



Erasmus+ KA2: Strategic Partnership Project  
“Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs”  
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# GENDER POLICY RECOMMENDATION



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# About Project

“Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs” is an Erasmus+ KA2: Strategic Partnership project to promote innovative solutions on gender related problems for youth organizations by building capacity and strategic partnerships and to mainstream the gender point of view in EU Mobility Programs.

This partnership brings together four (4) civil society organizations and a university unit working on the field of youth in four different countries. Partners are Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG), Turkey (coordinator), Yasar University, Turkey; the Portuguese Network of Young People for Gender Equality (REDE), Portugal; United Societies of Balkans (USB), Greece; and EURO-NET, Italy.

Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs Project aims to mainstream the gender point of view in EU Mobility Programs and to increase the visibility of gender issues in youth organizations. EU Mobility Programs such as Erasmus + mobilize so many young people all around the Europe together brings excellent opportunities for young people. At the same time, it is obvious that gender discrimination is a global/transnational issue and it effects all the young women’s life all around the world including Europe. Especially being a young woman foreigner means facing many different challenges which might differentiate from their men peers. Even though there are differences according to travelled countries structure, the organization of society legitimizes the discriminative action and sexual harassment against young women. Therefore, discussing preventive suggestions against those measures and developing reliable solutions and mechanisms will contribute increasing the quality of mobility programs and young women’ experience.

The other aims of the project are ;

- To explore experiences of discriminative action against young women and challenges within an exchange program in 4 different countries;
- To focus on best practices on gender which have supportive mechanisms for young women;
- To establish and promote new tools and solidarity network in order to empower young women;
- To encourage young women to be the main actor while promoting the innovative solutions;
- To advocate the ‘Gender Policy Recommendation for EU Mobility Program’ to local and international authorities, decision makers, public entities, NGOs and networks;

The intellectual outputs realized within the scope of the project are:

**Situation Report:** the major aim of this study is to collect data that will allow to develop mechanisms of prevention and response to situations of discrimination, thus striving to increase the quality of the experience that young women and young LGBTI+ within exchange programmes and to bring the gender perspective to the centre while considering and evaluating the mobility programmes.

**Guide:** Guide contains the support mechanisms that young women and LGBTI+ can appeal in the case of violence of their rights.

**Video:** Three video has been prepared on the title of “What is Gender Based Violence?”, “What can young people do to struggle with gender based violence during the mobility programs” and “ What is gender based violence”.

## Gender Policy Recommendation for EU Mobility

**Programs:** Gender Policy Recommendation contains the current situation analyze and recommendations that are developed regarding prevention of gender-based discrimination within mobility programs.

Also, within the framework of the project, **5 study visits** among partner organizations were organized to learn from each other on various gender-related issues. During each study visit, the participants visited six different NGOs, which are active in youth field working for gender equality or/and LGBTQ+ rights; higher education institutions; and municipalities

## About this Booklet

“Gender Policy Recommendation for EU Mobility Programs” is **written policy advice** prepared for *European Commission; National Agencies, University Erasmus Offices; Youth NGOs and the public entities* who are related with mobility programs. The final aim of this recommendations is to mainstream the gender point of view within EU Mobility Programs and improve the existing services provided to young women and LGBTI+ before, during and after the mobility programs.

Mobility programs are a great opportunity for young people to explore different cultures and ways of living, to gain professional experience and to grow as individuals. However, one can only do that in an environment where he or she can live his or her full potential, free from any type of restriction, as an individual and in his or her social and intimate relationships. Being gender one of the social categories that shapes our lives the most, if not the most relevant one, we should pay close attention to it. Through gender we socially differentiate women and men, regarding their roles in society (gender roles), tasks, duties, responsibilities, power, interests, expectations and necessities, creating constraints that prevent them from exploring their full potential and from taking the most of exchange experiences. On top of this, also based on expectations related to gender, hetero-normativity, this is, the belief that heterosexuality is the “natural” foundation of society, represents another type of constraint to individuals. In a society that is built from an hetero-androcentric perspective, the expectations and necessities of women and LGBTI+ are often invisible or devalued.

