

NARRATIVE REPORT

Possible Project Title:	Raising awareness on the needs of LGBT people in Cyprus: Targeting evidence-based change in the sociopolitical context
Name of the implementing organization:	Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA) & accept - LGBT Cyprus
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Date of organization's registration with the authorities:	CFPA – December 1971 accept - LGBT Cyprus – in process of registration
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The project, **Raising awareness on the needs of LGBT people in Cyprus: Targeting evidence-based change in the sociopolitical context**, was aiming at disseminating the results of the report resulting from the study «Sexual Orientation in Cyprus: Mapping the socio-political change, experiences and needs», conducted within the 7th ILGA-Documentation Fund.

The activities to reach the aim included:

- 1) Design and printing of the full English report;
- 2) Translation of the report's executive summary into Greek, design and printing;
- 3) Organization of approximately ten meetings with MPs of relevant parliamentary committees (i.e. Human Rights Committee) and five individual meetings with representatives of five political youth sections to present the findings and needs in person;
- 4) Presentation of findings in academic and professional conferences.

Following the Action Plan (Delegation of Tasks and Timeframe), the activities 4,5 and 6 were undertaken by the coordinator.

Specifically the activities referred to:

Activity 4: Organization of individual meetings with MPs and Political youth representatives. The actions included sending invitations and agendas for meetings. The Arrangement of at least 10 individual meetings with newly elected MPs targeting those belonging to committees (Human Rights, Health, Education, Equal Opportunities).

Activity 5: Implementation of the arranged meetings, at least 10 individual meetings with newly elected MPs targeting those belonging to committees (Human Rights, Health, Education, Equal Opportunities) and five individual meetings with representatives of five political youth sections. The actions included the coordination and keeping minutes of the held meetings.

Activity 6: Evaluation of the meetings with politicians. Measurement of the impact of the meetings. The actions included identification of press articles, blogs, media statements, and, political activity (i.e. discussion of legislation pertaining to homophobic violence) of the political parties and young political organizations.

The activities have been completed with success (following an Action Plan with corresponding deadlines).

After the search and the formulation of the final list of stakeholders, an official letter and the executive summary were sent by post to 102 key decision making stakeholders and other officials. The full report was sent to specific key decision makers; the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, all presidents of the Parliamentary Committees, the ombudsman, the commissioner for Children's rights, the chief of police, the Cyprus Radio-television Authority and the Cyprus Youth Board.

Later follow up calls were completed for the arrangement of meetings. The results were outstanding, fourteen meetings were scheduled and accomplished successfully. The meetings that were realized were with high level stakeholders and decision makers including ministers, parliamentarians, presidents of political parties and officials like ombudsman, Cyprus Radio-television Authority, police and the representative of European Commission in Cyprus. Meetings were established with minister of Interior, Justice and Defence, almost all the popular political parties' representatives and youth representatives, including the Democratic Rally Party of Cyprus (DISY), Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL), Democratic Party (DIKO), European Party (EUROKO) and the Cyprus Green Party (OIKOLOGOI). Unfortunately, despite the efforts no meeting were established with the Movement of Social Democrats (EDEK).

In the meetings two representatives (one from each organisation) were present and one coordinator to keep minutes (and take pictures where possible).

The topics discussed in the meetings were based on the study's outcomes and concentrated on three basic issues; the bullying (in schools especially, army, work place and generally in society), the hate speech and the civil partnership.

Regarding **bullying** in schools there were a common agreement that something must be done in spectrum of guidelines, regulations for schools as well as sensitisation and prevention projects and steps for handling cases when they occur. In regards to legalisation and law enforcement the majority agreed that it is difficult in practice since the act of bullying in schools involves juveniles (there is no juvenile court in Cyprus or other laws that place the responsibility to parents).

On the subject of **hate speech** the majority agreed that it is difficult to criminalize it since the line is very thin between the expression of opinion (hate speech) and the right (to express) of freedom of speech. The two are contradictory thus difficult to articulate a law and then

implement it. However, (some) asked for examples of laws or regulations from other countries (e.g. example of Malta – passed law on hate speech against gay people). Also, in regards to hate speech, Cyprus Radio-television Authority developed draft law to promote for parliamentary public discussion and then to pass it. The Authority had great cooperation with accept LGBT Cyprus and CFPA on developing the draft especially with reference to LGBT rights. The director of CRTA suggested that it is necessary, on the NGOs' part, to be prepared to advocate and promote the issue on the right time (the timing is very important – before and during the hearings and the public discussions of the legal framework).

The third issue concerned the **civil partnership**. The majority were positive in promoting the issue (since it is already being discussed in parliamentary groups to proceed with suggested legal framework). In spite of most representatives of political parties were positive to promote the issue, all of them showed no willingness to take the lead to suggest the issue for legal framework in public due to the upcoming presidential elections. The Cyprus society is considered still conservative thus the issue could have a negative effect during election period. However, the majority were very positive that the legal framework (when presented) will pass.

Most of the parliamentarians and political party representatives suggested that NGOs should be prepared for the public discussions of the legal framework to promote and advocate as well as face the opposition (with facts and examples from other EU countries, references to EU laws and directives/regulations, and conventions regarding civil partnership and LGBT – equal - rights).

Another positive outcome of the meeting is the willingness for partnerships and cooperation. Some (EUROKO, Green Party, ombudsman, EC representative) showed willingness to support NGOs on their work and efforts and have suggested partnerships in common projects, informative and sensitisation activities and events by co-organising, providing funds or in kind contributions.