Greece adopts historic bill introducing marriage equality

News, Inclusion and Equality, Legal Protection, Family, Greece, Marriage Equality

> We welcome and celebrate with local activists the news that the Greek parliament has adopted an historic bill introducing marriage equality, granting marriage and adoption rights to same-sex couples, as well as fully recognising marriages that took place in other countries, and family ties of children who were born abroad to same-sex parents.

ILGA-Europe and NELFA welcome the news from yesterday, 15 February 2024, that the Greek Parliament adopted a bill introducing marriage equality.

This vote reflects the trend in Greek and European societies towards increasing equality for same-sex couples. The new marriage equality law will grant marriage and adoption rights to same-sex couples, as well as fully recognise all marriages and family ties of children who were born abroad to same-sex parents, and comes as a result of clear political leadership from the current Greek government.

The adoption of this law comes at a time when public acceptance of LGBTI people is on the rise in Greece and across Europe. In fact, an EU survey conducted in 2023 shows that public opinion in Greece as regards same-sex marriage is at an all-time high, marking also the largest increase in approval across all of the EU since the last iteration of the survey in 2019.

The law also follows a number of important legislative steps taken by the current Greek government to improve the access of LGBTI people to their rights and dignity, such as becoming the fifth European country to ban intersex genital mutilation (IGM) in July 2023, lifting the ban on men who have sex with men to donate blood in January 2023 and banning so-called ‘conversion practices’ against LGBTI minors and ‘vulnerable’ LGBTI people in May 2023.

Despite this important step towards equality for LGBTI families, the law does not remove all discrimination as:

- The law does not allow for access to in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) for same-sex couples of two women, meaning that the current discriminatory practice of only single women unable to conceive a child being able to access IVF in a Greek clinic, persists. This should also be made possible for same-sex couples made of two women, who also cannot conceive a child otherwise. Of the 19 EU countries which allow access to IVF for single women, the vast majority of them also allow access to IVF for female couples, coming to a total of 15. This reflects trends across the EU to ensure more equitable access to family and reproductive rights.
- Currently in Greece, altruistic surrogacy is available to opposite-sex couples only, creating a discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation i.e. gay men do not have equal access to the ability to have a child and form a family. The new law has not addressed this.

Greece’s adoption of marriage equality is a hugely important step for the recognition of equality of all couples, and a first step in achieving equality for all parents and people who wish to form a family. We encourage the Greek government to look at the remaining gaps in legislation and to propose measures to bring full equality for rainbow

families in Greece.

Join statement by:

- ILGA-Europe
- NELFA – Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations