

LET'S CHANGE THE PACE



WEBINAR #2 report

**Family associations as catalysts
for the wellbeing of gender variant youth**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Trans children are our children, and we want them to be loved! But are they? Are they receiving the care and support they need? In the community and the schools, health care; in the spaces of life; in their families and relationships; in legal frameworks and governments!*

These are the questions that the Erasmus+ project "Let's Change the Pace" seeks to address and bring to the attention of policymakers, governments, and allies willing to know and act.

Transgender rights and needs have been widely discussed in society, and significant progress has been made in many countries. However, much work still needs to be done to achieve full equality for gender non-conforming people.

Let's Change the Pace is a project run by ENP in collaboration with Drachma (Malta), Agedo (Italy), AMPLOS (Portugal), Grupa-IZADJI (Serbia), and Ampgyl (Spain), co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. The project includes three series of webinars and a live conference.

THE MISSION

One of the main goals of the transgender rights movement is to change the general inclusion and understanding of transgender people in society into legal protections and regulations. We can achieve this goal for transgender youth with continued advocacy and education.

In recent years, children and teens are increasingly coming out as transgender or gender non-conforming. It takes great courage, and they deserve our support and validation.

We can create a safe and supportive environment where transgender kids feel free to express themselves. By supporting them early, we can help them feel understood through personal development and self-discovery. We can help in improving their self-esteem and feeling of belonging. They have the right to live their lives in the most authentic and comfortable gender without restriction, criticism, or judgement.

"The gender affirmative model is a method of therapeutic care that includes allowing children to speak for themselves about their self-experienced gender identity and expressions and providing support for them to evolve into their authentic gender selves, no matter at what age. Interventions include the social transition from one gender to another and/or evolving gender-nonconforming expressions and presentations. Later gender-affirming medical interventions (puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, surgeries)".

Society as a whole must accept the notion that all humans are entitled to inalienable rights, regardless of their identity or name. Numerous citizens opened their minds and hearts to the idea that everyone should be permitted to pursue happiness and live without fear of persecution.

Unfortunately, parts of European politics, public society, and religious institutions have rooted their ideologies in the denial of recognition of some citizens and their needs and rights; this leads to slow, cumbersome legal paths for gender reassignment, unnecessary medicalisation, and hate speech, and leaves many citizens exposed to unbearable discomfort and discrimination; this exposes many people to a high risk of poverty, social isolation, self-harm, and suicide and repercussions on the family and in the general context."

Europe has a long history of diversity and tolerance; unfortunately, school systems have not always been successful in instilling in future generations the value of respecting others regardless of their differences.

Transgender youth face discrimination and numerous challenges. As a result, they are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues; they are also more likely to engage in substance abuse, self-injury, and suicide; they frequently feel discriminated against at school and are not understood by teachers, and they do not receive adequate psychological support.

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is prohibited by the Employment Equality Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC). Gender non-conforming people are protected by the Gender Equality Directive (recast) (Directive 2006/54/EC). Yet, there is still a lot to do for these directives to be correctly implemented everywhere in Europe.

Gender identity is an innate characteristic of individuals and is not affected by family patterns or education; it is a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to their physiology or designated gender at birth; it's the gender they see themselves in. For the majority, this may mean identifying as the same gender they were assigned at birth; for others, it may mean identifying as a different gender; for some, it's somewhere in between. We are talking about substantial numbers, ranging from 0.5 to 1.3% of the population. The 11th revision to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) was approved by the general assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2019. It will go into effect in 2022. The WHO moved gender identity-related diagnoses from the chapter on mental disorders to a chapter on sexual health in relation to the body, as the American Psychiatric Association did in 2013 in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—a foundational text.). The new version recognises that a mismatch between birth gender and identity is not pathological and that being transgender is not a psychiatric disorder.

Even so, transgender people, especially young people, face prejudice and discrimination, which hurts their lives and the gender affirmation process.

Even though a lot has changed in recent years, prejudice and discrimination are still major problems today. Even in countries with more advanced legislation, there is a hard core of entrenched attitudes and beliefs that hinder social evolution. However, it is essential to continue to strive toward the goal of equal rights. Only by recognising and valuing differences can we hope to achieve true equality and social justice for everyone.

