The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Public Sector in Türkiye

2025 Research

KAOS GL

eşcinsellerin kurtuluşu heteroseksüelleri de özgürleştirecektir

The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Public Sector in Türkiye

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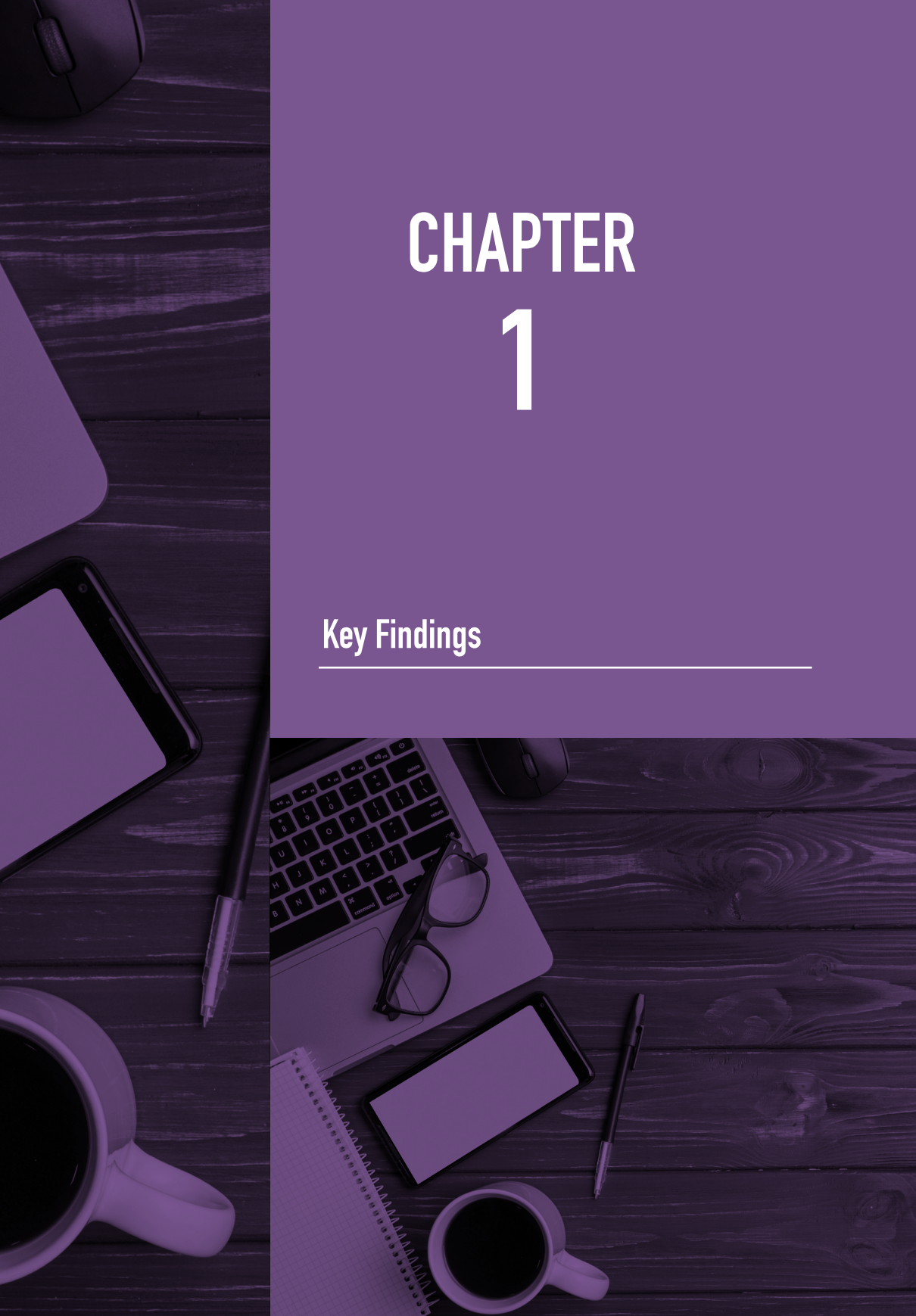


CHAPTER 1

Key Findings

The consecutive research conducted by Kaos GL Association, on the situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Public Sector in Türkiye completed its 9th edition in 2025. The 2025 survey was conducted online with *SurveyMonkey* Pro, and a total of 99 people who declared that they work in the public sector in Türkiye and that they are LGBTI+ completed the survey.

Sample

As in previous years, this year's sample was predominantly composed of young individuals with post-secondary education who have worked in the public sector for a short time. 65.7% of the respondents were between 18 and 35; 96% had a bachelor's, associate's, or graduate degree. 76.8% of the respondents have worked in their institution for 10 years or less. Regarding the fields in which public sector survey participants work, it is seen that more than half of the participants (56.6%) work in the education, academia, and healthcare sectors. Since the 2020 Survey, respondents have been asked to indicate their city of residence. Yet, the answer "I prefer not to share" is added to the options, anticipating that some respondents would prefer not to share this information due to safety concerns. This year, 16.2% of the respondents chose to keep their city of residence private. Of the respondents who indicated a city, 33.4% live in Ankara. Among the options most frequently selected, Ankara is followed by Istanbul (26.5%) and Izmir (7.2%).[1] Although two-thirds of the respondents who indicated a city live in these three metropolitan cities, it is understood from the participants' statements that our survey reached LGBTI+ employees from at least 20 provinces.

In the sample of the 2025 survey, 41.4% of the respondents answered the question on gender identity by selecting the options of trans man, man, or cis man, and their sexual orientation as gay. Therefore, as in previous years, gay male participants were predominantly represented in this year's survey sample. On the other hand, for the first time in 2023, the option of "non-binary" was added to the question on gender identity in addition to the "other" option, and the total rate of participants who selected these two options in 2025 was 4%. This rate shows that those who define their gender identity outside the binary gender system are represented in the sample this year at the highest rate since the beginning of the research. The rate of respondents who answered the question on sexual orientation by selecting an option other than lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (asexual, pansexual, and "other" options) was 8.1%.

1 The ratios are based on the 83 people who specified a city of residence.

Forced closet strategy and discrimination

The rate of respondents who declared that they are completely out regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in their work place is 4% in the 2025 survey sample. In this year's private sector survey, which we conducted simultaneously with the survey on public employees, this rate is 21.9%. According to last year's surveys, the rate of LGBTI+ employees fully out at work was 2.8% in the public sector and 22.5% in the private sector. These rates were 3.1% and 21.3% in 2023, 6.5% and 27.7% in 2022, 4.4% and 17.4% in 2019, 5% and 17.2% in 2021, 3.4% and 14.8% in 2020, 4.4% and 17.4% in 2019, and 7% and 22% in 2018. The fact that the rates of out status regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics are significantly lower in the public sector compared to the private sector every year suggests that the risk of discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI+ employees is much higher in the public sector than in the private sector. According to the data of the 2025 survey, 96% of LGBTI+ public sector employees in the sample cannot be completely out about their gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics. Despite this, out of the 39 people who stated that they are completely closeted, 4 indicated that they were subjected to discriminatory attitudes or practices due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics at their workplace. In addition, 23.2% of our participants indicated that they witnessed discriminatory attitudes or practices against other LGBTI+ employees in the institution where they work, and 58.6% stated that they encountered hate speech against LGBTI+ persons. This rate is 34.6% in the private sector survey. The rate of participants who did not want to specify their city of residence while answering the survey questions in the private sector survey was 10.6%; the fact that this rate is higher in the public sector survey (16.2%) is a finding that should be taken into consideration in this context. As seen, the conditions that lead to the reproduction of discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI+ persons are much more severe in the public sector than in the private sector. As in previous years, the 2025 survey reveals that discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics is a serious obstacle to access to employment in the public sector. LGBTI+ employees follow a strategy of forced closedness to avoid the risk of not being employed. Since the risk of discrimination persists even after employment, the same strategy characterizes the entire working life of LGBTI+ employees. Being closeted is even more mandatory in the public than in the private sector.

Data from the 2025 survey shows that the rate of respondents who stated that they had encountered discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices in recruitment was 4%. 71.8% of the participants attributed the fact that they did not encounter such attitudes or practices during recruitment to the fact that they hid their gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics, or that

these were not immediately apparent. The rate of participants who stated that they encountered discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices in the workplace after recruitment is 19.2%. Again, 64.6% of the participants attributed the fact that they did not encounter such treatment to the fact that they hid their gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics, or that these were not visible. In light of these data, the first point that should be emphasized is that the rates of encountering discriminatory attitudes or practices both in the recruitment process and in the workplace are higher than the rates of being completely out in recruitment and in the workplace. This finding indicates that the strategy of compulsory closetedness does not always eliminate the risk of discrimination in the public sector. Three out of every four LGBTI+ employees who participated in our 2025 survey (71.8%) have been discriminated against in recruitment, and four out of every five participants (83.8%) have either been discriminated against in their working life or think that they have not been discriminated against because they have been assigned as cisgender and heterosexual by the people around them due to hiding or not revealing their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics. On the other hand, the proportion of participants who stated that they did not face discriminatory attitudes or practices without any reason (24.2% during recruitment and 16.2% after starting work) should also be considered, together with the out status rates among the participants. No participants stated that they were completely out during the recruitment process, and only 4% stated that they were completely out at their workplace.

In 2011, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights issued a detailed report regarding discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, in which it pointed out that the staying in closet strategy LGBTI+ employees are obliged to follow to prevent the risk of discrimination and harassment makes it more difficult to analyze the actual effects of homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination in the workplace.[2] Considering our study's findings, the Commissioner's statement appears to be valid also for Türkiye. The data also suggests that when this strategy is not practiced, the feared discrimination occurs.

In the 2020 survey, the total rate of those who stated that they were fully or partially out in recruitment processes was 6.3%, and the total rate of those who indicated that they had experienced discriminatory attitudes or practices in these processes was 6.9%. The rate of being fully or partially out increased to 17.7% after the start of the duty, and the rate of being discriminated against increased to 10.9% in the sample as a whole. In 2020, while writing the key findings, we stated that when only looking at these rates, it can be concluded that being fully or partially out au-

2 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, s. 166, 176.

tomatically increases the rate of discrimination for LGBTI+ employees. Still, when the answers of the participants who declared that they were out and partially out to the questions on discrimination were analyzed, it was seen that the rates of discrimination among these participants were well below the general rates of discrimination in the sample. In light of these data, we concluded that LGBTI+ public employees give up the strategy of closeness only if they are sure that the risk of being discriminated against has almost disappeared. In these cases, the risk is rarely realized. We underlined that in working environments where the heteronormative and cisnormative gender perception is very strong, the strategy of being closeted does not always work, and the slightest statement, behavior, or attitude that is incompatible with gender roles can cause a person to face a discriminatory practice despite not being out about their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics.

When we examined the responses to questions about discrimination given by participants who were completely or partially out in the 2021 survey, we observed that although there was no significant increase in the proportion of those who were completely or partially out in the sample compared to the previous year, the rates of discrimination experienced by these participants were significantly higher than the overall rates in the sample. This situation raised the question of whether there was a connection between this finding and the fact that discriminatory discourse against LGBTI+ individuals had begun to be publicly disseminated by officials at various levels of the state during that period. We followed the relevant data in subsequent years. In 2022, the rates of discrimination experienced by participants who declared themselves to be fully or partially out in their hiring or workplace were again significantly higher than the overall rates in the sample. Thus, we are convinced that the increasing prevalence of discriminatory rhetoric against LGBTQI+ individuals in statements made by government officials increased the risk of discrimination for fully or partially out public employees in their workplaces. In the 2023 study, the rate of encountering discriminatory attitudes, behaviors, or practices among participants who declared themselves to be fully or partially out at their workplace was again above the overall rate in the sample. In addition, there was a sharp decline in the total percentage of those who stated that they were fully or partially out during the hiring processes. Indeed, in the 2024 survey, there were no participants who stated that their hiring processes were fully out. The rates of discrimination experienced by participants who reported being partially out or fully or partially out at work were significantly higher than the overall rates in the sample. These findings reinforced our belief that working openly in the public sector is becoming nearly impossible due to government officials' anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric.

In the 2025 survey, there were no participants who stated that they were completely out in their recruitment processes. The percentage of those who stated that they were partially out was 4%, and the total percentage of those who stated that they had encountered discriminatory attitudes or practices in these processes within the sample was also 4%. The rate of being fully and partially out rises to 26.2% after starting the job, while the rate of experiencing discrimination in the sample rises to 19.2%. Among the 4 participants in 2025 who stated that they were partially out during the recruitment process, none reported encountering discriminatory attitudes or practices; however, three of these participants attributed not experiencing discrimination to concealing their identity. Of the 28 participants who stated that they were fully or partially out at work, 10 (35.7%) stated that they had encountered discriminatory attitudes, behavior, or practices. This rate is again significantly higher than the overall rates in the sample. On the other hand, this year, participants' responses to open-ended questions also included comments about the declaration of 2025 as the "Family Year" and the accompanying LGBTQI+ hostility and its negative effects on public employees.

In addition to the strategy of being closeted, another phenomenon that makes it difficult to analyze the real extent of discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in employment in Türkiye is the low number of cases where application mechanisms are used in the face of discrimination. Again, in parallel with the findings of the research we have conducted in the past years, the 2025 survey shows that LGBTI+ public employees generally do not apply to any official channel against the discrimination they face. This year, there were 4 participants who stated that they encountered discriminatory attitudes or practices during recruitment. Among these, one participant stated that they have not taken any action regarding discrimination, one stated that they have verbally informed the institutional authorities, one shared that they informed the union/professional organization that they are a member of, and two people stated that they shared the incident with their close circle. None of the participants have officially notified the institutional authorities, applied to the Ombudsman Institution or Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TİHEK), or notified a civil society organization. Among the 19 participants who stated that they encountered discriminatory attitudes or practices in the institution where they worked after recruitment, only 2 of them verbally reported the situation to the institutional authorities, while 8 of them directly reacted to the person concerned. 7 people shared that they have shared the incident with their close circle, and 5 people stated that they have not taken any action regarding the discrimination they were subjected to. None of the participants have officially notified the institutional authorities, applied to the Ombudsman Institution or Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TİHEK), notified a civil society organization, or applied to the judiciary. Among these participants, only 3 people shared the issue with their

union/professional organization. The statements of the participants reveal that LGBTI+ employees do not believe that they will get results through official channels against discrimination.

This picture reveals that LGBTI+ employees need empowering mechanisms to access public employment and working life. However, our research shows that such mechanisms do not exist in the public sector in Türkiye, and where they do exist, they are ineffective. Only 2% of the participants stated that there are rules or boards to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in their workplace. 4% of the respondents stated that there are such mechanisms, but they are not effective or well-known. Examples of rules, customs, and practices that lead to discrimination include dismissal from the civil service, termination of employment, and mobbing. The point that participants focused on most was the discriminatory consequences of legislation that centers on the heterosexual nuclear family in Türkiye, where marriage equality is not recognized, in areas such as leave of absence, transfers, public housing, and social rights.

Unions and Professional Organizations

The findings of our research, similar to the results of previous years' research, indicate that the strategy of being closeted that LGBTI+ employees are forced to follow also prevents them from creating empowerment mechanisms such as communication and solidarity networks among themselves. Only 3 participants (3%) stated that there are such networks in their institution and that they are also included in these networks. 2 participants stated that there are such networks, but they are not a part of them. The percentage of participants who stated that they were union members was 51.5%. This rate is below the unionization rate among public employees in Türkiye. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's announcement published in the Official Gazette dated July 6, 2025, and numbered 32948, the unionization rate among public employees in Türkiye is 76.88%. On the other hand, only 14.1% of participants in our survey stated that they were members of a professional organization. Among the participants who stated that they were members of a union and/or professional association, only one person stated that they were completely out about their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics at their union/professional organization. The rate of being completely closeted (64.3%) is also higher than the relevant rate in the sample (39.4%). These rates explain why only three of the participants who had experienced discrimination in their workplace due to their identity had reported it to a union or professional organization. The percentage of respondents who selected "organized struggle and solidarity networks" in response to the question about the three main measures that should be taken against discrimination against LGBT+ individuals in our survey remained at 10.1%.

Although the fact that the rate of being discriminated against in the union or professional organization of which one is a member (5.1%) is lower than the rate of being discriminated against in the workplace (19.2%) and the rate of encountering hate speech (10.2%) is considerably lower than the corresponding rate in the workplace (58.6%) suggests that unions and professional organizations provide relatively safer spaces than public institutions, the fact that the rate of being closeted is still very high, the high rate of those who attribute this to the fact that their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics are not known (49.2%) and the statements of the participants reveal that unions and professional organizations have important duties in empowering LGBTI+ persons in employment and preventing discrimination against LGBTI+ employees, and in this context, unions and professional organizations should make it one of their priorities to produce policies in this direction. Indeed, the results of our research indicate that the International Labor Organization's 2016 briefing note on the findings of the Pride Project, which states that the economic and social rights of LGBTI+ persons are not a priority issue for unions, is also valid for Türkiye. In the same information note, it is stated that LGBTI+ persons are among the leading groups facing discrimination and harassment in employment, that LGBTI+ persons seeking employment prefer to be closeted about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics as a compulsory strategy, and that this strategy generally continues to be followed throughout their working life; whereas field studies on the subject indicate that LGBTI+ persons who are out in the workplace are much less likely to show symptoms of anxiety, depression and burnout syndrome; supportive and inclusive policies should be implemented to ensure this; in countries where marriage equality is not recognized, there are discriminatory practices that result in LGBTI+ employees not being able to enjoy some rights equally due to family norms.[3]

The Effects of Discrimination and/or The Potential to be Discriminated Against

All these findings are in line with both the results of the previous years' surveys and the 2025 survey that we have conducted. In addition, the participants also shared that being discriminated against on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics, facing hate speech or the risk of facing discrimination and hate speech, and the strategy of being closeted that they have to maintain, have caused LGBTI+ employees to be unable to establish close and genuine relationships with their coworkers. It is understood that they cannot feel a sense of belonging to the institution they work for and experience intense emotions such as hopelessness, unhappiness, anxiety, worry, anger, low performance and motiva-

3 International Labour Organization, *Gender identity and sexual orientation: promoting rights, diversity and equality in the world of work, Results of the ILO's PRIDE Project,* Briefing note, s. 1, 2, 3.

tion, depression, stress and tension, and burnout syndrome caused by psychological and physical overstrain. This, in turn, reduces productivity and job satisfaction in the workplace. Considering that workplaces are the places where we spend most of our lives in today's societies, the extent of these negative effects becomes much more evident. It should also be underlined that the rate of respondents who stated that these conditions negatively affect their productivity and job satisfaction at work is higher among public sector employees (53.5%) compared to private sector employees (38.9%).

Although the strategy of being closeted appears to provide some protection for LGBTI+ employees against the risk of discrimination and hate speech, being forced into it is itself a form of discrimination. Generally, LGBTI+ employees, expecting to face discrimination, take certain precautions starting from the pre-employment period and continue to do so throughout their employment by hiding their gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics, or sharing them only with very close colleagues or other LGBTI+ employees, strictly separating their work and private lives, sometimes forced to role-play in terms of speech, body language, and gender expression in order to continue their professional lives. This state of not being able to be out and having to constantly be cautious against potential discrimination itself becomes ongoing discrimination and can lead to severe psychological and sometimes physical effects on LGBT+ employees that extend beyond their working lives. Indeed, the contributions made within the framework of open-ended questions reveal that the most pressing demand of LGBTI+ employees is freedom and visibility. Participants indicate that the conditions for meeting this demand are the effective implementation of legal protection mechanisms and increased social awareness.

Economic Instability and Uncertainty

To gather data on whether the economic instability and uncertainty experienced in Türkiye has an impact on the working conditions of LGBTI+ employees, we added a question to the survey in 2022. In 2022, 14.2% of participants answered "yes" to this question. The responses shared by those who answered "yes" revealed that the economic situation in the country has deepened isolation and insecurity among LGBTI+ employees. Being forced to shrink their social life outside of work has a negative impact on LGBTI+'s, who particularly need safe spaces and solidarity. It was understood that the fear of being fired and not being able to find new jobs was increasing among LGBTI+ employees, that being out at work had become an even greater risk in this context, and that the steps they were taking to work and live in better conditions were being disrupted. A trans male participant working as a healthcare professional pointed out the difficulties experienced in accessing

hormones in recent times. Looking at the 2023 posts, the first striking data point was that the percentage of participants who selected the "yes" option had risen to 26.9% of the sample. These participants' posts indicated that economic instability was pushing LGBTI+ employees in the public sector into greater secrecy. The posts showed that LGBT+ employees in the public sector were forced to endure negative conditions due to both the fear of losing their jobs and the lack of job and salary guarantees in the private sector, they became more dependent on others and more vulnerable as their economic freedom decreased, and their opportunities for socialization decreased. Some participants drew a connection between economic instability and the political demonization of LGBTI+ individuals, as well as the rise in hate speech and violence against LGBTI+ people. Within this context, some participants expressed a desire to live abroad if the conditions were right.

In the 2024 survey, the relevant rate was 23.9%. Participants' comments last year also indicated that the economic situation in the country deepened the fear of losing their jobs and not being able to find new ones among LGBTI+ public employees. Job and wage insecurity in the private sector forced LGBTI+ public employees to continue their working lives in public institutions, which had much more unfavorable conditions in terms of LGBTI+ identity. According to some participants, the lack of recognition of marriage equality in Türkiye meant that impoverishment due to economic conditions had more severe consequences for LGBTI+ people. Participants' contributions also showed that it was becoming increasingly difficult in economic terms for LGBTI+ people to find accommodation in cities and neighborhoods where they could live openly. In the words of one participant, "having to choose between freedom or economic concerns leads to hopelessness about the future." In the 2025 survey, 20.2% of participants believe that economic instability and uncertainty affect working conditions due to gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics. The responses indicate that working openly in the public sector is very difficult, and the fear of losing one's job is very common among LGBTI+ employees. The impact of the economic situation on job safety in the private sector has led LGBTI+ employees to seek employment in the public sector, where they can at least have financial security. However, they are forced to conceal their identities in the public sector as well, doing everything they can to avoid standing out, either positively or negatively, which can hinder their professional development.

What Are the Demands of LGBTI+ Employees?

Looking at the statements of participants in response to open-ended questions, it is clear that the fundamental demands of LGBTI+ employees in Türkiye are freedom, visibility, and equality. In this context, LGBTI+ employees primarily express

their demand for legal protection against discrimination, both in general and specifically in employment. Participants also consider it important for responsibility to be taken at the government level and in the management levels of institutions. On the other hand, this year, some participants mentioned the anxiety and concerns caused by the government's anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric and policies. Finally, it can be said that there is a widespread perception among participants that social change cannot be achieved through the law alone. Alongside the demand for legal guarantees, demands are also being voiced for increased social awareness, abandoning heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions based on the binary gender system, and achieving social change through education. In this context, it is understood that LGBTI+ employees also have demands from universities, professional organizations, unions, and civil society organizations working in the field of LGBTI+ rights.

Consequently, in line with the findings of previous years' research, our 2025 research also highlights the need to prevent discrimination in employment based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics, to transform the disadvantaged position of LGBTI+ employees in accessing a safe and productive working environment, ensuring equality in the exercise of social and economic rights. We hope that these studies will contribute to the development of policies aimed at preventing discrimination against LGBTI+ individuals in employment and empowering LGBTI+ employees.

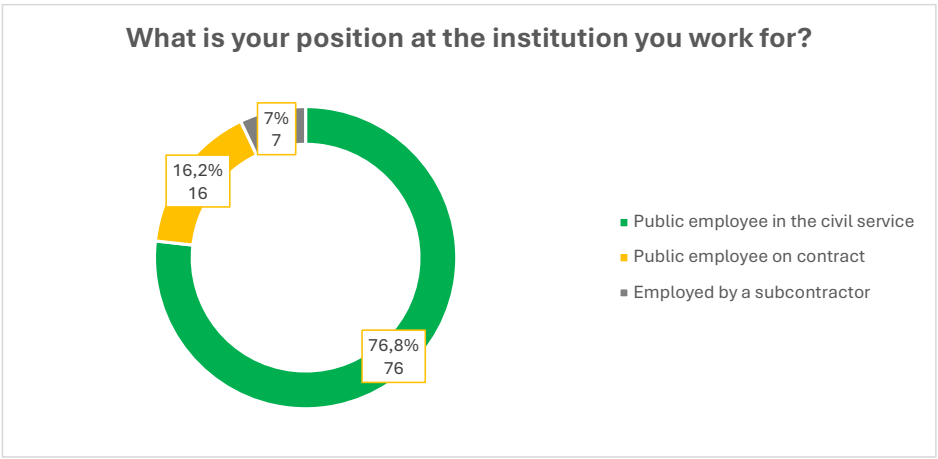
Prof. Mary Lou O'Neil and Dr. Reyda Ergün

CHAPTER 2

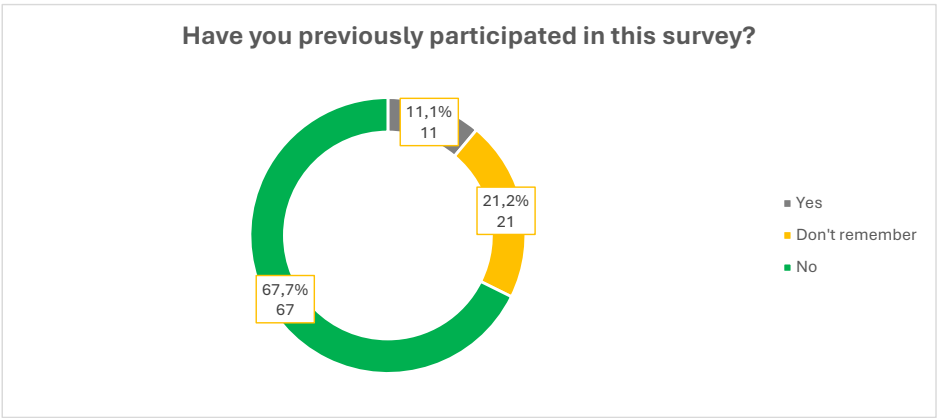
The Situation of LGBTI+ Employees in the Public Sector in Türkiye

1. Research Sample

The survey was conducted through an online survey platform, SurveyMonkey Pro. The final sample consisted of 99 individuals who declared themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex or plus (LGBTI+), actively working in the public sector in Türkiye. In the sample, 76 of respondents (76,8%) worked as civil servants, 16 (16,2%) worked under contract and 7 (7%) were employed by a subcontractor.

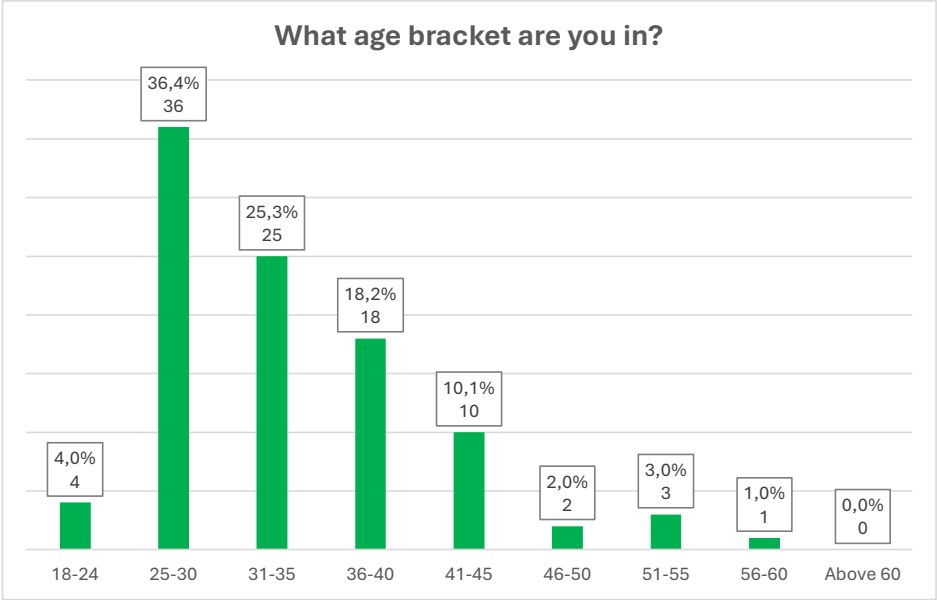


67 (67.7%) of the participants in our 2025 survey stated that they had not participated in the surveys conducted in previous years, 21 (21.2%) did not remember whether they had participated in these surveys, and 11 (11.1%) stated that they had participated in our survey before.

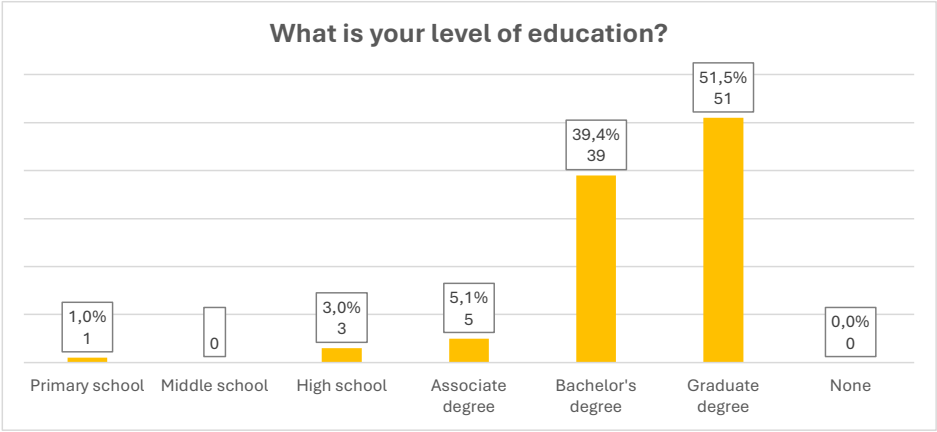


1.1. Age, level of education, and city residence information of the participants

The graphic below displays the age distribution of survey participants. 83.3% of all participants are between the ages of 25-40. Participants between the ages of 18-24 constitute 4% of the sample (4 participants), and there are only 4 participants over the age of 50.



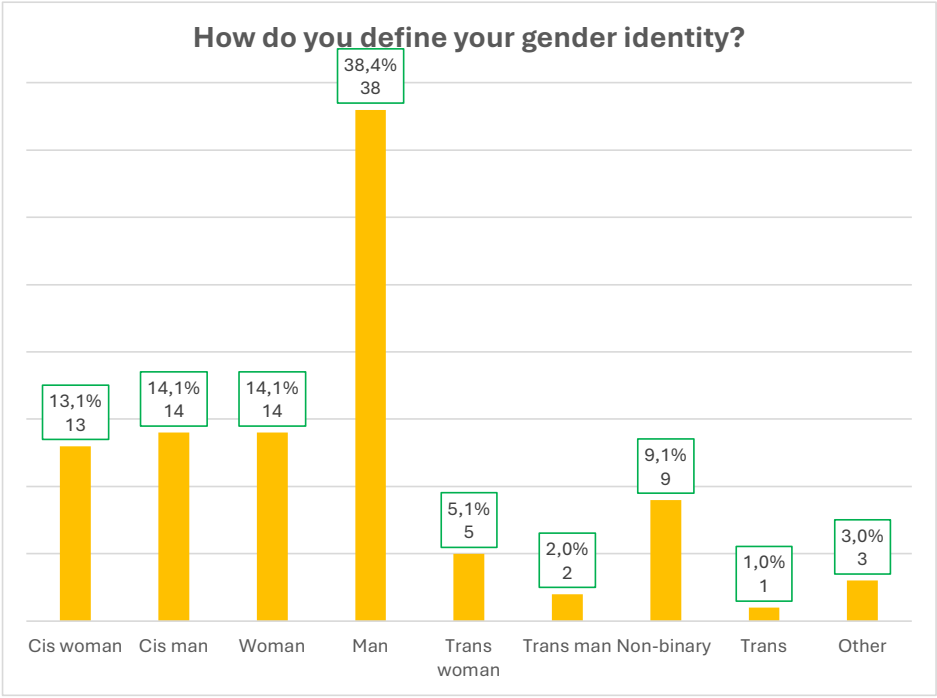
The table below shows the level of education of the respondents. 39.4% of the 99 respondents are bachelor's degree holders, while 51.5% of the respondents have graduate degrees.



Participants were also asked in which city they live. 16 of the participants (16.2%) preferred not to specify their city of residence. The responses of the remaining 83 respondents (83.8%) show that LGBTI+ public employees from at least 20 different cities participated in our survey. The most common places of residence were Ankara (28 participants, 28.3%), and Istanbul (24 participants, 24.2%).

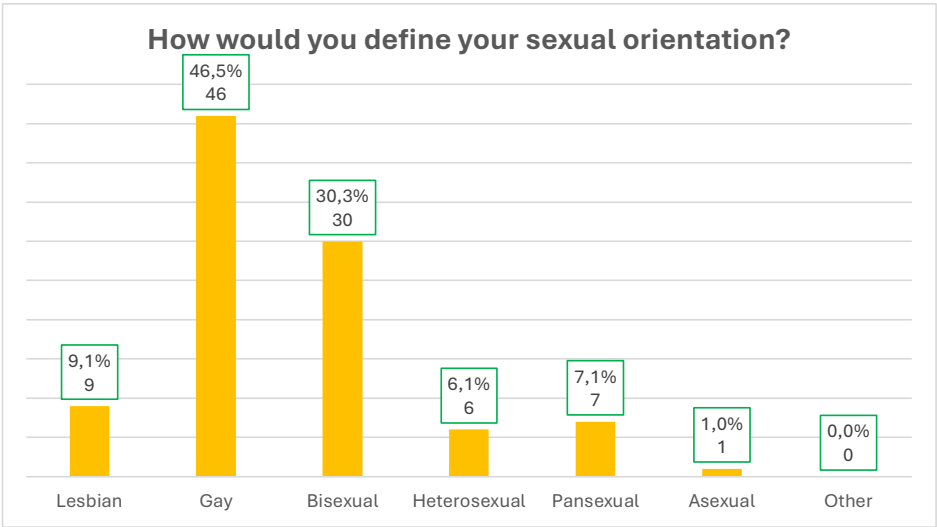
1.2. Gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics

In addition to their sex assigned at birth, participants were asked three separate questions about their sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. Participants generally declared their gender identity as "male" or "female". However, there were also participants who indicated their gender identity as "cis woman", "cis man", "trans woman", "trans man" or "other".



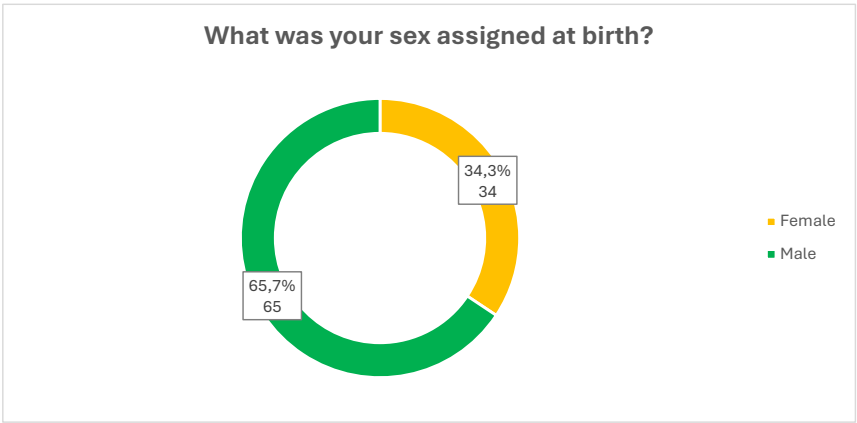
Other: 1-Agender, 2-Gender fluid, 3- Queer

Those who identified their sexual orientation as gay comprised the largest group in the sample (%46.5).



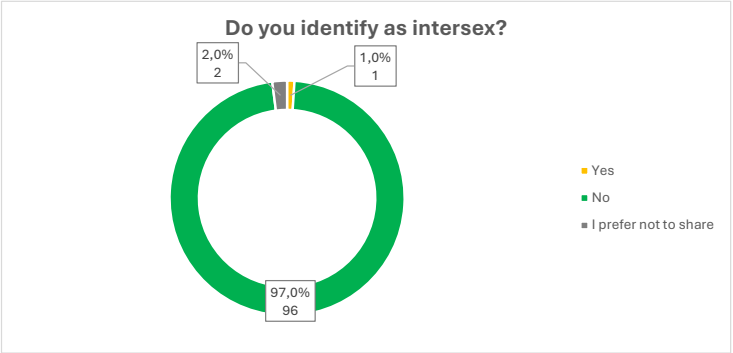
Out of a total of 99 participants, 52.5% (52 people) declared their gender identity as male/cis male and there were 46 people (46.5%) in the sample who defined their sexual orientation as gay. Therefore, the majority of the sample (41 people) consists of cisgender gay individuals.

To the question "What was your sex assigned at birth?" 65.7% responded as male, and 34.3% as female.



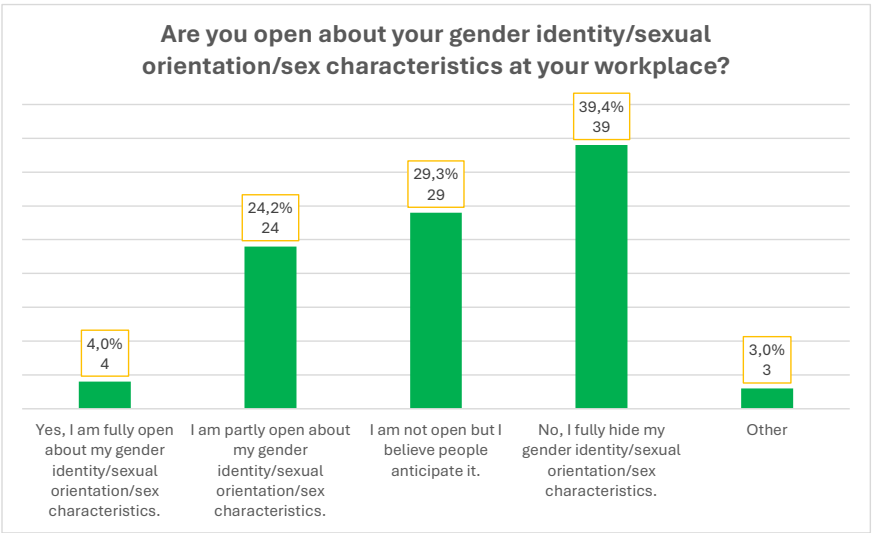
In response to the question "Do you identify as intersex?", 1 people (1%) answered "Yes" and 96 people (97%) answered "No." 2 people (2%) answered "I do not want to specify." The person who selected the "Yes" option indicated their gender iden-

tity as trans woman, and identified as "heterosexual" in response to the question about their sexual orientation.



1.3. Out status regarding gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics in the workplace

To the question "Are you out about your gender identity/ sexual orientation/ sex characteristics in your workplace?", 39 out of 99 participants (39.4%) answered "completely in the closet." 24 people (24.2%) stated that they were partially out, while only 4 people (4%) stated that they were "completely out" in terms of their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. The rate of those who stated that their identity/orientation/characteristics are "assumed even if they are not



Other: I only come out to close friends. /I'm closeted, I don't show it, but because of my old innocence and lack of skill at lying, I have work colleagues who know, and this scares me a lot. / I have two friends who know.

out" is 29.3% (29 people). We observe that participants who are completely out in the workplace comprise the lowest proportion of the sample. Another striking data is the high ratio of those who think that their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics are anticipated despite being in the closet in the workplace.

According to the findings of the research conducted by Kaos GL about private sector employees in 2025, 21,9% of participants (62 people) stated they were "completely out". The rate was 22.5% in 2024. These data suggest that more LGBTI+ employees can disclose their identity in the private sector. These data are concerning especially when the national and international obligations of the public that prohibit discrimination are considered.

Another striking data is the answers of the closeted participants to the question about whether they personally encountered discrimination directed against them in the relevant institution, and to the question about whether they witnessed hate speech against other LGBTI+ persons at their workplace. Among the 39 people who declared that they were fully in the closet at the institution they work for, 2 stated that they had encountered discriminatory attitudes in recruitment, 4 stated that they had personally experienced discrimination during their employment, and 24 stated that they had witnessed hate speech against LGBTI+ persons. Another noteworthy finding this year is the observation of the effects of the declaration of 2025 as the "Year of the Family" in the discrimination and hate speech narratives experienced/witnessed in the public sector.

Below are some of the responses participants gave to the question, "What are your thoughts and feelings about being out or in closet about your gender identity/sexual orientation/gender characteristics at your workplace?"

"I came out, or rather, I was forced to come out. I was threatened. So I came out myself to show them I wasn't afraid. It was a very difficult process, but I made them accept me." (A pansexual non-binary person working as a teacher)

"As a teacher, I believe that if I fully come out, I will face an investigation and suspension." (A cisgender bisexual man working as a teacher)

"Although I am currently fighting against this, I see that there has been no change in the use of marginalizing and othering language, and feudal mentality. And this situation again leads me to keep myself closeted, just like everyone else." (Bisexual man working as academic staff)

"I am sharing my gender identity because I believe it will make me feel more comfortable working with my colleagues. Otherwise, I and other members of my community will continue to live in hiding or under pressure. I express my sexual orientation when appropriate because working without hiding myself makes me happier and because we need to normalize it." (A cisgender bisexual woman working as a healthcare professional)

"I wish I could express myself without feeling anxious. I wish measures were taken to protect my mental and physical health under the law." (Lesbian gender fluid working as a doctor)

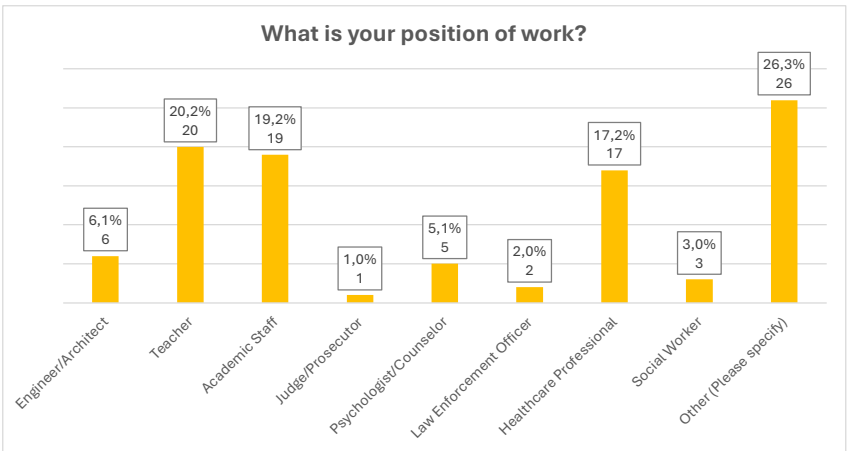
"I wish I could be out. I constantly have to lie and deceive, forcing myself to lie to the people I respect and love." (Lesbian cis woman working as an engineer/architect)

"I think it's difficult in terms of work. I'm constantly stressed because I can't act as freely as I'd like to, and I feel judged and excluded." (Bisexual cis man working as a healthcare professional)

"It's a terrible thing. Everyone is getting married and having children, but because I'm gay, that's not an option for me. Even though I have a relationship, no one knows about it. If I told someone and things went sour with that person later on, it could become a serious threat to me because I work in the public sector. But my negative stance on marriage starts getting suspicious. I'm not feminine, but I'm not very masculine either, so I sense that people have certain thoughts about me in this regard but can't quite put their finger on it." (Gay cis man working as a psychologist/counselor)

1.4. Workplace Properties and Working Positions of the Respondents

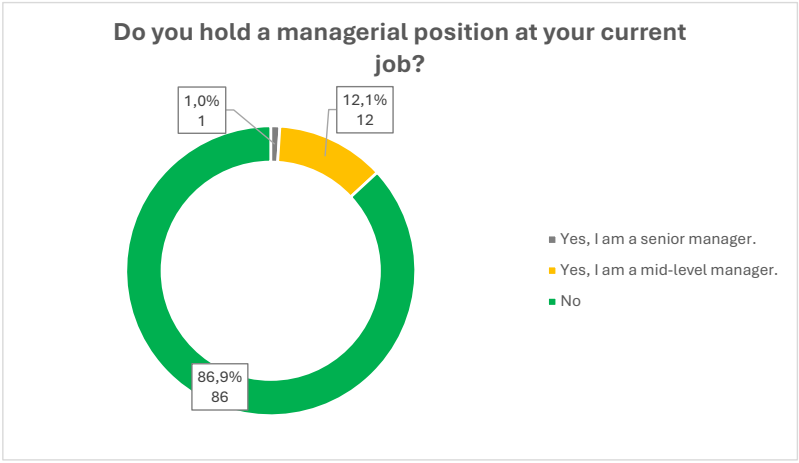
LGBTI+ employees from institutions with different qualifications and various positions participated in our research. Data on the positions of the participants in the institutions they work in are presented in the table below. The graph below shows that most of the participants work in the field of education, academia, and health (20 teachers,



Other: 1 Police Officer/ 2 Specialist/ 1 Communications Officer/ 1 Worker/ 1 Office Staff/ 1 Assistant Principal/ 1 Nurse/ 1 Cabin Crew Member/ 1 Public Relations Officer/ 1 Prefer Not to Say/ 1 Porter/ 4 Doctor/ 1 Coordinator/ 1 Computer Operator/ 1 Cameraman/ 1 Office Clerk/ 1 Media Producer/ 1 Branch Manager V./ 3 Clerk

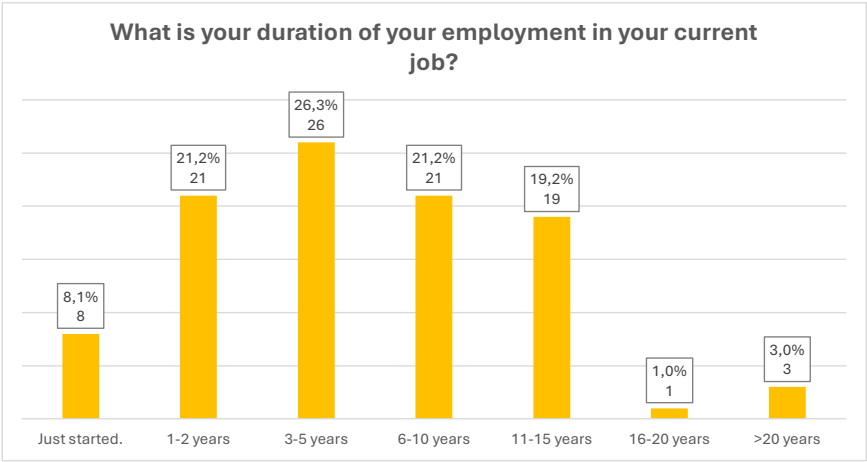
19 academic staff and 17 healthcare professionals). Teachers (20 people, 20.2%), academic staff (19 people, 19.2%), and health personnel (17 people, 17.2%) comprised the largest group, while there were 26 people (26.3%) who chose the "other" option.

In response to the question "Do you hold a managerial position in your workplace?", 86 people (86.9%) answered "no" and only 1 person stated that they were a senior manager. Among the 12 people who stated that they were mid-level managers, 6 stated that they were fully closeted at their workplace.



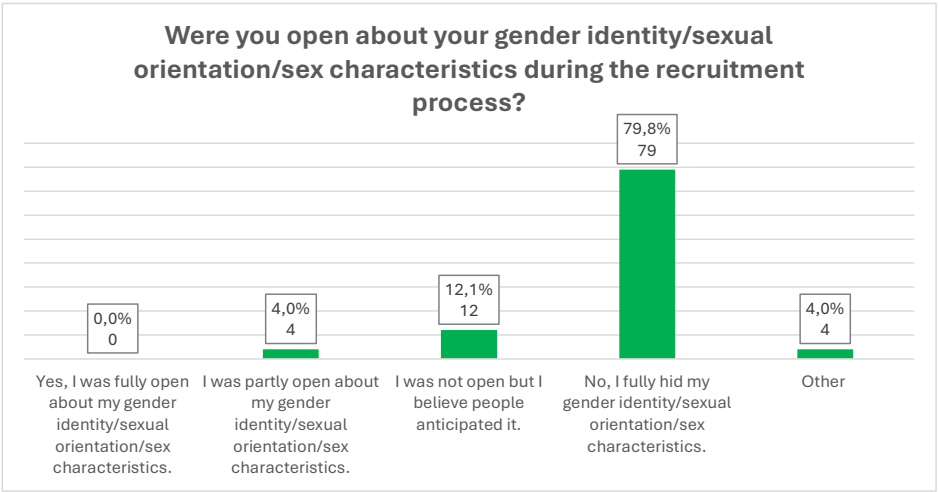
1.5. Duration of Employment at the Current Institution

The total number of respondents who have been working in their current institution for 5 years or less is 55 (55.6%). Among those who have been working in their current institution for 2 years or less (29 people), 72.4% are between the ages of 18-30, 58.6% between 25-30 and 13.7% between 18-24.



2. Findings regarding the recruitment process

Another question we asked the participants was: "Were you out about your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics during the recruitment process?" None of the respondents stated that they were completely out during the recruitment process. Those who stated that they were partially out were 4 people (4%). The rate of those who were not out but thought they were anticipated was 12.1% (12 people). The rate of those who stated that they were completely in the closet during the recruitment process is 79.8% (79 people).

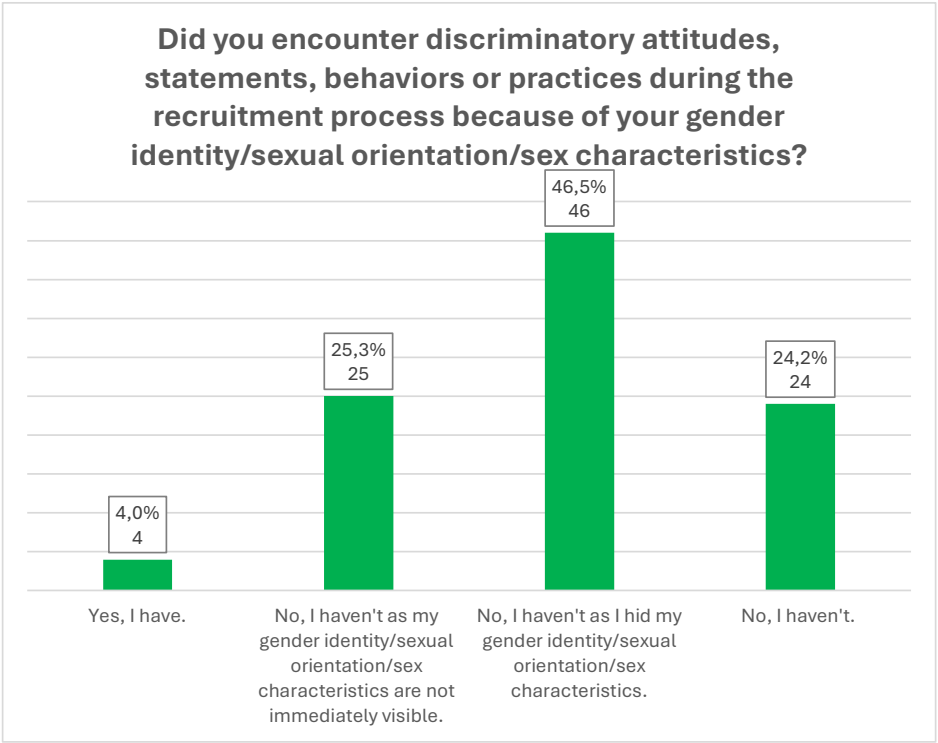


Other: There was no such process. / No, because I wasn't aware of it yet. And I was living within heteronormative boundaries. / I wasn't forced to mention it. / I wasn't out or closeted about it.

2.1. Experiences of Discrimination in the Job Application Process

Another question for LGBTI+ employees who participated in our research was "Did you encounter any discriminatory attitude, statement, behavior or practice during the recruitment process (job postings, interviews, exams, etc.) because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?".

As we can see, a significant part of the respondents felt the need to conceal their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics to avoid discrimination during the application process (46.5%). Another group of employees (25.3%, 25 people) attributed the reasons for not facing discrimination to the fact that their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics are not directly visible, not to the environment where there is no risk of discrimination. Therefore, we can con-



clude that the participants who gave this answer are also aware of the "potential discrimination" that may target LGBTI+ employees and participate in working life with this knowledge.

Consistent with the results of previous years' studies, participants' accounts of the recruitment process indicate that LGBTI+ employees experience different levels and forms of discrimination in the job application and interview processes. There is a social reality that should be considered when evaluating this finding: Since LGBTI+ employees are aware of the potential discrimination they may face during the job application process, interviews, etc. and the risk of not being hired as a result, they take precautions throughout these processes. These precautious behaviors continue throughout their working life. Hiding one's identity completely and living with a constant sense of control over appearance, body language, and similar existential characteristics is an experience that can be as severe as being directly discriminated against.

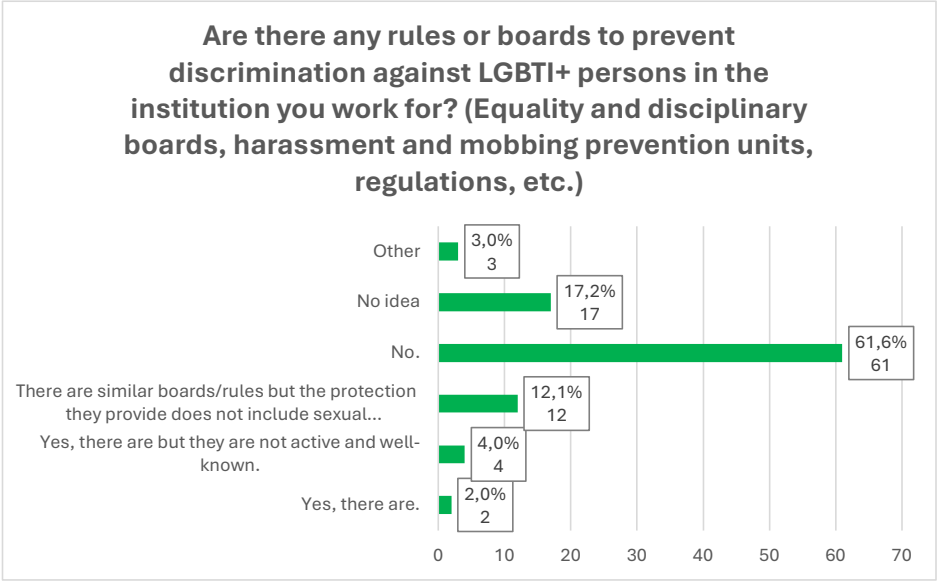
2.2. Reporting Discrimination Experienced During the Recruitment Process

4 out of 99 LGBTI+ employees who participated in our 2025 survey stated that they encountered different forms of discrimination during the job application process. Within the scope of the survey, the participants who stated that they faced discrimination during the recruitment stage were also asked the question, "Did you report your experience of discrimination in the hiring process?". More than one answer could be selected in response to this question. The number of participants who stated that they did not take any action is 1. While 2 participants shared the situation with their close ones, 1 participant reacted directly to the person concerned. 1 participant verbally reported the situation to the institution's authorities. One participant also reported the situation to a union or professional organization. This finding can be interpreted as indicating that LGBT+ individuals find public institutions, including judicial authorities, the Ombudsman's Office, and the Turkish Human Rights and Equality Agency, as well as civil society organizations, ineffective, do not trust them, or do not believe in their effectiveness.

3. Institutional Protection against Discrimination

2 participants (2%) answered " yes" to the question "Are there rules or boards to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in the institution you work for?", while 4 participants (4%) answered the question by selecting the option "yes, but not effective and well-known". However, in parallel with the findings of the research conducted in previous years, a large proportion of the participants (61 people; 61.6%) stated that there are no rules or committees to prevent discrimination against LGBTI+ persons in their institutions.

12 respondents (12.1%) stated that there are anti-discrimination boards/rules in their institutions, but these mechanisms do not include protection based on gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics. 17 people (17.2%) stated that they were not aware of the existence of such committees or rules.



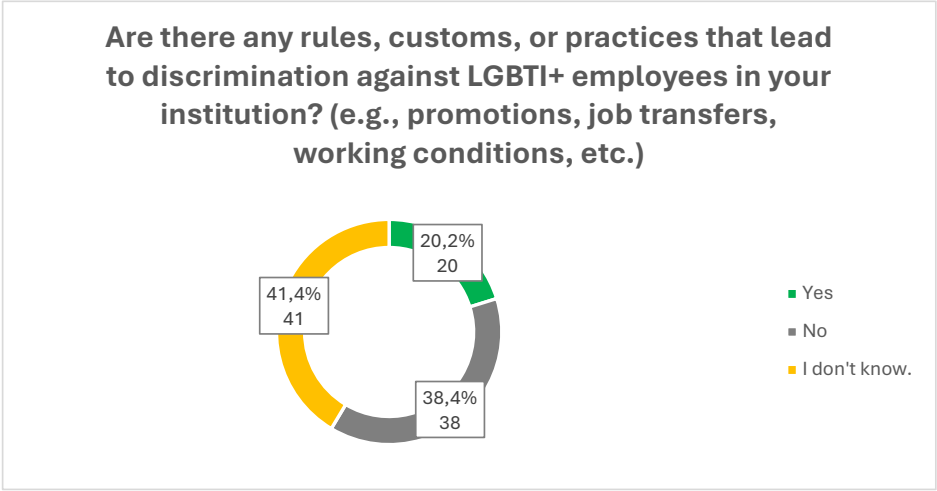
Other: There is a sexual harassment prevention unit. / There is no specific policy within the institution, but there are rules in the professional code of ethics. / There is a clause in the employment contracts stating that there should be no discrimination based on sexual identity, but I don't think people adhere to it very much.

As a whole, this data reveals the following: In the public sector in Türkiye, internal mechanisms to prevent discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics either do not exist, or in exceptional cases where they do exist, their effectiveness is open to debate. However, the mere existence of such mechanisms is not adequate; there is also a need for a general institutional-societal perception that the rights of LGBTI+ employees will be protected and that these mechanisms function effectively.

3.1. Internal Discriminatory Rules or Practices

Another question we posed to the participants was "Are there any rules, customs, practices that lead to discrimination against LGBTI+ employees in the institution you work for?" When the answers are analyzed, the first striking finding is that more than half of the participants (41 people; 41.4%) stated that they have no knowledge on this issue. This finding is similar to previous years.

The number of participants who stated that there are no rules and practices that lead to discrimination in their institution is 38 (38.4%). On the other hand, 20 participants (20.2%) stated that there are rules and practices that lead to discrimination in their institution.



While most participants pointed to job rotation and transfer practices and the difficulty of promotion, some participants also stated that they did not request a transfer in order to avoid exposure or to maintain their relative comfort in their current position. As the following statements will show, the legal validity of heterosexual marriages prevents life partners from benefiting from marriage-related rights. Another noteworthy point is that participants working as academic staff stated that they were unable to conduct LGBTQI+/Queer studies. These findings also appear similarly in the answers to questions about job satisfaction. Therefore, it would not be wrong to make the following observation: increasing discrimination, targeting, and hate speech, on the one hand, hinder academic work and, on the other hand, directly violate human rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of scientific work, and the right to development.

"The thing is, these types of marriages aren't accepted in our country anyway, married people get special treatment, and when working parents get other privileges, it's discrimination even if people aren't aware of it. I got scolded for talking about this with my students at a place I used to work." (Lesbian cis woman working as an engineer/architect)

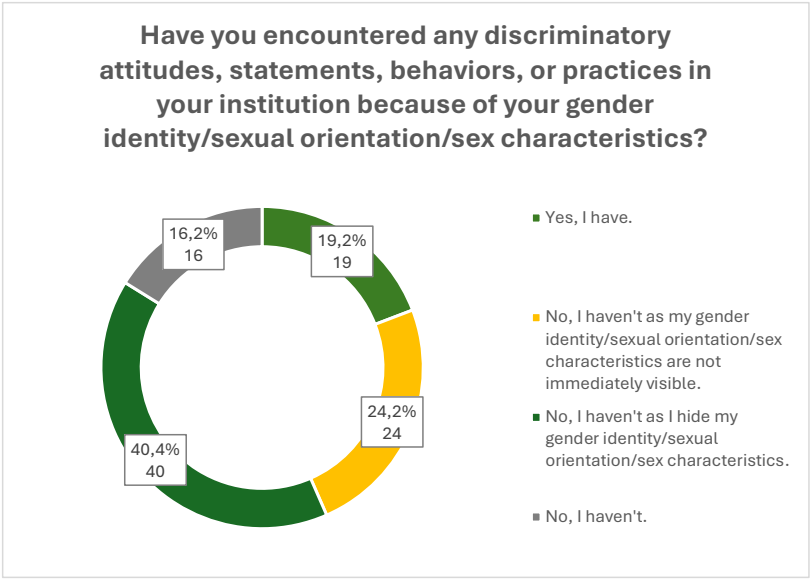
"My faculty journal did not accept my article on LGBT issues for review." (Gay man working as academic staff)

"The civil service law directly leads to discrimination. In a disciplinary proceeding, it can be treated as an offense worthy of dismissal." (Gay man working as academic staff)

The narratives of the participants point to the legal framework, attitudes, and practices that prevent LGBTI+ employees from enjoying their rights equally. For example, the heteronormative structure of the institution of marriage based on the binary gender system, reinforced by the law, results in unequal enjoyment of rights in working life for many LGBTI+ persons. Processes such as promotion and assignment can also function as a mechanism of punishment and threats against LGBTI+ employees. The fact that the understanding of "moral conduct" functions as an ideology of discrimination in public institutions, as in the society in general, causes LGBTI+ employees to be marginalized, excluded, and pushed into invisibility.

4. Personal Experiences of Discrimination in the Workplace

Another question in the survey was, "Have you encountered any discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices in your workplace because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?" As we see in the table below, 19.2% (19 people) of the participants responded with "Yes, I have." However, 40.4% (40 people) of the participants stated that they did not encounter discrimination but attributed this to the fact that they hid their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. On the other hand, 24.2% of the participants (24 people) stated that they did not experience discrimination but attributed this to the fact that their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics were not directly visible. Only 16.2% (16 people) of the respondents answered this question negatively.



Most LGBT+ employees who reported experiencing discrimination at their workplace stated that they were humiliated, excluded, and gossiped about. Below are examples of participants' accounts of the forms of discrimination they personally encountered at their workplace.

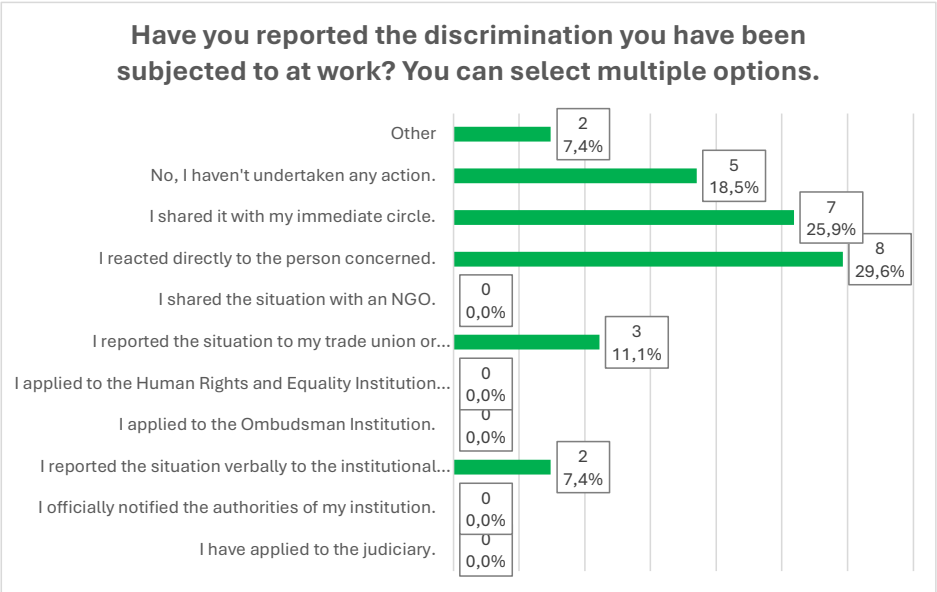
> *"Yes, I experienced homophobia and isolation." (A trans woman working as a worker)*
>
> *"Because I dressed in a way that didn't match my assigned gender, I was subjected to unnecessary and irrelevant advice. Ridiculous comments like, 'You're such a pretty girl, why are you walking around like a boy?'" (A heterosexual trans man working as a teacher)*

> *"When it became apparent that I didn't conform to established gender roles (for example, going to the soccer field, talking about the women I slept with, or getting a girlfriend), I began to experience psychological harassment." (Gay man working as a teacher)*

The testimonies of participants suggest that even if they do not disclose their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics, LGBTI+ employees constantly experience indirect discrimination.

4.1. Reporting Discrimination Experienced in the Workplace

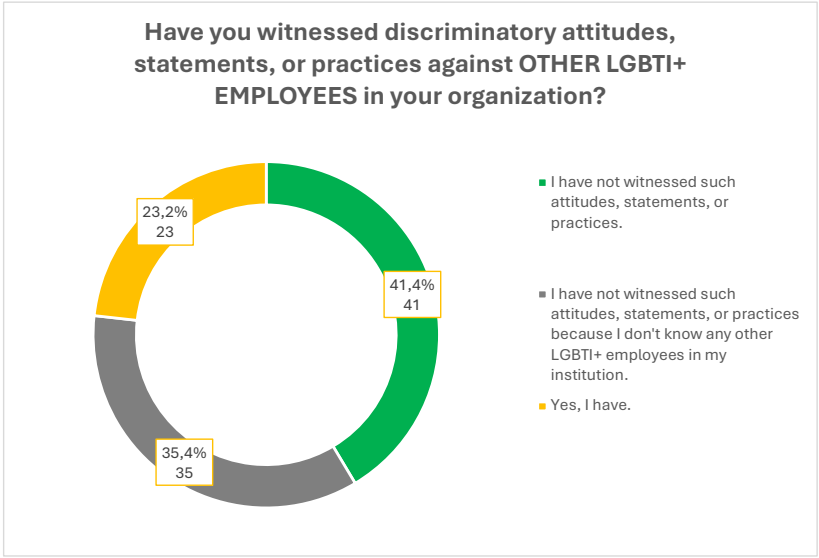
Participants who shared that they had been subjected to discrimination in the workplace were also asked the question, "Have you reported any discrimination you have been subjected to in your workplace?". While evaluating the answers to this question, it should be taken into consideration that most LGBTI+ employees in the public sector are completely in the closet or partially out their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics. According to the table below, none of the participants that were subjected to discrimination have applied to the judiciary. Only 2 people made a verbal report to the authorities within the institution. Application to TIHEK and the Ombudsman's Office was not preferred in any case. 5 of the participants did not report the discrimination to anybody, 8 of them reacted to the person concerned, 7 of them shared the situation with their close circle. 3 people reported that they have notified a union/professional organization.



5. Other LGBTI+ Employees and Discrimination against them

5.1. Accounts of Discrimination against Other LGBTI+ Employees at the Workplace

To the question, "Have you witnessed discriminatory attitudes, statements, or practices against OTHER LGBTI+ EMPLOYEES in your institution?", 41.4% of the participants (41 people) responded by selecting the option "no." 35.4% of the participants (35 people) attributed the fact that they did not witness such discrimination to the lack of other LGBTI+ employees they know in their institutions. 23.2% of the participants (23 people) stated that they witnessed discriminatory attitudes, statements, or practices against other LGBTI+ employees. Undoubtedly, the answers given to this question should be interpreted together with the finding that LGBTI+ employees in the public sector are in the closet regarding their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics.



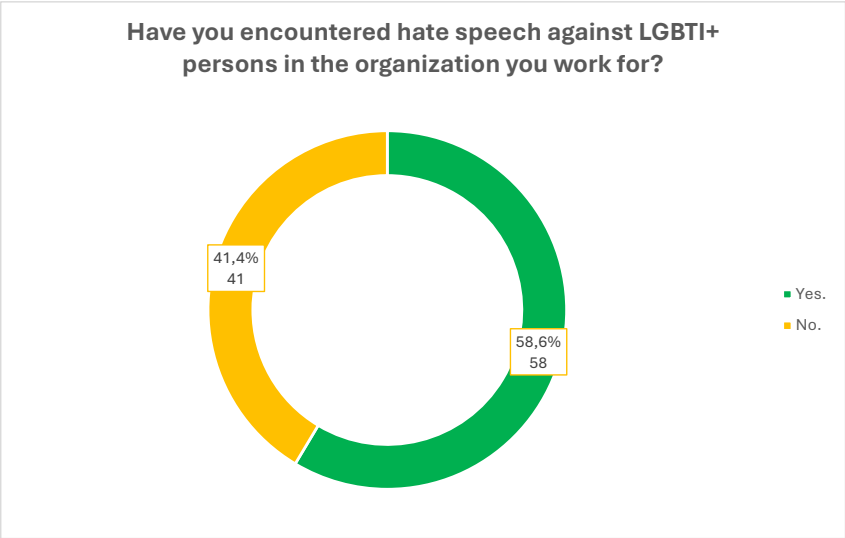
"I heard bad rumors about my friend who works in another department and is out about her sexuality." (A cis lesbian woman working as office staff)

"I often hear people say things behind gay friends' backs like 'faggot, he's hitting on other guys, he's so disgusting.' There are also rumors going around about lesbians who are very obvious, like 'she had her breasts removed.'" (Bisexual woman working as a flight attendant)

"I have repeatedly witnessed discriminatory remarks made by other teachers towards individuals among my students whom we suspected had a different sexual orientation." (Gay male teacher)

6. Hate Speech against LGBTI+ Employees in the Workplace

We also asked the participants the question, "Have you encountered any hate speech against LGBTI+ persons in your workplace?". While 41 (41.4%) of the participants stated that they did not encounter any hate speech, 58 (58.6%) stated that they did.



"Especially after the "Family Year", they say that we are sick individuals and should be isolated, and that people like us cannot be government employees." (Bisexual cis woman working as an engineer/architect)

Opposition to the so-called "LGBT lobby" and the imposition of the "Family Year" are being intensely promoted. Cursed race, luti rhetoric is widespread." (Bisexual cis man working as an Assistant Principal Teacher)

"Faggot, psychologically disturbed, not sure if he's a woman or a man, oh my god, he's probably a pervert, queer, etc." (A heterosexual trans man working as a teacher)

"The statements made during Family Year constitute explicit hate speech." (Gay man working as academic staff)

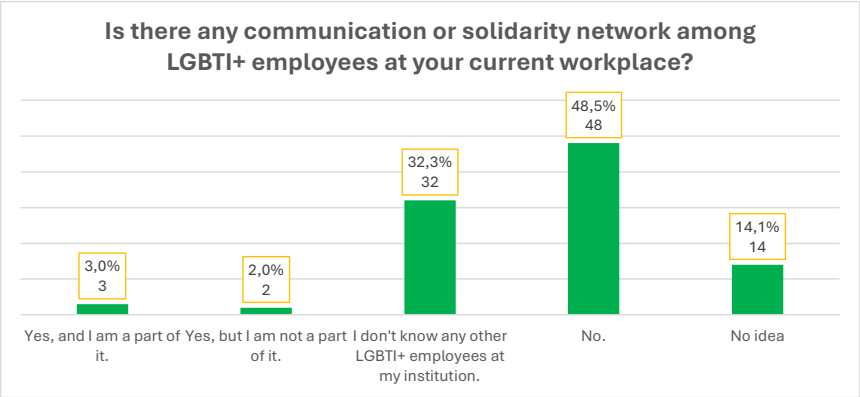
"They keep insisting on 'lobbying'. Each piece of content is being individually checked for 'rainbow' content." (Gay cis man working as a media producer)

"Due to 2025 being designated as the "Year of the Family", and the existence of negative policies towards LGBTI+ individuals, ministries are constantly receiving memos. Naturally, this situation allows Islamist but homophobic individuals to become more visible and speak more freely. When giving their opinion about a person, if that person is LGBTI+, professionals can refer to 'conversion therapy' in their written reports and that the person should be referred to hospitals." (Gay cis man working as a psychologist/counselor)

7. Situation of Unions and Professional Organizations

7.1. Communication and solidarity networks among LGBTI+ employees

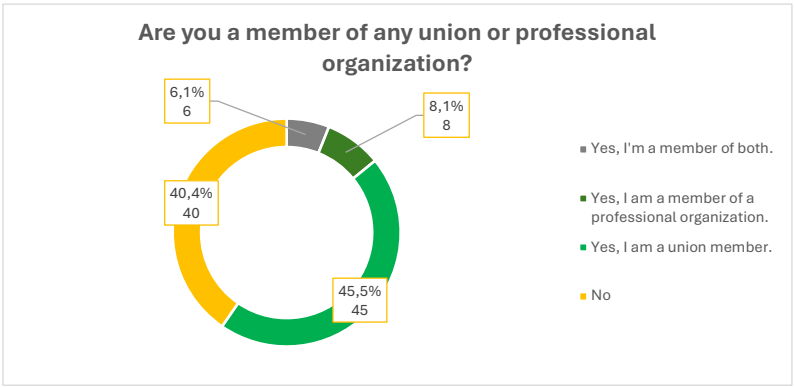
The responses to our question, "Is there any communication or solidarity network among LGBT+ employees at your workplace?" indicate that opportunities for communication and solidarity are weak in the public sector. While 48.5% (48 people) responded that no such networks exist, 14 people (14.1%) selected the "I don't know" option. 32 people (32.3%) stated that they do not know of any other LGBT+ employees at their workplace.



As can be seen from the table, only 3% of LGBTI+ employees (3 people) say that there is a communication network among them and that they are part of this network. 2% stated that such a network exists but they are not a part of it.

7.2. Membership in Unions and/or Professional Organizations

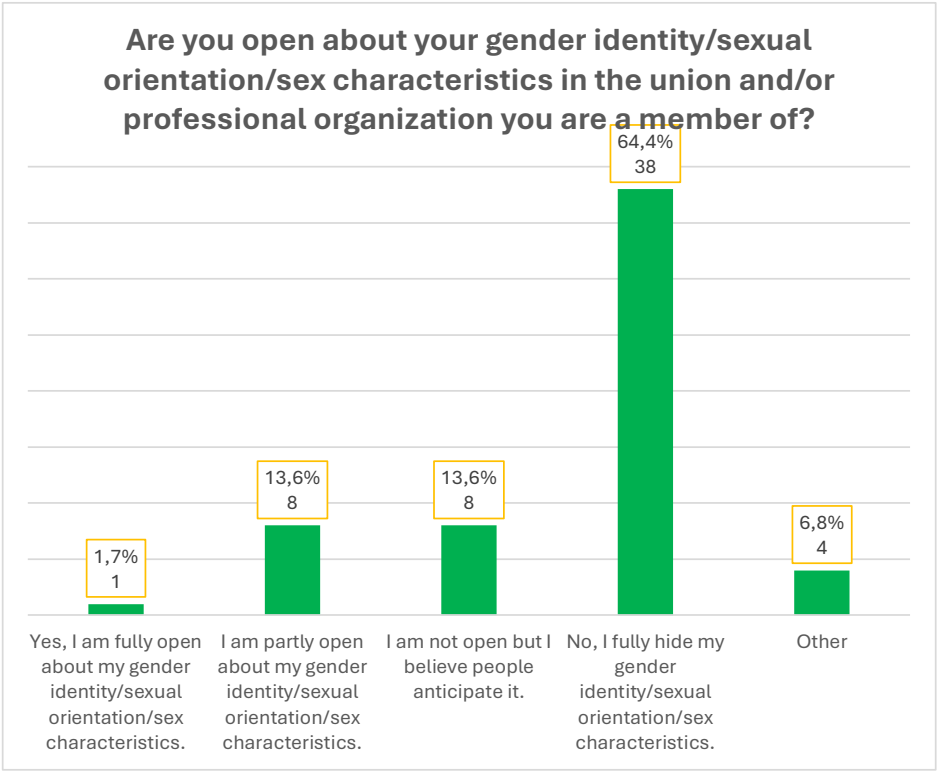
To the question, "Are you a member of a trade union or professional organization?" 45.5% of the participants (45 people) answered, "yes, I am a member of a union",



8.1% (8 people) answered, “yes, I am a member of an professional organization”, and 6.1% answered (6 people), “yes, I am a member of both.” On the other hand, 40.2% of the participants (40 people) stated that they are neither union nor professional organization members.

7.3. Out status in unions and professional organizations

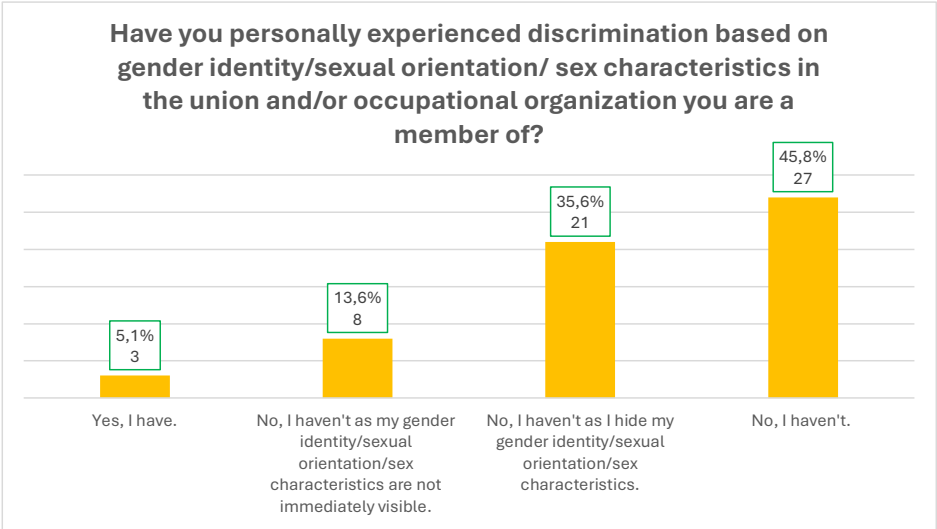
Participants who are members of a trade union and/or professional organization were also asked the question, “Are you out about your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics in the union and/or professional organization you are a member of?” The rate of those who answered this question by selecting the option, “yes, I am completely out” is 1.7% (1 person) among union and/or professional organization members. The rate of those who stated that they are partly out was 13.6% (8 people). The rate for those who answered, “No, I fully hide my gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics” is 64.4% (38 people).



Other: I don’t spend time with the union. / I didn’t feel the need to say anything. / If they found out, they’d fire me. / I’m just a member; I don’t actively participate.

7.4. Personal Experiences of Discrimination in Unions and Professional Organizations

Participants who are members of unions and/or professional organizations were also asked whether they had personally experienced discrimination in their unions or professional organizations. While 45.8% of the participants (27 people) who are members of unions and/or professional organizations stated that they did not face discrimination, 3 participants stated that they directly faced discrimination. However, 49.2% of the respondents who did not have such personal experience, attributed the reason for this to the fact that they conceal their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics and that their identity is not known.

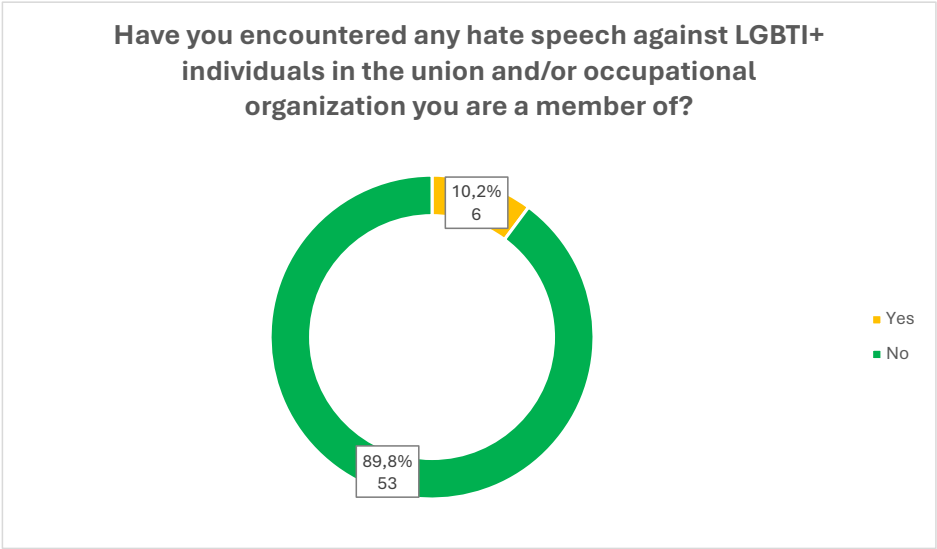


Participants were also asked, "Have you taken any action regarding the discrimination you have been subjected to in your union or professional organization?" 2 participants stated that they had not taken any action, while 1 participant stated that they had verbally reported the situation to union or professional organization officials. One person stated that they had shared it with their close ones. None of the participants had resorted to judicial or quasi-judicial means. These data may indicate that unions and professional organizations have failed to establish sufficient trust among LGBTI+ members.

> *"My union leaders strongly criticized another union for holding a one-hour class on sexual orientation in schools. The professional association's management, however, did not issue a statement condemning the field instructor who proposed LGBT conversion therapy and was featured in news reports about harassment allegations." (Bisexual man working as a psychologist/counselor)*

7.5. Hate Speech against LGBTI+ in Unions and Professional Organizations

Our last question to the participants that are members of a trade union and/or professional organization was: "Have you encountered any hate speech against LGBTI+s in the union and/or professional organization you are a member of?" The rate of participants who answered "no" to this question is 89.8% (53 people), while the percentage who answered "yes" was 10.2% (6 people). Participants stated that they were exposed to offensive jokes and homophobic remarks in their institutions, just as they were in their workplaces. The fact that some public sector unions directly endorse the government's rhetoric makes it difficult for LGBT+ employees to fight for their rights within their unions.

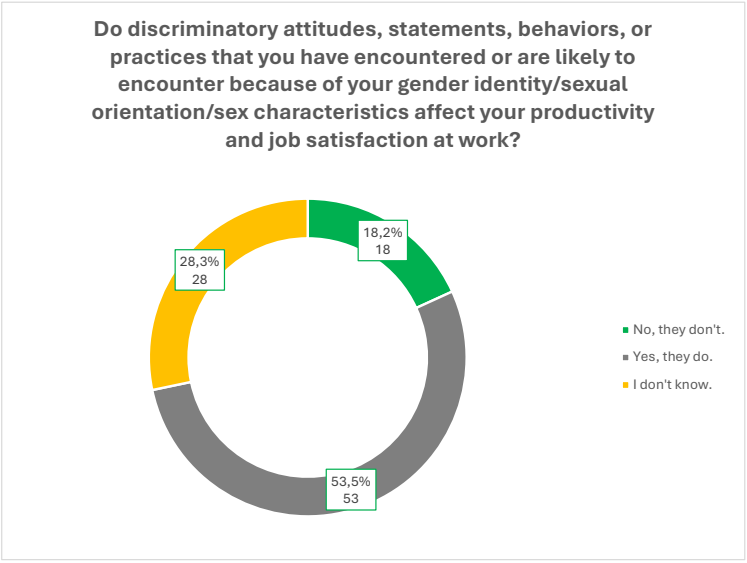


"In the province where I live, a member of the union leadership repeatedly posted messages saying 'Down with LGBT'." (Bisexual man working as a psychologist/counselor)

"Sharing posts about and in support of the 'Family Year'" (Gay man working as a psychologist/counselor)

8. The Relationship Between Discrimination, Productivity, and Job Satisfaction in the Workplace

In order to reveal the relationship between discrimination, work efficiency and job satisfaction, the participants were asked the question "Do discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors, or practices that you have encountered or are likely to encounter because of your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics affect your productivity and job satisfaction at work?". To this question, 18 participants (18.2%) answered "no" and 28 participants (28.3%) answered "no idea". On the other hand, 53 participants (53.5%) stated that their work productivity and satisfaction were affected by discriminatory attitudes, statements, behaviors or practices.



