



# EASO

## Researching the situation of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons (LGB) in countries of origin

*EASO Practical Guides Series*

April 2015





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- ✓ Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Office for Country Information and Language Analysis (OCILA), the Netherlands;
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## Abbreviations

<b>Accord</b>	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation
<b>AIDS</b>	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>Cedoca</b>	Documentation and Research Centre (CGRS, Belgium)
<b>CGRS</b>	Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (Belgium)
<b>COI</b>	country of origin information
<b>DCR</b>	Dutch Council for Refugees
<b>DIDR</b>	Division de l'Information, de la Documentation et des Recherches (OFPRA, France)
<b>EASO</b>	European Asylum Support Office
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FFM</b>	fact-finding mission
<b>GLAAD</b>	Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation
<b>HFHR</b>	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>IGLHRC</b>	International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
<b>ILGA</b>	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
<b>LGB</b>	lesbian, gay and bisexual (persons)
<b>LGBT</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (persons)
<b>LGBTI</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (persons)
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (persons)
<b>MSA</b>	modern standard Arabic
<b>MSM</b>	men who have sex with men
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OCILA</b>	Office for Country Information and Language Analysis (Netherlands)
<b>OFPRA</b>	Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (France)
<b>ORAM</b>	Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration
<b>RSS</b>	really simple syndication
<b>SGN</b>	sexual and gender nonconforming
<b>SMB</b>	Swedish Migration Agency (Previously known as Swedish Migration Board)
<b>SOGI</b>	sexual orientation and gender identity
<b>SSRN</b>	Social Science Research Network
<b>STD</b>	sexually transmitted disease



<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>ULB</b>	Université Libre de Bruxelles
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WSW</b>	women who have sex with women

# 1. Introduction

## The scope and aims of the guide

While sharing many methodological similarities with other types of COI research, reporting on the situation of LGB in countries of origin can become a difficult task for several reasons (variety of search terms, scarce sources, general information...). Becoming acquainted with terminology, local contexts and types of sources, understanding relevant research questions and search terms and obtaining alternative sources of information can better equip a researcher confronted with the difficulties of this topic.

This guide aims to provide background knowledge as well as useful tips and sources for researching the situation of LGB in countries of origin.

The guide should be read in combination with **Annex II**, which provides a list of sources and their web links. To enable regular updates of the list of web links, the online version of the guide will be updated as necessary. The most up-to-date version will be available on the EASO website at: <http://easo.europa.eu/asylum-documentation/easo-publication-and-documentation/>

The guide focuses on researching the situation of LGB since transgender and intersex applicants for international protection are not so common. However, in order not to exclude potential research issues related to transgender and intersex persons, the glossary of terms (Chapter 2) and the list of sources (Annex II) encompass these two groups. Throughout the guide, the abbreviation **LGB** for '**lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons**' will be used, except when citing other sources that may use different acronyms (such as LGBT; LGBTI — lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex; or SOGI — sexual orientation and gender identity).

The guide should serve the needs of both experienced and inexperienced COI researchers <sup>(1)</sup>, as well as caseworkers conducting COI research. Additionally, it may assist lawyers, legal aid providers and judges working in the asylum process.

The guide should be consulted in conjunction with EASO's *Country of origin information report methodology* <sup>(2)</sup> and the *Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)* <sup>(3)</sup>, which provide the general framework for COI methodology and quality standards.

This guide is a public document.

The research for this version of the guide was finalised in February 2015.

## The background

Over the past few decades, it appears that attitudes toward LGB have significantly changed in many parts of the world. LGB have advocated and have obtained recognition of their human rights, such as the right to non-discrimination and the right to private and family life. This development, however, has not been universal, as some countries have faced a rise in homophobia and others have failed to decriminalise or have further criminalised homosexuality. In some ways the gap between these countries appears to have widened in recent years <sup>(4)</sup>. It is in this context that some LGB flee their countries of origin and ask for international protection.

In its '**Guidelines on claims to refugee status based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity within the context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 convention and/or its 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees**', the **UNHCR** specifies the following:

*An applicant's **sexual orientation and/or gender identity** can be relevant to a refugee claim where he or she fears persecutory harm on account of his or her **actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity**, which does not, or is seen not to, conform to prevailing political, cultural or social norms. The **intersection of gender**,*

<sup>(1)</sup> In the guide, the terms 'COI researcher' or 'COI specialist' will be used to refer to a person who provides COI services to support asylum practitioners. A COI researcher collects, selects and validates COI and often drafts COI products. He or she also undertakes enquiries or investigations into COI-related matters in order to check facts, events or situations and to build up knowledge on a particular country.

<sup>(2)</sup> EASO, *Country of origin information report methodology*, July 2012.

<sup>(3)</sup> European Union, *Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)*, April 2008.

<sup>(4)</sup> *The Economist*, 'The gay divide', 11 October 2014.

*sexual orientation and gender identity is an integral part in the assessment of claims raising questions of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Harm as a result of not conforming to expected gender roles is often a central element in these claims [emphasis added] (5).*

Article 10 of the **European Union (EU) qualification directive** reiterates that sexual orientation may be invoked as one of the five existing persecution grounds:

*Depending on the circumstances in the country of origin, a particular **social group** might include a group based on a **common characteristic of sexual orientation**. Sexual orientation cannot be understood to include acts considered to be criminal in accordance with national law of the Member States. Gender-related aspects, including **gender identity**, shall be given due consideration for the purposes of determining membership of a particular social group or identifying a characteristic of such a group [emphasis added] (6).*

LGB may experience persecution and discrimination in different ways, as summarised by the UNHCR.

***Lesbians** may suffer persecution based on both their gender and sexual orientation and may be exposed more frequently to honour crimes and rape at the hands of private actors, including family and community members. Their social and economic status may obstruct their access to asylum procedures, police, and other forms of protection and support in countries of asylum.*

***Gay men** tend to live more public lives and, as a result, are often at more immediate risk of harm, especially from state actors in countries where male same-sex conduct is a criminal offence. Gay men may be reluctant to reveal to authorities or service providers the sexual abuse they may have endured.*

***Bisexuality** is not well understood in many countries. Bisexual persons are attracted to people of the opposite as well as the same sex, but are persecuted because of their same-sex conduct. They consider their sexual orientation to be fluid and flexible, creating the misperception that their sexuality is a matter of choice, not identity [emphasis added] (7).*

As people from various countries lodge applications for international protection based on their sexual orientation, there is a growing need for information on the situation of LGB in their respective countries of origin. This need has been confirmed by the European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on the ‘EU roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity’. In this, the EU called on asylum authorities to ensure that ‘*the **legal and social situation of LGBTI persons in countries of origin is documented systematically and that such information is made available to asylum decision-makers as part of COI***’ [emphasis added] (8).

However, as indicated before, while documenting the situation of LGB in countries of origin shares many methodological similarities with other types of COI work, the research on LGB often can turn into a difficult and, at times, challenging task.

## The challenges

- **Understanding the issue at stake**

Having a general knowledge of issues pertaining to LGB assists COI researchers in capturing relevant **legal and non-legal information** and reporting on these issues clearly and comprehensively (9).

It is particularly important to grasp the terminology used in various countries to refer to LGB, as well as the cultural variations in the expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity to conduct their research in an **effective** and **objective** manner. COI research can be easily influenced by a researcher’s cultural background. A preconceived idea of how LGB should behave and portray themselves may impact the way researchers collect information.

(5) UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012.

(6) Directive No 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast).

(7) UNHCR, *Need to know guidance 2*, 2011.

(8) European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on the EU roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

(9) EASO, *COI and LGBTI workshop*, held on 20–21 May 2014.

- **Scarce, incomplete and general COI**

Even if the amount and quality of information on the situation of LGB in countries of origin has increased since the early 1990s, it often remains scarce, incomplete and general in nature, which poses challenges to COI researchers and ultimately to case workers/decision-makers in the thorough examination of such cases <sup>(10)</sup>.

The situation of LGB in some countries may be **poorly documented** for various reasons. The stigma associated with this population may leave many incidents unreported; additionally, the capacity of international and local groups to monitor and document abuse remains limited in many countries <sup>(11)</sup>. In other cases, *'increased activism has often been met with attacks on human rights defenders, which impede their ability to document violations'* <sup>(12)</sup>. Documenting state persecution — when prosecution is rare or when it is hidden in vague charges — can also be difficult.

Many sources provide information about **gay men exclusively** as less information may be available on the situation of lesbians and bisexual individuals for various reasons (they may not be as 'visible', for instance) <sup>(13)</sup>. While sources may present information as relevant to LGB, the information may be limited to the situation of gay men.

Additionally, COI tends to focus on the situation of LGB in **general**. Yet the situation of LGB can be heavily influenced by **individual factors** such as gender, socioeconomic status, religion, geography, social network, attitude of the family and (non) conformity to the prevailing norms <sup>(14)</sup>. These factors may not always be covered by general reports on LGB.

\*\*\*

In light of the above challenges, the COI researcher may be confronted with a lack of information or lack of specific elements on the situation of LGB. However, scarcity or absence of information does not automatically mean that the situation of LGB is not problematic. In addition, when information is available, it may seem contradictory. For instance, in some countries, a visible and sometimes socially accepted LGB group may at the same time face acts of repression, including state repression <sup>(15)</sup>.

## The responses

Responding to the above challenges and to the European Parliament resolution <sup>(16)</sup>, EASO organised a **workshop on 20 and 21 May 2014** for COI researchers on the topic of 'COI and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex persons'. The workshop aimed to identify and share existing expertise and good practices at national and European levels <sup>(17)</sup>.

This workshop revealed that various COI units in EU+ countries <sup>(18)</sup> have already gained valuable expertise in researching the situation of LGB in countries of origin and have developed useful tools, such as research checklists, standardised tables of contents, research indicators, lists of sources and targeted FFMs (see Chapter 5).

The Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM), as well as the UNHCR, both present at the workshop, have also gained experience in the field. The UNHCR will soon develop a set of eligibility guidelines on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)-related claims (see Chapter 4) <sup>(19)</sup>. ORAM has published country of origin reports on the legal and social conditions of sexual and gender minorities in various countries (see Chapter 4) <sup>(20)</sup>.

<sup>(10)</sup> LaViolette, N., 'Independent human rights documentation and sexual minorities: an ongoing challenge for the Canadian refugee determination process', April–June 2009, pp. 437–476. See also: Refugee Studies Centre, *Sexual orientation in refugee status determination*, April 2011; Jansen, S., Spijkerboer, T., *Fleeing homophobia, asylum claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, September 2011.

<sup>(11)</sup> LaViolette, N., 'Independent human rights documentation and sexual minorities: an ongoing challenge for the Canadian refugee determination process', April–June 2009, pp. 437–476. See also: UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No. 9*, 23 October 2012.

<sup>(12)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No. 9*, 23 October 2012.

<sup>(13)</sup> Jansen, S., Spijkerboer, T., *Fleeing homophobia, asylum claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe*, September 2011. See also: United Kingdom Home Office, *Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim*, 11 February 2015.

<sup>(14)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop held on 20–21 May 2014. See also: UNHCR, *UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection No. 9*, 23 October 2012.

<sup>(15)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(16)</sup> European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2014 on the EU roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

<sup>(17)</sup> COI specialists from 12 EU+ countries — plus representatives from the UNHCR, the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCR), the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR), ORAM, COC Netherlands — participated in this 1.5-day workshop. During this event, participants discussed how COI can support the assessment of LGBTI claims and how to research and assess COI related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Participants also shared national practices (see Chapter 5), useful tools and sources, while invited speakers delivered focused presentations.

<sup>(18)</sup> In the guide, 'EU+ countries' refers to EU Member States, plus the associated states Norway and Switzerland.

<sup>(19)</sup> The UNHCR guidelines will include 10 country-specific chapters with COI on individuals of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. The UNHCR will publish the eligibility guidelines in 2015 and make them available on Refworld.

<sup>(20)</sup> See ORAM publications at: <http://www.oraminternational.org/en/publications>, accessed 3 December 2014.

The COI and LGBTI meeting showed, however, that **knowledge, good practices and research tools are not widely available**.

Following this meeting, a working group <sup>(21)</sup> was set up to draft a practical guide, drawing from best practices and tools developed by EU+ countries and civil society and from the outcome of the workshop organised by the EASO in May 2014. The present guide constitutes the outcome of this joint effort. The methodology used to produce the present guide is described below.

## The methodology

In October 2014, the abovementioned working group, composed of COI specialists from EU+ countries, ORAM and EASO, met to determine the content of the guide and the division of tasks. The content was determined on the basis of the needs expressed by EU+ countries during the May 2014 workshop. The drafting process took place from October 2014 to February 2015.

A review was carried out in February 2015 by experts from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the Acknowledgement section <sup>(22)</sup>. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report.

The present guide presents information (good practices, useful tools and sources) gathered during the May 2014 workshop. It also uses information collected from various additional sources of information (guides, methodology, manuals, periodicals, press articles...). Moreover, it is based on the practical experience of COI researchers who have developed an expertise in researching the situation of LGB.

### EASO training module: Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation <sup>(23)</sup>

EASO recently developed a new **training module** for case officers and other asylum practitioners throughout the EU on ‘**Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation**’. The module follows the blended learning methodology of the EASO training curriculum, combining an e-learning method and face-to-face sessions. The aim of the module is to enable trainees to:

- explain how their personal experiences and attitude regarding gender, gender identity and sexual orientation influence the way they process a claim for international protection;
- identify gender, gender identity and sexual orientation factors when they process a claim for international protection;
- apply an appropriate approach to gender, gender identity and sexual orientation when processing a claim for international protection.

The EASO training module makes reference to the importance of COI in researching sexual and gender minorities and provides reference to various sources. A link to the present guide is provided in the e-learning version of the module.

## Overview of the content<sup>23</sup>

**Chapter 2** demonstrates the importance of terminology when referring to LGB. It aims to:

- ✓ present a broad overview of concepts and terms referring to LGB;
- ✓ show the great variations in usage of terms through specific examples;
- ✓ emphasise the importance of understanding the meaning and connotation of terms.

At the end of the chapter, a **glossary** of the most commonly used SOGI terms is provided.

<sup>(21)</sup> The working group was set up in September 2014, following a call for interest. Belgium (CGRS/Cedoca), the Netherlands (IND/OCILA), ORAM and EASO are members of this working group.

<sup>(22)</sup> The peer reviewers included the UNHCR, Denmark (Immigration Service, COI) and Lilian Tsourdi (Odysseus Academic Network, Université Libre de Bruxelles).

<sup>(23)</sup> For further information on the EASO training module, contact: [Vulnerablegroups@easo.europa.eu](mailto:Vulnerablegroups@easo.europa.eu)

**Chapter 3** provides:

- ✓ a suggested standardised table of contents for a COI report;
- ✓ a short description of possible chapters/subchapters;
- ✓ a list of research questions for each chapter to guide the COI researcher.

**Chapter 4** aims to:

- ✓ give an overview of the types of sources available;
- ✓ provide guidance on information provided by types of sources.

The chapter does not intend to list or describe sources of information on LGB, since such a list is provided in Annex II (see below). Therefore, Chapter 4 should be read together with **Annex II**.

**Chapter 5** examines search terms and online research tools/tips that can be useful in researching efficiently and in monitoring the situation of LGB in countries of origin. It also lists tools to better share information among EU+ countries.

**Chapter 6** gives guidance when limited time is available to research the situation of LGB in a particular country or when limited or no information can be found.

### **Annexes**

**Annex I** is a research and quality checklist that summarises the main COI principles and quality standards described in the guide.

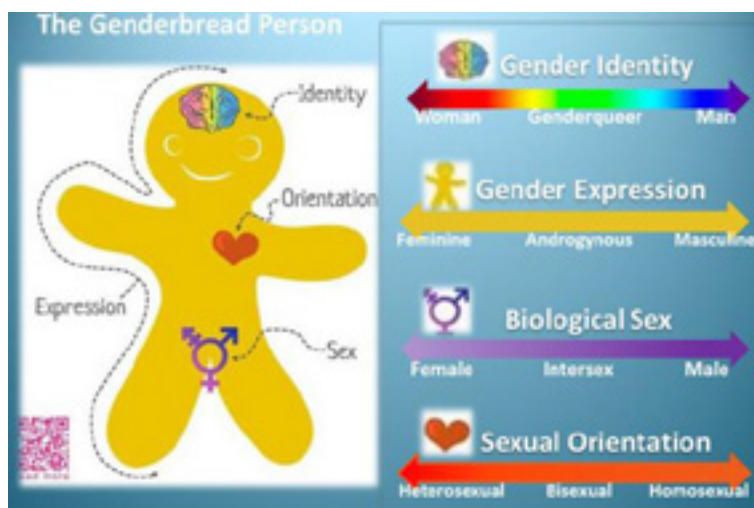
**Annex II** provides a list of sources and their web links. Sources have been divided into ‘types’ and each source is briefly described.

## 2. Terminology

As terminology regarding LGB is so varied and non-standardised, understanding the importance of the use of certain terms is essential when researching and writing about the situation of LGB. It will assist a COI researcher in identifying search terms when conducting online research. It will also help the researcher in interviewing oral sources. Knowing which terms to use can make an enormous difference to the outcome. We will see in Chapters 4 and 5 the practical bearings of grasping LGB terminology.

Firstly, it is important to become acquainted with the different concepts related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. **Four distinct, yet related, notions** can be distinguished, as illustrated in the image <sup>(24)</sup> below.

- **Gender identity** refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of being a man, woman or other gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth <sup>(25)</sup>.
- **Gender expression** (or 'gender presentation') refers to the external appearance, dress, mannerisms and behaviour through which individuals present their gender identity <sup>(26)</sup>.
- **Biological sex** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Biological and physical characteristics include sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures and external genitalia <sup>(27)</sup>.
- **Sexual orientation** refers to a person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional and/or sexual attraction to, and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender <sup>(28)</sup>.



Source: <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2011/11/breaking-through-the-binary-gender-explained-using-continuums/>

Secondly, there is **no uniform terminology** relating to diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. In the languages of origin of many applicants for international protection, terminology is scarce and general, or may have negative connotations. In some cultures, the terminology used does not correspond to the LGB identities (see the example of Senegal, below). In addition, concepts, attitudes and terminology are not static but change over time.

<sup>(24)</sup> It's Pronounced Metrosexual, *The genderbread person*, 2012.

<sup>(25)</sup> The Yogyakarta principles, *Yogyakarta principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity*, March 2007.

<sup>(26)</sup> ORAM, *Blind alleys, Part I: Guidance for NGOs, governments, UNHCR and program funders, Glossary of terms*, February 2013; ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, 7 November 2014.

<sup>(27)</sup> ORAM, *Blind alleys, Part I: Guidance for NGOs, governments, UNHCR and program funders, Glossary of terms*, February 2013; ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, 7 November 2014.

<sup>(28)</sup> The Yogyakarta principles, *Yogyakarta principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity*, March 2007.

## Variations in concepts and terms

As indicated above, it is important to understand that concepts regarding diverse sexual orientations and gender identities vary immensely across (sub-) cultures and countries/regions, and may change over time <sup>(29)</sup>. Terms can also vary from person to person and even differ in different contexts.

In many languages, reference to homosexuality is associated with taboo and/or shame. Generally, the more powerful the taboo, the more scarce the terminology is. Accordingly, in those cultures, widely read newspapers and electronic media in the native language tend to use derogative and non-nuanced terms to describe LGB.

It is also the case that different terms exist for sexually ‘active’ and ‘passive’ partners in men who have sex with men (MSM). The ‘active’ partner is usually regarded as less ‘negative’ and sometimes not even homosexual whereas the sexually ‘passive’ partner is commonly seen as more ‘negative’, the ‘real’ homosexual.

Where **positive, affirmative terms** appear, they are far more likely to be found in **foreign-language press** and more often in electronic media appealing to foreigners, ‘Westernised’ local populations and LGB diaspora communities.

**Arabic** is a case in point: while same-sex relations/behaviours are common in the Middle East and north African region, the topic is highly taboo from Morocco to the Gulf states. Classical Arabic contains no commonly used positive terms for LGB <sup>(30)</sup>. The official standard Arab (modern standard Arabic or MSA) word for homosexual is *Mithliyya jinsiyya*, literally translated from the Greek *Homoios seksus*. *Shouzouz jins* or *Shatha Jinsiya* (‘abnormal sexuality’) is used to describe so-called abnormal sexual practices but also to describe homosexuality <sup>(31)</sup>. The rather insulting *LuuTii* or *Al-Luti* (referring to the Biblical/Koranic story of Lot) is often used in common speech <sup>(32)</sup>. In recent years, the neutral, positive term *Mithly/Misly* (‘the same’) is used by some LGB communities <sup>(33)</sup>, but its use is mostly limited to diaspora communities. Neither *LuuTii* nor *Mithly* is likely to be seen in the general media in any Arabic-speaking country. Local dialects have many different words that are all quite offensive such as *Zamel* (in Morocco), *Khawell*, *Khaniith*, *Manyak* and *Sjadh*, which are used in common speech but sometimes also in the local press <sup>(34)</sup>.

Similarly, in **Uganda**, self-identifying sexual and gender minorities (including trans, gay, lesbian, some bisexual persons and allies) commonly use the quasi-affectionate Swahili-derived term ‘*kuchu*’ to describe themselves and one another <sup>(35)</sup>. Ugandan tabloids refer to ‘homosexuals’ or to ‘gays’, often using ‘gays’ as a slur against ‘Western’ identity and ‘Western’ influence <sup>(36)</sup>. Heterosexual **Kenyan**s sometimes call their homosexual fellow citizens ‘Volkswagen’ or ‘Beetle’, with the view that homosexuality comes from outside and is ‘not Kenyan’ <sup>(37)</sup>.

Such disparate, complex and distinct uses of terminology are common in most languages. The extent to which neutral or positive terminology, used by LGB themselves, appears in the **general press** can be a strong indicator of social acceptance. As we will see (Chapter 3), social acceptance is one of the topics a researcher may have to investigate when writing a report on the situation of LGB.

## Self-concepts used by LGB

As indicated, **socioeconomic factors, foreign language and access to electronic communication** play an important role in the terms a person is likely to use. For example, educated, wealthy, urban and well-travelled individuals are far more likely to use terms such as ‘gay,’ ‘lesbian,’ ‘bisexual’ and ‘transgender’ than their rural, uneducated, poor and untravelled counterparts. This is likely a reflection of a desire to identify with recognised LGB concepts and communities, equivalents of which do not exist in many societies.

<sup>(29)</sup> In the past, neutral terms for same-sex behaviour did exist in certain local languages, but after the arrival of colonialism, Christianity or Islam they were forgotten and they disappeared, as, for example, happened in some African societies.

<sup>(30)</sup> For a discussion on various Arabic terms, see Ganly, Katharine, *Arab world: Trouble for gay travels in the Muslim world*, posted on: 15 July 2009.

<sup>(31)</sup> Ganly, Katharine, *Arab world: Trouble for gay travels in the Muslim world*, posted on: 15 July 2009.

<sup>(32)</sup> Palmer, Bryan, *How do you say gay in Arabic? A brief linguistic history of Middle Eastern homosexuality*, 16 August 2012.

<sup>(33)</sup> Bint el Nas, *Glossary of Arabic terms*, July 2003.

<sup>(34)</sup> Moscas De Colores, *Gay dictionary: Arabic*, n.d.; Bint el Nas, *Glossary of Arabic terms*, July 2003; Coolslang, *Arabic slang dictionary with English translation* [online dictionary], n.d.; LA Times, *Morocco: New magazine braves risks to give voice to Arab homosexuals*, 28 April 2010.

<sup>(35)</sup> Canavera Mark, *The Kuchu Beehive*, posted on: 2 August 2010.

<sup>(36)</sup> BBC News, *Ugandan ‘homosexuals’ named in Red Pepper paper*, 25 February 2014.

<sup>(37)</sup> Opanga Kwendo, *Kenya; What is this about tying aid to gay rights?*, posted on: 10 December 2011.



In cultures where LGB live in social isolation and deep taboo, they may use many different terms to describe themselves and one another. They may even lack terminology to describe their own sexual orientation or gender identity altogether, especially if they do not have access to foreign-language media.

In Senegal, MSM sometimes use the terms 'ibbi' and 'yoos' to refer to themselves and one another, where 'ibbi' refers to the 'feminine' or 'receptive' partner and 'yoos' refers to the 'male' or 'dominant' sex partner<sup>(37)</sup>. Others avoid these stereotyped gender roles altogether. Outsiders do not know or do not use these terms. Instead, they most commonly use the now pejorative 'goor jigeen' (literally man-woman) and/or 'pédé' (considered by many as derogatory French slang for 'pederast') to refer to gay men and gender-nonconforming persons, as well as a few other terms<sup>(38)</sup>.

Depending on the level of taboo and/or shame in any given country, LGB may avoid self-identifying terms altogether.

It is important to understand that LGB can influence the use and connotation of terminology as well. The Dutch gay movement, for example, started to use the, until then, very offensive Dutch word *Flikker* (faggot<sup>(39)</sup>) to organise themselves (they formed *Flikker* groups all around the country). In doing so, the movement attempted to disarm the word of its very negative connotation and reclaim it. LGB may also distance themselves from terms/concepts commonly used in the West — such as gay or homosexual — because of the negative connotation it has for them.

Below is a glossary that can guide you through the most commonly used SOGI-related terms.

### Glossary of terms<sup>(40)</sup> In alphabetical order

**Bisexual:** A term used to describe a person who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men<sup>(41)</sup> and women (or rather, more than one gender)<sup>(42)</sup>. A bisexual identity does not necessarily equate to equal sexual attraction to both genders.

**Cisgender:** A term referring to people whose gender identity and gender expression match the sex they were assigned at birth and the social expectations related to their gender.<sup>(43)</sup>

**FTM:** An acronym for 'female-to-male,' most commonly used to refer to a female-to-male trans-person. Someone who was assigned female at birth but who identifies as male. Also called a trans-man<sup>(44)</sup>.

**Gay:** A term often used to describe a man whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other men. Gay can also be used to describe women<sup>(45)</sup>.

**Gender:** Refers to people's internal perception and experience of maleness and femaleness, and the social construction that allocates certain behaviours into male and female roles which vary across history, societies, cultures and classes. Gender is hence strongly linked to society's expectations and is not exclusively a biological matter<sup>(46)</sup>. See also the definition provided by the UNHCR (2002): '*Gender refers to the relationship between women and men based on socially or culturally constructed and defined identities, statuses, roles and responsibilities that are assigned to one sex or another, while sex is a biological determination*'<sup>(47)</sup>.

**Gender-based violence:** Violence directed against a person based on his/her gender<sup>(48)</sup>.

<sup>(38)</sup> Beyrer Chris, Wirtz Andrea L., Walker Damian, Johns Benjamin, Sifakis Frangiscos and Baral Stefan D., *The global HIV epidemics among men who have sex with men*, 2011.

<sup>(39)</sup> Cedoca, *Subject-related briefing 'Sénégal: Situation actuelle de la communauté homosexuelle et MSM'*, 12 February 2013.

<sup>(40)</sup> 'Faggot', literally meaning 'bundle of sticks', was used to refer to the burning of heretics in Medieval Europe. Burning live at the stake was one of the punishments for homosexuality at the time. See: Online Etymology Dictionary; Berkowitz Eric, *Sex and punishment: Four thousand years of judging desire*, 2012.

<sup>(41)</sup> The definitions are derived from several sources which are all referenced.

<sup>(42)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012.

<sup>(43)</sup> The Bisexual Index [website], n.d.

<sup>(44)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(45)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(46)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012.

<sup>(47)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(48)</sup> UNHCR, *Guidelines on international protection No 1*, 7 May 2002.

**Gender expression:** The manifestations of one’s gender identity and the one that is perceived by others. Typically, people seek to make their gender expression or presentation match their gender identity/identities, irrespective of the sex that they were assigned at birth <sup>(49)</sup>.

**Gender identity:** Each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms <sup>(50)</sup>.

**Homophobia:** Refers to the fear of or unreasonable anger, intolerance or/and hatred towards homosexuality <sup>(51)</sup>.

**Homosexual:** Describes people who are attracted to people of the same sex <sup>(52)</sup>.

**Intersex:** A medical condition in which an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or chromosome patterns that do not fit typical biological notions of being male or female. An intersex person may identify as male or female or any other gender, while their sexual orientation may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, asexual, etc. <sup>(53)</sup>.

**LGB(TI):** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual (trans and intersex) people.

**Lesbian:** A term for a woman whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women <sup>(54)</sup>.

**MSM:** An acronym for ‘men who have sex with men’ but do not necessarily identify as gay or bisexual. The term is often used in the health field, in general, and in HIV/AIDS/STD prevention, in particular <sup>(55)</sup>.

**MTF:** An acronym for ‘male-to-female.’ Commonly used to refer to a male-to-female trans-person. Someone who was assigned the male sex at birth but who self-identifies as female. Also called a trans-woman <sup>(56)</sup>.

**Non-conformity:** Non-conformity refers to a situation in which one does not follow the norm, when one is perceived as different because of the characteristics one has or is believed to have, by nature, choice or experience. In the SOGI context, it is when one’s appearance, behaviour, identity or experience differs from the gender-based expectations that society has of that person <sup>(57)</sup>.

**Queer:** A largely academic term that is inclusive of people who are not heterosexual. It includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-persons. ‘Queer’ was formerly used in Anglophone countries to taunt and degrade LGB, and its use is still considered objectionable by some <sup>(58)</sup>.

**Sex:** Refers to the biological make-up, such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics, genes and hormones. One’s legal sex is usually assigned at birth. It has traditionally been a ‘binary’ concept consisting of two mutually exclusive groups: men and women <sup>(59)</sup>.

**Sexual orientation:** Sexual orientation is understood to refer to each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender <sup>(60)</sup>.

<sup>(49)</sup> EIGE, *Gender-based violence* [webpage], n.d.

<sup>(50)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(51)</sup> The Yogyakarta principles, *Yogyakarta principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity*, March 2007.

<sup>(52)</sup> ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, October 2014.

<sup>(53)</sup> ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, October 2014.

<sup>(54)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012. For more definitions, see: OII, OII Intersex Network [website], n.d.

<sup>(55)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012; ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(56)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(57)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(58)</sup> EASO, *Training module: Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation*, 2015 version.

<sup>(59)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(60)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

**SGN:** An acronym for ‘sexually and gender nonconforming’. An umbrella term used to refer to individuals whose sexual practices, attractions and/or gender identity and expression are different from the societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. It is intended to be a broader term than LGBTI. The term was coined to describe sexual and gender minorities in the refugee context, referencing the underlying cause for their persecution and avoiding rigid classifications like LGBTI <sup>(61)</sup>.

**Trans-person/people/man/woman:** An inclusive umbrella term referring to persons whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. This term includes, but is not limited to: men and women with transsexual pasts, and people who identify themselves as transsexual, transgender, transvestite/cross-dresser, androgynous, polygender, genderqueer, agender, gender variant or with any other gender identity and/or expression that is not standard male or female and express their gender through their choice of clothes, presentation or body modifications, including undergoing multiple surgical procedures <sup>(62)</sup>.

**Transgender:** The term describes people whose own sense of their gender identity differs from the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender is a gender identity, not a sexual orientation. A transgender individual may be heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual <sup>(63)</sup>.

**Tran(s)sexual:** Refers to people who identify entirely with the gender role opposite to the sex assigned at birth and seek to live permanently in the preferred gender role. This often goes along with a strong rejection of their physical primary and secondary sex characteristics and a wish to align their body with their preferred gender. Transsexual people might intend to undergo, be undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment treatment (which may involve hormone therapy or surgery) <sup>(64)</sup>.

**Transvestite/Cross-dresser:** Refers to people who wear the clothing of another gender for certain periods of time. Their sense of identification with another gender can range from being very strong to non-existent. Some transvestite or cross-dressing people may also be transgender (see above) <sup>(65)</sup>.

**WSW:** An acronym to refer to ‘women who have sex with women’ but do not necessarily identify as lesbian or bisexual. The term is often used in the public health context, and in HIV/AIDS/STD prevention in particular <sup>(66)</sup>.

<sup>(61)</sup> The Yogyakarta principles, *Yogyakarta principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity*, March 2007.

<sup>(62)</sup> ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, October 2014.

<sup>(63)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(64)</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012. For more definitions, see: GLAAD, *GLAAD media reference guide — Transgender issues*, n.d.

<sup>(65)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(66)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

### 3. Table of contents and research questions

Not all COI products on the situation of LGB take the form of COI reports. Some may consist of brief responses to specific queries, for instance. The situation of LGB may also form a chapter of a more general report on a country of origin.

Regardless of the form of the COI product, a number of essential topics and research questions can guide the researcher in his/her work to ensure the relevance, balance and comprehensiveness of the final product.

This chapter provides a **suggestion for a table of contents** of a **comprehensive** COI report on LGB in which the most relevant topics are covered. For each chapter, **research questions** are provided to guide the COI specialist in his/her work. These questions are not exhaustive and some will probably remain unanswered. They should be viewed as examples aiming to guide the researcher rather than as a complete and mandatory list. Note that in the research questions, references to transgender and intersex persons are included for comprehensiveness purposes.

Bear in mind that **national preferences, circumstances (e.g. time constraints) and the availability of data** can lead to a more limited or a more detailed report structure.

➡ The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Accord), in its *Training manual* (2013 edition)<sup>(68)</sup>, and the International Human Rights Programme at the University of Toronto<sup>(69)</sup> have also developed very similar research checklists that can be consulted in conjunction with the list below.

#### Table of contents of a COI report on LGB

##### Disclaimer/Introduction

##### Legal framework

- Laws specifically concerning gay men and lesbians
- Laws specifically concerning same-sex acts and 'homosexual' behaviour
- Laws granting rights (or specifically denying rights) to same-sex couples
- Laws relating to the legal recognition of the gender identity of transgender persons
- Laws protecting LGB
- Laws concerning LGB organisations
- Discussion on criminalisation/decriminalisation
- Legal provisions concerning other gender minorities, transgender and intersex persons
- General anti-discrimination provisions

##### Application of the law

- Application of the laws specifically concerning LGB
- Discriminatory application of other laws
- Social impact of laws against LGB
- State protection
- Chronology of major cases of arrests, prosecution and detention

##### Treatment by state actors

- Treatment by state officials (other than arrest, prosecution and detention, e.g. employment, education, health)
- Political climate toward LGB
- Restrictions on LGB organisations
- Chronology of major incidents involving state actors

<sup>(67)</sup> EASO, *Training module: Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation*, 2015 version.

<sup>(68)</sup> Austrian Red Cross/Accord, *Researching country of origin information — Training manual*, 2013 edition, October 2013.

<sup>(69)</sup> University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, *Research checklist — A guide to the sources used in SOGI's research process*, 7 March 2011.

**Treatment by non-state actors**

- Societal attitudes
- The role of religion (or cults, brotherhoods...) and the position of organised religions and religious leaders
- Depiction of homosexuality and LGB in the media
- Treatment of LGB by fellow citizens
- Differences between LGB
- Access to healthcare, including in relation to HIV/AIDS, for LGB
- Chronology of major incidents involving fellow citizens

**Social life**

- General climate and openness around LGB
- Self-image and self-identification
- Geographical differences in attitudes and sexual/gender diversity
- Terminology used to describe LGB
- LGB organisations
- Meeting places and events for LGB

**List of sources (consulted/used)**

## Introduction/Disclaimer

The introduction (or disclaimer) usually explains, briefly, the general context of the report, its aim, the methodology used and, the scope of the research, and presents the main sources (including a brief description of those who were contacted by the author, if any).

It should also clarify the terminology used in the report.

The introduction can also be used to highlight certain issues that may be relevant, such as:

- ✓ a general lack of (public) information on the subject at hand;
- ✓ the available COI mostly concerns a specific group of persons, such as homosexual young men who live in an urban environment;
- ✓ the available COI is general, yet the situation of LGB can and will be heavily influenced by factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, geography, social network, attitude of the family and (non) conformity to the prevailing standards.

Below is an **extract** from **Cedoca**'s standardised introduction to COI reports on lesbians and gays in countries of origin <sup>(70)</sup>.

#### **Cedoca COI focus — Template for COI product on homosexuality**

*Given the fact that this research focuses on the situation of homosexuals in country X, Cedoca will not use the abbreviation LGBT which encompasses other realities. When it is necessary to emphasise that an aspect is specific to the experience of either homosexual men or women, Cedoca will use the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian', as well as the names that were possibly used by the sources consulted in the course of this research.*

*[Some indications about the sources that have been used and the possible limitations.]*

*The research consists of three parts.*

*The first part examines the legislation with regard to the sexual orientation of people. This part also tackles the subject of the legal actions taken by the state, against or in favour of homosexuals, whether this is in accordance with the existing legal dispositions or not.*

*The second part concerns the situation of homosexuals in the X society. First, social and cultural perceptions of homosexuality are examined, as well as homophobic violence and differences in treatment homosexuals can experience on a socioeconomic level. Then, the social life of homosexuals is examined, notably through the existence of meeting places and/or associations.*

*Finally, the third chapter describes the current political context in country X and in particular the position of the political and religious actors with regard to homosexuality.*

## Research questions (non-exhaustive)

Note that in the research questions, references to transgender and intersex persons are included for comprehensiveness purposes <sup>(71)</sup>.

### Legal framework

#### Legal framework

1. Are there laws targeting same-sex relationships, LGB or LGB organisations?
  - Is there a difference in the legal consent between heterosexual and homosexual acts?
2. Are there laws targeting homosexual acts/behaviour?
  - Does the law differentiate between sexual acts between men and acts between women?
  - Are there specific laws for minors <sup>(72)</sup>?
  - Are there any laws prohibiting content that promotes homosexuality?
3. Are there laws specifically granting rights to LGB, such as the right to marry, or are there laws that specifically rule this out?
4. Are LGB mentioned in the constitution, national anti-discrimination laws or international human rights laws that have been ratified?
5. Do anti-discrimination provisions state that discrimination is prohibited on any ground? Or do such provisions list specific grounds on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited? If so, are sex/gender, sexual orientation and gender identity included?
6. Is there a discussion about further criminalisation or decriminalisation of LGB?
7. Are there legal provisions concerning sexual and gender minorities other than LGB, i.e. transgender, transsexual or intersex persons?

<sup>(70)</sup> Belgium, Cedoca, *COI focus, Template for COI product on homosexuality*, n.d.

<sup>(71)</sup> For more information on gender minorities, please consult: UNHCR, *UNHCR guidelines on international protection No 9*, 23 October 2012; ILGA, *ILGA-Europe glossary*, updated: July 2014.

<sup>(72)</sup> For more information on LGBT children, see: Unicef, *Position paper No 9, Eliminating discrimination against children and parents based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity*, November 2014.

## Application of the law

Application of the law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there cases of persons being arrested, prosecuted and detained in accordance with the existing LGB legislation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this common?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Is the government actively persecuting LGB and, if so, based on which laws and to what extent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is appeal possible and, if so, has it been granted?</li> <li>• Can the accused benefit from judicial assistance? Give examples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Are other laws (concerning, for example, public order, public indecency, the registration of organisations) not specifically mentioning LGB used against LGB? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there discrimination towards LGB in the application of other such laws?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Are convicted LGB more severely punished for the same crime than non-LGB? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give examples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Is the result of the existing laws and/or their application that LGB do not have access to protection if they are threatened or if they are victims of crime, persecution or discrimination? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does fear of the law prevent LGB from asking for protection when needed?</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Have laws been used to protect the rights of LGB? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there cases of complaints introduced by victims of homophobic violence/discrimination?</li> <li>• Have there been important judgments granting rights to LGB?</li> <li>• Give examples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Are there major cases of arrests, prosecution and detention (if deemed relevant for the report)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify that a list is never exhaustive and indicate which period it covers.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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## Treatment by state actors

Treatment by state actors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are LGB subjected to discrimination, exclusion, extortion, insults, intimidation, harassment, threats, aggression, violence, blackmail or other actions by the authorities (police, intelligence, state health authorities) and, if so, to what extent? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are such incidents registered and reported on? Give examples.</li> <li>• Is any help/support given to victims of homophobic violence?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. What is the position of political actors on LGB? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the subject of homosexuality discussed in politics by national, regional or local leaders?</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Are there any restrictions regarding the registration and daily activities of LGB organisations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give examples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Are there major incidents involving state actors (if deemed relevant for the report)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify that a list is never exhaustive and indicate which period it covers.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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## Treatment by non-state actors

### Treatment by non-state actors

1. Are there any international, regional, national or local opinion polls concerning homosexuality or LGB? Are the polls indicative of any visible change?
2. What is the general role of religion (or cults, brotherhoods...) in the country?
  - In what way does it influence the treatment of LGB?
  - What have local religious leaders said about the subject?
  - Is there any change visible in religious views?
  - Are there religious leaders/people who are in favour of LGB rights?
  - If so, to what extent?
3. How are homosexuality and LGB depicted in the national media?
  - Is there room for the views of LGB or are the views of people who reject LGB mostly published?
  - Are there any people from LGB who function as role models?
  - Are there openly LGB characters visible on television, in theatre or in movies?
  - Are there or have there been specialised periodicals, magazines or websites on LGB and/or run by LGB? Give examples.
4. How are LGB treated by other citizens?
  - What is the influence of traditional values on the daily life of LGB (e.g. are LGB expected to engage in heterosexual marriages)?
  - Do LGB have access to basic services, such as healthcare, education and employment?
  - Have there been cases of honour killings, discrimination, rape, exclusion, extortion, blackmail, aggression, violence, expulsion, and, if so, to what extent? Are such incidents registered and reported on? Give examples.
5. Are there any notable differences between the situation of male and female homosexuals or bisexuals?
6. What is the situation of other gender minorities (transsexual, transgender, intersex people or people with a different gender expression)?
7. Do LGB have access to health care, including in relation to HIV/AIDS?
  - What is the climate towards LGB who have HIV/AIDS?
8. Are there major incidents of (mis) treatment involving fellow citizens (if deemed relevant for the report)?
  - Specify that a list is never exhaustive and indicate which period it covers.



## Social life

### Social life

1. Is there stigma or taboo concerning LGB?
  - Are there examples of outspoken LGB and, if so, to what extent are they known to the general public? Give examples.
2. Is there any notable difference regarding the situation of LGB within the country?
  - For example, is the situation in the north similar to the one in the south?
  - Is there an urban/rural divide?
3. What local terms are used to designate LGB?
  - Are there different terms used for sexually active or passive partners?
  - Who uses those terms?
  - What is their connotation?
4. Are there organisations representing LGB?
  - Are they officially registered and recognised?
  - Are the leaders of those organisations known activists?
  - Are the organisations known to the general public?
5. Are there local, national or international human rights organisations reporting on the situation of LGB?
6. What is known of the social life of LGB?
  - Are there known meeting places and events, such as demonstrations or parades?
7. Which international, national or local internet sites are generally used by LGB?

## 4. General overview of sources

As indicated above, even if the volume and quality of information on the situation of LGB has improved, finding specific and balanced information remains challenging for COI researchers.

Being aware of the **range of sources available** and resorting to **alternative sources** and **channels** of information can greatly contribute to a researcher's capacity to investigate the topic. Knowledge of specific terms — as described in Chapter 2 — can also help to locate more in-depth information, while the use of certain online tools can increase efficiency.

This chapter aims to:

- ✓ give an overview of the types of sources available;
- ✓ give guidance on information provided by types of sources.

The chapter does not intend to list and describe sources of information on LGB; such a list is provided in Annex II.

Therefore, the sources cited below should only be regarded as illustrative and the chapter below should be read in conjunction with Annex II.

### Use of a variety of sources

As in any other type of research, when reporting on the situation of LGB or responding to a particular question, a COI researcher should use, as much as possible, a **variety of sources (i.e. multiple sources of different types) to ensure that a balanced picture is obtained**.

Some sources may have a strong advocacy stance, while others may not be comprehensive or specific enough. As with any other COI research, it is therefore important to include sources within or outside the population concerned <sup>(73)</sup>.

Below are the **types of sources** that can be used for COI research on LGB:

- governmental bodies
- international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- international specialised (LGB) NGOs
- local NGOs
- United Nations (UN) bodies
- EU bodies
- academia/research institutes or centres
- media (general and specific)
- social sciences journals/medical journals or studies (HIV)
- COI portals and social media as platforms of sources.

While investigating the conditions of LGB, sources should be assessed in the same way as any other type of COI research. The researcher should carefully examine the sources taking into account the context in which they operate, as well as their reliability.

For more information on **source selection and validation**, see:

- European Union, *Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)*, April 2008, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/48493f7f2.html>;
- EASO, *Country of origin information report methodology*, July 2012, <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/BZ3012618ENC.pdf>;
- Austrian Red Cross/Accord, *Researching country of origin information — Training manual*, 2013 edition, October 2013, <http://www.coi-training.net/content/>.

<sup>(73)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

- **Governmental bodies**

Many government reports on the human rights situation in countries of origin include a section on the situation of LGB. Yet in most cases these sections provide rather general information, which may be an informative starting point but should be completed by more specialised sources. The United States Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor), for example, in its annual reports, provides a chapter on ‘Societal abuses, discrimination and acts of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity’<sup>(74)</sup>.

Other country reports — produced by the COI units of national asylum administrations (e.g. the UK Home Office Country Information and Guidance<sup>(75)</sup>) or by the ministries of foreign affairs (e.g. the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>(76)</sup>) — often include a section on LGB in their publications. In addition, some COI national units conduct FFM in countries of origin. Some of these missions may include, in their terms of reference, the situation of LGB<sup>(77)</sup>. In some cases (e.g. Swedish Migration Agency; Danish Immigration Service), the missions will be focused on this single topic (see the section on FFM).

- **International NGOs**

Some international NGOs have expanded their mandates to include the protection of LGB<sup>(78)</sup>. Organisations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) or Amnesty International, while not specialised in the situation of LGB, provide, in some way or another (reports, news, videos, etc.), information on the conditions of LGB in countries of origin. Hence, for instance, HRW has a specific LGBT rights programme and has developed a specific webpage on **LGBT rights**<sup>(79)</sup> where one can access news releases, reports and commentaries and subscribe to RSS feeds. **Amnesty International** publishes thematic reports on the situation of LGB and has a specific page devoted to ‘Sexual orientation and gender identity’<sup>(80)</sup>.

- **International specialised (LGB) NGOs**

Other sources have **specialised** in providing specific information on LGB. Unlike the non-specialised sources, these tend to monitor on a regular basis the situation of LGB in countries of origin. They often benefit from a network of local contacts that assists them in gathering information<sup>(81)</sup>.

For instance, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (**ILGA**), a **worldwide federation** of 1 100 member organisations from 110 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights, publishes an **annual report** (*State-sponsored homophobia report*, available in several languages)<sup>(82)</sup> which constitutes a world survey of laws prohibiting same-sex activity between consenting adults. The ILGA website also provides **news** on specific countries of origin and **maps**<sup>(83)</sup> on gays’ and lesbians’ rights around the world<sup>(84)</sup>.

Similarly, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (**IGLHRC**)<sup>(85)</sup> is an international organisation dedicated to LGB human rights. It also provides information and reports by country and the so-called ‘Shadow reports’ on the situation of LGB<sup>(86)</sup>. These reports are submitted to committees of independent experts reporting, at UN level, on governments’ human rights obligations in order to counterbalance official government reports. For more information on the UN as a source of information, refer to the section below on ‘UN bodies’.

<sup>(74)</sup> US Department of State, *Country reports* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/>) accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(75)</sup> UK Home Office, *Country information and guidance* [webpage], updated on: 23 February 2015 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/country-information-and-guidance>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(76)</sup> The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Ambtsberichten* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/bz/documenten-en-publicaties/ambtsberichten>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(77)</sup> For instance, the FFM reports of the Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA or French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons), the French national asylum administration, contain a section on lesbians and gays. See the FFM reports of Mauritania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d’Ivoire on OFPRA’s webpage: *Rapports de missions* ([http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/index.html?xml\\_id=307&dtd\\_id=10](http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/index.html?xml_id=307&dtd_id=10)), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(78)</sup> LaViolette, N., ‘Independent human rights documentation and sexual minorities: an ongoing challenge for the Canadian refugee determination process’, April–June 2009.

<sup>(79)</sup> HRW, *LGBT rights* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(80)</sup> AI, *Sexual orientation and gender identity* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(81)</sup> EASO, *COI and LGBTI workshop* held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(82)</sup> ILGA, *State-sponsored homophobia report* [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/what-we-do/state-sponsored-homophobia-report/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(83)</sup> ILGA, *News archive* [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/category/uncategorized/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(84)</sup> ILGA, *Maps* [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/what-we-do/lesbian-gay-rights-maps/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(85)</sup> IGLHRC [website], n.d. (<http://iglhrc.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(86)</sup> IGLHRC, *Shadow reports* [webpage] n.d. (<http://iglhrc.org/our-publications/shadow-reports>), accessed 3 December 2014.

**ORAM** <sup>(87)</sup>, an international organisation conducting capacity-building and advocacy regarding LGBTI refugees, produces reports that synthesise desk research, empirical data and information collected from interviews. Reports include information on legal and protection environments as well as relevant information on factors including family structure, socioeconomic conditions and religion. ORAM has recently launched an online library that provides a database of nearly 250 LGBTI-specific COI reports on a variety of countries, organized according to country of origin, publisher, date and type of publication <sup>(88)</sup>.

A COI researcher may also consider consulting organisations focusing on **health issues and legal rights**, such as ‘Bridging the Gaps’ <sup>(89)</sup>, a Dutch-initiated international health project, as some information it produces may concern LGB.

Note that specialised sources may not represent all LGB. LGB sources may focus on specific sub-groups (e.g. gay men) or specific aspects of LGB issues (e.g. access to housing). Some of these sources may also have a strong stance on advocacy. One should bear in mind that there could be other views to those of LGB activists.

- **Local NGOs**

Many COI researchers consider local organisations in countries of origin to be useful and trustworthy sources of information, as they have a presence on the ground and are aware of sociocultural sensitivities and realities. Moreover, these sources may use the locally acceptable terms for LGB, which can give the researcher guidance on which search terms to use <sup>(90)</sup>.

Some local organisations may **specialise in** defending LGB or may have integrated into, in their mandate the defence of LGB. As such, local organisations usually have identical information and, as they are typically linked with one another, they may provide similar or identical information or opinions.

**Local human rights organisations** do not always integrate LGB into their target groups for various reasons. This situation underscores the necessity of consulting a wide variety of sources.

Note that **ILGA**, on its webpage, provides a **directory** <sup>(91)</sup> of ‘LGBTI and allied organisations’ which can help to identify local groups. As we will see in a later section, social media can also be a good tool to identify local organisations when local NGOs do not maintain a webpage <sup>(92)</sup>.

- **UN bodies**

The **UNHCR** will soon publish a set of eligibility guidelines on sexual orientation and gender identity-related claims. These guidelines will include **10 country-specific chapters** with COI on individuals of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities <sup>(93)</sup>.

Various **UN human rights bodies**, such as the Human Rights Council and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, under the umbrella website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**) <sup>(94)</sup>, publish reports that may contain valuable information on the human rights situation of LGB. In November 2011, as mandated by the Human Rights Council resolution, the OHCHR produced the first UN report on *Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity* <sup>(95)</sup>.

<sup>(87)</sup> ORAM [website], n.d. (<http://www.oraminternational.org/en/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(88)</sup> ORAM COI Database: [http://www.oraminternational.org/images/COI\\_Database\\_dft.pdf](http://www.oraminternational.org/images/COI_Database_dft.pdf), accessed 25 February 2015.

<sup>(89)</sup> Bridging the Gaps [website], n.d. (<http://www.hivgaps.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(90)</sup> Bridging the Gaps [website], n.d. (<http://www.hivgaps.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(91)</sup> ILGA, *ILGA’s directory of LGBTI and allied organisations* [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/directory/>), accessed 3 December 2014. Devdir, a directory of development organisations, can also be a useful tool to identify local NGOs. See: Devdir [website], n.d. (<http://www.devdir.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(92)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(93)</sup> The guidelines will be available on Refworld, at: <http://www.refworld.org/>

<sup>(94)</sup> ‘The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) works to offer the best expertise and support to the different human rights monitoring mechanisms in the United Nations system: UN Charter-based bodies, including the Human Rights Council, and bodies created under the international human rights treaties and made up of independent experts mandated to monitor state parties’ compliance with their treaty obligations. Most of these bodies receive secretariat support from the Human Rights Council and Treaties Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).’ See OHCHR [website], n.d. (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(95)</sup> OHCHR, *Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity*, 17 November 2011 (<http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/429139.882326126.html>), accessed 3 December 2014.

**UN special rapporteurs, working groups or special representatives**, under the special procedures system<sup>(96)</sup>, also integrate sexual orientation and gender identity issues in their reports<sup>(97)</sup>. In many cases, information published by these UN human rights bodies is obtained during visits to the countries of origin.

As it may be a lengthy process to search for UN reports covering the situation of LGB, one can use the **IGLHRC** website. The IGLHRC collects all relevant UN publications on the ‘Our publications’ page, under ‘**Reports**’<sup>(98)</sup> and ‘**Shadow reports**’<sup>(99)</sup>.

- **EU bodies**

Less known to COI researchers is that some EU institutions or forums, such as the **European Parliament (Committee on Human Rights)**<sup>(100)</sup> and the **Intergroup on LGBT rights**<sup>(101)</sup>, can provide information on LGB, whether it is in the form of reports, press releases or links to other sources. Note that the website of the **European Parliament Committee on Human Rights** has a search option that facilitates the retrieval of relevant documents<sup>(102)</sup>.

- **Academia/Research institutes or centres**

Academics can be a very useful source of information because they have in-depth knowledge of key issues as a result of field studies. They may also benefit from a network of contacts in the countries of origin<sup>(103)</sup>. Often, academics specialise in a specific region or country or are affiliated with a particular programme within a university or research institute. For instance, the Faculty of Law of the University of Toronto<sup>(104)</sup> offers an international human rights programme that includes a ‘Sexual diversity’ section. **Memoranda** on the situation of LGBT in various countries, a **list of sources**, a **database of domestic legislation** and a **research checklist** are all available via this human rights programme. There are many more universities with LGB departments, such as Yale University, which offers LGBT studies<sup>(105)</sup>. These specialised programmes or studies can offer helpful publications as well as **links** to other sources. They can also help a COI researcher to identify an academic on a particular country of origin who can be contacted by e-mail or telephone.

Research institutes/centres, such as the Pew Research Center<sup>(106)</sup>, also publish relevant studies or surveys. Under the ‘Topic’ tab of the Pew Research Center, one can select, for instance, ‘Gay marriage and homosexuality’, and access various data. In 2013, the Pew Research Center also published a survey concerning the acceptance of homosexuality in 39 countries<sup>(107)</sup>.

<sup>(96)</sup> ‘Special procedures’ is the collective term used for a group of human rights experts tasked by the United Nations with investigating and reporting on the situation of human rights around the world. They are mostly individuals, called special rapporteur, independent expert or special representative, but some of the procedures are also through working groups typically comprising five members.

<sup>(97)</sup> A number of special procedures are relevant to the question of sexual and gender minorities’ rights, such as the special rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, or the working group on enforced or involuntary disappearances. For more information on these procedures, see: ARC International, *The UN special procedures: A guide for sexual orientation and gender identity advocates*, n.d. (<http://arc-international.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/arc-guide-special-procedures.pdf>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(98)</sup> IGLHRC, *Sections reports* [webpage], n.d. (<http://iglhrc.org/content/reports>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(99)</sup> IGLHRC, *Shadow reports* [webpage], n.d. (<http://iglhrc.org/our-publications/shadow-reports>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(100)</sup> European Parliament, *Human Rights Committee* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/droi/search-in-documents.html>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(101)</sup> ‘The intergroup on LGBT rights’ is an informal forum for Members of the European Parliament who wish to advance and protect the fundamental rights of LGBT. See European Parliament, *Intergroup on LGBT rights* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(102)</sup> European Parliament, *Human Rights Committee/Documents* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/droi/search-in-documents.html>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(103)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(104)</sup> University of Toronto/Faculty of Law, *Sexual diversity* [webpage], n.d. (<http://ihp.law.utoronto.ca/expertise/sexual-diversity>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(105)</sup> Yale University, *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender studies* [webpage], n.d. (<http://lgbts.yale.edu/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(106)</sup> The Pew Research Center is a ‘nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world, and conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis as well as other empirical social science research’. See Pew Research Center, homepage [website], n.d. (<http://www.pewresearch.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(107)</sup> Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, *The global divide on homosexuality*, 4 June 2013 (<http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

- **Media (general and specific)**

Reports in local and international media can assist in documenting the situation of LGB and especially the societal attitude towards them. It is impossible, however, to give an exhaustive overview of media that could potentially provide information on the conditions of LGB in countries of origin.

Note that researching in **non-local languages media**, such as French and English, may yield skewed results reflecting cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of ‘liberal’ writers, editors and readers.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, searching **local media** can give a good insight into the concepts used to refer to LGB and the societal attitude towards them.

The **IRIN** <sup>(108)</sup>, an independent, non-profitmaking media organisation providing humanitarian news and analysis, features ‘gender’ among the topics it covers. Using the advanced search function of its website, one can access interesting articles on the situations of LGB in selected countries of origin <sup>(109)</sup>.

A few websites specialise in delivering news related to LGB. These include **SOGI News** <sup>(110)</sup>, which ‘gives information on decisions made in the UN, updates on global events, testimonies by activists from all over the world, news on regional matters and in-depth feature articles’ and **Pink News**, which is described as ‘Europe’s largest gay news service’ <sup>(111)</sup>. Bear in mind that specialised media may sometimes use information collected from the Internet without verifying the original source. As for any other types of sources, information should be cross-checked.

- **Social science journals/Medical journals studies or centres (HIV)**

The situation of LGB in many countries is intertwined with the legal, social, religious and familial spheres, making it more difficult to investigate. Occasionally, social science journals publish articles/studies portraying the situation of LGB from an **anthropological** or **sociological** perspective, which is often lacking in the general country or human rights reports.

Aggregators of social science journals can assist in covering a wide range of journals <sup>(112)</sup>. The Social Science Research Network (SSRN) website <sup>(113)</sup> features research papers that can be downloaded for free. However, for copyright purposes, only the draft papers and not the published version are available. **Google scholar**® will also assist in searching for scholarly literature <sup>(114)</sup>.

**Medical journals or studies** can constitute an interesting source of information when it comes to the perception of LGB and access to services, as their analyses often go beyond a purely medical perspective.

- **COI portals and social media as platforms of sources**

- \* **COI portals**

COI portals offer a single entry point to searching COI from various sources. They are particularly useful at the initial stage of research as they allow COI specialists to rapidly retrieve relevant COI from multiple sources.

**EASO’s common European COI portal** <sup>(115)</sup> is a platform that enables asylum officials from EU+ countries to access COI from various sources <sup>(116)</sup>. The COI portal contains a specific folder <sup>(117)</sup> on COI and LGBTI where EU+ countries can share:

<sup>(108)</sup> IRIN [website], n.d. (<http://www.irinnews.org/>) accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(109)</sup> IRIN/Advanced search [website], n.d. (<http://www.irinnews.org/advancedsearch>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(110)</sup> SOGI News [website], n.d. (<http://www.soginews.com/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(111)</sup> Pink News [website], n.d. (<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/home/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(112)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(113)</sup> SSRN [website], n.d. (<http://www.ssrn.com/en/>), accessed 19 February 2015.

<sup>(114)</sup> Google scholar [search engine], n.d. (<http://scholar.google.com/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(115)</sup> The COI portal is accessible from the EASO website. Note that currently the COI portal is a platform for EU+ states’ national asylum administrations only. Common European COI portal [portal], n.d., accessible at [login required]: (<http://easo.europa.eu/coiportalnotice/>).

<sup>(116)</sup> Five external COI databases are currently connected to the COI portal (MILo/Germany; OFPRA/France; Landinfo/Norway; Lifos/Sweden; Tellus/Finland and soon Ireland). The connected COI systems deliver their own COI national products, as well as COI authored by third parties (NGOs, international organisations, media, etc.) to the COI portal.

<sup>(117)</sup> The folder is located in the EASO upload area.

- national COI products (planned, in progress or finalised);
- other publications of interest;
- particular events in relation to LGB (conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.).

It is expected that EASO's common European COI portal will open to the public in 2016.

Both **Refworld** <sup>(118)</sup> and **Ecoi.net** <sup>(119)</sup> are publicly available portals gathering up-to-date COI from a wide range of sources. They provide assisted search functions that can help in selecting the right search terms.

ORAM hosts an online **LGBT project portal** <sup>(120)</sup>, a platform providing in-depth announcements and descriptions of research needed as well as upcoming research and other LGBTI refugee- and asylum-related undertakings by refugee NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, academic institutions and professionals. These stakeholders may announce their upcoming works on that portal.

#### \* **Social media**

Finding useful contacts in countries of origin or following up on very local situations can be a difficult task for COI researchers. Social media (YouTube/blogs/Facebook/Twitter) <sup>(121)</sup> can assist by helping to <sup>(122)</sup>:

- identify **local groups** (NGOs) <sup>(123)</sup>;
- get in contact with **local informants**;
- follow up on **local events** (e.g. demonstrations, local NGO activities, arrests).

Social media can be especially useful for countries where local organisations do not develop or maintain their own websites. As local NGOs, in some cases, give access to more specific and updated information than mainstream human rights organisations, reaching out to these local NGOs can prove invaluable. In a later section on 'oral sources' we will see how local NGOs can be approached to obtain information.

Some **blogs** specialise in LGB. For example, '**Erasing 76 Crimes**' is a blog which provides posts, articles and references on '76 countries' anti-gay laws and the struggle to repeal them' <sup>(124)</sup>. Bear in mind that while the blog informs on arrests of LGB, it may not always announce when a person has been released. **ARC International**, which advocates LGB rights, also hosts an online SOGI electronic network that focuses on international advocacy, discussions and strategies related to sexuality, sexual rights, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression <sup>(125)</sup>. While these blogs often have strong advocacy stances, their posts can be a good way both to obtain up-to-date and specific information and to identify other sources.

Attention should be paid to the risk of harming local contacts or LGB communities in the country when raising issues on LGB issues in social media. In some countries, a person may be put at risk simply for being contacted by a researcher who is looking for information on LGB.

As with any other type of COI research, social media should be used with caution. Given the unregulated nature of social media, some will invariably lack the traditional quality criteria that guide the work of COI researchers (e.g. neutrality, objectivity and protection of personal data) and their final products (e.g. reliability, traceability and transparency).

<sup>(118)</sup> Refworld — UNHCR's public domain protection and information database — provides COI, but also legal and policy information. See UNHCR, Refworld [portal], n.d. (<http://refworld.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(119)</sup> Ecoi.net is a publicly available portal gathering up-to-date COI relevant in procedures for international protection. It is maintained by the Austrian Red Cross (Accord department) and Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany). See: Ecoi.net [portal], n.d. (<http://www.ecoi.net/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(120)</sup> ORAM, LGBTI refugee project portal [portal], n.d. (<http://www.portal.oraminternational.org>) accessed 16 February 2015.

<sup>(121)</sup> Access to certain information (via Facebook, for instance) often requires a specific account however, which then raises the issue of self-identification. Some EU+ countries have developed guidelines on how to use social media. For the use of social media, see also: Austrian Red Cross/Accord, *Researching country of origin information — Training manual*, 2013 edition, October 2013 and New Zealand, Immigration, Country Research Branch, *Country of origin information and social media, literature review, Executive summary*, October 2013.

<sup>(122)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(123)</sup> Note that the ILGA, on its webpage, provides a directory of LGBTI and allied organisations which can help to identify local groups, the ILGA's directory of LGBTI and allied organisations [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/directory/>), accessed 3 December 2014. Devdir, a directory of development organisations, can also be a useful tool to identify local NGOs. See: Devdir [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.devdir.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(124)</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes [weblog], n.d. (<http://76crimes.com/about-2/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(125)</sup> ARC international, *Electronic networking* [webpage], n.d. (<http://arc-international.net/network-development/electronic-networking>), accessed 24 February 2015.

- For more information on the use of **social media in COI**, see Austrian Red Cross/Accord, *Researching country of origin information — Training manual*, 2013 edition, October 2013 (<http://www.coi-training.net/handbook/Researching-Country-of-Origin-Information-2013-edition-Accord-COI-Training-manual.pdf>).
- For further guidance on **searching social media**, see EASO, *Tools and tips for online COI research*, EASO practical guide series, June 2014, <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Tools-and-tips-for-online-COI-research2.pdf>.

## Non-IT based sources

While valuable information may be available from online sources, one should explore other channels of information as they can yield specific and in-depth information. These include:

- books
- conferences/workshops
- documentaries/films
- fact-finding missions (FFMs)
- oral sources.

We will highlight some of these channels of information-gathering in the sections below.

- **Books**

Besides links to reports, surveys and films, the website of ‘LGBT Net’<sup>(126)</sup> also provides references to books on the life of LGB in various countries of the world. The resources listed in this website can be retrieved via a search function, available from the homepage.

- **Conferences/Workshops**

Conferences or workshops on the situation of LGB can be a valuable occasion to collect information from different sources and to establish contacts with experts or counterparts. COI specialists in some EU+ COI units attend such events. Often, they produce a summary of the main discussions/presentations, which can become useful pieces of COI. On 3 December 2014, for instance, the Vice-President of the European Parliament hosted a conference on LGB rights in Africa, organised by the Heinrich-Böll Foundation<sup>(127)</sup>, with invited speakers from Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. This conference was attended by several COI researchers who reported on the event<sup>(128)</sup>. In September 2014, Lifos, the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency, organised a seminar on the situation of LGB in Nigeria and Uganda where COI researchers from different national asylum authorities were invited. This seminar was an occasion to present Lifos’ findings following FFMs in these two countries, but also to invite speakers from local organisations in Nigeria and from the Danish Institute for Human Rights<sup>(129)</sup>.

<sup>(126)</sup> LGBT Net, *Magazines, books and films* [webpage], n.d. ([http://www.lgbtnet.dk/database/cat\\_view/37-all-documents/48-magazines-books-and-films](http://www.lgbtnet.dk/database/cat_view/37-all-documents/48-magazines-books-and-films)), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(127)</sup> Heinrich Böll Stiftung aims, amongst others, to foster democracy and uphold human rights. It also focuses on ‘the promotion of human rights for people with sexual identities and gender identities that are outside the mainstream is part and parcel of our democracy and human rights programmes’. See: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, *Democracy, LGBTI* [webpage], n.d. (<http://www.boell.de/en/topics/lgtbi>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(128)</sup> Heinrich Böll Stiftung, *Europe, Let’s speak out for LGBTI rights in Africa!*, held on: 3 December 2014. The notes from this conference can be obtained by contacting Cedoca or the OCILA.

<sup>(129)</sup> The Danish Institute for Human Rights published a comprehensive report on the sexual and gender minorities in Africa. See: Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Getting to rights*, 2014 (<http://www.humanrights.dk/publications/getting-rights>), accessed 3 December 2014.



- **Documentaries/Films**

Documentaries or films on the situation of LGB in countries of origin can be an efficient way to grasp complex situations and are often of considerable ‘educational’ value<sup>(130)</sup>. The website of **LGBT Net**<sup>(131)</sup> provides a list of films/documentaries on the life of LGBT in various countries of the world. ‘**Movies that Matter**’<sup>(132)</sup> is another platform where one can access films and documentaries dealing with human rights and justice, including the situation of LGB. The platform offers a search function.

- **Fact-finding missions**

As mentioned previously, some asylum administrations (often the COI unit) in EU+ countries conduct FFM to collect specific information on the topic of LGB. In some instances, the missions focus exclusively on the topic of LGB. In others, this topic is one among many areas investigated.

The missions are an opportunity to collect information from the field and to establish and/or reinforce a **network of contacts**. In some cases, the missions may be limited in duration, location and in the number and type of interviewees, yet invaluable information can be collected. In other cases, interviewees from local NGOs are part of a country-wide network and are able to report extensively on the situation in other parts of the country<sup>(133)</sup>.

Given the sensitivity of the subject in some countries, collecting information on the topic of LGB in the field, and reporting about it, may prove difficult. Lifos (Centre for Country of Origin Information and Analysis; Swedish Migration Agency) has identified the following challenges or limitations<sup>(134)</sup>.

- **Reporting on norms:** While information on laws and their application is often easily accessible, collecting information related to religion, school, family, societal/gender norms or intimate relations can be far more difficult.
- **Choosing the appropriate terminology:** Terms carry different values in different countries and can also have different values in different contexts in the same country. Delegations have to be prepared before the FFM about the terminology to be used and should be explicit about it while drafting the report.
- **Endangering LGBT individuals/communities:** Speaking about LGBT issues, in some contexts, can harm local contacts or LGBT communities in the country.
- **Unbalanced findings:** The collected information is not always representative of all local situations as delegations tend to obtain information related to urban and educated individuals. Furthermore, information often concerns gay men to the exclusion of lesbians and other LGBT persons.
- **Language:** Translating interview notes from English to a national language can prove difficult since words may carry different meanings and values from one language to the other<sup>(135)</sup>.

<sup>(130)</sup> EASO, COI and LGBTI workshop, held on 20–21 May 2014.

<sup>(131)</sup> LGBT Net, *Magazines, books and films* [webpage], n.d. ([http://www.lgbtnet.dk/database/cat\\_view/37-all-documents/48-magazines-books-and-films](http://www.lgbtnet.dk/database/cat_view/37-all-documents/48-magazines-books-and-films)), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(132)</sup> Movies that Matter [website], n.d. ([http://www.moviesthatmatter.nl/english\\_index](http://www.moviesthatmatter.nl/english_index)), accessed 3 December 2014. Movies that Matter followed in the footsteps of the Amnesty International Film Festival. It serves as an international platform for films of interest dealing with human rights and social justice.

<sup>(133)</sup> This was the case during the FFM conducted by Danish Immigration Service and the Danish Refugee Council, in Uganda, in 2013. See: DIS/DRC, *Situation of LGBT persons in Uganda, fact-finding mission to Kampala, Uganda from 16 to 25 June 2013*, January 2014 (<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/C0BC7D6B-C3E0-46DA-B151-EA7A28E4362F/0/SituationofLGBTpersonsInUgandaFinal.pdf>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(134)</sup> Swedish Migration Agency, Lifos, e-mail, December 2014.

<sup>(135)</sup> For example, in some local contexts, the term ‘gay men’ is less prejudiced than ‘homosexual men’; yet, when translating into Swedish, the Swedish term for ‘gay men’ appears to be more prejudiced than the Swedish words for ‘homosexual men’.

Lifos performed two FFM in 2014 on the topic of LGBT, one in Nigeria (11–15 May 2014) <sup>(136)</sup> and one in Uganda (6–9 May 2014). Lifos adopted two distinct approaches. In Uganda, the delegation did not contact governmental bodies or religious organisations as it had information that merely contacting these could ‘harm’ the LGBT community. In Nigeria, Lifos interviewed most available sources on human rights, including the question of LGBT <sup>(137)</sup>.

- **Oral sources**

When a COI researcher cannot obtain information from an FFM or when limited written information is available, contacting oral sources by e-mail, by telephone or during a face-to-face meeting can be a useful way to gather information.

Yet oral sources can also be hard to find. In the absence of organisations that openly defend LGB in certain countries of origin, it can be a challenge to identify a local source that does so covertly. **Several strategies** can be used to tackle that problem.

As mentioned under the section on social media and FFMs, caution must always be exercised so as not to put oral sources at risk by contacting them for information on LGB issues.

- \* **How to find them**

As indicated in previous sections, some specialised NGOs, such as the ILGA in its directory of LGBTI organisations <sup>(138)</sup>, provide information and contact details on local groups. Other specialised LGB NGOs — whether domestic, regional or based in neighbouring countries — can be useful in helping to find local contacts. This can also be true of **LGB journals** which often have local correspondents. Reports on the situation of LGB may also indicate names of local organisations, such as ORAM’s country of origin report on sexual and gender minorities in Uganda <sup>(139)</sup>. Social media, as mentioned previously, can serve to trace local organisations and their contact details.

In other instances, oral sources can be found through **organisations focusing on the fight against HIV/AIDS**. In many countries where discussion of LGB is taboo, the topic can to some extent be approached through a health/medical lens. As almost all HIV/AIDS organisations have an MSM component — whether explicit or unstated — they are either knowledgeable about the situation of LGB or know someone who is. Keep in mind that in countries where the subject is taboo, some people might be very suspicious or uncomfortable talking about it. One strategy is to contact these professionals through a third party, such as an organisation that supports and funds some of their activities. A European-based sexual and gender minority rights and/or HIV/AIDS organisation funding activities in African or Middle Eastern countries can, for example, refer the researcher to a local source. The Centre de ressources francophones sur le VIH/sida en Afrique, for instance, provides a list of local African NGOs working in the field of HIV/AIDS <sup>(140)</sup>.

**Local human rights organisations** can sometimes offer information about the situation of LGB. However, this is not always the case, as the information they provide (or omit) can be strongly affected by prevailing taboos. Moreover, a few countries are now criminalising the mere discussion of LGB. Thus, one should not assume that lack of awareness or silence about problems is an indication of their absence.

**COI colleagues** from other EU+ national asylum administrations can also be helpful partners in the quest for more information and/or potential oral sources.

<sup>(136)</sup> Swedish Migration Board, Lifos, *Nigeria. Den kulturella kontexten för hbt-personer*, 18 December 2014 (<http://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=33781>), accessed 29 January 2015.

<sup>(137)</sup> Swedish Migration Agency, Lifos, e-mail, December 2014.

<sup>(138)</sup> ILGA’s directory of LGBTI and allied organisations [webpage], n.d. (<http://ilga.org/directory/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(139)</sup> The appendix of the report provides a list of LGBTI and human rights organisations in Uganda. See: ORAM, *Country of origin report: Sexual and gender minorities — Uganda*, October 2014 ([http://www.oraminternational.org/images/stories/PDFs/Countryoforigin\\_report.pdf](http://www.oraminternational.org/images/stories/PDFs/Countryoforigin_report.pdf)), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(140)</sup> ELSA, Centre de ressources francophones sur le VIH/sida en Afrique [website], n.d. (<http://www.platforme-elsa.org/>), accessed 19 February 2015.

Note that often the identification of a source will have a snowball effect: the first source will connect the researcher with one or two other sources and so on.

\* **How to contact them**

Where LGB is a taboo subject, it can be even more important for the researcher to make a telephone call instead of, or in addition to, sending an e-mail. When doing so, it is essential to take time to **clearly explain** which **organisation** the researcher is working for and for what **purpose** he/she is collecting information.

The researcher should bear in mind that the persons he/she contacts might not use the same **terminology** as him/her. As mentioned in Chapter 2 on terminology, some sources may avoid the terms ‘homosexual’ or ‘LGB,’ which they find negative and/or ‘Western’ in nature. In order to gather the most correct and useful information, the researcher should describe in clear and unequivocal terms what information he or she is looking for and take note of local sensitivities and terminology, which are key to fully comprehending the situation.

When contacting the person, it is also important to **check the following points**:

- Is any part of the information obtained confidential?
- Can the name of the source be mentioned in a public document? Explain to the source what ‘public’ means in your country: will the document be available online or will it solely be used in and by asylum authorities or other stakeholders in the asylum process?
- If the person wishes to remain anonymous, can his or her organisation be quoted? If not, can the organisation be described, and, if so, how?

If the information is transmitted **by phone or during a face-to-face meeting**, it is good practice to:

- ✓ send a transcript of the conversation to the source for validation;
- ✓ verify with the source whether the information provided in the transcript is correct;
- ✓ make sure the information is safe to publicise.

In countries where LGB are repressed and where homosexuality or advocacy for LGB is criminalised, sources and their organisations could be in danger if openly quoted.

## 5. Tools for research, information monitoring and sharing

### Keywords/Search terms

Often in COI research the use of relevant search terms, their broadening or narrowing, will be key to producing results. When investigating the situation of LGB in countries of origin, this will be even more essential given the variety of terms used, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Terminology).

It is recommended to start with the wider terms when initiating research on the situation of LGB in a particular country of origin. The wider terms include:

- ✓ homosexual;
- ✓ gay (man/men);
- ✓ lesbian;
- ✓ LGB, LGBT, LGBTI;
- ✓ sexual orientation.

This first step might put you on track and help you to identify more specific and local concepts that will eventually allow you to narrow your search. Not all languages offer comparable terms for the abovementioned English terms. Local words to translate those terms might not even exist.

**Search operators** (AND, NOT, wildcards, truncations) can be useful when dealing with such variations in concepts and expressions. For instance, with the search functions of the COI portals Ecol.net<sup>(141)</sup>, Refworld<sup>(142)</sup> and the common European COI portal<sup>(143)</sup>, the asterisk (\*) placed within or after a query term will search for spelling variations or word forms.

—▶ For instance, **homo\*** will retrieve documents containing homosexual, homosexuals, homosexuality, homophobic, homophobia, homoerotic as well as the German words *homosexuell*, *Homosexualität*, or the French word *homosexuels*, etc. However, your search string should also include other relevant terms, such as ‘gay men’ or ‘gay man’.

—▶ When searching for information about lesbians, a search for **lesb\*** will call up documents containing lesbian, lesbians, the French *lesbienne* and the German *lesbe* and *lesbisch*.

Note that Ecol.net offers a ‘**moderated search**’, which helps to narrow or to broaden a search. Whenever the user searches for a word included in the COI thesaurus, the moderated search suggests broader, narrower and related terms. In Refworld, the search operator uses ‘**assisted search**’ to match spelling and word variations.

For more information on **search operators**, see: Austrian Red Cross/Accord, *Researching country of origin information — Training manual*, 2013 edition, October 2013 (<http://www.coi-training.net/handbook/Researching-Country-of-Origin-Information-2013-edition-Accord-COI-Training-manual.pdf>).

### Online tools

To increase research efficiency, the following specific online tools<sup>(144)</sup> can be used.

- **Customised search**, such as Google custom search, enables the limitation of a search to selected web sources.
- **Alerts services**, such as Google and Yahoo alerts, allow the monitoring of situations in specific countries of interest on a particular subject by predefining queries with selected keywords, a region or country, and language. The researcher can then receive regular updates. Many of the gay news services, such as Gay Star News and Pink News, offer the possibility to register for alert services.

<sup>(141)</sup> Ecol.net [portal], n.d. (<http://www.ecoi.net/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(142)</sup> UNHCR, Refworld [portal], n.d. (<http://refworld.org/>), accessed 3 December 2014.

<sup>(143)</sup> EASO, common European COI portal [portal], n.d. (<http://easo.europa.eu/coiportalnotice/>).

<sup>(144)</sup> References to specific online technologies are provided as examples only; EASO does not recommend any specific tools.

- **RSS** (really simple syndication) allows subscription to updates on selected websites.
- **Social bookmarking tools**, such as Delicious or Diigo, enable users to better organise bookmarks and share sources of information with others.
- **Twitter/Facebook** allow you to follow selected researchers or organisations for the latest news.

Also note that specifying the web link in the search field, next to the keyword, e.g. LGBTI: <http://www.refworld.com>, serves to narrow a search in Google.

For more information related to **online COI research tools**, see: EASO, *Tools and tips for online COI research*, EASO practical guide series, June 2014, <http://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Tools-and-tips-for-online-COI-research2.pdf>.

## Other tools

COI researchers from EU+ countries often work on similar topics simultaneously without knowing it. Some researchers may have conducted valuable interviews with experts on the situation of LGB or attended interesting conferences that could be useful to other researchers working on the same topic and countries of origin. Some COI units may organise FFM in the same countries of origin, a mere few weeks or months apart, without being aware of it.

Several ways to increase information sharing were identified during EASO's workshop of May 2014 and some have already been implemented.

**Common lists of sources:** Sharing COI products among EU+ countries is often limited by the use of national languages. However, many sources consulted and/or used by COI researchers are in English. While the main sources consulted or used by a COI researcher should appear at the end of the final document (in the bibliography), many more may not be listed for reasons of conciseness. Compiled in a separate list, these sources can become a useful piece of information that can be easily shared. The **annex to the present guide**, while not specific to any country of origin, constitutes an example of a list of web links that can be shared. This will be updated on a regular basis. EU+ countries are invited to suggest new sources to complement the list.

**A common list of national COI products** on the situation of LGB (planned, in progress, finalised): This list is currently available on the common European COI portal. It is updated as needed. EU+ countries are invited to inform EASO of new additions.

**Workshops** on specific countries of origin: EASO will organise, when needed, workshops on the situation of LGB in particular countries of origin to share expertise and knowledge.

**Publicise information on conferences/meetings:** The COI portal news section can serve this purpose. Any EU+ country can contact EASO to inform other countries of such events <sup>(145)</sup>. If the information provided during a conference is public, COI researchers who attend the conference and report on it for their own national administrations can possibly share this information with European counterparts. Information can be stored on the COI portal.

**Share the transcripts/summaries of interviews with experts:** As there are few experts on LGB in countries of origin, the 'use' of the same expert by several COI researchers may lead to what is commonly called 'source fatigue' (i.e. the experts may feel that they are contacted too often, on similar questions). COI researchers who conduct interviews with experts on the question of LGB in a particular country or who attend a conference on the topic (see above) can share the transcripts with their counterparts. COI researchers have to ensure that the information provided by the experts does not contain confidential information and that the expert agrees to it being shared with COI counterparts. They should also clearly state whether the information can appear in public documents.

**Draft common EU report or 'Europeanise' national reports:** Several paths are possible.

\* If a need for a specific report on LGB arises among several EU+ countries, EASO may send out a call for contributions to EU+ countries that have expertise on this specific country. EU+ countries can then consider, after taking into account availability of resources, whether to share this expertise with other EU+ countries in the form of an EU-level COI product (following EASO methodology and subject to a peer review by an ad hoc peer review group).

\* If a COI product on LGB is planned by one or more EU+ countries at national level, and if it fulfils the need of a significant number of EU+ countries, this national COI product can become an EASO product (following EASO methodology and subject to a peer review by an ad hoc peer review group).

<sup>(145)</sup> Please contact: [easo-cida@easo.europa.eu](mailto:easo-cida@easo.europa.eu)

## Examples of national practices/tools

Below are examples of COI national practices/tools (in EU+ national asylum authorities) which were presented during EASO's workshop on COI and LGBTI in May 2014.

- **'LGB COI harmonisation project' (Belgium, Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, CGRS/Cedoca)**

The goal of the **'LGB COI harmonisation project'** is to harmonise the treatment of LGB-related cases and enhance objectivity in the examination of such cases. A **template**, including a **standardised table of contents** and a **list of sources**, to be used for COI products on LGB, has been developed in the framework of this project (see Chapter 3).

Furthermore, **research indicators** have been identified in order to classify countries into two main categories (countries where LGB face 'group persecution' and countries where LGB constitute a 'vulnerable group'), with the aim of harmonising decision practices.

- **'Focal group on LGBTI' (France, Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides, OFPRA/DIDR)**

A **focal group on LGBTI** acts as an interface between decision-makers, COI researchers and legal officers at OFPRA. The goal of this focal group is to enable the COI unit to be more responsive, more efficient and to better adapt to the needs of end-users. The COI Unit of OFPRA (Division de l'information, de la Documentation et de la Recherche (DIDR)) has developed concise fact sheets on the situation of LGB in a number of countries of origin.

- **'Internal guidelines' (Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency/Lifos)**

The SMA's approach towards COI and LGB follows the recommendations made in the report entitled *Unknown people — The vulnerability of sexual and gender identity minorities and the Swedish Migration Board's country of origin information system* (January 2010) <sup>(146)</sup>. The report reveals that a lack of qualitative information on LGB conditions often leads to general, obscure and outdated COI products using few and unbalanced sources. It shows that information concerning LGB is often focused on gay men and that 'LGB sources' do not always represent all LGB persons. On the basis of these findings, the SMB recommended a number of steps when researching the situation of LGB.

- ✓ Identify norms and differences in the country of origin.
- ✓ Ascertain whether the state persecutes.
- ✓ If the state does not persecute, ascertain the issues related to government protection for LGB persons.
- ✓ Ascertain the issues related to society and non-state actors.

Note that the **UK Home Office** has recently published instructions on *Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim* which provide guidance on the topic of LGB in country information reports <sup>(147)</sup>.

<sup>(146)</sup> Swedish Migration Board, *Unknown people — The vulnerability of sexual and gender identity minorities and the Swedish Migration Board's country of origin information system*, January 2010.

<sup>(147)</sup> UK Home Office, *Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim*, 11 February 2015.

## 6. Research limitations

### When limited time is available

A COI researcher may not have enough time to conduct in-depth research. As a result, a COI researcher may be unable to document the topics that are outlined in the suggested table of contents and to check a variety of sources. The obvious solution is to provide the requester with recent detailed reports produced by the COI unit of another asylum authority or by (non-governmental) organisations. Such reports are, however, not always available.

The section below provides guidance to the researcher who has to work under time constraints.

- ✓ Mention the **specific research question** in the introduction as well as the **limited time** that was allocated to the research. Ideally, an overview of the consulted sources should be given (see Chapter 3). It has to be made clear that the research cannot be considered exhaustive.
- ✓ **Research questions** to check as a minimum.
  - (a) **The legal framework:** Are there laws targeting homosexual acts/behaviour?
  - (b) **Application of the law:** Are there cases of LGB being arrested, prosecuted and detained? Is this common? Can LGB who have been subjected to threats or acts of violence go to their authorities and benefit from state protection?
  - (c) **Treatment by state actors:** Are LGB subjected to discrimination, exclusion, extortion, insults, intimidation, harassment, threats, aggression, violence, blackmail or other actions by the authorities and, if so, to what extent?
  - (d) If time allows: How are LGB treated by **non-state actors**?
- ✓ **Sources**

For point **a** (legal framework), the ILGA's *State-sponsored homophobia report* <sup>(148)</sup> is a good reference. However, it is always advisable to also check the criminal code of the country in question.

For points **b, c and d**, general sources, and, occasionally, annual and/or specific human rights organisation reports, can be useful. Refworld <sup>(149)</sup> and Ecol.net <sup>(150)</sup> will generally store the most recent reports and articles about LGB. A simple Google search will often quickly lead to some useful links, using keywords/search terms such as 'homosexual', 'gay', 'lesbian' and 'LGB(T)(I)' (see Chapter 5). It is also possible to look for regional reports, which often contain information at national level. If the country in question has its own NGOs working on the issue, you can check whether they have recently published reports or articles.

To ensure that no recent changes and/or incidents have gone unnoticed, it is advisable to do a country search on specialist news sites. Chapter 4 and Annex II suggest various sources for specialist news sites.

### When limited or no information can be found

For some countries, a very limited amount of LGB information will be available. This can be the case because there is nothing to report, because the subject is highly taboo or because nothing in a language known by the COI researcher has been published and/or is available online.

It is important to indicate when limited or no information has been found on a certain subject, as well as to include a **description of the attempts** that were made to find that information. It may be advisable also to specify, in a **disclaimer**, that limited or lack of information should not be conclusive as to the merits of the claim. As mentioned previously (Chapter 3), an **introduction** can be used to make the reader aware of certain issues that may be relevant. For example, there may be a general lack of (public) information on the subject or the COI may be focused mostly on a specific group of persons, such as gay young men who live in an urban environment. With this background information in mind, the reader will be better equipped to understand the outcome of the research.

<sup>(148)</sup> ILGA, *State-sponsored homophobia report* [webpage], n.d.

<sup>(149)</sup> UNHCR, Refworld [portal], n.d.

<sup>(150)</sup> Ecol.net [portal], n.d.

## Annex I: Research and quality checklist

As indicated in Chapter 4, research into the situation of LGB should be conducted according to the same principles and quality standards as any other COI research. At the same time, we have seen that special guidance applies to researching the situation of LGB.

The checklist that follows summarises key elements of research on the situation of LGB. For each of these, we refer to the relevant chapter of the guide. The quality criteria indicated in the checklist should be read in conjunction with general COI quality standards enumerated in **EASO's COI report methodology** and in the **Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)** <sup>(151)</sup>.

Research and quality checklist (non-exhaustive)	
Questions	Chapter
Do I have a good understanding of the terminology at stake?	2
Did I check if any particular local terminology is used?	2
Did I use all possible search terms?	2 and 5
Did I exhaust all research questions (Did I refer to the list of research questions provided in the guide)?	3
Did I consult some of the sources provided in Annex II?	4 and Annex II
Did I use a variety of sources, such as:	4 and Annex II
✓ governmental?	4 and Annex II
✓ mainstream NGOs?	4 and Annex II
✓ specialised (LGB) NGOs?	4 and Annex II
✓ local NGOs?	4 and Annex II
✓ UN bodies?	4 and Annex II
✓ EU bodies?	4 and Annex II
✓ academia/research institutes?	4 and Annex II
✓ media (general and specific)?	4 and Annex II
✓ social sciences journals/medical journals or studies (HIV/AIDS)?	4 and Annex II
✓ COI portals?	4 and Annex II
✓ social media?	4 and 5
When relevant, did I use non-online sources, such as:	4
✓ books?	4
✓ conferences/workshops?	4
✓ documentaries/films?	4
✓ FFM reports/findings?	4
✓ oral sources?	4
Did I make use of alternative sources of information, such as:	4
✓ health-related sources (journals, organisations, etc.)?	
In order to look for local sources, did I:	4
✓ check via (local) HIV/AIDS organisations?	4
✓ check via specialised LGB organisations?	4
✓ check via LGB media (local correspondents)?	4
Did I verify, to the extent possible, the reliability of the sources?	4
If I used specialised LGB sources, did I check that they represent all LGB persons?	4
If I contacted an oral source, did I:	4
✓ ensure prior to contacting the source that he/she would not be put at risk by being contacted?	4
✓ take note of local sensitivities and terminology prior to contacting the source?	3 and 4
✓ take the time to clearly explain which organisation I work for and for what purpose I am collecting information?	4
✓ describe in clear and unequivocal terms what information I am looking for?	4
✓ check whether the information provided by the source is confidential?	4
✓ check whether the name of the source can be mentioned in the COI document?	4

<sup>(151)</sup> EASO, *EASO country of origin information report methodology*, July 2012. European Union, *Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI)*, April 2008.



<b>Research and quality checklist (non-exhaustive)</b>	
✓ if the person wishes to remain anonymous, ask whether his/her organisation can be quoted? If not, can the organisation be described, and, if so, how?	4
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
✓ if the information was provided by phone or in person, send a transcript of the conversation?	4
<b>Did I contact colleagues from other COI units?</b>	4 and 5
<b>Did I check the list of COI/LGB products planned, in progress or finalised, available on the EASO COI portal?</b>	4 and 5
<b>In my final COI product, did I ensure to include an introduction/disclaimer that covers the following:</b>	3 and 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ scope of the report;</li> <li>✓ sources used and possible limitations;</li> <li>✓ time constraint;</li> <li>✓ terminology?</li> </ul>	
<b>In my final COI product, is the language used neutral (impartial) and objective (not influenced by opinions, emotions, biases, etc.)?</b>	Introduction
<b>Is all information provided in the report referenced (in the footnotes)?</b>	
<b>Is all information provided in the report fully referenced in the bibliography?</b>	
<b>Was my COI product quality checked by a third party?</b>	

## Annex II: List of sources

The list below is a compilation of websites providing information on LGB. Though the present guide focuses on LGB persons, the list covers sources that include transgender and intersex persons. All links were accessed between December 2014 and February 2015.

The list has been divided into several parts:

- specialised NGOs
- specialised platforms/networks/portals
- specialised regional NGOs in Africa
- specialised regional NGOs in Asia
- specialised regional NGOs in Europe
- specialised regional NGOs in Latin America
- non-specialised NGOs
- non-specialised portals
- health-related organisations
- European bodies
- UN organisations
- national asylum administrations
- universities — research centres/institutes
- media (specialised and non-specialised)
- blogs
- others.

Under each subsection, the listing is provided in **alphabetical order**.

A list of local LGB NGOs by country of origin is not included as this would have constituted a lengthy collection. However, links to regional organisations that give information on the situation of LGB in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America are provided.

All sources of information, and each piece of information provided by these sources, have to be assessed carefully by COI researchers.

The list below is not exhaustive. If you wish to contribute to it, kindly send your suggestions to: [EASO-CIDA@easo.europa.eu](mailto:EASO-CIDA@easo.europa.eu). The list will be updated accordingly.

## Specialised NGOs

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Advocates for Informed Choices (AIC) <a href="http://aiclegal.org/">http://aiclegal.org/</a>	US organisation with coordinated strategy of legal advocacy for the rights of children with intersex conditions or differences of sex development (DSDs)	Newsletter Annual report Blog
ARC International <a href="http://arc-international.net/">http://arc-international.net/</a>  ARC SOGI Listserv <a href="http://arc-international.net/network-development/electronic-networking">http://arc-international.net/network-development/electronic-networking</a>	Canadian non-profitmaking organisation working to advance LGBT rights	Links to other NGOs Links to UN documents Bulletin (news) A forum focusing on discussions and strategies related to sexuality, sexual rights, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression
Bisexual.org <a href="http://bisexual.org/">http://bisexual.org/</a>	Project designed to give a voice to the bisexual community, share accurate information, answer questions, and provide resources for further learning	Publications (books, research, fact sheets, videos) Blog
Female to Male International (FTMI/ <i>international</i> ) <a href="http://www.ftmi.org/">http://www.ftmi.org/</a>	Organisation providing information and resources on female-to-male transition (legal rights, health)	Legal information
Human Dignity Trust <a href="http://www.humandignitytrust.org">http://www.humandignitytrust.org</a>	Human rights organisation working for the global decriminalisation of sexual identity	Information by country (law) Search function to retrieve case-law, legal analysis, UN/regional human rights mechanisms
Human Rights Campaign <a href="http://www.hrc.org">http://www.hrc.org</a> <a href="http://www.hrc.org/topics/international">http://www.hrc.org/topics/international</a>	US civil rights organisation working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people	Contains an international page with news, reports, maps of various countries
(The) Interface Project <a href="http://www.interfaceproject.org/">http://www.interfaceproject.org/</a>	Stories of people around the world living with intersex traits — or variations of sex anatomy — under the banner 'No body is shameful'	
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) <a href="http://iglhrc.org/">http://iglhrc.org/</a> <a href="http://iglhrc.org/content/international-documentation-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi">http://iglhrc.org/content/international-documentation-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi</a>	International human rights organisation dedicated to improving the lives of people who experience discrimination or abuse on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression	Information by country Publications (country reports, shadow reports, newsletters, etc.) International documentation page with links to UN reports/NGO statements Directory of organisations Index of laws Links to other sources
International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) <a href="http://ilga.org/">http://ilga.org/</a>	Worldwide federation of 1 100 member organisations from 110 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights	Twice-yearly updated world report <i>State-sponsored homophobia</i> Information per country

## Specialised NGOs

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Kaleidoscope Trust <a href="http://kaleidoscopetrust.com/">http://kaleidoscopetrust.com/</a> <a href="http://kaleidoscopetrust.com/resources/">http://kaleidoscopetrust.com/resources/</a>	UK-based charity working to uphold the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people internationally	Links to several reports/studies News (Archive) Search function
Micro Rainbow International <a href="http://www.micro-rainbow.com/">http://www.micro-rainbow.com/</a>	NGO addressing the situation of poverty of LGBTI internationally	Reports Miniblogs
Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration (ORAM) <a href="http://www.oraminternational.org/">http://www.oraminternational.org/</a> <a href="http://portal.oraminternational.org/">http://portal.oraminternational.org/</a>	International organisation devoted to advocating for LGBTI refugees	Reports on specific countries News Search function Online portal
Other Sheep <a href="http://www.othersheep.org/">http://www.othersheep.org/</a>	Multicultural, ecumenical, non-profitmaking Christian ministry working worldwide for the full inclusion of LGBT people	Information by region News
StopIGM.org Stop Intersex Genital Mutilations In Children's Clinics <a href="http://stop.genitalmutilation.org/">http://stop.genitalmutilation.org/</a>	International human rights NGO of survivors and allies fighting intersex genital mutilations (IGMs) in children's clinics	Search function

## Specialised platforms/networks/portals

Name/Web link	Brief description	Useful features
GayLawNet <a href="http://www.gaylawnet.com/laws/laws.htm">http://www.gaylawnet.com/laws/laws.htm</a>	Website maintained by a retired Australian lawyer	General information Law news, articles, papers
Global Gayz <a href="http://www.globalgayz.com">http://www.globalgayz.com</a>	Travel, culture and LGBT rights website focused on les-bi-gay-trans life	Information by country Search function by country
LGBT Net <a href="http://www.lgbtnet.dk/">http://www.lgbtnet.dk/</a>	Provides Danish organisations and others working in international development with knowledge about LGBTI aspects of development work	Information by country Database of resources searchable by keyword and category (country reports, surveys, magazines, books, films, etc.)
Library of Congress <a href="http://www.loc.gov/law/help/criminal-laws-on-homosexuality/african-nations-laws.php">http://www.loc.gov/law/help/criminal-laws-on-homosexuality/african-nations-laws.php</a>	Laws on homosexuality in African nations	A chart on the treatment of homosexuality in the criminal laws of 49 African nations
Organisation Intersex International (OII) <a href="http://oiiinternational.com/">http://oiiinternational.com/</a>	Decentralised global network of intersex organisations	Information by region Links to reports Links to conferences/events
Right to asylum guide <a href="http://cear-euskadi.org/guia/en/investigacion-sobre-informacion-en-pais-de-origen-2/">http://cear-euskadi.org/guia/en/investigacion-sobre-informacion-en-pais-de-origen-2/</a>	Database on gender-based persecution within the framework of asylum	Searchable database by region, topics (including LGBTI), categories (academia, NGOs, UN, etc.)