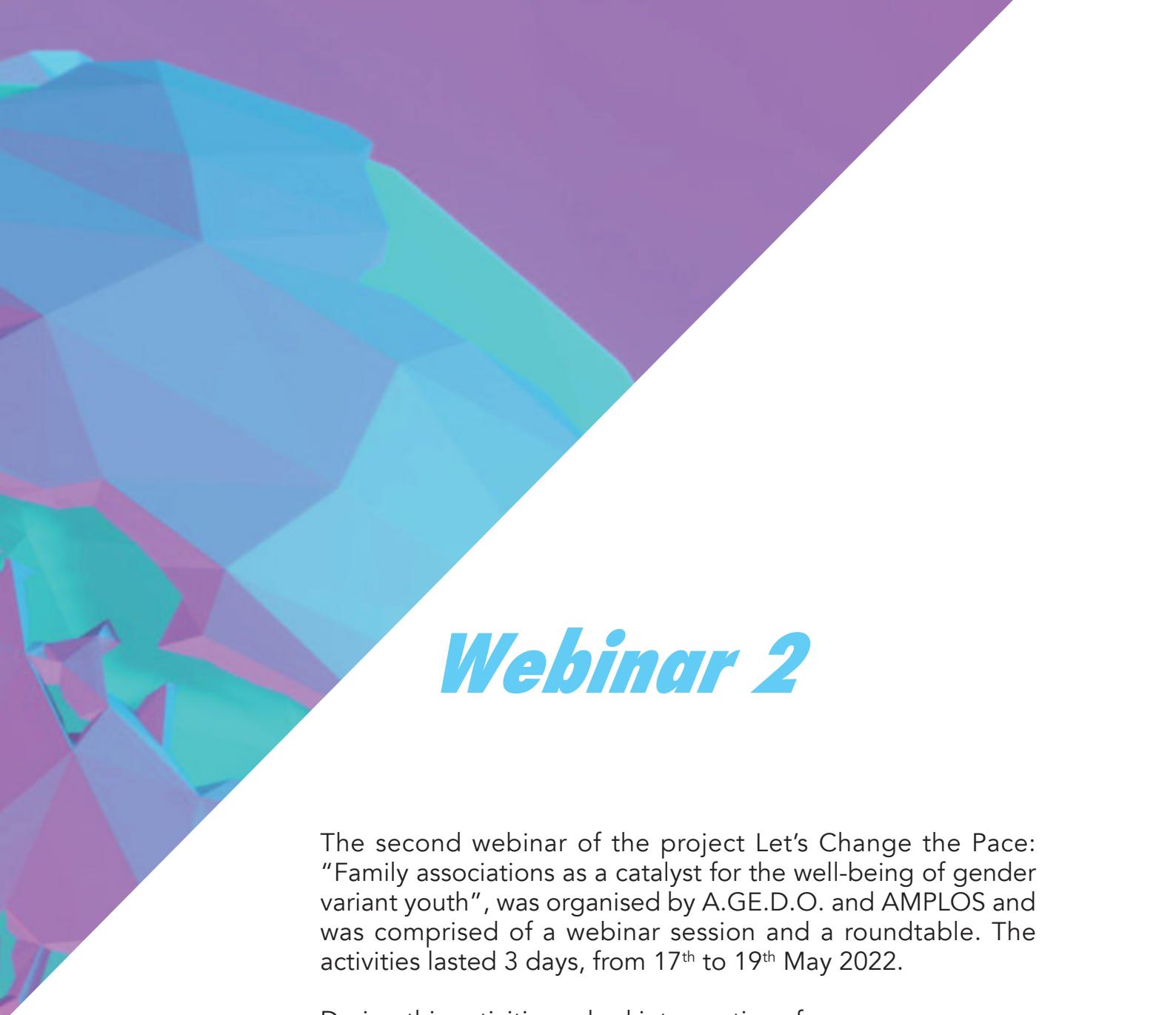
In recent years, there has been a cohesion between fundamentalist religious groups and political groups that have a unified basis, a conservative defence of the status quo, and a return to the patriarchal family, which profoundly affects society. This is happening in Italy, most of Europe, and outside Europe.

One of the most common arguments against gender nonconforming identities is that they are ideological constructs that threaten the traditional family; this argument is supported by many fundamentalist branches of religious institutions and many conservative political parties around the world, and transphobia is widespread in Europe and around the world, affecting nearly all countries, including those with more advanced legislation.

While it is true that this cohesion between religious and political groups represents a very real threat to social progress, it is also true that the values and ideas they are defending are increasingly irrelevant in today's world. In an age when more and more people are rejecting traditional conceptions of gender and sexuality, when women are asserting their rights and demanding an equal place in society, it is only a matter of time before this reactionary alliance crumbles under the weight of its contradictions.

"We can create a safe and supportive environment where transgender kids feel free to express themselves."





Webinar 2

The second webinar of the project Let's Change the Pace: "Family associations as a catalyst for the well-being of gender variant youth", was organised by A.GE.D.O. and AMPLOS and was comprised of a webinar session and a roundtable. The activities lasted 3 days, from 17th to 19th May 2022.

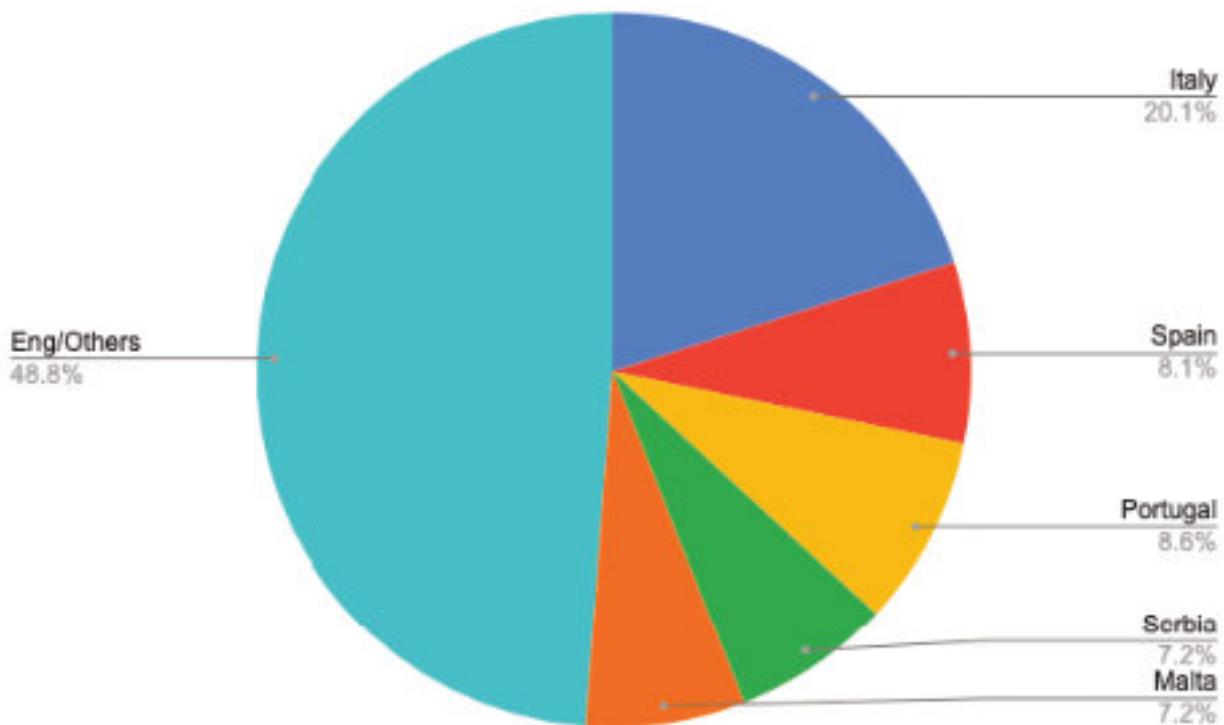
During this activity we had interventions from:

- *Fiorenzo Gimelli, president of A.Ge.D.O. Nazionale;*
- *José Mellinas, president of AMPGYL;*
- *Susie Green, Mermaids;*
- *Birna Bjorg Gudmundsdottir, Trans-Vinir;*
- *Camilla Vivian, Mio Figlio in Rosa;*
- *Helge Sune, FSTB;*
- *Alexandra Teixeira, Amplos;*
- *Joseanne Peregin, Drachma;*
- *Michela Mariotto, Genderlens;*
- *Luka Secerov, Grupa-Izadji.*

Associations advocating for LGBTI+ persons from various European countries were invited to participate, to discuss, learn and understand the importance of working hand in hand at a national and international level. Some of these organisations form part of ENP, some others do not. Organisations are born at grass-root levels by people seeking answers for the challenges they face. Governments and institutions are most frequently unable to answer their questions and queries. Naturally, movements employ diverse strategies to address their specific challenges but all believe in dialogue to further their work. The growth of associations is crucial for democracy and education, as well as the economy anyday.

The situation in the EU is uneven. In some countries, associations advocating for transgender youth rights have been active for many years, and their role is widely acknowledged; Mermaids has been active in the United Kingdom since 1995, whereas in other countries, associations are just beginning and struggling with unresponsive politics. Also, the law is not the same everywhere. Some countries adopt inclusive strategies more quickly than others, while others actively try to stop them. Italy has a long history of NGOs, but the political climate is constantly shifting, and rights for transgender people move very slowly.

The webinar was followed by more than 80 participants from more than 70 different NGOs and more than 50 individuals participated at the round table session. More than 200 persons followed the project updates.



“In recent years we have seen positive changes however prejudice and discrimination are still major problems today. Even in countries with advanced legislation, there is a hard core of entrenched attitudes and beliefs that hinder social evolution. It is essential to continue to strive toward the goal of equal rights.”





Webinar report

The purpose of this webinar was to introduce active organisations in the field. Many young organisations are formed by people who worked in the field for years, often within other organisations; others have been active within informal groups for a very long time; this offered us a picture of how dynamic the sector of activism is.

The structure of the webinar was divided into two meetings:
In the first meeting speakers

- introduced themselves
- their NGO and its mission
- the local challenges and how they faced them
- current and future objectives

In the second meeting a roundtable discussion was held between the speakers and the public.

The conversation was centred on three questions:

- **“What are the immediate and short term goals in your Country and how can your parents’ organisation contribute?”**
- **“How essential do you think is the parents’ voice to influence European policies?**
- **“How can European institutions help Countries to advance with national laws?”**

Margarida Faria**ENP**

ENP aims to create a European-level space for dialogue and exchange. Parents can be development agents, and NGOs can be change accelerators. Parents' organisations have seen a growing need for support for transgender children and youth. Families are not always ready to offer the necessary support; we need to promote an environment of anti-discrimination laws and support institutions to meet our children's needs.

"Let's change the pace" aims to increase the capacity of organisations to better advocate for transgender youth and empower parents of transgender people through the exchange of good practices and ideas, strengthening their feeling of belonging to a community. We want to speak as a single voice, to advocate for mental and physical health and social rights at a European level.

Fiorenzo Gimelli**A.GE.D.O. Nazionale Italy**

The role of family associations is crucial, as they bring the issues to the forefront in their respective countries, sparking a debate and bringing families together. They created networks of exchange of good practises and ideas; they focused on the strength of many parents to talk to institutions as one voice.

These webinars are an opportunity for organisations to network and advocate together; a chance to understand what motivates parents in different parts of Europe to form organised groups; an opportunity to better understand what impact parents' organisations have on the local territories and what the specific and shared needs of our children are.

The European level is crucial, especially for nations that lag in rights and services. Italy struggles to keep pace. Each nation faces a unique set of constraints, difficulties, and resources, so communication between NGOs is essential to understanding the full scope of the problem in Europe. It is important to bring together the voices of NGOs in Europe so that our requests have more weight and we can put on the right amount of pressure for change. A.Ge.D.O. is an Italian NGO for parents of LGBTI+ people that has changed a lot in time. It was founded by a small group of parents of homosexual people in 1993; until 2015, there were no parents of transgender children within Agedo. Until 2016, when activist Camilla Vivian spoke publicly about the topic in the media, the topic of transgender people was often discussed as if cut out of the family context. A.GE.D.O. now receives numerous requests from parents of gender-variant young people.

The institutions are often unprepared, and parents of gender-variant children often struggle to find answers. The many Agedo cells offer a place for listening and information, self-help groups, and meetings with experts and volunteers.

"We need to promote anti-discrimination laws and create an environment of support to meet our children's needs."

A.Ge.D.O. is officially recognised by the ministry of education and often works with schools to fight discrimination and bullying, train teachers, and inform students.

In recent years, Agedo has been pushing for schools to adopt Alias careers: changing the gender in the official documents can be a very long process; the Alias career allows children to use a chosen name at school, this can support the children during social transition. A.Ge.D.O. provides training for big companies who desire information on LGBT+ inclusivity.

The current law in Italy about gender reassignment is 40 years old (1982) and was written considering just persons who underwent surgeries. In 2015, the Italian constitutional court reinterpreted that law, and since then, it has been possible to ask for gender change in documents without having to undergo gender reassignment surgery. This was a big step, but it is based solely on the interpretation of an old law; we are pushing for the law to be changed.

The difficulties parents of transgender people encounter at school and in public services are due not only to ignorance but also to a political and social climate that must be overturned.

The school system lags due to ignorance, lack of information, and the pressure exercised by conservative and extremist groups who lobby against changes toward inclusivity. For fundamentalist Catholics whose worldview does not contemplate the existence of our children, A.Ge.D.O. offers training and testimonials in schools and companies; public events in cooperation with other LGBT+ associations to combat homo-lesbian-transphobia; organisation and participation in public debates and mobilisation (pride, conferences, meetings with political parties, publishing and disseminating articles and interviews in the mass media).

Maintaining ties with other Italian organisations is essential for establishing a network and gaining a stronger voice with public administrations.

Alexandra Teixeira

Amplos, Portugal

Public initiatives like "Let's Change the Pace" help us be close to each other on what matters.

The journey of ourselves, our children, and our friends brought us together. The solutions enacted to deal with the pandemic promoted remote interactions. Seeing many people participating and so many speakers, shows we are a network.

We all have the same goal: to be happy and live the life we deserve.

AMPLOS was founded in 2009 out of a feeling that there was a need for families to explore their doubts and fears freely, to feel empowered along their journey of supporting their LGBTI sons and daughters, and to fight for their rights. We

"Institutions are often unprepared, and parents of gender-variant children often struggle to find answers."

"Access to healthcare for transgender youth is too complicated!"

work around three axes: support, education and training, and political intervention.

We participate in workshops in school, often upon request from student associations. We have taken part in many political actions to foster the creation and improvement of legislation in our country, especially Act 38/2018 (Right to self-determination of gender identity and gender expression and to the protection of the sexual characteristics of each person). We are sitting on committees on social rights in some municipalities, such as Lisbon, Porto, and Almada, and we continue to fight for a more inclusive healthcare system and for a school system where diversity is embraced.

The pandemic gave us a new challenge: we had to keep doing our work from afar. So we turned to the use of new technologies and were pleasantly surprised by the reach these tools provided. The online platform helped us break down barriers related to physical distance; we could bring together more people than ever before. The Ampliando Famílias project was started during the pandemic and aimed to create guides for families of LGBT+ people.

In 2021, the organisation received financial support from the Secretary of State for Equality to set up psychological support services.

We have come a long way, but there is more to do. Associations like ours are instrumental in making sure no one is left behind.

José Mellinas

AMPGYL, Spain

AMPGYL is an organisation of mothers and fathers who support LGBTQIA+ people. We shone a light through a dark path without help, reference points, or tools for years.

We believe that there are no wrong bodies and that diversity is vital. We also think that one must learn about new things to have genuine respect.

AMPGYL is born from the collaboration of families, experts, and volunteers with years of experience in shelters and accompaniments.

We have a board of directors that communicates the experiences of different delegations in Spain.

Our work focuses on offering support services, spaces of reflection and dialogue, and groups aimed at families of LGBTQIA+ people.

We aim to reduce violence and discrimination in Europe, spread culture and awareness through workshops and cooperation with other entities, and assist educational centres.

To deal with the problems caused by the pandemic, we've set up online support services. Now, we're a hybrid organisation with both online and in-person events.

At AMPGYL, we organise regular visibility and awareness workshops to help redefine relationships between oneself and others.

We hold monthly or fortnightly meetings for parents to discuss and support one another.

"El Club" and "El Bar" are two socialisation spaces for young people, divided by age groups, with the support of a professional who coordinates said workshop.

Mindfulness workshops teach people to pay attention to the present moment to improve their physical and mental health.

Susie Green

Mermaids, UK

In 1995, a group of parents whose children attended the Tavistock Gender Identity Service in London formed Mermaids as a support group.