Participants' accounts show that forms of discrimination experienced or likely to be experienced in the work environment negatively affect employees' job satisfaction and productivity. This effect is felt in different ways.

> *"Yes, because while trying to do my job, I have to advocate for rights in the face of absurd phobic statements." (Gay agender academic staff member)*
>
> *"The anger I feel because I can't express myself freely leads to a lack of motivation at work." (Gay cis man working as academic staff)*
>
> *"I have a job I love, but every day I feel like I'm being forced to work." (A cisgender bisexual woman working in healthcare)*
>
> *"This causes me to feel ashamed not only of my own identity, but also of my students' view of the world. That's why it affects my perspective on my work." (Pansexual non-binary academic staff member)*

"If my orientation becomes known, it will inevitably be used against me in the future, which destroys my desire to advance or devote myself wholeheartedly to my work. Without dreaming of advancement, I just do what I have to do and move on. I'm waiting for retirement." (Lesbian cis woman working as an engineer/architect)

"I can't do my job the way I want to. I'm constantly assigned to institutions rather than schools. I'm constantly being pushed towards online work. To avoid standing out, I have to do everything twice as well and twice as carefully. I feel like I have to be the most compliant and docile person possible. I think that at the slightest mistake, it's not my competence that will be brought up, but my appearance. I have to be the 'best' in every sense, which forces me to suppress my personality and compromise my values, leading me to hate my job." (A heterosexual trans man working as a teacher)

"It affects me in every way. I feel like quitting my job and hindering everyone else's work. There's a sense of security that comes with being a public employee, and that, combined with my financial obligations, somehow convinces me to stay." (Gay cis man working as a media producer)

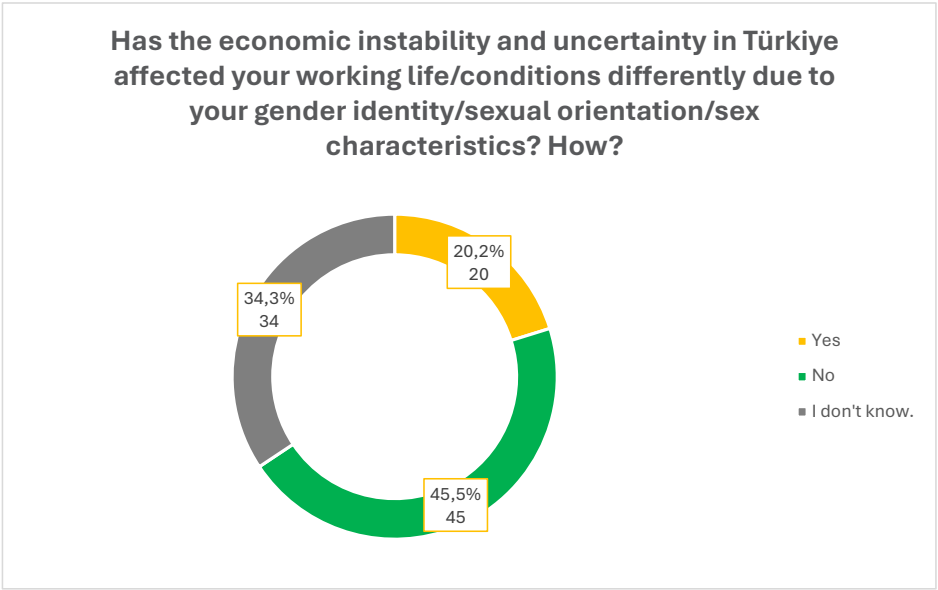
"I work in a place where the policies and practices implemented make me feel hated for who I am, where my identity is directly targeted. As a result, I cannot fulfill my potential and am forced to hide. This oppressive environment significantly undermines both my productivity and job satisfaction." (Gay non-binary engineer/architect)

"For example, because I am already queer, I have started to withdraw from things like teaching courses on queer theory and presenting papers in recent years because I don't want to draw attention to myself and have it used against me." (Pansexual non-binary academic staff member)

Considering that work hours occupy a significant part of the day, the fact that the participants have to conceal their gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics causes them to spend most of their lives under pressure. Constantly being careful, trying to control their emotions - which are mostly negative emotions due to the discrimination they are exposed to - trying to remain calm and unresponsive to insinuations, jokes, and general hate speech, even if it is not personally directed at them, creates pressure and uneasiness throughout the working day, which directly affect productivity. In addition to these, the experiences of the participants indicate that productivity and job satisfaction decrease due to reasons such as not being able to establish a sense of belonging to the institution or not feeling like a part of the institution and the work environment. Many participants also reported that their health had deteriorated; their moods were depressed; and they were constantly anxious. In addition, in an environment where all these experiences occur, it is natural that creativity decreases as a result of the decrease in self-confidence and general well-being.

9. The Situation of LGBTI+ in the Current Economic Conditions

Another question asked to the participants was "Has the economic instability and uncertainty being experienced in Türkiye affected your working life/conditions due to your gender identity/sexual orientation/sex characteristics?". To this question, 20.2% (20 people) answered "yes", 45.5% (45 people) answered "no", and 34.3% (34 people) chose the option "no idea."



The responses of the participants can be evaluated in various ways. Since the participants have (relatively) more job security as public sector employees compared to the private sector, they do not attribute the economic difficulties and uncertainty they experience or will likely experience are due to their gender identity, sex characteristics or sexual orientation. Another explanation is that since LGBTI+ persons working in the public sector follow a strategy of staying in the closet more than LGBTI+ persons working in the private sector, they do not attribute the difficulties they experience or will experience are due to gender identity, sex characteristics or sexual orientation. Instead, they may attribute the difficulties they experience or will likely experience to the overall conditions in the country.

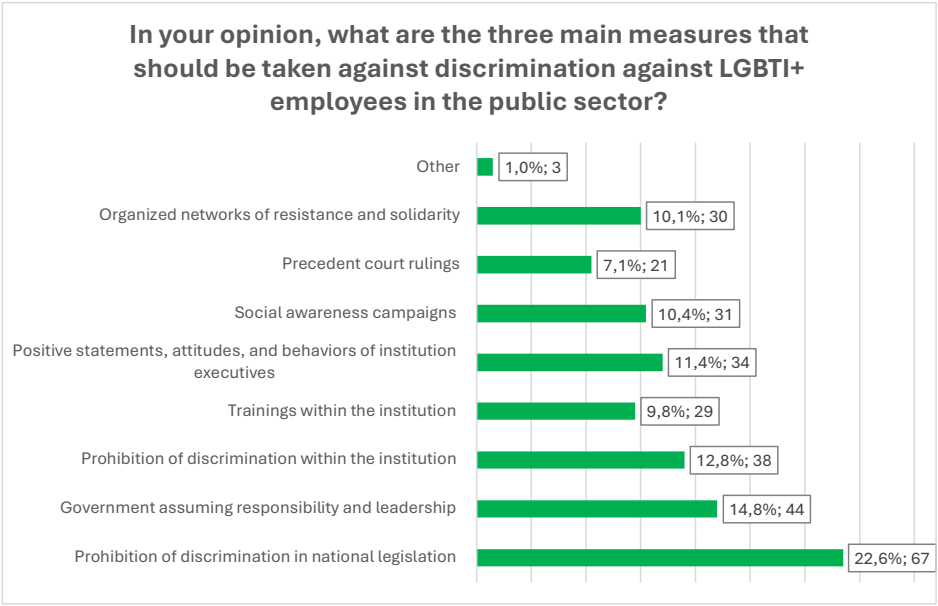
On the other hand, participants who answered "yes" stated that the current economic conditions made them feel insecure and that they were afraid to quit their jobs or change jobs. It was also observed that participants associated unemployment with helplessness. Participants who answered "yes" also stated that they were unable to socialize because their income was insufficient or that they felt

isolated because there was no social environment for them where they lived. In addition to the material hardships created by economic conditions, this isolation highlights the negative situation for LGBT+ employees who stated that they could only be themselves outside the work environment (after work).

> *"I'm afraid of losing my job. I've become even more invisible" (Gay cis man working as academic staff)*
>
> *"Economic uncertainty reduces our chances of finding new jobs if we lose our current ones. This also limits opportunities to stand up against discrimination or express ourselves." (Pansexual non-binary academic staff member)*
>
> *"I never wanted to work in the public sector. I was looking for more flexible, freelance, and project-based conditions because I knew that in the public sector, I would feel threatened both because of my sexual orientation and my personal stance. However, the public sector is relatively more stable financially and allows me to sustain my life financially." (Gay cis man working as a psychologist/counselor)*

10. Respondents' Recommendations for Combatting Discrimination Against LGBTI+ Employees

Another question we asked participants was, "In your opinion, what are the three most important measures that should be taken against discrimination against LGBT+ employees in public institutions?" When we grouped the responses according to their content, we saw that the category of "legal measures" that should be taken regarding LGBT+ rights stood out: prohibition of discrimination in national legislation, "government responsibility and leadership," and prohibition of discrimination in internal institutional legislation. Demands for updating legislation in line with universal human rights criteria were followed by demands related to "organized struggle and solidarity networks," "social awareness campaigns," and "internal institutional training."



Other: Let's be realistic. I don't see any savior outside of the law. / I don't think there's anything to be done about the way the world is going. I'm at the point where it's enough that they don't kill us, rape us, commit violence against us, or ruin our lives, that they don't bother us as human beings just trying to exist on the sidelines. / Early elections

The majority of responses and requests are consistent with Türkiye's obligations under international and national human rights law. A large majority of participants emphasized the need to update relevant legislation to prevent discrimination in the public sector. Legal regulations will primarily provide guarantees for LGBT+ indi-

viduals working in the public sector and lead to positive changes in the conditions that cause them to work under constant risk. It was also noted that there is a need for internal regulations that can be effective in combating discrimination.

In recent years, although some participants stated that society needed to change completely, they also indicated that they did not hold out hope for positive change; this hopelessness was expressed in this year's survey as well, in the form of a goal to move abroad because society would not change.

11. Additional Comments from the Respondents

At the end of the survey, participants were asked whether they wanted to share anything else to be quoted in the study. The responses of some participants are presented below.

"LGBT+ academics and students facing LGBT+phobia at universities is a human rights violation. We need to show more solidarity." (Gay agender academic staff member)

We are very happy that you are addressing this issue and consider it worthy of research. It makes us feel that we are not alone. Thank you with all our hearts. (Gay man who did not wish to disclose his profession)

"More than economic instability, the government's ongoing anti-LGBTQ+ policies and narrative are making me question whether I will continue to live and work in this country in the future. At some point, I want to leave the country." (Gay cisgender man working as academic staff)

"While there is no protection system between women and men who are considered cisgender, expecting such a thing for LGBTI+ groups sometimes seems like a fantasy, but even in non-institutional situations, there are many situations that are not normalized. People need to be educated." (Pansexual non-binary person working as academic staff)

"I believe that universities and organizations that could be expected to lead the way among public institutions should take the lead by making rational public statements against LGBTI+ discrimination." (Bisexual woman working as a computer operator)

"Homophobia should be a hate crime, and marriage equality should be granted." (Gay man working as a psychologist/counselor)

"I want the voices of institutions that can speak out on this issue to be heard louder. I'm tired." (Gay man working as academic staff)

"We should plan many more events to reach the public through social media, engage in more dialogue with parties and other NGOs that support LGBTQI+ policies, and increase visibility on the streets." (Gay cis man working as a teacher)