

## Characteristics of the respondents

- Total number of respondents: 377  
Number per country: Italy, 146; Germany, 75; France, 0 ; Austria, 116 ; Netherlands, 40.
- Number of respondents with known ethnic origin outside Europe: 7
- Percent of respondents who are practising a religion: 54%, of which 98% is Christian
- Percent of females: 67%
- Mean age: 42 years (range 16-75 years).
- Degree of urbanization of the town they live in: small, 26%; moderate, 33%; large, 41%.
- Sexual preference: heterosexual, 83%; homosexual, 16% (male, 22%; female, 12%); bisexual, 2%
- Sector, and profession

	Teachers	Psychosocial workers	Doctors/nurses	Volunteers in education about homosexuality	Total
Educational sector	N=160	N=91	N=5	N=12	268
Health sector	N=9	N=101	N=19	N=0	129

Respondents working in both sectors are included in both groups (“educational sector” and “health sector”).

- Professional or volunteer: professional, 89%; volunteer, 4%; both, 8%
- Years of work experience:  
educational sector, mean 17 (range, 1-40); public health sector, mean 15 (range, 1-40)
- Percent working with girls and boys: educational sector, 96%; public health sector, 94%
- Percent working with individuals only, groups only, or both individuals and groups.  
public health sector: individuals, 43%; groups, 7%; both, 51%
- Attitudes towards homosexuals and homosexuality (questions 22, 33, 34)  
Overall, the respondents’ attitude towards homosexuality is a positive one. The Dutch and German respondents are the most tolerant, compared to the Austrian and Italian respondents.

*The percentages and the statistical analyses are corrected for the differences in number of respondents between the countries.*

**On the following pages, the findings are summarized and presented separately for the respondents working in the Educational sector (n=268) and those working in the Health sector (n=129).**

## **Educational sector**

### 1. Knowledge (question 23)

The five aspects about which the 268 respondents have the least knowledge are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents with limited knowledge on that aspect)

- differences between gays and lesbians of various cultural-ethnic groups (57)
- the homosexual subculture (54)
- mental and physical health of homosexual men and women (45)
- bisexuality (41)
- views on homosexuality in various cultural-ethnic groups (38)

The three aspects about which the 268 respondents have the most knowledge are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents with moderate to extensive knowledge on that aspect)

- discrimination of homosexual men and women (15)
- impact of social norms, parents and peer group on homosexuals (20)
- possible psychosocial problems of gays and lesbians (25)

#### *Differences according to country:*

Overall, the Dutch have the most knowledge, followed by the Germans. The Austrian and Italian respondents have the least knowledge.

#### *Differences according to profession:*

Overall, the teachers have less knowledge than the psychosocial workers and the volunteers. The teachers have relatively little knowledge on “sexuality and sexual relationships of gays and lesbians”.

### 2. Reasons for not intervening or educating (question 43)

The reasons that were mentioned the most by the 268 respondents are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that mentioned the reason)

- I am not self-confident about my knowledge on homosexuality (40)
- I am not confident about how to give meaning or shape to the intervention/education (36)
- I lack a teaching package on homosexuality (30)
- (some of) the parents of my target group are averse to educating on homosexuality (21)
- I am not confident about how to take good care of homosexual youngsters in the group (20)

#### *Differences according to country:*

No differences emerge between Italians, Germans and Austrians.

The Dutch respondents mentioned the following reasons the most:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that mentioned the reason)

- I feel vulnerable, as I am a homosexual myself (40)
- My target group is too opposed to homosexuality (33)
- The management at my work does not support the idea of educating on homosexuality (27)
- I am not confident about how to give meaning or shape to the intervention/education (20)
- I am not confident about how to take good care of homosexual youngsters in the group (20)

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences emerge between teachers and psychosocial workers.

Other relevant reasons that were mentioned are:

1. They are already too old (18 years and older)
2. I would like to treat the subject in a wider context
3. I cannot be open about my homosexuality.
4. drawbacks: "Fear that the atmosphere could escalate and that this could do harm to gay and lesbian youngsters", or "a gay/ lesbian youngster could feel "discovered" or forced to be out", or "fear that the family does not support the homosexual youngster".
5. large proportion of youngsters who reject homosexuality because of their cultural background, a lot of moslims".

**3. Problems encountered when educating (question 46): respondents with experience n=111 (41% of the 268 respondents working in the educational sector)**

The problems that were mentioned the most are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that have encountered the problem)

- (some of the) youngsters were not willing to talk about it open-hearted (65)
- (some of) the parents of my target group were averse to educating on homosexuality (59)
- I could not breach the hostile or indifferent attitude of some of the youngsters during the education (53)
- (some of the) youngsters behaved offensive or aggressive towards homosexual youngsters in my group (48)
- I was not confident about how to take good care of homosexual youngsters in the group (47)
- I lacked a teaching package on homosexuality (42)

*Differences according to country:*

The Italians, Germans, and Austrians relatively often mentioned non-confidence about their knowledge on homosexuality.

The Italians mentioned relatively often that they did not know how to give shape to the education, and that the management team at their work did not support the idea of educating on homosexuality.

Overall, the Dutch respondents encountered less problems than the others. However, they mentioned relatively often that the management team at their work did not support the idea of educating on homosexuality.

*Differences according to profession:*

Overall, teachers encountered problems to a larger extent than psychosocial workers.

Specifically, teachers relatively often mentioned non-confidence about how to give shape to the education, and that they lacked a teaching package. Psychosocial workers relatively often mentioned that some of the youngsters were not willing to talk about it open-hearted, and that they could not breach the hostile or indifferent attitude of some of the youngsters.

**4. Confidence in one's own skills, when educating (questions 45 and 58)**

The skills in which the 268 respondents have the least confidence are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that (maybe to certainly) *not* would manage to ...)

- adequately handling differences between youngsters from different cultural-ethnic backgrounds (52)
- connecting to youngsters' experiences (40)
- creating such an ambience, that the youngsters dare to talk open-hearted about sexuality and relationships (39)

- adequately handling (religious) anti-gay attitudes or convictions (39)
- speaking freely about differences and similarities in sexuality of heterosexuals and homosexuals (36)
- adequately handling a coming-out of a youngster during the lesson (34)

*Differences according to country:*

Compared to respondents from other countries, the Italian respondents are the least confident, and the Dutch respondents are the most confident. Regarding the last two aspects ((religious) anti-gay attitudes and differences according cultural-ethnic background), the Dutch respondents are no more confident than respondents from the other countries.

*Differences according to profession:*

Compared to the others, the volunteers were the most confident. There were no large differences between teachers and psychosocial workers.

5. Problems encountered when counselling gays and lesbians (question 54): respondents in educational sector with experience(n=110)

The problems that were mentioned the most by the 110 respondents are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that have encountered the problem)

- I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality in cultural-ethnic minority groups (80)
- I lacked a handbook or manual for counselling gays and lesbians (60)
- I was not confident about how to take good care of the homosexual youngster (54)
- I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality (52)

*Differences according to country:*

The Italian and Austrian reported the most problems, the Dutch the least.  
A relatively high proportion of Italian respondents mentioned that they did not know where to refer the youngster to.

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences.

6. Confidence in one's own skills, when counselling (questions 53 and 60)

The skills in which the 268 respondents have the least confidence are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that (maybe to certainly) *not* would manage to ...)

- adequately judge whether his or her homosexual preference should be a theme in the counselling (49)
- adequately judge whether his or her cultural-ethnic background should be a theme in the counselling (45)
- adequately recognize problems related to homosexual preference (43)
- adequately handle your own prejudices and opinions about the way homosexuality is viewed in cultural-ethnic minority groups (24)

*Differences according to country:*

The Italians are the least confident.

The Dutch have the most confidence in their skills, only regarding the aspect of “adequately handle your own prejudices and opinions about the way homosexuality is viewed in cultural-ethnic minority groups”, some of them are not confident.

*Differences according to profession*

Teachers are less confident than psychosocial workers.

## 7. Needs with respect to themes (questions 62-63)

The themes about which the 268 respondents need the most information are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that theme as most relevant for the manual)

- the coming-out process (52)
- aspects of health and (psychological) problems associated with homosexuality (37)
- sexuality of gays and lesbians (36)
- homosexuality in relation to religion and culture (32)
- ways in which gays and lesbians are discriminated against (31)
- social map of relevant organisations in your country (26)

*Differences according to country:*

A relatively high proportion of the Italian and Dutch respondents say that sex education in general should be a theme in the manual.

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences, except that relatively more psychosocial workers than teachers say that a social map should be a theme in the manual.

(Volunteers do not need much information about sexuality of gays and lesbians, and aspects of health.)

## 8. Needs with respect to methods (questions 64-65)

The methods about which the 268 respondents need the most information are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that method as most relevant for the manual)

- how to teach on homosexuality in a classroom or other group of youngsters (65)
- how to deal with homo-negative attitudes in a classroom (53)
- how to empower gay and lesbian pupils or clients (46)
- general guidelines for anti-discrimination interventions (theory, standards) (34)

*Differences according to country:*

No differences.

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences.

## 9. Needs with respect to contexts (questions 66-67)

The contexts about which the 268 respondents need the most information are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that context as most relevant for the manual)

- working with groups of mixed gender and sexual preference (72)
- working with groups of mixed ethnic background (46)
- working with individual male homosexuals (45)
- working with individual lesbians (43)

### *Differences according to country:*

No differences, except that only the Dutch respondents mention "working with ethnic minority groups" as a context where the manual should give attention to anyhow.

### *Differences according to profession:*

No differences.

## Health sector

### 1. Knowledge (question 23)

The five aspects about which the 129 respondents have the least knowledge are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents with limited knowledge on that aspect)

- differences between gays and lesbians of various cultural-ethnic groups (52)
- the homosexual subculture (42)
- homosexuality and the law (40)
- bisexuality (40)
- views on homosexuality in various cultural-ethnic groups (39)

The three aspects about which the 129 respondents have the most knowledge are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents with moderate to extensive knowledge on that aspect)

- impact of social norms, parents and peer group on homosexuals (88)
- discrimination of homosexual men and women (86)
- possible psychosocial problems of gays and lesbians (82)

#### *Differences according to country:*

According to their own estimation, the Italians have the least knowledge and the Germans have the most knowledge.

A relatively low proportion of German respondents say they have limited knowledge on differences according to cultural-ethnic background of gays and lesbians.

A relatively high proportion of Italians say they have limited knowledge on the number of young people with homosexual feelings.

A relatively high proportion of Austrians say they have limited knowledge on the impact of social norms, parents and peer group on homosexuals.

#### *Differences according to profession:*

Overall, there are no differences in knowledge of psychosocial workers and doctors/nurses.

A relatively high proportion of nurse/doctors say they have limited knowledge on the number of young people with homosexual feelings, and on bisexuality.

### 2. Problems encountered when counselling gays and lesbians (question 54): respondents with experience (n=81, 63% of respondents working in health sector)

The five problems that were mentioned the most by the 81 respondents are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that mentioned the problem)

- I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality in cultural-ethnic minority groups (91)
- I was not confident about how to take good care of the homosexual youngster (63)
- I was not confident about my knowledge on homosexuality (56)
- I lacked a handbook or manual for counselling gays and lesbians (53)
- I was not confident about how to take homospecific aspects into account during the counselling (51)

*Differences according to country:*

In general, Italian respondents indicated more problems than respondents from other countries. A relatively high proportion of Italians and Austrians mention that they did not know to which relief organisation they could refer the youngster.

*Differences according to profession:*

In general, nurses/doctors indicated more problems than psychosocial workers. A relatively high proportion of nurses/doctors mention that the youngster was not willing to talk about the homospecific aspects in his/her life.

Other problems that were mentioned are:

- There is no service like a club or a self-help group where I could refer the client to.

3. Confidence in one's own skills, when counselling (questions 53 and 60)

The skills in which the 129 respondents have the least confidence are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that probably/certainly *not* would manage to ...)

- adequately recognize problems related to homosexual preference (44)
- adequately judge whether his or her homosexual preference should be a theme in the counselling (35)
- adequately judge whether his or her cultural-ethnic background should be a theme in the counselling (35)
- adequately handle your own prejudices and opinions about the way homosexuality is viewed in cultural-ethnic minority groups (18)

*Differences according to country:*

The Italians are the least confident.

