



# PRESS RELEASE

August, 2018

**CONTACT:**  
**DR. THEO GAVRIELIDES**  
**T.GAVRIELIDES@IARS.ORG.UK**  
**0044(0)20 7064 4380**

The "Epsilon" project is funded by Erasmus+ KA2 under Grant Agreement 2016-1-UK01-KA204-024317  
[www.epsilonproject.eu](http://www.epsilonproject.eu)



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

## **FINAL EPSILON PROJECT REPORT AND TRAINING LAUNCHED:** making LGBT migrant and refugees voices stronger

**LONDON, UK - AUGUST 2018** – ***The IARS International Institute** and the **Epsilon partnership** raised awareness on LGBT migrant and refugees, one of the most vulnerable groups in modern Europe, focusing on the urgent need to increase the knowledge, skills and awareness of professionals who come in contact with them.*

According to the **UNHCR**, over 1.1 million migrants and refugees arrived in Europe in 2015 and this flow continued and increased in the last few years.

War, violence, poverty forces these individuals to abandon their homes and as a consequence of this, their basic needs and human rights are compromised. This also includes their dignity and respect, and being free to exercise their sexual orientation, have a partner from the same sex and develop a family life without run the risk of being killed, harmed or bullied.

Under EU law, individuals persecuted because of their sexual orientation and gender identity qualify for refugee status but, on the other side, we know from research that public authorities as well as the migration/ asylum procedures are often not equipped to deal with their particular situation.

**Dr. Theo Gavrielides**, IARS' Founder and Director, said: *"This group are particularly marginalised, either by the community they have joined or by the community they have left. Their migration status combined with their sexual orientation presents them with additional challenges in achieving their potential, hopes and dreams in life. Our project has provided new insights and policy recommendations that will help reduce the detrimental impact that this prejudice has on these people's lives".*

During the two year project, the **Epsilon consortium** has worked together under the leadership of **The IARS International Institute** and guided by a team of LGBT migrants, to develop a set of highly innovative educational tools and **training courses** informed by the real needs of LGBT migrants and refugees. These evidence-based tools benefit both professionals and volunteers providing services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers enabling them to better address issues of dignity, respect, inclusion and discrimination.

The recently published Epsilon E-book titled "**Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and migrant: a European story of discrimination and empowerment**" brings new and original evidence from the UK, Netherlands, Cyprus, Italy and Greece. Each participating country conducted desk-based research and qualitative fieldwork in their respective locations. This book presents the main findings and recommendations from this research as well as the outcomes from the tools that were developed as a result of the project. This included a face-to-face and online education programme which was piloted in all partner countries and across Europe.

The **full report** and projects website can be viewed **[here](#)**.

ENDS

### **THE IARS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE**

A user-led and user-focused charity with a mission to give everyone a chance to forge a safer, fairer and more inclusive society. Since its inception, the Institute has been providing world-class and cutting-edge educational, research, policy and networking services of local, national and international significance. We are focused on empowering the most marginalised communities through direct service delivery, while enabling organisations to achieve, measure and improve their social impact. We are experts in the fields of Youth | Equalities | Justice. To find out more about the IARS International Institute please follow the link [www.iars.org.uk](http://www.iars.org.uk).

#### **Contact details:**

E-mail: [contact@iars.org.uk](mailto:contact@iars.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IARSCommunity>

Twitter: [http://twitter.com/\\_IARS\\_](http://twitter.com/_IARS_)

### **THE ADVISORY BOARD**

The IARS International Institute and the Epsilon partners have set up an Advisory Board made up of LGBTI migrants/refugees, alongside academics and professionals working in the field.

The Advisory panel consists of 18 LGBT migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, LGBT campaigners, psychologists and other professionals and researchers from 7 countries across Europe. The Panel's main role is to scrutinise, guide and support the implementation of EPSILON and ensure that all outcomes are of high quality and responsive to the specific needs of its target groups. Panel members have been drawn together from all five project partners, IARS in the UK, CARDET in Cyprus, KMOP in Greece, Movisie in Netherlands and Anziani in Italy and will interact with the project digitally through a closed Facebook group and Skype meetings.

### **THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME**

Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of Lifelong Learning, including schools education, further and higher education, adult education and the youth sector. Erasmus+ provides funding for organisations to offer opportunities to students, teachers, apprentices, volunteers, youth leaders and people working in grassroots' sport. It will also provide funding for partnerships between organisations such as educational institutions, youth organisations, enterprises, local and regional authorities and NGOs, as well as support for reforms in Member States to modernise education and training and to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and employability. The programme is managed in the UK by the Erasmus+ UK National Agency, which is a partnership between the British Council and Ecorys UK.

EPSILON is co-funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ - Grant agreement 2016-1-UK01- KA204-024317



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein