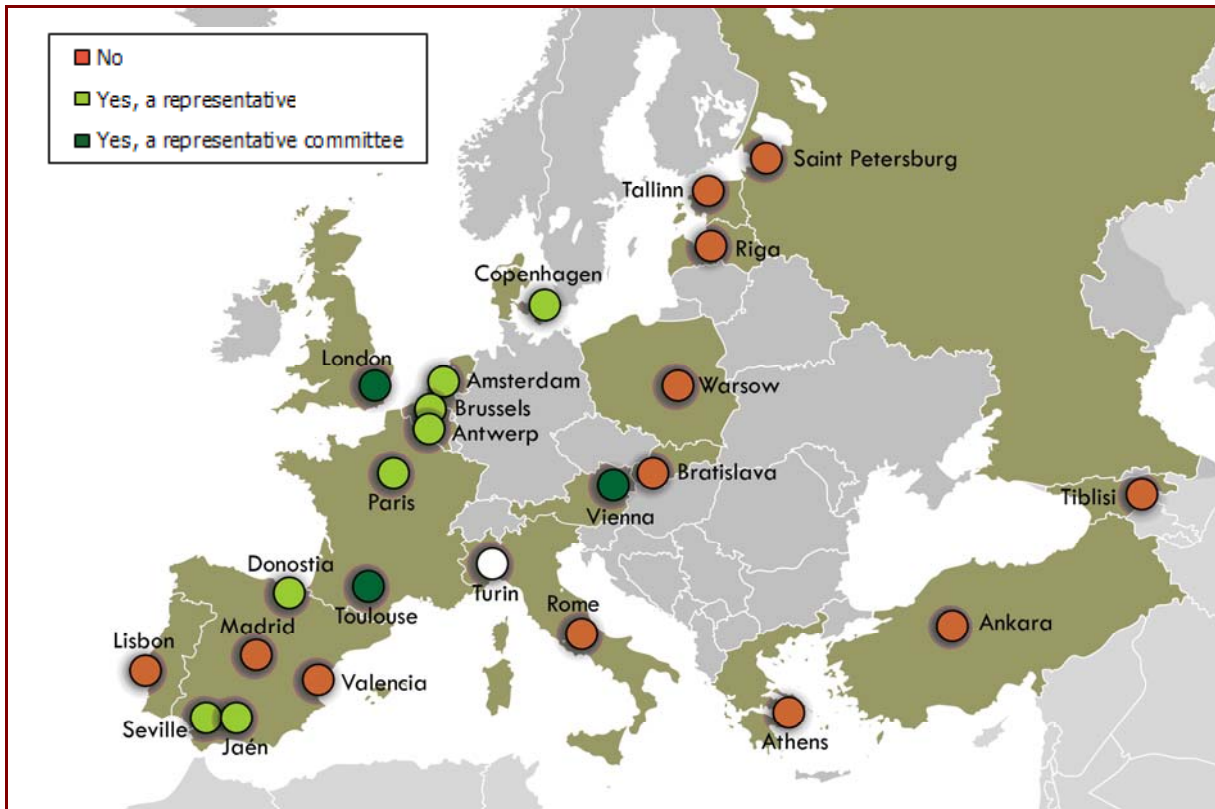
Source: own

As can be seen in Figure 3, **the existence of certain relations channels with the LGBT community is a characteristic of Central Europe and Scandinavia, which shows signs of being adopted in Spanish cities where there are good relations between the city councils and the organisations.**

² With regards to Jaén and Seville, the relations representative is the alderman, therefore making it difficult to talk about specific resources.

³ Vienna has a specific office for relations with the city's LGBT community.

Figure 3. Existence of a certain specific internal relations channel with LGBT organisations



Source: own

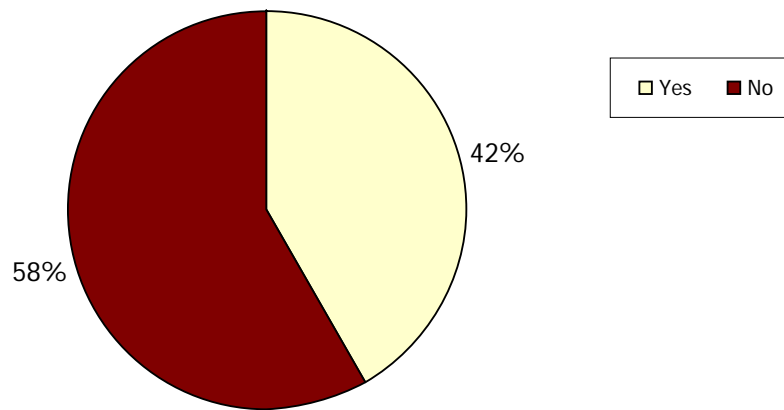
3.1.4. Specific action plans or specific policies

As can be previously observed when referring to the relations channels, **the majority of European cities (58%) do not have a specific action plan accounting for economic resources and specific staff for the LGBT community (Graph 4).**

However, **42% of the municipal authorities do have such action plans in place** (even though the level of organisation, autonomy and resources varies between them). Once again, **cities in Central Europe and Scandinavia implement the largest number of these types of policies**, which are present in the Spanish cities of Donostia-San Sebastian, Madrid and Jaén. However, there is not one city in Eastern Europe which has implemented such policies (Figure 4).

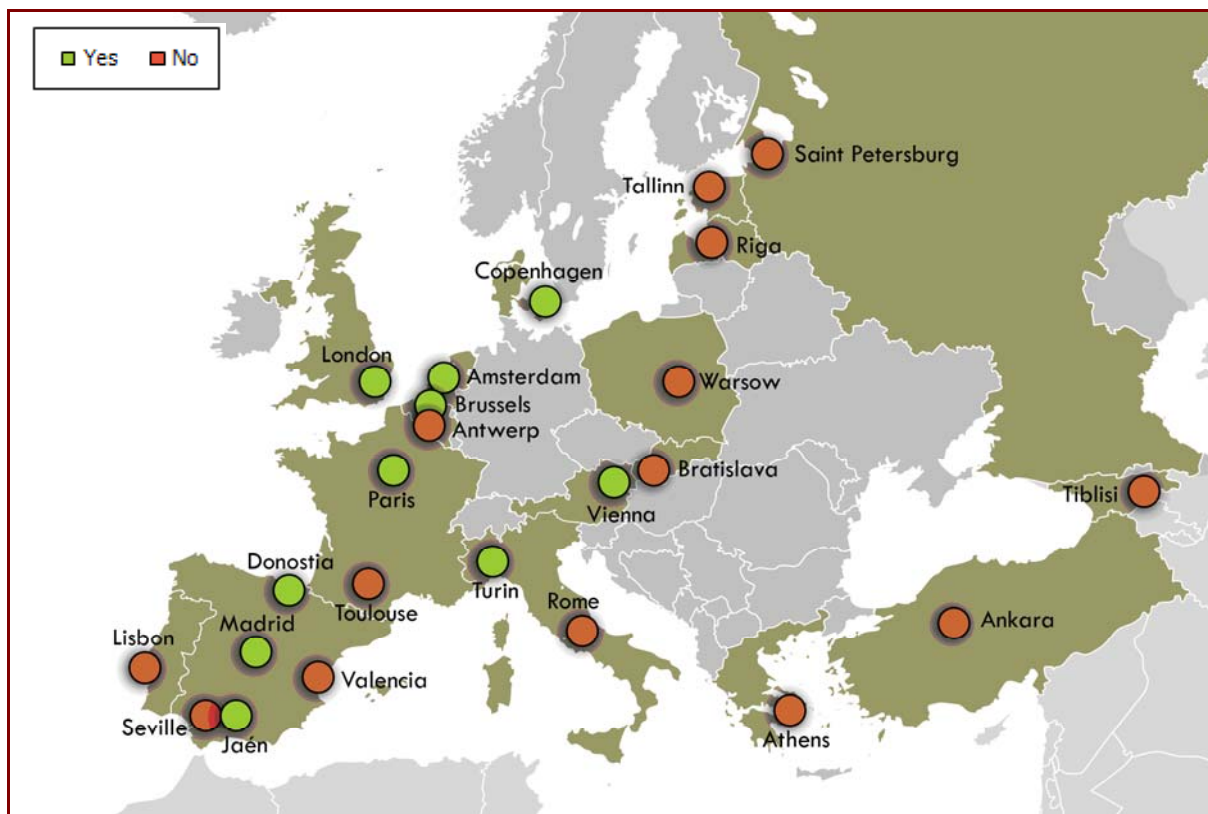
The organisations' assessment of the specific plans are fundamentally positive, with 56% stating that they are very or quite satisfied with the aforementioned policies and only 11% are not satisfied at all (*Graph 5*).

Graph 4. Existing action plan or policy aimed at the LGBT community, for economic resources, staff and projects (studies, campaigns, exhibitions, etc.)



Source: own

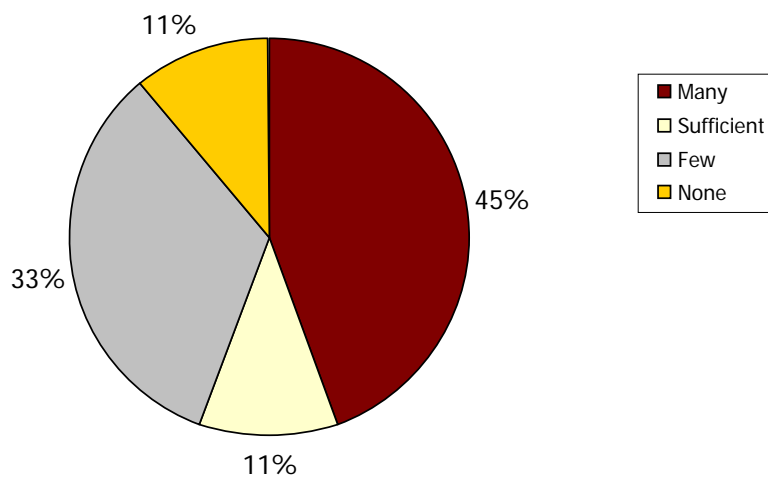
Figure 4. Existing action plan or policy aimed at the LGBT community, for economic resources, staff and projects



Source: own

Graph 4.1. Level of satisfaction

Base: answered positively when asked the question of whether there were any specific action plans or policies in place.



Source: own

3.1.5. Areas of joint work

The main area of joint work carried out between LGBT organisations and their respective city councils⁴ are the campaigns and activities (56%), as well as the implementation and maintenance of care services (29%) (Graph 5).

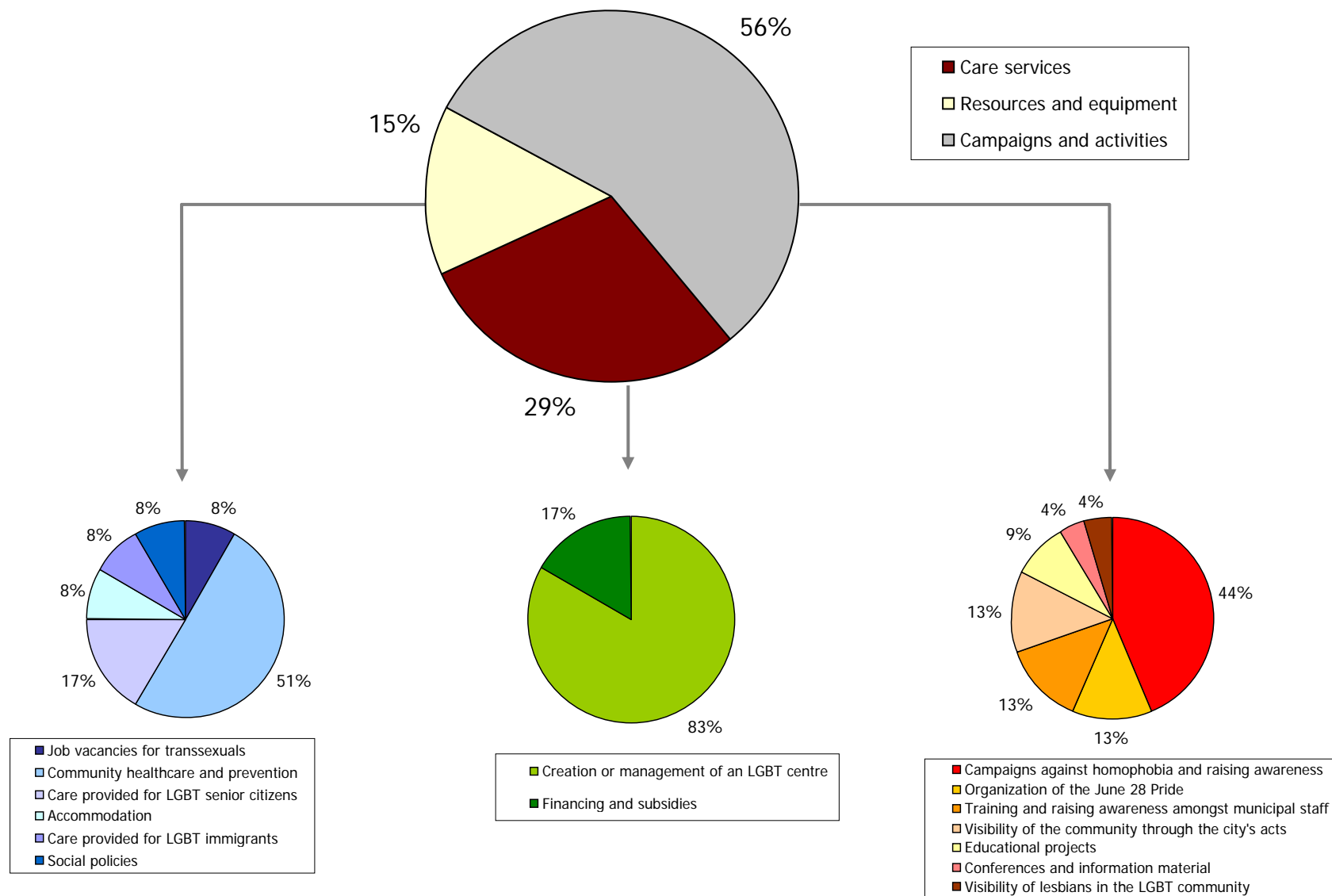
In the former example the most widespread actions are campaigns against homophobia and raising awareness within society (44%), the organisation of the June 28 Pride, training and raising awareness amongst the municipal staff and increasing the visibility of the community in the cities' acts (three of which with 13%).

In relation to the joint collaboration on care services, the majority referred to community healthcare, HIV prevention and prevention of other sexually transmitted diseases (51%), followed by care initiatives for LGBT senior citizens (17%).