In 1998, my daughter felt she was meant to be born a girl, even though she was born a boy. The general paediatrician said it was a phase; she is nearly 29 now, and it is not a phase. I joined the Mermaids parents group in 2000; at the time, it was a small group, and I participated in just a few events. Inside of me, I was convinced that my child's gender dysphoria would resolve itself; obviously, it never did. Time passed, and in 2005 I became a trustee to help support trans kids and their families, and I became Chair in 2010. Mermaids started offering weekend residential and a week-time helpline. By 2013, the number of calls and requests we received outnumbered our capacity to respond; we answered just 7% of calls, and it was time for Mermaids to grow professionally. In 2016, I became the first Mermaids employee; now, Mermaids has 46 employees.

We offer a helpline, email and web chat information and support services, online forums dedicated to parents and teens, nationwide residential weekends for family support groups, legal support campaigning, research and advocacy, school training, the NHS, and more.

We believe that access to healthcare is too complicated for transgender youth; there can be up to a three-year-long wait. The government refuses to include trans people in a ban, and conversion practices still happen. The media frequently misrepresents trans women and trans kids, leading to an increasingly hostile environment. Hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people are rising, and there are attempts at the political level to remove human rights protections.

"Hospitals do not offer enough surgeries for adults and youth have to undergo many diagnoses, even while unnecessary."

**Birna Bjorg Gudmundsdottir
Trans-Vinir, Iceland**

We established Tans-Vinir (Trans Allies) in January 2019 to support parents and trans children in Iceland. We are fortunate in Iceland to have large queer organisations fighting for our rights, but parents also need their own voice. We wanted to have a voice to stand with our kids and fight for service for them. Our main problem is that laws are in place, but not all institutions put them into practice. It is difficult to access public support and services for transgender people. Hospitals do not offer enough surgeries for adults, and youth have to undergo many diagnoses, even while they are unnecessary.

**Camilla Vivian,
Mio Figlio in Rosa, Italy**

I began my research on gender identity in 2010. I had to search for information abroad since there is nothing on gender variance in childhood and adolescence in Italy. No one spoke publicly about the topic. In 2016, after six years of lonely searching, I felt the need to know other Italian families, and the only way was to go public. I also understand that I have to be visible to provide adequate information. The blog got attention from the media right away, and I worked on a book with the same name, which has now been translated into three languages. My visibility and activism allow many families and teenagers to get in touch with me. I am not an association but an activist who tries to support people and families and bring information to Italy. Many families face isolation, fear of lack of knowledge, social stigma, and school problems.

I try to provide tools so families can understand that the problem does not belong to their child but to society. As parents or tutors, our job is to accompany our kids and adolescents through this journey to be their true selves. The families that contact me are partly families of very young, assigned male children who claim to be girls. Families feel the weight of social pressure and do not know what to do, while families of adolescents assigned females usually contact me during the puberty phase, as society is more welcoming toward younger tomboys.

My work is to welcome and listen, give information and translate foreign studies and authors, and refer families and individuals to the right associations. I believe that the biggest problems in Italy are that youth and young children are not catered for and that there is social pressure because of backward thinking. Children know who they are, yet parents and even grandparents often find it challenging to meet their children's needs.

We need a law. We need to update university degrees; we need to train professionals who work with people; we need to shorten transition times; we need depathologisation and a social change.

"We know from science and expertise that legal recognition, protection, and access to affirming healthcare are essential."

**Helge Sune
FSTB, Denmark**

FSTB: The Association in Support of Transgender Children is a Danish association of volunteers, founded in 2015 by a small group of families who felt alone trying to understand their children who had come out as transgender. When we formed our association, there was very little information about and acceptance of transgender children in Denmark. Many other countries in the EU found themselves better informed as well. Parents seemed to lack the language to understand their children. Existing organisations focused their efforts on providing direct assistance to transgender people. Our association took up the task of trying to cover the knowledge gap.

Many parents fear that their child's transgender identity is just a symptom of something else; they hope it is just a phase, but transgender children need support. It is important to let people know so that no child has to go through the pain of constantly having to defend themselves against ignorance, violence, and refusal.

Therefore, our association has decided on three focus areas:

- Create a network for families because helping families means helping their children.
- Provide advice and counselling so that those who need it can learn from the experiences of others and the latest research.
- Provide information to decision-makers, health authorities, and the general public so they can adapt to the children's needs.

We now have 150 families who support their gender-diverse children, and another 100 who are allies and support our work. Our numbers are constantly growing. We receive many requests from schools, daycares, and families on how to help their children better. We have received funding to prepare booklets with our experiences and knowledge that we can now share with those who need them for free.

The interest from the media sparked a debate among the general public. We understand that it can be a challenging aspect to grasp. So, we love and support our children by being patient and kind, but also by being firm and not giving in. Like any good parent, we constantly learn, protect, and love our children.

However, we are concerned with the current legal framework and practice of health authorities, which seem to lag behind. We are concerned because personal opinions and fear often seem to weigh more than scientific evidence and direct experiences of trans* and gender-diverse persons and their families. We know from science and expertise that legal recognition, protection, and access to affirming healthcare are essential to the health and quality of life of those who need them. It is devastating to see the politicians and medical doctors who argue against it, especially when they do it based on personal opinions and references to old habits.

"Many families face isolation, lack of knowledge and fear of social stigma."

