

Press Release – Launch of the Good Practice Map 2023

Today, on the 15th of May 2024, OII Europe celebrates the publication of its Good Practice Map 2023! **The map highlights advancements achieved in 2023 towards the better protection of intersex human rights across Europe.**

The 2023 Good Practice Map once again features the section “*In the Making: IGM Bans*”. This year, we feature news about the newly adopted IGM legislation in **Spain**: In February 2023, Spain became the sixth Council of Europe country to adopt an IGM ban within the law “*For the real and effective equality of trans people and for the guarantee of the rights of LGBTI people*”. Article 19 of the law **prohibits non-consensual genital modification practices performed on intersex children under the age of 12**. The Good Practice Map includes a short analysis of the protective elements as well as remaining gaps and inconsistencies.

In addition, the map presents good practice examples related to awareness raising, research, discrimination/legislation, training and political will.

“2023 saw **Spain** become the fifth EU country, and 6th CoE member state, to establish provisions to protect intersex peoples’ bodily autonomy and self-determination by **adopting a ban on intersex genital mutilation** performed on minors!”, says Dan Christian Ghattas, Executive Director of OII Europe. “The new law protects intersex minors below the age of 12 from non-vital, non-consensual medical interventions, except in cases where the intervention is required in order to protect the person’s health. The law also includes provisions to ensure that intersex minors between the ages of 12 and 16 can request to undergo an intervention, upon the provision of their informed consent. We congratulate Spain for taking this very important step and encourage the Spanish government to take all necessary action to ensure full implementation of the ban. The developments in the past years have shown that there is an increasing political will to end IGM and we hope that OII Europe’s list of IGM ban indicators, published in 2023 and linked in this year’s map, will support governments to take the remaining necessary steps.”

“Last year provided positive examples of how governments can listen to the voices of intersex communities at national level, to better understand and **take concrete legislative action** to protect their rights”, adds Kristian Randelović, Co-Chair of OII Europe. “In **Greece**, the Ministry of Education will implement provisions related to the prevention and treatment of violence and bullying, which are inclusive of the ground of sex characteristics, in the newly passed law, ‘*We Live Together in Harmony – Breaking the silence*’. In **Spain**, the Canary Island set up a Consultative Committee for Social Equality and Non Discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics in the context of the 2021 regional LGBTI law. Caminar Intersex, an intersex-led organisation, will be part of the Committee, which is a significant example of local governments engaging and involving the local intersex community”.

“2023 saw an **increase in research** on a range of topics related to the specific challenges and needs of the intersex community”, says Magda Rakita, Co-Chair of OII Europe. “In **France**,

the Collectif Intersexe Activiste/OII France, in collaboration with Réfri, conducted a survey on intersex health, which focused on very important, yet under-researched topics such as: socio-demographics; physical and mental health; medical experiences; conjugality & sexuality and discrimination & violence. In **Greece**, Intersex Greece published the first-ever intersex-led study on hate speech against intersex people in the country, an achievement which is to be celebrated despite the worrisome findings of the study.

“In **Turkey** and **Austria training to a range of health professionals** took place in 2023, with OII Europe member organisations Inter Solidarity and VIMÖ/OII Austria respectively hosting workshops”, says Kaisli Syrjänen, Treasurer of OII Europe. “Furthermore, we saw a steady increase in awareness raising activities. In Spain, the Municipality of La Laguna increased the visibility of intersex people through their *Visible Spaces* action, and in Turkey, a documentary entitled ‘Superhero Intersex’ carried an empowering message about the lives and work of Turkish intersex activists.”

“2023 was a big year in terms of witnessing a **growing commitment from EU and Council of Europe decision makers** to combating violence and discrimination against intersex people in the region”, concludes Tobias Humer, Secretary of OII Europe. “The good practice examples account for the increased awareness about and attention given to intersex issues by key decision makers and institutions, as well as for the impact of the dedication and determination of intersex activists and organisations. However, in the face of backlash and financial instability of intersex organisations, we hope to see steadier support from key political actors and institutions emerge over the next year. OII Europe encourages local governments and funders to increase their financial support to intersex organisations, so as to ensure that movement-building can continue far into the future and that the examples featured in this map can continue to multiply year by year”.

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