Finally, the least mentioned area relates to the provision of resources and equipment provided by the city councils for these organisations, (15%), mainly used in the creation or management of LGBT centres (83%).

⁴ 9 organisations did not identify any area of joint work carried out with their city councils.

Graph 5. Main issues or problems for organisations who work in collaboration with their city councils



3.2. Assessment of political actions

3.2.1. Assessment of the city councils' actions

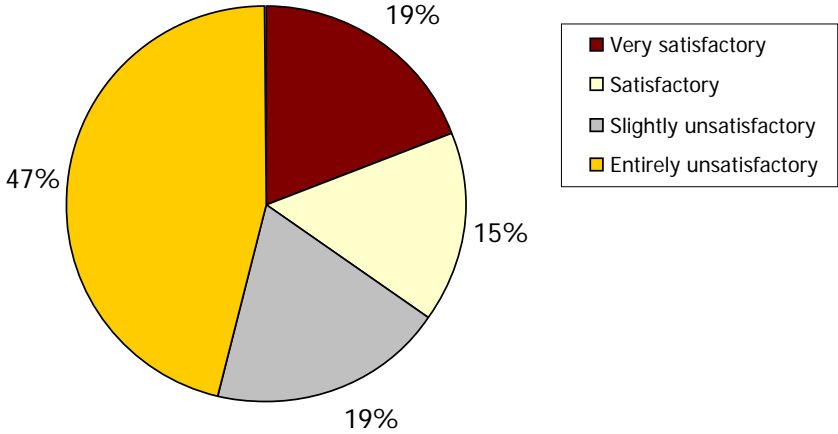
Of all the organisations surveyed, **65% stated that the city council acts in a negative way in relation to the LGBT community** and only 19% value it as being very satisfactory (*Graph 6*).

The analysis carried out according to geographical areas shows that in **Eastern Europe, negative results were shown for the cities surveyed**, whilst there was **positive feedback from Copenhagen (Scandinavia) and generally satisfactory levels were recorded in Central Europe** (*Figure 5*).

The Mediterranean area has displayed the most consistent attitudes even though **there is a clear link between the existence of a specific relations channel with the LGBT organizations** (*Figure 3*) and a **positive feedback relating to the city council's actions towards said organizations**.

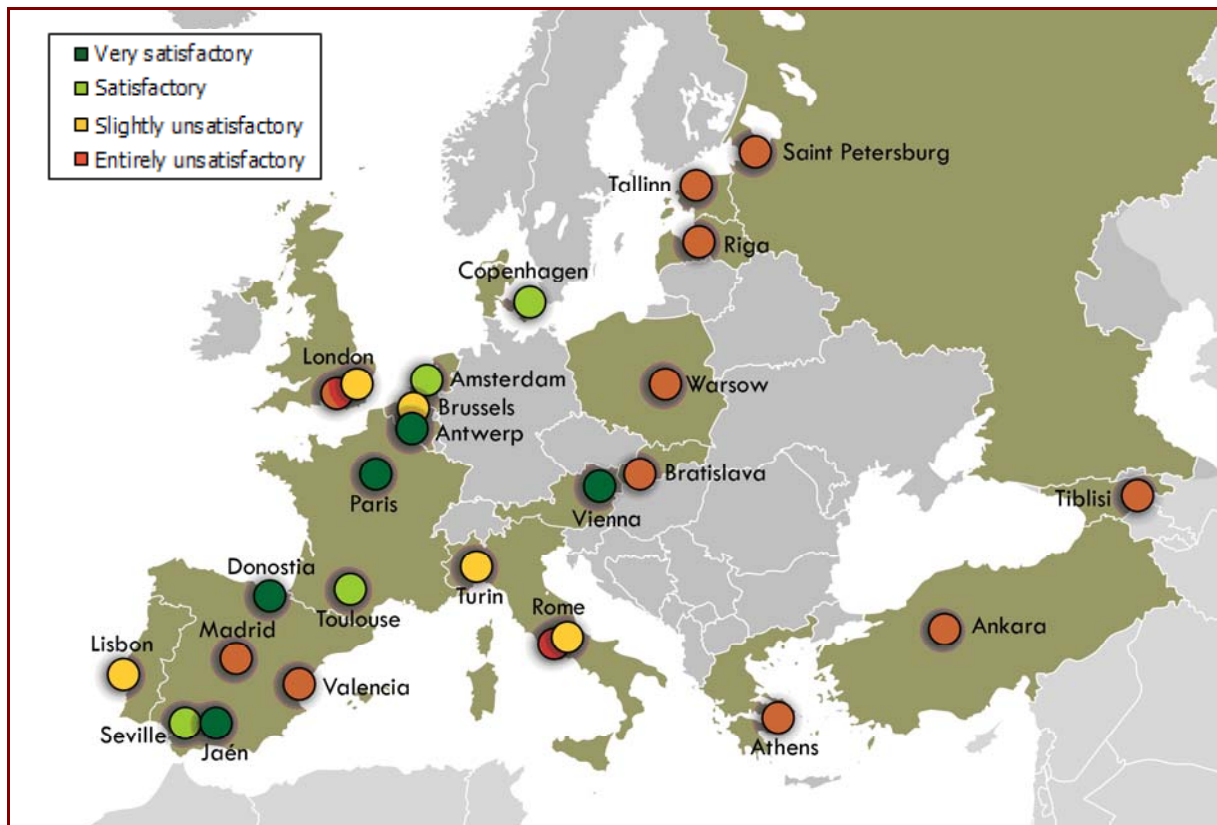
In Rome and London, where feedback was given regarding two organisations, there are differing levels of satisfaction, in both cases negative.

Graph 6. Assessment of city councils' attitude towards the LGBT community



Source: own

Figure 5. Assessment of city councils' attitude towards the LGBT community



Source: own

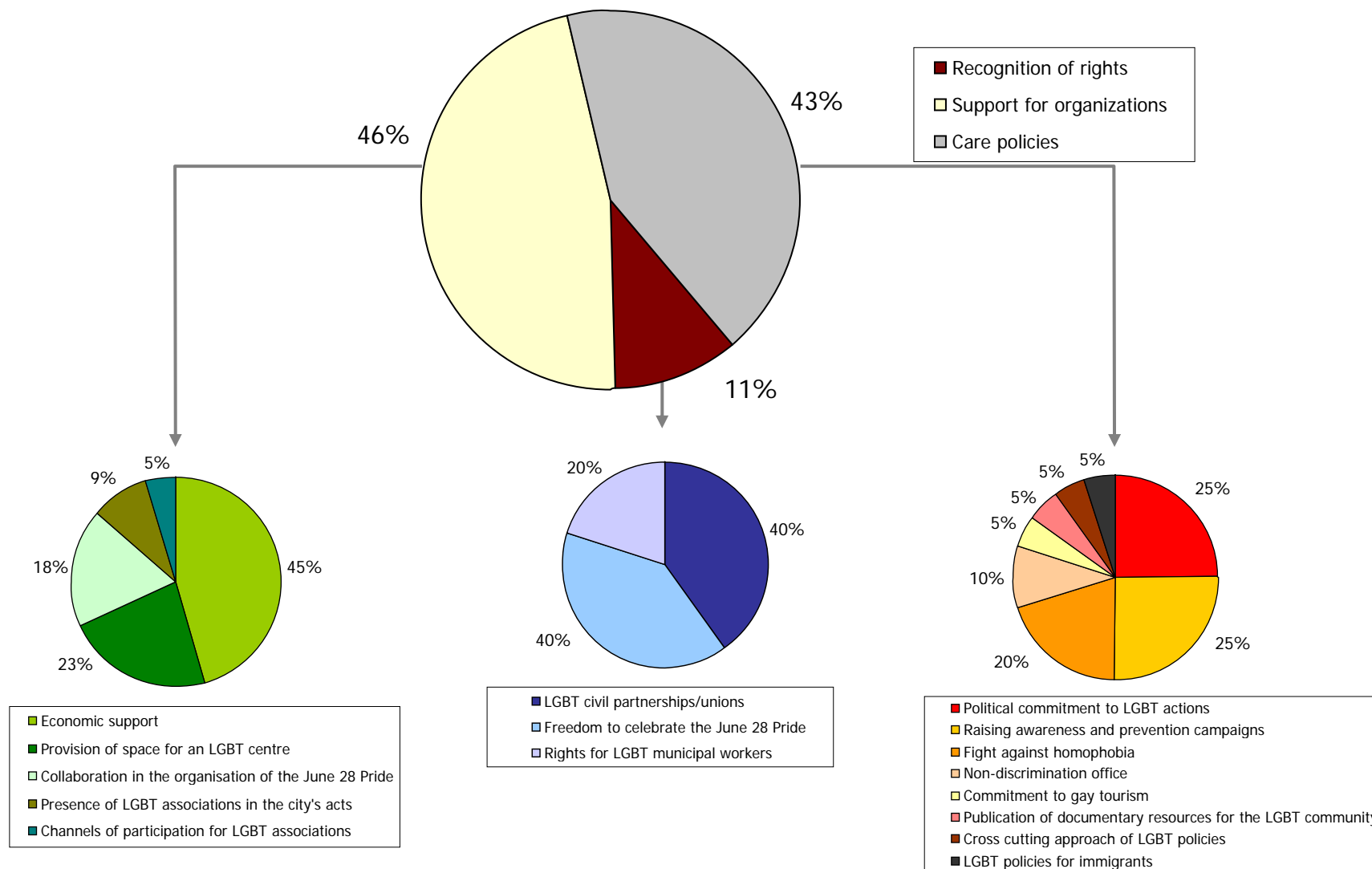
3.2.2. Positive actions

Amongst the municipal activities addressed to the LGBT community undertaken by the cities of the survey which received positive feedback from the organisations⁵, **46% refer to the support for the organisations, 43% are related to care policies and 11% to the recognition of rights** (*Graph 7*).

Amongst the support for associations, the most mentioned actions are the **economic support (45%) and the provision of space (23%)**.