However, as we have found out in our study, there is a overall lack of gender awareness among

women and LGBTI+ who participate in mobility programs, this is, “the ability to view society from the perspective of gender roles and understand how this has affected women’s needs in comparison to the needs of men.”<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the majority of them were not informed about their rights and the situation of human rights in the hosting country and those who were, searched for that information before departure. This lack of awareness can be overcome by sharing more information and knowledge on the issue. For example, one of the participants stated that when she had the exchange experience she didn’t realize that she was being discriminated for being a woman, but now that she is more informed about gender discrimination, she acknowledges that she was discriminated for being a young woman during the mobility experience.

The Erasmus+ programme is the most well known and best established mobility program in the European Union. It has an overall budget of €14.7 billion, providing opportunities in education, training, professional experience and volunteering for more than 4 million people. One of its general objectives is the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union that states the following “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail”.

Bearing this in mind, it is important that we start looking to Erasmus+ and other mobility programs with “gender glasses”. How? Through gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is “a

strategy towards realizing gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination”<sup>2</sup>. This strategy will allow a more efficient investment in mobility programs and, most important, it will guarantee that each person that has a mobility experience, independently from gender identity or sexual orientation, makes the most of it.

In the preparation of recommendation, “The Situation Report” provided evidence about the current situation which can be identified under 4 title: (1) Right of Foreigners; (2) Gender (un)awareness; (3) Gender-based discrimination and sexism; (3) Support and monitoring before, during and after the mobility program. In the following chapter it will be seen the recommendations prepared by each partner organization by taking their countries’ conditions into consideration to achieve gender equality in mobility programs.

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1\_ <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1147>, consulted on 11/08/2017.

2\_ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>, consulted on 12/05/2018.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## TURKEY

### Analysis of the Current Situation

According to the findings of the research conducted within the “Gender Perspective in Eu Programs Project”, young women and LGBTI+ in EU mobility programs face challenges in the following areas:

#### On the Rights of the Foreigners

The research findings demonstrated an overall lack of rights of foreigners in the visited country. When asked if as women or LGBTI+ the participants knew their rights in the hosting country, the answers were mainly negative or they had very limited knowledge on these issues. They also did not know about the regulations of the hosting country regarding non-citizens. The participants who had knowledge on their rights mostly learnt these issues in orientation trainings, on arrival-departure trainings or because they were interested in these topics. It was generally EVS participants who would be informed by the coordinating organization about practical issues, such as health insurance, but not about how to use their rights in the hosting country. They also had limited knowledge of how to proceed in case of an emergency.

#### Gender (un)awareness

On the other the other issue is an overall lack of gender awareness among the interviewees. Young people were unable to spot socially determined differences resulting from learned behavior between women and men. Some interviewees were not sure which indications could be specified as gender

discrimination or sexism. They could not identify subtle sexism like “mansplaining”, “positive discrimination” and “slut shaming”.

If somebody described this kind of behaviour to them they often said that they have faced it but they did not consider it as sexism. However, sexism was mentioned by the individuals in every interview, even when the person did not realise that fact. In other words because of the gender unawareness, they did not relate the problems they were facing at the hosting organisation or in their accommodation to gender discrimination or sexism. This was thought to be a result of normalisation of dominant gender roles in these societies. Some of the participants were not sure which behaviours could be specified as gender discrimination. Therefore, even if they were discriminated because of their gender, they were not aware of it.

#### Gender-based Discrimination and Sexism

Although subtle sexism and discrimination was difficult for interviewees to detect, some recounted experiences of gender-based discrimination, discrimination based on their sexual orientation and sexism in social life, private life and the workplace.

Young LGBTI+ reported that they did not express their sexual orientation openly until they could trust the people they met during their mobility period and when they did express it, they told only to their close friends. They thought that homophobia was a problem everywhere and there was the possibility of encountering hostile behaviours in the hosting organisation or the universities.

One of the most common forms of gender-based discrimination participants encountered was stereotyping foreign women as “easy”. Many

participants stated that they faced unwelcome sexual approaches, behaviours, sometimes sexual harassments and assaults from local men under this assumption. They reported that they felt uncomfortable during their mobility because the local men were classifying and treating them as “easy girls” because they were Erasmus students or volunteers from other countries. It was frequently mentioned that these men were making sexual demands by telling them that “they were alone in that country or city without a father, brother or a boyfriend so they were free to have sexual relations with any men who demanded.” This way of thinking shows how hegemonic masculinity influences men’s attitudes towards women, especially towards “foreign women”. It is also another proof that sexism and sexual violence are not the problem of women but a structural problem which requires a transformation in patriarchal relations of the society.

Interviewees stated that they faced unwelcome sexual approaches, sometimes sexual harassment and assault from men. In the shared living spaces, men usually expected to divide household chorus by gender norms. In the workplace, some interviewees felt they were not given tasks according to their skills and competences because of their gender. In many cases, interviewees were interrupted by male colleagues and lectured while speaking (mansplaining).

### **Support and monitoring before, during and after the mobility program**

EU mobility programs involve the cooperation between participants, sending and hosting organizations (NGOs, Higher Education Institutions, local authorities etc.), National Agencies in programme countries and European Commission to successfully implement projects. The process of cooperation between these actors were not without

its problems. The interviewees identified several problems regarding support and monitoring from sending and hosting organizations. These included bureaucracy, problems with the staff/board of the hosting organizations, mobility content and activity agreement, problems with accommodation, difficulties in accessing language courses, not knowing legal rights of non-citizens, the regulations and the health system of the host country.

## **Recommendations**

### **European Commission**

1. Acknowledge gender awareness as **a stand-alone priority of Erasmus+** through encouraging actions directly dealing with gender equality. More funded projects on gender awareness will increase the young people’s awareness on the issue and provide long-lasting solutions in the area.
2. Increase support for policies against gender-based discrimination, discrimination based on their sexual orientation, and sexism at European level through funding opportunities for organizations specifically working on gender issues and initiating European level campaigns on subtle sexism, sexual harassment and homophobia.
3. Promote gender awareness and information on human rights, by including gender equality and human rights as a component of the training and evaluation cycle of the volunteers;
4. Introduce counseling support grant for mobility projects.
5. Provide financial support for professional counseling in mobility projects within the framework of Erasmus+ programme. Mobility program implementers are not usually equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to provide sound psychological support to students or

volunteers in cases of sexual harassment, gender discrimination or discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Professional psychological help or counseling service should be provided to participants throughout their mobility programs.

6. Include mandatory questions in Erasmus+ applications on how the host organizations plan to inform participants about their rights. Applications without clear strategies should not be selected for funding.
7. Introduce stricter measures to monitor mobility content (learning agreements, traineeship agreements, and volunteer agreements).
8. - Introduce an interim report to assess the quality of the mobility before its end.
9. Encourage professionalization of mentoring. Mobility project applications should be updated to include in-dept plans for mentorship arrangements for participants. Applications without clear strategies should not be selected for funding.
10. Encourage organizations to use organizational support to finance mentorship programs.
11. Increase the financial support provided to students, trainees or volunteers for the next funding period of 2020-2027 to improve the living conditions of participants.

### **National Agency**

1. Ensure that coordinating, receiving and sending organizations comply with the main principles and quality standards of the Erasmus+ Volunteering Charter, by putting into place a more rigorous selection and monitorization of mobility projects;
2. Organize specific transnational training activities

targeting gender awareness for participants of EU mobility programs. The transnational aspect of training activities will enable participants from different social and cultural backgrounds to integrate gender perspective into their work while altering long-held attitudes and behaviors on gender.

3. Introduce a mechanism for supporting participants in reporting sexual harassment or discriminatory behavior. Organizations, which are known to condone discriminatory behavior or harassment, should be banned from participating in Erasmus+ programme.
4. Update and incorporate sessions in their on-arrival trainings regarding rights of non-citizens.
5. Increase on-the-spot quality checks for mobility program projects.
6. Introduce interim quality checks for accredited EVS organizations to determine if the organization is operating within the framework of the accreditation. (working environment, accommodation of the volunteers, etc.)
7. Review the performance of higher education institutions which regularly take part in Erasmus+ student and staff mobility programs. Participant reports, which include specific questions on the support provided by these organizations, should be taken into account for the performance review . Funding should be decreased for organizations with weak reviews in terms of support and monitoring.
8. Support the implementation and promotion at national level of the National Solidarity Network created within the project Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs, aimed at giving support to participants of mobility programs.



### **University Erasmus Offices**

1. Guarantee that students have proper support with bureaucracy and logistics, by investing in the staff of the Erasmus office;
2. Provide mandatory courses and seminars on gender awareness for both their mobility program participants and staff members who work with them.
3. Introduce effective communication, monitoring and evaluation strategies for participants in order to take legal action in cases of discrimination and sexual harassment for those who fail to report discrimination or sexual harassment out of fear that their project might have been cancelled.
4. Introduce and/or diversify activities which bring together local and international students to expedite their integration and adaptation process.
5. Develop detailed orientation modules on legal rights for incoming students, trainees or volunteers. This information should be incorporated to the orientation (student mobility) or on-arrival (EVS) programs for participants.
6. Establish after mobility review programs to identify challenges that the participant faced to improve the quality of service offered to the future participants.

### **Youth Organizations and Public Entities**

1. Provide mandatory courses and seminars on gender awareness for both their mobility program participants and staff members who work with them.
2. Aim to increase the intercultural competences of their participants through strong orientation, pre-departure and on-arrival training courses.
3. Inform the participant about the cultural

differences and the social dynamics of the hosting country.

4. Provide proper information to participants on the preventive mechanisms for gender discrimination, contact points and institutions from their hosting organizations.
5. Invest more in the reception phase of the mobility.
6. Develop a concrete activity plan for volunteers with clear tasks responsibility assigned to them.
7. Establish after mobility review programs to identify challenges that the participant faced to improve the quality of service offered to the future participants.
8. Develop detailed orientation modules on legal rights for incoming trainees or volunteers. This information should be incorporated to the orientation or on-arrival programs for participants.

# PORTUGAL

## Current Situation

Portugal has been receiving and sending volunteers, in the context of the European Voluntary Service (EVS), since 1997. According to the National Agency for the Management of the Youth in Action Program (NA), around 800 Portuguese young people participated in EVS projects in different European countries, nearly 1500 foreign young people participated in EVS projects in Portugal and more than 150 Portuguese non-governmental organizations (NGO) were involved in sending and hosting EVS volunteers, from 1997 to 2010.

According to a questionnaire survey to 300 respondents sent by Portuguese organizations to EVS projects, the majority of the volunteers were women (61,7%) and about one third were men (38,3%). From the total population, just over half were graduated (54%). More than a fifth of the hosting countries were from other continents (25,3%) and the top destinations in Europe were the countries from Central Europe (19,7%). The three main reasons to participate in a EVS project were professional experience (27%), personal development (21%) and learning (17%). Finally, their main fears were social and cultural integration (63%), language difficulties (57%) and responding to the volunteer's role and to the hosting organization expectations

(49%). Regarding the profile of the foreign EVS volunteer, according to a questionnaire survey to 351 respondents, the majority were women (72,9%) and just over one fifth were men (27%), coming mainly from Central European countries (53%) and being Lisbon the top destination (31,5%). Their three main motivations to do EVS were to visit another country (17%) and to change their current situation (17%), self-knowledge (11%) and personal development (11%) and learning (8%).<sup>3</sup> Most recently, in accordance with data from the European Commission on Erasmus+ Program, in 2016, 17 955 participants in 335 Portuguese projects benefited from mobility in higher education, vocational education and training, school education, adult learning and youth<sup>4</sup>.

Regarding the rights and duties of foreign nationals, young women and LGBTI+ who are in learning mobility “enjoy the rights and are subject to the duties of the Portuguese citizen” (article 15º, nº1, Constitution of the Portuguese Republic). The Constitution also states that “No one shall be privileged, favored, prejudiced, deprived of any right or exempted from any duty because of ancestry, sex, race, language, place of origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, education, economic status, social status or sexual orientation” (article 13º, nº2). According to the Civil Code, “Foreigners shall be treated as nationals for the enjoyment of civil rights, unless otherwise provided by law” (article 14º, nº1).

In terms of support systems in case of gender-based discrimination or gender-based violence (GBV), the existing places targeting foreign women are a few immigrant associations. However, they are not specialized in giving assistance in gender-based discrimination or GBV cases. When facing such cases, these associations direct women to other entities specialized in GBV and gender-based discrimination,

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3\_ Anime – Projeto de Animação e Formação e Agência Nacional para a Gestão do Programa Juventude em Ação (2011) SVE – A Experiência Portuguesa.

4\_ [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/factsheets_en), consulted on 09/05/2018.

although not targeting only foreign women, such as AMCV – Association of Women Against Violence and UMAR – Union of Women Alternative and Response. Also, the existing information on support services, in foreign languages, is directed especially to immigrants residing in Portugal and not so much to tourists or other people in mobility. Apart from these entities, there is APAV – Portuguese Association for Victim Support, that offers support through the UAVMD Network – Support Unit of Migrants and Discrimination Victims and information on the website of the project “May I help you?”, especially targeting tourists. When it comes to gender-based discrimination or GBV towards LGBTI+, there are a few organizations that offer specialized support, namely, ILGA Portugal - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Intervention; Casa Qui - Social Solidarity Association and Association Planoí.

## **Challenges**

In spite of the rights guaranteed to foreign young women and LGBTI+ in Portugal, in practice, they face several challenges related with gender-based discrimination and GBV, due to lack of support from the coordinating and hosting organization and/or from the National Agency.

### **Gender-Based Discrimination**

Young women and LGBTI+ identify several challenges linked to discrimination on the basis of their gender. For example, being discriminated by male flatmates; being subjected as easy women. It is also reported discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation within the hosting organization. In general, young women don't feel safe while walking in some poorly illuminated areas of the cities. Another issue is sexual harassment on the streets such as staring and catcalling, as well as stalking.

Usually, young women and LGBTI+ don't share these problems with the coordinating or hosting organization. They normalize or adopte different strategies to avoid it.

### **Bureaucracy and Logistics**

The lack of support with bureaucracy and logistics is mainly identified by young women and LGBTI+ who had an experience as students or interns. Young students are having trouble with finding accommodation. In some cases, hosting universities rather sharing the possibilities, they forward them to other sources, such as Facebook groups. On the other hand, while dealing with bureaucracy, the exchange student generally have no proper information and orientation during the process.

### **Academic Procedures**

Another problem, related with academic procedures, is the equivalence of grades. Sometimes, the information about the courses on the hosting University's website is minimal and it is only in the language of the hosting country. Another challenge, specifically in Portugal, is that the grades equivalence process can take up to one year to be completed. This is not only due to differences in the grade system between the sending and hosting University, but mostly to the lack of support from the International Relation's Office of the sending University. One of the reasons for this lack of support is the lack of officials to respond to these situations.

### **Financial Support**

The lack of proper financial support from the sending university or hosting organization is also a challenge identified by young women and LGBTI+, either because it is not enough to cover living expenses or because allowance comes later than what is supposed

to. These constraints lead many of them to seek for support from their parents or other persons within their social network.

### Accommodation

Regarding accommodation, young women and LGBTI+ point out four main problems, namely, the difficulty in finding a house, due to the growing competition in the real state industry; the sanitary and overall conditions of the apartment, that in some cases, jeopardize their health; problems with the landlord and the number of people with whom they share the apartment with.

### Staff of the Organization

Another major challenge is the lack of proper support and problems with the staff/Board of the hosting organization, namely, lack of communication; difficulties in feeling integrated in the organization, leading to self-doubt; lack of knowledge of the staff of the organization on how to deal with certain situations, such as conflict management and absence of a (proper) EVS mentor. It is also reported cases of sexual harassment by Board members of the hosting organization and lack of response from the National Agency, when confronted with such cases.

### Others

Young women and LGBTI+ also face challenges related to the EVS activity agreement, this is, the project where they are expecting to volunteer is different from what was previously agreed or doesn't exist at all. Furthermore, they point out difficulties in accessing the language course, that volunteers doing EVS for at least two months are eligible for and in understanding how the health system of the hosting country works. Frequently, they don't have the proper support from the hosting organization

on this matter or the information they are given beforehand is wrong. In these cases, the participants look for information or support near their friends, other volunteers or flat-mates.