Joseanne Peregin

Drachma, Malta

In 2005, when my son came out, there was no parent organisation where my husband and I could go for help, and I felt angry that we received no support from the Church. I eventually approached an LGBT+ organisation to find some answers to my many questions. However, sometimes a mother needs another mother to speak about her LGBTI+ child, not an activist. I got the opportunity to 'come out' to other parents for the first time only three years later at a public conference organised by Drachma LGBT, where Sister Jeannine Gramick, supported by a Dominican priest, spoke about integrating being gay and Catholic.

I had been very involved with the Christian Life Community and the Jesuits for over thirty years, and the Jesuits offered support to our work; we promoted Drachma's meetings for parents in the Church's monthly magazine; I started writing to the Archbishop regularly, updating him on our group's status; we were driven by the wish to see LGBT people and their parents receive proper pastoral assistance during such a difficult family moment. Most parents had issues with the Catholic Church's official position on homosexuality, they felt safe to come to Drachma since we met in a Jesuit retreat house, belonging to the church.

After some years, we felt it was time to reach out to other parents. We started to link with counterparts abroad, like Listag, Turkey, Agedo, Italy, FFLAG, UK, and ILGA-Europe, where we shared our experience in Drachma as catalysts for change in Catholic Malta.

To mark IDAHOBIT 2016, we published our first book, "Uliedna Rigal" (Our children as a gift), with 50 of the most common questions. The President of Malta gave a keynote speech, increasing visibility considerably. The archbishop bought numerous copies to make them available in every parish. We had to run a reprint only five weeks after it was launched. We are launching our second book, titled "I have carved you in the palms of my hand", which tackles what the Bible says and does not say about homosexuality, which people unfortunately often use to oppress LGBT people.

Drachma Parents was a catalyst in co-founding the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics and has been involved in the steering committee and board since its inception in 2017; it also co-founded the European Network of Parents of LGBTI+ Persons in Malta in 2017.

We aim to continue to be a safe space for parents; to encourage the acceptance of diversity; to be a voice and a force for change, and to look to the future with love and hope for our kids.

Michela Mariotto

Genderlens, Italy

Genderlens is an association formed by families and young trans people with the support of professionals. The association was born from a series of meetings, people, and events.

A comparison project between the Catalan and Italian realities, developed with the autonomous university of Barcelona in 2017, highlighted substantial differences. In the healthcare system in Catalonia, the TRANSIT model proposes a non-pathological, psychosocial, and affirmative approach. In contrast, the watchful waiting model in Italy proposes that young people wait until adolescence or adulthood. Families and individuals are subject to numerous tests, and the language is always medical and aseptic.

During my research on services in Italy, the word dysphoria appeared 21 times, while it appeared 0 times during the research on services in Catalonia, where people prefer to use a more accessible and welcoming language. The school context also presents significant differences. Catalonia had the CAT protocol, which helped transgender students by giving them guidelines, but Italy had nothing.

At the time of the research, in Catalonia, I could interact with a handful of organisations, of which some were Chrysallis and AMPGYL; the organisation had many parents of transgender persons and transgender persons, whilst in Italy, the topic of transgender childhood and youth was hidden until 2017.

The few newspaper articles that were available in Italy at the time were translated from other countries; they made the situation sound alien and distant. The situation started changing when Camilla Vivian opened up to a different narrative through her blog, "Mio Figlio in Rosa". Genderlens was born from this experience, initially as a project and, from 2021, as a social promotion association.

Genderlens provides help for families, training groups, national and international networks, press offices, and activities on social media.

The main activities are: welcoming new parents and organising support groups for families; meeting with professionals involved with trans young people's rights and health; training for school professionals and production of educational materials; networking with transfeminist groups of activists and health professionals; and translations of the most critical research work about trans children and adolescents.

The situation in Italy is still difficult. Genderlens is committed to promoting Alias Career, with a national protocol to be applied in schools for trans* students. The protocol was written together with A.GE.D.O. and was received by many schools, but there is still no official recognition from the ministry of education. The legal recognition of minors' gender has been a critical success. However, because there is no adequate law, battles on the issue take place in the courts on a case-by-case basis. Genderlens, working with lawyers across the country, was able to obtain recognition for six people, lowering the age to 14—a significant accomplishment.

Luka Secerov

Grupa-Izadji, Serbia

The parent group for self-support at the Social Center "Izadji" in Novi Sad started working in October 2018. Initially, parents met in psychological workshops to share their experiences about their children and beyond. The group has had 15 parents over its 3.5-year existence, with only three active members who have been present since the beginning. These members are two mothers and one father who have decided to use their parenting skills to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ people and their families.

The parent group has collaborated with related groups and activists to promote transgender, intergender, and mental health awareness through professional and experimental lectures and by participating in the Novi Sad Pride and Belgrade Pride at the Festival of Mental Health, Human Rights Festival, IDAHOBIT Days, and more.

Our parent group made a short video about what it's like to be a parent of a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT+) child in Serbia. The goal was to improve social support and health care for LGBT+ people. The parents contributed to a study on parenting experiences and messages for experts working with LGBT+ children and young people. The scientific work and the video were shown at a psychological conference in Serbia in 2019 and in Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of the Pride programme.

Other important tasks included promoting the "Schools Safe for All" manual for high school teachers and taking part in the "Increasing the visibility of the LGBTI population in Serbia" state project, which included writing a collection of stories about the lives of LGBTIQ+ people.

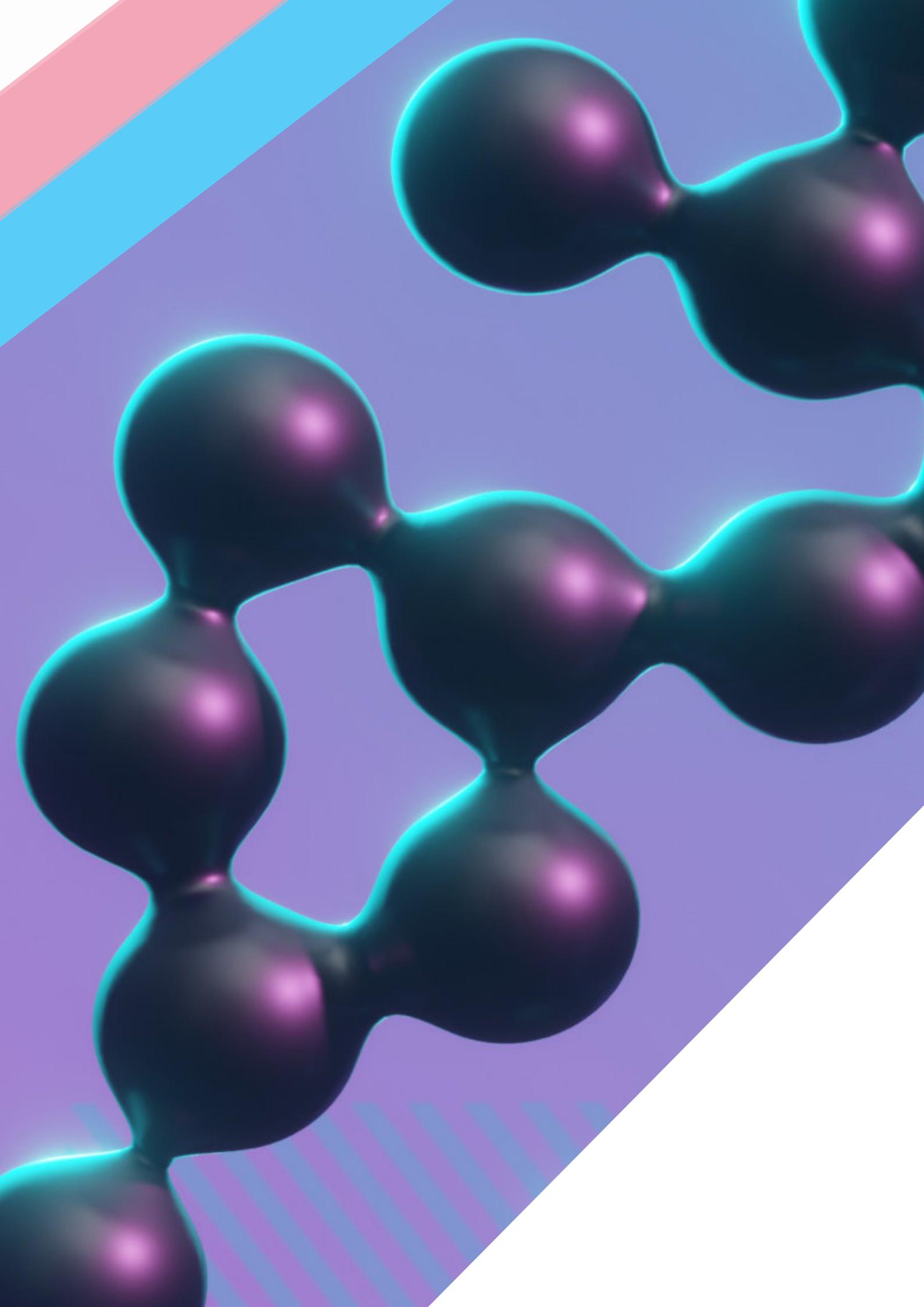
Grupa-Izadji works with local news outlets to bring attention to the problems LGBT+ people face. The group's scope extends beyond Serbia, with numerous activities aimed at networking with other NGOs and European realities, as well as participation in European Parents' Network (ENP) activities.