⁵ It is worth noting that eight organisations, most of them from Eastern Europe, did not identify any political action of their respective city councils as being satisfactory.

Graph 7. City council activities addressed to the LGBT community that received positive feedback



However, in terms of care policies special attention is given to **city councils' political commitment to undertaking actions for the LGBT community (25%), raising awareness and prevention campaigns (25%) and the fight against homophobia (20%).**

Finally, the positive feedback resulting from the actions about recognition of rights is fundamental for the objective of **creating LGBT civil partnerships/unions (40%) and the freedom to celebrate the June 28 Pride (40%).**

The regional analysis is useful to determine which actions receive better feedback in each case:

- **Scandinavia:** care policies (awareness campaigns).
- **Central Europe:** care policies (awareness campaigns and political commitment).
- **Eastern Europe:** recognition of rights (freedom to celebrate the June 28 Pride).
- **Mediterranean:** support for organisations (economic aid and collaboration in the organisation of the June 28 Pride).

The feedback also helped to identify **good practices** in municipal LGBT policies and in terms of collaboration with organisations, which **are mainly concentrated in Central Europe**, as we can easily observe:

- Awareness plan for government employees (Toulouse, Turin and Jaén).
- Non-discrimination office (Toulouse, Vienna).
- Suicide prevention programme (Paris).
- Emergency accommodation for young LGBT people (Paris).
- LGBT community and social action centre (London).
- Programme for LGBT senior citizens (Vienna and Antwerp).
- Programme for LGBT immigrants (Amsterdam, Antwerp and Copenhagen).
- Programme against homophobic bullying (London).
- Programmes for educational projects (Donostia-San Sebastian and Turin).

3.2.3. Negative actions

The other side of the coin is the negative feedback provided by LGBT organisations about some city councils' actions, either in terms of results and implementation, or because of government's inaction.

In this group⁶, most of this negative feedback is related to **care policies (43%)**, followed by **the support for organisations (46%)** and **the recognition of rights (11%)** (Graph 8).

The most common criticisms about policies are the **absence of specific care resources (36%)**, **the absence of political will (19%)** and the lack of support for associations (18%). However, **the analysis of the relationship with the organisations reflects lack of consultation and participation (62% and 25%, respectively)**.

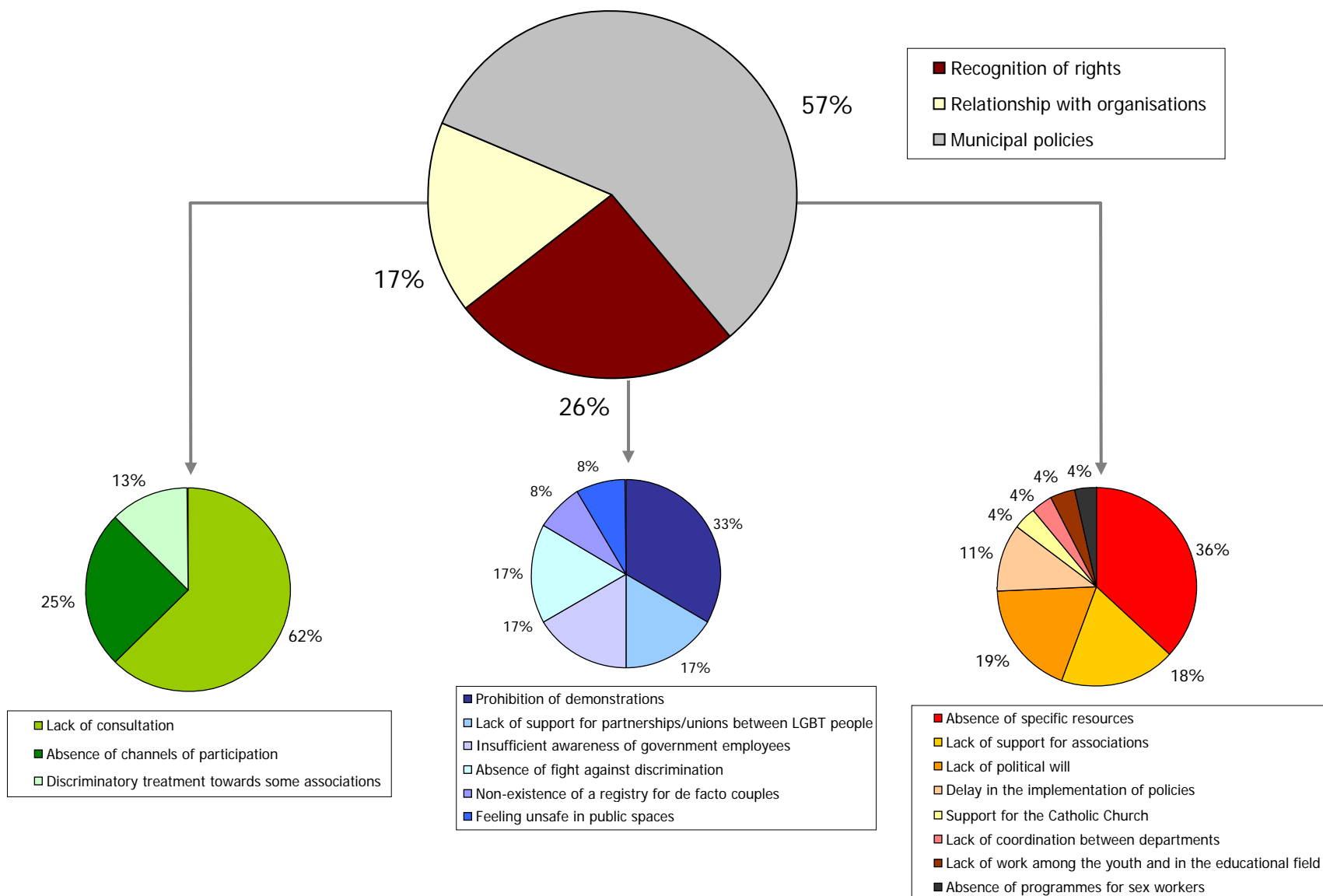
Finally, in terms of rights, the **prohibition of demonstrations (33%)** and **the recognition of partnerships/unions between LGBT people (17%)** are the two main complaints.

As with the positive feedback, the regional analysis is also useful to determine which actions receive more criticism in each case:

- **Scandinavia:** no negative feedback has been received.
- **Central Europe:** municipal policies (lack of specific resources and delay in the implementation of political commitments).
- **Eastern Europe:** public policies (lack of support for associations and lack of political commitment).
- **Mediterranean:** municipal policies (lack of specific resources).

⁶ It is worth noting that three organisations did not identify any political action of their respective city councils as being criticisable.

Graph 8. City council activities addressed to the LGBT community that received negative feedback



3.3. Challenges for the future

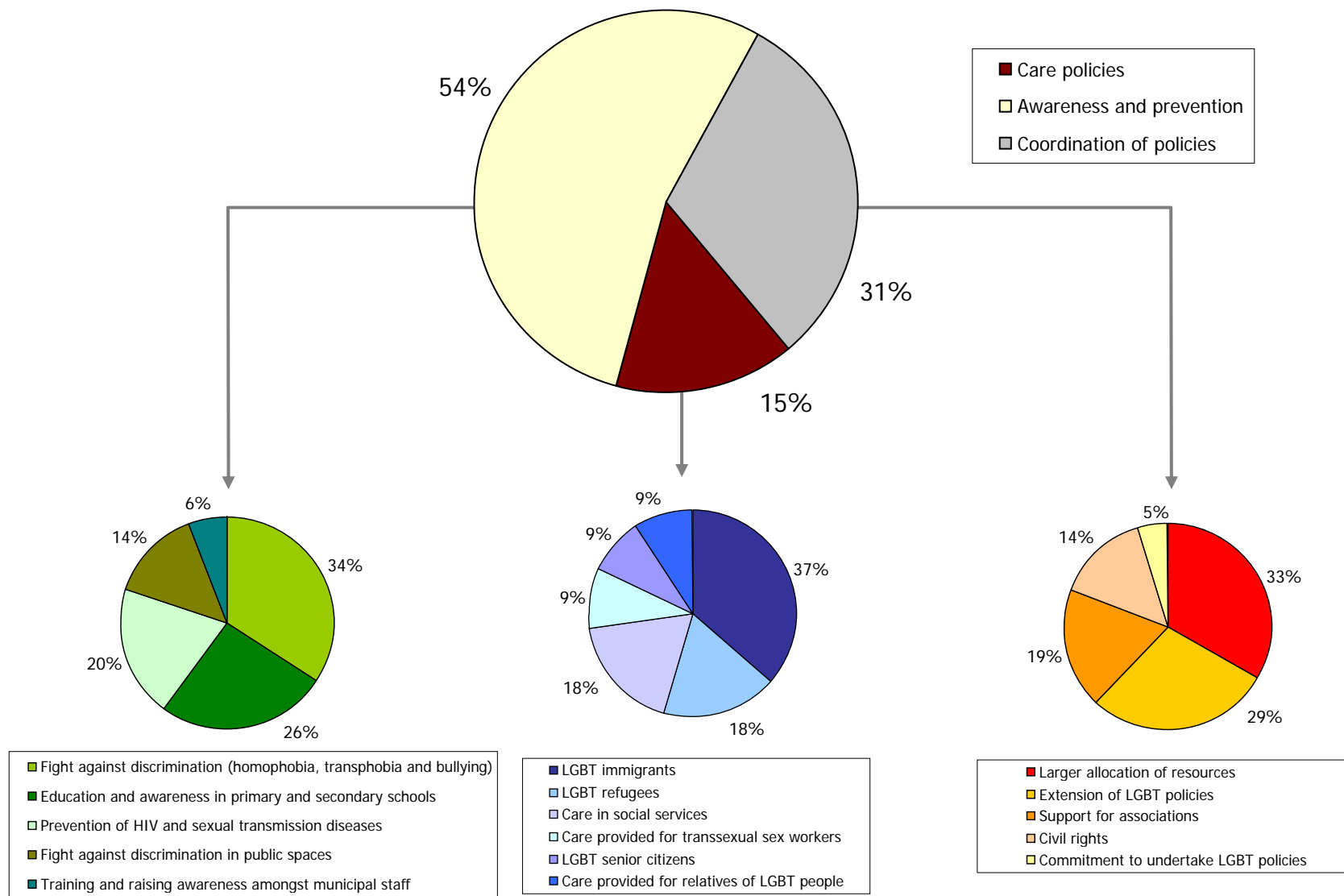
The questionnaire also helped identify the main challenges at the city level, according to the different organisations. In this sense, the first questions raised are related to **awareness and prevention (54%), especially with regard to the fight against discrimination (34%)** and education in sexual diversity and awareness in primary and secondary schools (26%) (*Graph 9*).

Secondly, the questionnaire mentions the challenges related to the **coordination of public policies (31%): larger allocation of resources (33%)** or extension of actions to other areas (29%). Finally, 15% of the challenges refer to **care policies, mainly in terms of care for LGBT immigrants (37%),** refugees (18%) and social services (18%).

Similarly, the analysis of the results per geographic area helped determine the main challenges that appear in each case:

- **Scandinavia:** fight against discrimination.
- **Central Europe:** fight against discrimination and care for LGBT immigrants.
- **Eastern Europe:** larger allocation of resources and support for associations.
- **Mediterranean:** fight against discrimination and awareness campaigns.

Graph 9. Main challenges at the city level in connection with the LGBT community



3.4. Conclusions

3.4.1. General situation

The LGBT movement has a long history in the first 15 EU countries and Norway, which has made it easier for almost all public administrations to adopt the promotion of LGBT rights as their own. Indicators are particularly high in Scandinavia and The Netherlands, where Nazism did not manage to destroy the homosexual movement of the 30s, keeping it active after World War II.

We can mention as remarkable examples of this long history of North European LGBT political action, the appointment of a "Defender of the LGBT community" (*Homosex-ombudsman*) in Sweden (1999) and the pioneering recognition of same sex marriage in Denmark (1989). However, there are also countries in the EU where the influence of religious hierarchies, dictatorships and certain social conservatism has prevented institutions from developing a positive commitment towards the LGBT movement, as is the case in Portugal, Italy and Greece.

Finally, in Russia, the former Soviet republics and Turkey there is still a large delay in terms of recognition of basic LGBT rights, with June 28 demonstrations prohibited in Warsaw, Riga or Moscow. This situation is largely due both to the inheritance from the former Soviet Union (Stalinism practiced homophobia, thus perpetuating ancestral prejudices prior to the 1917 revolution), and to the influence of religious hierarchies (being homophobic themselves). During Communism, these hierarchies were a source of political opposition and then were further strengthened during the transition to democracy, thus reaffirming very conservative social values and their rejection of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals. Finally, despite having a secular society, the influence of Islam has stopped Turkey from making progress towards the LGBT movement, forcing it to survive between legality and illegality.

3.4.2. Situation of the different geographic and cultural areas

1. Scandinavia.

- Cities have channels of participation and relations are established through a representative.
- City councils implement action plans or specific policies for the LGBT community.
- The feedback provided by LGBT organisations about municipal actions is very positive.
- The positive feedback about city council actions is related to the awareness campaigns and no criticisms have been made.
- The main challenge for the future that has been identified is the fight against discrimination.

2. Central Europe.

- City councils have channels of participation and relations are established through a representative or a committee.
- City councils implement action plans or specific policies for the LGBT community.
- The feedback from the organisations is, in general, satisfactory.
- The positive feedback about city council actions is related to the awareness campaigns and the political commitment. However, there is criticism related to the lack of specific resources and the delay in the implementation of political commitments.
- The main challenges for the future that have been identified are the fight against discrimination and the care for LGBT immigrants.

3. Eastern Europe.

- City councils do not have channels of relation or representation for the organisations and do not implement any kind of action plans or specific policies for the LGBT community.
- The organisations have provided very negative feedback about the city councils' activities.
- The positive feedback about city council actions is related to the recognition of rights (freedom to celebrate the June 28 Pride). However, there is criticism related to the lack of support for associations and the lack of political commitment.
- The main challenges for the future that have been identified are a larger allocation of resources and the support for associations.

4. Mediterranean.

- Spanish city councils have a good relationship with organisations, with channels of participation or relation established through representatives with little specialisation.
- Very few cities have specific action plans, and where they exist, resources are very limited.
- There is a vast range of differing opinions on city councils actions, although we observe a clear link between the existence of specific structures of relations with LGBT organisations and the positive feedback about city council actions provided by these.
- The positive feedback about city council actions is related to the economic aid and the collaboration in the organisation of the June 28 Pride. However, there is criticism related to the lack of specific resources.
- The main challenges for the future that have been identified are the fight against discrimination and the impetus given to awareness campaigns.