## Specialised regional NGOs — Africa

Name	Brief description	Useful features
African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHer) <a href="http://www.amsher.org/">http://www.amsher.org/</a> <a href="http://www.amsher.org/category/resources/">http://www.amsher.org/category/resources/</a>	Coalition of 18 MSM/LGBTI-led organisations in Africa Focuses on policy, law, health	'Resources' page with links to reports, news, etc.
Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre (ARSRC) <a href="http://www.arsrc.org/">http://www.arsrc.org/</a>	Part of a Ford Foundation initiative, 'Global Dialogue of Sexual Health and Well-Being'	Magazines Articles Seminar papers
Centre de ressources francophones sur le VIH/sida en Afrique (Plateforme Ensemble luttons contre le sida en Africa — ELSA) <a href="http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/">http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/</a> <a href="http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/associations-africaines-du-reseau-elsa/annuaire/">http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/associations-africaines-du-reseau-elsa/annuaire/</a> <a href="http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/AIDES-2014-GuideAssociationsEtSituationsSanitairesPays.pdf">http://www.plateforme-elsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/AIDES-2014-GuideAssociationsEtSituationsSanitairesPays.pdf</a>	Platform of five French NGOs active in the struggle against AIDS in Africa via the support of local NGOs	List of local LGBT/HIV-AIDS NGOs by country (statistics, description of NGOs, contact details)
Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) <a href="http://www.cal.org.za/">http://www.cal.org.za/</a>	Coalition of 30 organisations in 19 African countries to advance justice for lesbian and bisexual women and trans-diverse persons	Reports News Search function
Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) <a href="http://www.gala.co.za/index.htm">http://www.gala.co.za/index.htm</a>	Centre for LGBTI culture and education in Africa	Reports
Gender DynamiX (Transgender) <a href="http://www.genderdynamix.org.za/">http://www.genderdynamix.org.za/</a>	African-based organisation solely focusing on the transgender community	Research articles/reports Conference presentations and papers
Heinrich Böll Stiftung — East and Horn of Africa <a href="http://ke.boell.org/categories/gender">http://ke.boell.org/categories/gender</a>	German Green Political Foundation that conducts and supports civic educational activities worldwide. Gender is one of the themes on which the foundation focuses	Links to publications

## Specialised regional NGOs — Asia

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Asian and Pacific Islander Queer Women and Transgender Community (APIQWTC) <a href="http://www.apiqwtc.org/">http://www.apiqwtc.org/</a>	Group of Asian and Pacific islander queer women and transgender people in the Bay Area, who are building communities together	Events Resources
Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) <a href="http://www.apcom.org/">http://www.apcom.org/</a>	Coalition of members — governments, UN partners, non-profitmaking and community-based organisations — from Asia and the Pacific working together to advocate, highlight and prioritise HIV issues that affect the lives of MSM and transgender people	Reports and other publications Research

## Specialised regional NGOs — Europe

Name	Brief description	Useful features
ILGA Europe <a href="http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/about_us/members">http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/about_us/members</a>	Worldwide federation of 1 100 member organisations from 110 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights	List of LGBTI organisations in 45 European countries

## Specialised regional NGOs — Latin America

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Latin American Center on Sexuality and Human Rights (CLAM) <a href="http://www.clam.org.br/en/default.asp">http://www.clam.org.br/en/default.asp</a>	The centre aims to produce, organise and disseminate knowledge about sexuality from a human rights perspective in order to help fight gender inequality and contribute to the struggle against the discrimination of sexual minorities in the region	News Publications

## Non-specialised NGOs

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Amnesty International — SOGI <a href="http://www.amnesty.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity">http://www.amnesty.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity</a>	Topical page of Amnesty International website on SOGI	Does not provide links to specific reports (use Amnesty International search function to retrieve information) Terminology Key facts
Democracy Council — LGBTI Global Rights initiative <a href="https://democracycouncil.org/lgbt-global-rights-initiative.html">https://democracycouncil.org/lgbt-global-rights-initiative.html</a>	Human rights organisation working in partnership with local activists in Africa, Asia and Latin America to build grassroots movements that promote and protect the rights of populations marginalised because of gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity or disability	Reports News Events
Freedom House LGBT Rights (in Southeast Asia) <a href="https://www.freedomhouse.org/issues/lgbt-rights#.VS5V9RA2xnk">https://www.freedomhouse.org/issues/lgbt-rights#.VS5V9RA2xnk</a> <a href="https://www.freedomhouse.org/program/lgbt-rights-southeast-asia#.VS5WZBA2xnl">https://www.freedomhouse.org/program/lgbt-rights-southeast-asia#.VS5WZBA2xnl</a>	Independent watchdog organisation dedicated to the expansion of freedom around the world. Freedom House helps LGBTI rights groups in Southeast Asia	Reports
Human Rights Watch (HRW) LGBT rights <a href="http://www.hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights">http://www.hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights</a>	Topical page of Human Rights Watch website on LGBT	Reports News (LGBT rights) Videos
International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) SOGI UN database <a href="http://www.icj.org/sogi-un-database/">http://www.icj.org/sogi-un-database/</a>	NGO working to promote and protect human rights through the rule of law. The website contains a SOGI UN database	Searchable database to retrieve documents from the treaty bodies and special procedures (Human Rights Council/Commission on Human Rights)
Open Society Foundation LGBTI <a href="http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/topics/lgbti">http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/topics/lgbti</a>	Human rights foundation. Also works to combat discrimination by empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities to promote and defend their human rights	Reports Events Articles
Rights in exile programme (ex-Fahamu refugee programme) <a href="http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-lgbti">http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-lgbti</a> <a href="http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-country-list">http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-country-list</a>	Programme created to provide access to knowledge, nurture the growing refugee legal aid and advocacy movement in all countries and encourage active sharing of information as well as expertise among legal practitioners throughout the world	Information by country

## Non-specialised portals

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Common European COI portal <a href="http://easo.europa.eu/">http://easo.europa.eu/</a>	COI platform for EU+ states national asylum administrations. It provides access to COI from various sources (COI units of national asylum administrations, NGOs, international organisations, EU institutions, etc.)	Search function (simple/advanced) Specific LGBTI folder News Notification system
Ecoi.net <a href="http://www.ecoi.net/">http://www.ecoi.net/</a>	Publicly available portal gathering updated COI relevant in procedures for international protection. It is maintained by the Austrian Red Cross (Accord department) and Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration (Germany). Ecoi.net contains more than 225 000 documents from more than 155 sources	Country pages Search function (simple/advanced) Alert system (updates on the latest developments and newly added documents)
Refworld (UNHCR) <a href="http://www.refworld.org/">http://www.refworld.org/</a>	UNHCR's public domain protection and information database. It provides COI, but also legal and policy information. It contains more than 200 000 documents	Country pages Search function (simple/advanced) Alert system (updates on new additions)

## Health-related organisations <sup>(152)</sup>

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Bridging the gap <a href="http://www.hivgaps.org/">http://www.hivgaps.org/</a>	Organisation working through 21 key population projects in 16 countries	Reports News Blog, video
Centre for AIDS prevention studies (CAPS) <a href="http://caps.ucsf.edu/research/current-research-projects">http://caps.ucsf.edu/research/current-research-projects</a>	The centre conducts research to prevent new HIV infections, improve health outcomes among those infected and reduce disparities	Reports Surveys
Global Commission on HIV and the Law <a href="http://www.hivlawcommission.org/">http://www.hivlawcommission.org/</a>	An independent body, convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)	E-library containing a collection of resources and publications on subjects related to the findings and recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law Research/discussion papers Press releases
Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF) <a href="http://www.msmsgf.org/">http://www.msmsgf.org/</a>	Network of advocates and other experts in health, human rights, research and policy, working to ensure an effective response to HIV among gay men and other men who have sex with men	Publications (reports, policy briefs, etc.) Directory of organisations Blog
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (Unaids) <a href="http://www.unaids.org/en">http://www.unaids.org/en</a>	Member of the United Nations Development Group. It advocates for accelerated, comprehensive and coordinated global action on the HIV/AIDS epidemic	Information by country Press centre Reports
Kinsey Institute for Research on Sex, Gender and Reproduction <a href="http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/">http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/</a>	Institute at Indiana University working towards advancing sexual health and knowledge worldwide	Research papers

<sup>(152)</sup> Please note that currently, the common European COI portal is a platform for EU+ states' (EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway) national asylum administrations only.



Name	Brief description	Useful features
World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) <a href="http://www.wpath.org/">http://www.wpath.org/</a>	International multidisciplinary professional association to promote evidence-based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy and respect in transgender health	Research Links to transgender/transsexual organisations

## European bodies

Name	Brief description	Useful features
European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/droi/home.html">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/droi/home.html</a>	Main responsibilities include all matters relating to human rights, the protection of minorities and the promotion of democratic values, while its geographical remit covers countries outside the EU	Search function
European Parliament Intergroup on LGBT Rights <a href="http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/">http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/</a>	Informal forum for Members of the European Parliament who wish to advance and protect the fundamental rights of LGBT	News Links to European Parliament briefing on LGBTI Links to other sources
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) LGBT page: <a href="http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/lgbt">http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/lgbt</a>	Through the collection and analysis of data in the EU, the FRA assists EU institutions and EU Member States in understanding and tackling challenges to safeguard the fundamental rights of everyone in the EU. One of the themes covered by the FRA is LGBT	Survey data explorer News Reports

## UN organisations <sup>(153)</sup>

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) <a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomesPage.aspx">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomesPage.aspx</a>	OHCHR has a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights	Human rights per issue Human rights by country Search function
UNHCR Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (Refworld) <a href="http://www.refworld.org/sogi.html">http://www.refworld.org/sogi.html</a>	Refworld documents related to sexual orientation and gender identity, including legal, policy and background information	Country-specific information Case-law Links to other sources Search function

<sup>(153)</sup> See also UNAIDS in 'Health-Related Organisations'.

## National asylum administrations

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Bundesamt für Migration and Flüchtlinge (BAMF) Germany (MILO) <a href="https://milo.bamf.de/milop/livelink.exe?func=llworkspace">https://milo.bamf.de/milop/livelink.exe?func=llworkspace</a>	BAMF database. Contains COI	Information by country/theme
Danish Immigration Service <a href="https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/publications/SearchPublications.htm?searchType=publications">https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/publications/SearchPublications.htm?searchType=publications</a>	Publications from the Danish Immigration Service	Search function
Home Office — United Kingdom Country information and guidance <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/country-information-and-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/country-information-and-guidance</a>	Publications of the UK Home Office COI service	List of publications
Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) Canada <a href="http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/NdpCnd/Pages/index.aspx">http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/NdpCnd/Pages/index.aspx</a>	Publications of the Research Directorate of the IRB	National documentation packages by country Responses to information requests Recent research Search function
Landinfo Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre <a href="http://landinfo.no/id/162.0">http://landinfo.no/id/162.0</a>	Publications of Landinfo	Search function
Migrationsverket/Swedish Migration Agency Lifos — Centre for Country of Origin Information and Analysis <a href="http://lifos.migrationsverket.se/lifos_aktuell.html">http://lifos.migrationsverket.se/lifos_aktuell.html</a>	Publications of the Centre for Country of Origin Information and Analysis	Search function
Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) France — DIDR <a href="http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/index.html?xml_id=307&amp;dtd_id=10">http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/index.html?xml_id=307&amp;dtd_id=10</a>	Publications of the Division de l'Information, de la Documentation et des Recherches (DIDR)	Lists of recent COI reports and FFM reports

## Universities — Research centres/institutes

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Centre for Gender and Refugee Studies (CGRS) <a href="http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/#sthash.PCQC56yJ.dpuf">http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/#sthash.PCQC56yJ.dpuf</a>	Protects fundamental human rights of refugee women, children, LGBT through legal expertise and training, impact litigation, policy development, research, in-country fact-finding	Links to publications
International Spectrum — University of Michigan <a href="http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/global/worldwideorgs">http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/global/worldwideorgs</a>	Collaborative website by the University of Michigan's International Center and the Spectrum Center. Provides information on LGBTQ	International and LGBT organisations and resources
Pew Research Center <a href="http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/gay-marriage-and-homosexuality/">http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/gay-marriage-and-homosexuality/</a>	Fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the USA and the world	Articles Surveys
University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, International Human Rights Programme <a href="http://ihrp.law.utoronto.ca/page/working-group-and-clinic-reports/sogi-resources">http://ihrp.law.utoronto.ca/page/working-group-and-clinic-reports/sogi-resources</a>	The Human Rights Programme offers a list of SOGI resources	Information by country (reports)
LGBT studies (LGBTS) Yale University <a href="http://lgbts.yale.edu/">http://lgbts.yale.edu/</a>	LGBTS at Yale promotes innovative interdisciplinary scholarships and teaching on the historical and contemporary experience of LGBT	Link to LGBTI organisations Links to sources

## Media (specialised and non-specialised)

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Afrol News <a href="http://www.afrol.com/categories/gay_lesbian">http://www.afrol.com/categories/gay_lesbian</a>	African news	Archive search
Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD) <a href="http://www.glaad.org/">http://www.glaad.org/</a>	Media working with print, broadcast and online news sources	News Search function
Gay Star News <a href="http://www.gaystarnews.com/">http://www.gaystarnews.com/</a>	UK gay media company	News Search function
Guardian (The), LGBT Rights <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/world/lgbt-rights">http://www.theguardian.com/world/lgbt-rights</a> <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/society/gay-marriage">http://www.theguardian.com/society/gay-marriage</a> <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/society/transgender">http://www.theguardian.com/society/transgender</a>	Specific page of the UK newspaper highlighting LGBTI-rights-related news. Also pages on gay marriage and transgender	News Links to sources
IRIN News (Gender issues) <a href="http://www.irinnews.org/">http://www.irinnews.org/</a> <a href="http://www.irinnews.org/theme/gen/gender-issues">http://www.irinnews.org/theme/gen/gender-issues</a>	Independent, non-profitmaking media organisation	News Search function (simple/advanced) Links to articles, reports and films
Journal of Bisexuality (American Institute of Bisexuality) <a href="http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wjbi20/current#.VllbmW2E79p">http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wjbi20/current#.VllbmW2E79p</a>		Search function (books, journals)
LGBTQNation <a href="http://www.lgbtqnation.com/">http://www.lgbtqnation.com/</a>	US LGBTQ news source	News by region Search function Blog
Pink News <a href="http://www.pinknews.co.uk/world-news/">http://www.pinknews.co.uk/world-news/</a>	European gay news service; covers religion, politics, entertainment, finance, and community news for LGBT (UK/worldwide)	Information by region Search function
SOGI News <a href="http://www.soginews.com/">http://www.soginews.com/</a>	Swedish Federation for LGBT Rights (RFSL). RFSL is a non-profitmaking organisation working for the rights of LGBTQ	Information on decisions made in the UN Updates on global events/ regional news Testimonies by activists from all over the world In-depth feature articles
Têtu (in French) <a href="http://tetu.yagg.com/">http://tetu.yagg.com/</a>	French gay magazine	News (international) Magazine Blog

## Blogs

Name	Brief description	Useful features
Erasing 76 Crimes <a href="http://76crimes.com">http://76crimes.com</a>	Blog on the 76 countries' anti-gay laws and the struggle to repeal them	News archive searchable by country Lists of imprisoned people
Mehdi Kazemi — LGBTI asylum news <a href="http://madikazemi.blogspot.ch/">http://madikazemi.blogspot.ch/</a>	Website initially set up to help save gay Iranian Mehdi Kazemi from deportation to execution	Links to sources Blog documents the situation in countries from which LGBT people are fleeing
(A) Paper Bird <a href="http://paper-bird.net/">http://paper-bird.net/</a>	Blog by Scott Long, researcher and activist on sexual orientation/gender identity Main focus is on the Middle East	

## Others

Name	Brief description	Useful features
<i>The international encyclopedia of sexuality</i> <a href="http://www.sexarchive.info/IES/">http://www.sexarchive.info/IES/</a>		Information by country
Al Bab.com LGBT rights in Arab countries <a href="http://www.al-bab.com/arab/background/gay2.htm">http://www.al-bab.com/arab/background/gay2.htm</a>	LGBT rights in Arab countries	Information by country

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