### Recommendations

Taking into consideration the current situation, challenges of young women and LGBTI+ in mobility programs and findings of the project *Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs*, as well as the values of the European Union, these are our recommendations to **the European Commission, Portuguese National Agency, University Erasmus Offices, youth organizations and public entities who send or receive young people within mobility programs.**

#### European Commission

1. Incentive projects that integrate a gender perspective into its preparation, implementation and evaluation phase, by adopting gender mainstreaming as a formal criteria of eligibility for an Erasmus+ grant;
2. Promote gender equality as an Erasmus+ volunteering principle, by including it as a dimension of the learning plan of the volunteer in the Erasmus+ Volunteering Charter;
3. Ensure that receiving organizations provide safe and decent living conditions to volunteers, by specifying what it is "suitable accommodation and meals" in the Erasmus+ Volunteering Charter and in case of a food allowance, stipulate a minimum taking into consideration the cost of living of the hosting city;
4. Ensure that the Erasmus+ volunteer activities do not replace any employment, by establishing a volunteering time of 20 to 30 hours per week;

5. Guarantee that volunteers are properly supported by the receiving organization, by foreseeing staff costs for volunteer supervision and guidance;
6. Promote gender awareness and information on human rights, by including gender equality and human rights as a component of the training and evaluation cycle of the volunteers;
7. Guarantee that the National Agencies properly monitor mobility projects, by creating a system of direct report from the volunteer to the European Commission for when the National Agency of the hosting country doesn't respond properly to complaints presented by volunteers;
8. Ensure confidentiality and transparency during the final report of the mobility experience, by creating a channel for the participant to report openly on the experience, not accessible to the coordinating, receiving and sending organization;
9. Support the implementation and promotion at European level of the International Solidarity Network created within the project Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs, aimed at giving support to participants of mobility programs.

### **National Agency**

1. Ensure that coordinating, receiving and sending organizations comply with the main principles and quality standards of the Erasmus+ Volunteering Charter, by putting into place a more rigorous selection and monitorization of mobility projects;
2. Facilitate future evaluations of the Erasmus+ program in Portugal and its impact on participants, by disaggregating data by sex;
3. Provide trainings to youth workers and other staff of coordinating and receiving organizations

who are directly in charge of giving support to volunteers on gender-based discrimination, gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming;

4. Disseminate information to participants in mobility programs, coordinating and receiving organizations on national support mechanisms and support services that young women and LGBTI+ can appeal in case of violation of their rights;
5. Foster socialization among volunteers, by organizing more events, in addition to on-arrival, mid-term and pre-departure training;
6. Support the implementation and promotion at national level of the National Solidarity Network created within the project Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs, aimed at giving support to participants of mobility programs.

### **University Erasmus Offices**

1. Guarantee that students have proper support with bureaucracy and logistics, by investing in the staff of the Erasmus office;
2. Create a info-pack with information on procedures, supporting mechanisms and services, practical tips and useful contacts pre-departure, during and after the mobility experience;

### **Youth Organizations and Public Entities**

1. Make sure that the project meets the expectations and necessities of any volunteer, by integrating a gender perspective in its preparation, implementation and evaluation phase;
2. Promote a safe environment for young women and LGBTI+ to share their expectations, problems and concerns, by committing (the organization) to gender equality and addressing it on arrival;

3. Ensure that the staff of the organization who is directly in charge of giving support to the volunteer has the right competences to do so, by providing appropriate information and training;
4. Guarantee that volunteers have an active role in implementing the activities, as stated in the Erasmus+ Volunteering Charter, by reviewing weekly their set of tasks and by giving them the opportunity to share their ideas and put it into action;
5. Ensure that the mentor is impartial in case of conflict between the volunteer and the receiving organization, by appoint a mentor external to the organization;
6. Make sure that the mentor gives proper personal support to the volunteer, by providing her/him information on Erasmus+ program and training on mentoring volunteers.

## Greece

### Current Situation

Progress is being made in the EU but at a very slow pace. This is the conclusion reached by the updated “Gender Equality Index” published by the “European Institute for Gender Equality”. According to the report, the EU now scores 66.2 out of 100, just four points higher than a decade ago. The country with the best performance is Sweden with a score of 82.6 while Greece occupies the last place with 50 points. In recent years there have been changes - especially at the level of law, although slow progress is also present at everyday social level. The last year was passed the law that outlines legal gender confirmation procedure with the European law. It is possible for a person to reassign their gender by a court decision when they meets the requirements of the bill - without undergoing psychiatric treatment or surgery, as has been the case today. A few months after this decision, the gender of a non binary person was officially recognized. Finally, at 2015 the civil partnership is also legalized for couples of the same sex, thus giving couples of any gender the possibility of legal protection.

### Socioeconomic Situation

Economic restructuring has led to the redefinition of certain aspects of inequality in modern societies. Especially in the case of Greece (as it is country that even before the crisis gender equality had not been achieved), gender inequality remains, and new forms of discrimination are emerging. Although economic independence always was prerequisite for European citizens, both women and men, women and people with genders out of remain in more precarious situations within conditions of access to

financial resources. At Greece – even before the crisis -, women receive less income than men and have less opportunities in education and labour market, making progress in addressing the gender gap slow. Women have covered just 69.2% of the distance to the full equality in Greece (4th from the end in the EU), with a coverage rate of 67% in the economy, 99, 1% in education (3rd from the end) and 13.6% in politics (2nd from the end) respectively. The overall rating is significantly influenced by the low score on women's participation in politics, where Greece ranks below the level of 18 Balkan and Eastern European countries. Women's participation in the labor force of the country is low (59.6% for women and 76.5% for men), while also the concentration of women workers in branches and skills with relatively lower earnings is greatest.

### Legislation

The Greek law about gender based violence and discrimination is relevant with EU legislation. However, the steps that are taken through the years are slow and still anti-discrimination legislation in Greece is still quite complex. A development in the right way has been the re-amendment of the Penal Code to sentence the existence of racial, religious, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity motivation (Greek Ombudsman 2013). Domestic violence often goes unreported in Greece, it is estimated by studies that only 6-10% of domestic violence victims contacted the police – although there is a law (Articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this act and Articles 299 and 311 of the Criminal Code) about domestic violence - with very few of them to have made it to the court after all. It is also estimated that domestic violence has been exacerbated by the economic crisis as well as employment relations and work conditions had got worse. In Greece, Law 4075/2012 established the right to parental leave by introducing the right

of each parent to participate in the upbringing of the child until the age of 6. However, it is common that young women are often asked not to have children if they are to get a job in the private sector. (more info here: <https://goo.gl/dHGvYb>)

### Main Problems

According to the research findings conducted under the “Gender Perspective in EU Programs” the main challenges that women and LGBTI people face . discrimination, violence and fewer opportunities are often unfortunately expected situations for individuals of this groups. After recapitulation of the data which we recorded, four major categories came up which are discussed below.

### Sexism and Discrimination in Everyday Life

Sexism is not a phenomenon exclusively linked to the workplace and employment, but is manifested in various daily activities, based on inequality between men and women. Sexism, is a vague notion that includes all the prejudices and behaviours that contain sex discrimination and while it may concern both sexes, it has in practice been shown to affect women in particular and leads to arbitrary discrimination against women based on gender stereotypes as presented in society, which is basically patriarchal, considering one sex subordinate to each other.

At home, there are the traditional household roles where men are taking on the socially recognized external work and women being confined to the home and family. At work, the pay gap is at the expense of women who are under-represented in senior positions in the hierarchy and suffers discrimination and harassment. In education, the choice of studies, leads to the division of the

professions into men related jobs, with better employment conditions, and to women related jobs , with inferior terms of employment.

Prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination are the components of sexism. Prejudice refers to negative attitudes towards women and includes feelings of hostility while stereotypes are socially constructed and socially valid general beliefs about women that reinforce and justify prejudices and may imply that women are inferior. Discriminating behaviour refers to behaviours aimed at separating women through exclusion.

### **Sexism and Discrimination in Workplace**

In these last years, the economic crisis has had a considerable impact on employment relations and work conditions, which have affected women more than men. Particularly those who have motherhood needs were more at risk of unemployment or conversion of their employment into part-time status or of being generally discriminated. Unemployment figures show that 27.5 percent of women are out of work compared to 19.4 percent of men.

According to Article 22 of the 1975 Constitution ‘all workers, irrespective of sex or other distinction are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value’. But the wage gap between women and men in Greece is 15 percent.

### **Sexual Harassment**

In a country like Greece, where the workplace environment tends to be relaxed and the boundaries between roles and relations are often undefined, sexual harassment in the workplace frequently goes unnoticed for what it is.

Article 2 of Law 3769/2009, defines sexual harassment “when any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of infringing a person’s dignity, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”

Back in June 2017, angry social media debates were sparked after a female student claimed she was sexually harassed by a priest on a public bus in the Greek city of Thessaloniki. The viral Facebook post was corroborated by another passenger who posted photos of the incident. Many reached out with comments of support, while others accused the student of fabricating the situation and posting fake photos to “grab attention and publicity”. This shows how society is still divided in understanding how sexual harassment can never be justified by the way of dressing or walking, etc. Moreover, there is a tendency to justify the action of men and how excessive the reaction of women who feel offended.

The topic remains taboo, especially in small and medium-sized businesses the employee is discouraged from speaking out. Sexual harassments certainly relies on both sexes, but the greatest peak is registered with regard to female sex, perhaps because of the lower vision of women and the so-called charmed role.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **European Commission**

1. Increase the Erasmus + budget (2020-2027) in order to guarantee greater independence of the participants, anchoring it not only to the standard of living of the destination country but also to the income situation of the participant.;
2. Envisaged specific funding for psychological



support or mentoring during Erasmus + mobility, for youngsters with fewer opportunities;

3. Erase the gender indication in all Erasmus+ related documents. Use the neutral pronoun “they/them” when referring to any person regardless of their gender;
4. Introduce a mechanism of direct reporting of the disrespectful behaviors of European citizens on Erasmus mobility – maybe through a form or hotline;
5. Promote specific seminars to sensitize European values of equality, non-discrimination and gender equality – special calls and grants for implementation of this kind of projects;
6. Introduce gender perspective in questions of Erasmus+ project applications;
7. Introduce manuals as well as TCAs for gender perspective in EU mobility programs as well as how to handle sexual violence;
8. Introduce gender mainstreaming in all EU policies as well take into consideration youth matters in sectorial policies of the EU.

### **National Agency**

1. Provide better control over the accommodation provided by the hosting organizations.
2. Ensure adequate support for mentor and tutor training courses which aims to improve the ability to face delicate situations of inter-relational and inter-gender conflicts;
4. Give special priority to projects related to gender or LGBTI+ issues.

### **University Erasmus Office**

1. Provide better support to Erasmus students in

order to facilitate the uneasy situations with assigning a mentor for every student;

2. Promote meetings based on respect for diversity;
3. Ensure adequate support for searching accommodation according to the student’s needs;
4. Empowered the university tutors who facilitate the participation of Erasmus students in the university life.

### **Youth Organizations and Public Entities**

1. Ensure that volunteers have enough knowledge regarding individual rights, gender equality, and discrimination;
2. Considering that participants often live in close proximity to each other and with other young people, tensions due to cultural differences, gender, sexual orientation are avoided, through meetings, carried out in the early days, aimed at accustoming to the cohabitation between different;
3. Ensure maximum support in the organization and during the mobility from the country of departure to the country of destination;
4. Respect the gender of each individual as well as treat every case of participant in individual way.

# ITALY

## Current Situation

The condition of women in Italy has undergone radical changes over the centuries. Women, from a social component with limited rights, have seen formally recognized during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries their equal role as contemporary society. However, there are still some inequalities that, while also taking root in a cultural dimension, legislative equality still can not fill.

For example a very common discrimination between men and women concerns the salary at work, generally always lower for women than for males. According to a report released by the United Nations on the occasion of the 8th of March 2016, women in Europe earn an average of 16.1% less than their male colleagues, although from 56 years (in theory) there should be an equal payment.

So policy recommendations, in our opinions, can help to eliminate many gender gaps or, at least, contribute to reduce the remaining and still existing disparities. Of course, many steps and activities are required by many different actors: governments at any level (national, regional and municipal); international community; civil society; citizens; European Union and other important stakeholders.

The basic principles that we want to suggest are to:

- Eliminate discrimination under the law,
- Promote equal access to resources and opportunities,
- Ensure that policies and programs are gender-aware,
- Make women's voices heard in decision-making at all levels.

## Recommendations:

The European Commission could insert specific rules to facilitate the participation of women and LGBTI+, but also of all young people in general. Our recommendations can be found below:

### European Commission

1. Insert the gender awareness in the annual priorities of the Erasmus Plus program in all the Erasmus Plus Mobility programs
2. Assure a specific extra-grant for all the organizations that assure a training on gender awareness before each mobility

### National Agencies

1. Create a specific annual award to prize the organizations promoting gender awareness
2. Offer more mobilities for women in difficulties
3. Create an Erasmus Chart on gender awareness (as it exists for KA1 VET) that could assure the organizations working in this field to have the possibility to apply for a specific grant
4. Oblige the hosting organizations to have hosted at least the 40% of female volunteers







