

## Suggestions - requests for the recognition and protection of intersex people in Greece

- **Recognition by the Greek State of the physical existence of intersex people.** Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that are either female and male at the same time, or not absolutely female or male, or neither female nor male. The atypical sex characteristics and intersex bodies are healthy, natural variations within the biological spectrum of the human race. Often, health professionals advise parents to undergo surgery and other medical interventions at intersex newborns and children to make their body comply (seemingly) with typical male or typical female characteristics. In most cases, such interventions are not medically necessary and can have extremely negative effects on intersex children as they grow up.
- **Prohibition of non-medically necessary and irreversible sex "normalization" surgeries**, such as sterilization (preventive gonadectomy), or cosmetic surgeries and other treatments or interventions applied to intersex children before they reach an age appropriate to provide their free, stable and up-to-date consent. Prohibition of medical interventions (eg gonadectomy, urethroplasty, vaginoplasty, etc.) if the child or adolescent does not consent, even if the parents consent.
  - **Restoration of article 7 "Minors"** par. 1 and 2 of the Draft Law 4491/2017 (Government Gazette A'152 / 13-10-2-17) which prohibited the interventions in intersex minors and provided a clear legal framework for gender recognition in the event of medical procedures. In the (Filed) Draft Law of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, Article 7 has been deleted and replaced by the new one Article 7 "Other provisions".
- **Legislative provision of an easy administrative procedure** to facilitate change of gender registration on the basis of self-determination and personal statement. The procedure should also be accessible to minors, over 5 years, at the request of their parents / guardians. For non-binary and in general gender-diverse persons-whether they are intersex or not - it is necessary to have a third **gender neutral indicator available in every public document and government institution** (Birth-registry office, school, conscription, public services, etc.) and anywhere where gender is required. Recommendation to health professionals, civil servants and teachers is needed, not to take for granted the pronouns (judging by the appearance of the person), and either address the person by name or ask what pronouns the person uses.
- **Postponement of any cosmetic / aesthetic or preventive surgery** that is not medical necessary and is intended to change the sex characteristics of the child, up to the time at which the child will be fully informed and able to consent by deciding themselves for their own body.
- **Changing obsolete medical protocols** that, by handling natural diversity of sex characteristics (the intersex variations) as a "disease", they advise termination of pregnancy in healthy and desirable fetus, at a high rate of intersex pregnancies, thus pressuring and terrorizing future parents. **Change is needed for the stigmatizing medical term "Disorders of Sex Development" to "Differentiations of Sex Development"** (as is already the case abroad with the term DSD: Divergence of Sex Development, instead of "Disorder of Sex Development").
  - **Prohibition of degrading examinations and medical practices** in which the intersex children and adolescents are subject, even today, in some public hospitals in the country, such as a) undressing and photography occult parts of their body for the hospital record, b) simultaneous examination of the naked intersex body by large groups of doctors and medical students (as if it were an inanimate "exhibit") or in uncomfortable postures (eg in a gynecological position for intersex girls) or exams in a hard / painful way and without appropriately sized medical instruments, without prior consent or information of the individuals themselves and their guardians, c) prohibition derogatory / ironic comments from doctors / nurses about any atypical characteristic of the intersex (eg breast or clitoris size annotation in intersex girls, hate rhetoric by KEPA doctor in intersex young adult that "you are normally a mistake of nature and you should not have been born in the first place" and many others that have been reported to us), d) providing full information about the possibilities of hormonal substitution and non-invasive methods (eg in case of vaginal hypoplasia or agenesis).
- **Change in the characterization and management of the birth** of neonatals with atypical sex anatomy (i.e. the apparently intersex infants) as "urgent social condition" that requires surgical "normalization".

- Health care for intersex children needs to be provided by **specialists interdisciplinary teams** that will not pathologize the natural diversity of their sex characteristics, but will prioritize the psychosomatic needs of the intersex child.
- **Adequate access of intersex people to free public health care** throughout their lives and with respect for their needs. Inclusion of specialized medical examinations, medical treatments and medications that may be needed in free medical care. Possibility of exceptional selection of specialists doctors and medical laboratories (which usually are not covered by EOPYY).
- Full access of intersex people to their **medical records and their medical history**. Obligation of doctors and hospital units to maintain medical care history of intersex individuals for life.
- **Special care to provide adequate counseling and other support in intersex children and intersex people with disabilities**, as well as their parents or guardians. The later should be fully informed of the consequences of sex normalization medical treatments.
- **Special care and facilitation in the provision of asylum** to intersex refugees/asylum seekers and special care and protection of the physical integrity of the unaccompanied and/or abandoned intersex infants / children in state care. Training of all relevant structures of hospitality and adaptation.
- Recognition **of the right to enter into a cohabitation agreement, a marriage and childbearing** for intersex people, regardless of their gender and sexual orientation.
- Introduction of "**gender characteristics**" in all anti-discrimination and against hate speech legislation.
- **Education and training** on intersex issues under non-pathological view of all health professionals.
- **Informing lawyers, police officers, prosecutors, judges and other professionals** for handling incidents of discrimination due to diversity of sex characteristics.
- Inclusion of intersex reality as a **mandatory part of school curricula**, especially in biology and sex education, with the introduction of positive intersex images and related reports. Establishment, the soonest possible, of a mandatory, autonomous, up-to-date and inclusive sex education course, in accordance with international standards, in all educational levels (from kindergarten to university), with special emphasis on pedagogical and teaching academies. Need for thorough training of teachers who will teach the course, on intersex issues and non binary gender identities.
- Access to adequate **psychosocial support mechanisms** for intersex people (children or adults) and their families from therapists trained in intersex issues.
- Support for **civil society organizations** that aim to defend the rights of intersex people.
- **Conducting a national survey on the situation of intersex people in Greece** with emphasis in sex "normalization" surgeries and their short and long term consequences. Objectification should be prohibited when conducting these surveys, as well as instrumentation of intersex people, their bodies and their experiences. Prediction of compensation for intersex people who have been proven to have suffered psychosomatic abuse, disability and/or deterioration of their health due to unnecessary for their life medical interventions, in the context of reperate justice.
- **Organizing awareness campaigns and informing the public** about the existence intersex people and the recognition of the natural diversity of sex characteristics, aiming to remove the stigma and discrimination that exist. Also, recognition of the fact that, while most intersex people happen to agree with the sex attributed to them at birth, some of them may disagree or self-identify with non-binary identities and/or gender expression.
- Finally, **participation of intersex individuals and their organizations is considered necessary the in designing of any laws, decisions, policies and strategies that concern them**, in order to avoid -among other things- any invalid, embarrassing, stigmatizing or traumatizing practice, terminology or wording (such as "hermaphrodite", "middle-sex", "disorders" etc.).

**NOTHING FOR US WITHOUT US!**