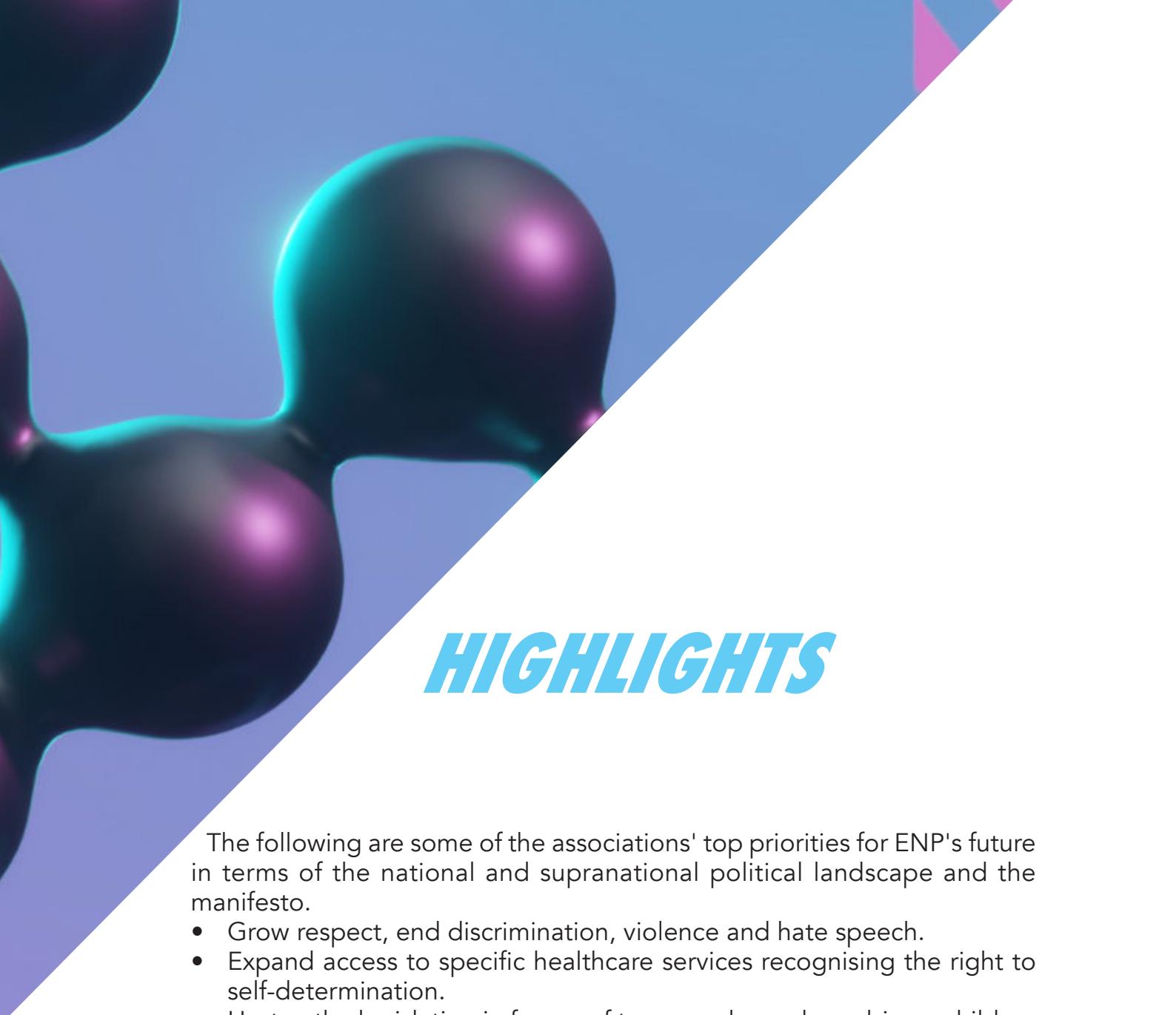
We believe that networking and exchanging information, experiences, and resources with other organisations is fundamental to improving the quality of life of LGBTIQ+ people and their families, and we aim to depathologize transgenderism in Serbia and beyond—in the fields of health, education, law, employment, and globally in society.

"The situation in Italy is still difficult... Alias Career was received by many schools, but there is still no official recognition from the ministry of education."

“We aim to continue to be a safe space for parents; to encourage the acceptance of diversity.”

“We believe that networking and exchanging information, experiences and resources with other organisations is fundamental”





HIGHLIGHTS

The following are some of the associations' top priorities for ENP's future in terms of the national and supranational political landscape and the manifesto.

- Grow respect, end discrimination, violence and hate speech.
- Expand access to specific healthcare services recognising the right to self-determination.
- Hasten the legislation in favour of transgender and non-binary children and youth.
- Monitor member states and sanction those that refuse to legislate or properly implement laws for transgender persons.
- Facilitate knowledge dissemination at all levels of society.
- Reform educational institutions to better answer the specific needs of transgender youth.
- Promote less gender-stereotyped and more inclusive books and toys.
- Promote and defend transgender rights in the workplace and enhance work opportunities for transgender youth.
- More funding for NGOs.
- Act to prevent hate speech and discriminative political pressure from religious hierarchies.
- Remove barriers to blood donations based on orientation or gender identity.
- Provide concrete support for LGBTI+ asylum seekers.

***“We should stop
reproducing a
narrative of self-pity
and take
action by calling for
trans* rights.”***

“We want to speak as a single voice, to advocate for mental and physical health and social rights at a European level.”



CONCLUSIONS

United as organisations supporting families of trans* and gender-diverse children and youths,

we ask that they

- Are treated with dignity and respect
- Enjoy the same fundamental human rights as any other person
- Have access to the same opportunities
- Have the right to self-determination
- Have a right to a good quality of life
- Have a right to sound education
- Are included in all spheres of society

we ask institutions to

- Enact strong legislation both at a national and international level
- Promote laws to protect them and keep them safe from all types of violence
- Defend their right to non-discrimination
- Offer services to provide for their well-being
- Guarantee their access to appropriate healthcare and reassignment surgery
- Guarantee their right to freedom of speech and expression
- Provide psychological services and support
- To be more open to diversity and inclusion
- To provide training for professionals working in the field
- Allow transgender individuals to change their name and gender in all documents

As families we value our children and we want to see them valued in society as well.

The concerns expressed during the webinar and highlighted in this brochure, are the foundation stones for the Parents' Manifesto, a document to advocate for the rights of trans and gender-diverse children in Europe.*

***Read the manifesto at
www.enparents.org/thepace***

*We thank all the amazing people who
made this project possible, we thank you,
the reader, and all the brave parents who
stand for the rights of their children.*

"Let's change the pace: how are European trans and gender diverse children doing?"

www.enparents.org/thepace

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