



OUTRIGHT
ACTION INTERNATIONAL

July 1st, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of [Outright Action International](#), please accept this submission in support of the [proposed law](#): **Chapter V, Article 16 - Change of Sex Characteristics of Intersex Persons.**

Established in 1990 and headquartered in New York, Outright Action International is a leading international organization dedicated to human rights advocacy on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ) people. For more than 30 years we have documented, defended, and advanced human rights for LGBTIQ people around the globe.

OutRight's position on the rights of persons born with variations in their sex characteristics (often referred to as intersex) is grounded in international human rights law. States' legal obligations vis-a-vis the rights of LGBTIQ people are articulated by the Yogyakarta Principles, a set of principles developed by a team of human rights experts in 2007 on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Yogyakarta Principles +10 (YP+10), which supplements the original principles, including through an articulation of international law in relation to differences in sex characteristics.¹

Intersex is defined by the United Nations as people born with one or more physical sex characteristics (such as genitals, internal reproductive organs, chromosomes or hormones) that don't line up with what is typically thought of as either a male or female body.² Intersex people are not that rare and make up up to 1.7% of all births³, equaling the total population of Japan. Intersex is not the same as transgender. However, some intersex people may

¹ The Yogyakarta Principles: Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, March 2007, http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/principles_en.pdf (accessed June 29, 2022); The Yogyakarta Principles Plus Ten: Additional Principles and State Obligations on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics to Complement the Yogyakarta Principles, November 10, 2017, http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A5_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf (accessed June 29, 2022).

² UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Free and Equal, "Fact Sheet: Intersex," <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNFE-Intersex.pdf>.

³ Anne Fausto-Sterling, 2000, *Sexing the Body*, Basic Books, page 53. ISBN 978-0465077144.

also identify as transgender and/or any number of gender identities and have any number of sexual preferences similar to the rest of the population.

For decades, intersex infants and children around the world have been subjected to harmful medical interventions in attempts to “fix” their nonbinary bodies and essentially erase their intersex traits. Intersex people have increasingly spoken out against these medical practices, demonstrating personal evidence of severe and longlasting physical and emotional harm.

OutRight calls for an end to medically unnecessary interventions performed on intersex children prior to their ability to meaningfully participate in these life-altering decisions. States should uphold Principle 32 of the YP+10 regarding the right to bodily and mental integrity, which states:

No one shall be subjected to invasive or irreversible medical procedures that modify sex characteristics without their free, prior and informed consent, unless necessary to avoid serious, urgent and irreparable harm to the concerned person.

The Principle calls on states to pass legislation that protects everyone, including all children, from all forms of forced, coercive or otherwise involuntary modification of their sex characteristics.

We join the chorus of intersex-led organizations worldwide and the many human rights groups who have condemned the deeply harmful surgeries and other efforts to “normalize” these children, efforts that have no proven medical benefit. Because of the serious physical and mental harm they cause, these procedures have been rejected by United Nations experts on health, torture, and women’s and children’s rights, the World Health Organization, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Physicians for Human Rights, among others. People whose bodies transcend arbitrary standards of sex classification must be the driving force behind any contemplated interventions on their bodies. OutRight strongly opposes any efforts that devalue healthy differences and the bodily autonomy of intersex people.

The European Union and the Council of Europe have named intersex interventions on children as “torture” and have made strong recommendations to Member States to ban them by law. The passage of this proposed law will firmly position Greece as a global

Established in 1990
ECOSOC Accredited

World Headquarters
216 East 45th, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA
p: +1.212.430.6054
f: +1.212.430.6060
hello@outrightinternational.org

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leader in the protection of intersex people's human rights. Only Malta, Portugal, Germany and Iceland have passed similar reforms.

We applaud the work of the Greek Ministry of Health and the many stakeholders responsible for proposing a law to protect young children born with intersex traits from harmful and irreversible intervention. OutRight fully supports the aim to ban medically unnecessary and irreversible medical interventions, including hormone therapy and surgeries, on children with intersex traits until they are old enough to decide treatments for themselves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Sjödin', written in a cursive style.

Maria Sjödin

Acting Executive Director

OutRight Action International

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