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences.

4. Needs with respect to themes (questions 62-63)

The themes about which the 129 respondents need the most information are:

(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that theme as most relevant for the manual)

- the coming-out process (61)
- aspects of health and (psychological) problems associated with homosexuality (49)
- homosexuality in relation to religion and culture (31)
- sexuality of gays and lesbians (31)
- homo-specific counselling in general (30)

*Differences according to country:*

The Italian respondents also consider homosexual parenting as very relevant for the manual.

The German respondents also consider the ways in which gays/lesbians are discriminated against as very relevant for the manual.

The Austrian respondents also consider homosexuality and the law as very relevant for the manual.



*Differences according to profession:*

Nurses/doctors also consider homosexuality and the law as very relevant for the manual (although they do not need much information about this topic).

5. Needs with respect to methods (questions 64-65)

The methods about which the 129 respondents need the most information are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that method as most relevant for the manual)

- how to adequately address homosexuality in a counselling situation (46)
- how to empower gay and lesbian pupils or clients (41)
- how to teach on homosexuality in a classroom or other group of youngsters (39)
- homo-specific counselling methodology (38)

*Differences according to country:*

German and Austrian respondents also consider “how to deal with homo-negative attitudes in a classroom” as very relevant for the manual.

Austrian respondents also consider “how to handle aversive reactions of the management, colleagues, or parents towards lesson(s) on homosexuality” as very relevant for the manual.

Dutch respondents also consider “general guidelines for anti-discrimination interventions” as very relevant for the manual.

*Differences according to profession:*

Nurses/doctors also consider “judging how and when to address homosexuality” as relevant for the manual.

6. Needs with respect to contexts (questions 66-67)

The contexts about which the 129 respondents need the most information are:  
(in brackets: the percent of respondents that consider that context as most relevant for the manual)

- working with groups of mixed gender and sexual preference (60)
- working with individual gay/lesbians (46)
- working with groups of mixed ethnic background (44)
- working with ethnic minority groups (43)

*Differences according to country:*

No differences

*Differences according to profession:*

No differences

**Total group of respondents (n=377): additional suggestions for the manual.**

**1. Other themes that were mentioned as relevant for the manual**

*Italy*

- Homosexuality in human history
- sexual orientation origin; distinction between transexualism, bisexuality, hermaphroditism, cross-dressing; psychotherapists' biases
- specific psychotherapy
- psychological theories about homosexuality
- videos on the gender differences between gay males and lesbians
- the origin of the homosexual orientation: nature or culture?
- homosexuality and work
- lifestyle of gay males and lesbians and their roles
- media and homosexuality (sexuality)
- what your religion thinks about homosexuality and how a religious person should behave

*Netherlands*

- Homosexuality, life styles and history

*Germany*

- invisibility mostly of lesbians in the society
- prejudices of heterosexuals
- internet; possibility to make links
- special information for youths
- Importance of homosexuality for the society
- original family and way of dealing with homosexuality
- internet-addresses
- History of homosexuality
- how gays and lesbians live their lives and lifestyles in a confident way
- homosexuality and handicap mustn't be forgotten!
- aim: tolerance, understanding, dealing the subject in the context of sexual education and questions of lifestyles/ way of life/ choice of lifestyle
- bisexuality, transsexuality, gay & lesbian scene in Germany and Europe. Bisexuals, Transsexuals, Transvestites.
- homosexual, bisexual, transsexual migrants
- in society and politics; by using which instruments can I change what and how?

*Austria*

- Humor; relationships are fun as well!
- The view of different churches. Wedding and benediction in the church. Marriage in a registry office
- Respect, personal responsibility.
- Addresses from involved people, to invite them to our school. Bisexuality.
- Homophobia! What is it, where does it come from, coping-strategies etcetera.
- How should I react when someone tells he/she is homosexual?
- Statistics: facts.
- Attention for parents, friends, relatives.
- Internet addresses, seminars

## 2. Other methods that were mentioned as relevant for the manual:

### *Italy*

- film with comments
- reports of single, personal experiences
- film, audiovisual media, literary and political readings

### *Netherlands*

- Tolerance test for the counsellor itself
- How to support the youngster in the coming-out process
- How to deal with religion and multicultural problems
- How to integrate the subject homosexuality in other lessons. How to accomplish that it get's continuing attention, in different situations and not only during a one-lesson project.

### *Germany*

- additional pages translated in the languages of the migrants
- how to deal with the "shocked parents"
- how to deal with multiple discrimination
- how to deal with insecurity of pupils, regardless if they are gay/ lesbian or not
- best practices
- how can I support homosexual or bisexual moslems
- how gays and lesbians should react on discrimination in their families

### *Austria*

none.

## 3. Comments at the end of the questionnaire.

### *Italy*

- I believe that only well skilled trainers can deal with homosexuality issues. I couldn't do that, even if I am much interested in this matter and emotionally close to gay males and lesbians.
- it could be useful to consider the suicidal risk among homosexual adolescents. Moreover, pediatricians and general practitioners should be trained in homosexual issues.
- why is homosexuality still considered as a moral deviation or a disease? Why aren't health workers clear enough on this issue? Are you homosexual from birth or do you become it later? Does a sexual abuse cause homosexuality? Which books can help parents of gay males and lesbians to cope with them?
- I believe that a specific manual could be useful but not enough in itself. There should also be surveys and direct observation, together with a personal training on this issue and, eventually, a supervision
- maybe we need something different from a real "manual".
- I consider diversity as necessary in nature, society, politics and personal relations. To me, no difference is just like being dead. To be responsible does not depend on sex. Homosexuality has nothing to do with making sex; it's just a natural dimension which the whole society should make the most of.
- in my opinion, it is necessary to talk about sex to adolescents, wherever they meet, with delicacy, so that they don't feel uneasy. People working within schools should therefore be trained from a psycho-pedagogical point of view.
- I never personally considered gay males and lesbians as "different", while dealing with homosexuality as a specific issue can let them feel even more different. What do people belonging to groups (associations) want? They want to be the centre of attention. It depends on their need.

### *Netherlands*

- Also mention that "homosexuals" are not a homogeneous group, there are many differences between individual homosexuals.

- Be alert on the tension between moslems and homosexuals.

#### *Germany*

- I would like the focus of the project more on anti-discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin in combination with homosexuality. My most important question is: How can I reduce prejudices of Islamic boys?
- I would like to have creative, new ideas in the manual
- bisexual people are rarely or not mentioned at all (discrimination)
- I'm bothered that in this questionnaire there is always spoken about schools and teachers or counselling centres. The work in youth associations, where homosexuality is a subject, too, is completely neglected.
- I'm missing the attempt to dissolve the polarity between normal-gay/lesbian by a visionary thinking
- In my work there is a high need for education concerning homosexuality and handicap. here are very few teaching aids concerning this topic, perhaps this is a gap that you can fill in, because you already tackle the question of double-discrimination in a multicultural context.
- unfortunately bisexual or Transsexual people are rarely named in your questions
- homosexual migrants especially from the Islamic countries are rarely considered
- I miss hints concerning a political conception. What can a single person, a group, an institution, the politicians do?

#### *Austria*

- Theme bisexuality should be added.
- You have to deal with this topic carefully. Care about the human personality and help are needed, on the other side it is very important to tell the kids about the values "marriage" and "family".
- It's a duty for the Christian churches to help the homosexuals to be able to deal with their homosexuality.
- Handbook should be short and precise. No too long story-telling, examples etcetera.
- I teach in a basic school, the children in this age are not confronted with this subject.
- As a teachers without experience in this topic, I would not do too much counselling before: 1. I've got a training in this, 2. the training is paid by the government. Is there money for this?
- I will deal with this topic only when there are questions about it, then I will not be too shy to tell about it. But I think it's wrong that, again, it should be the school's duty to deal with this topic.

## **Recommendations**

### 1. Educational sector

According to the teachers and psychosocial workers in the educational sector, the manual should give a lot of information on various aspects of homosexuality. They indicate that they have limited knowledge, and they consider this as a problem for both educating on homosexuality and counselling individual gays and lesbians.

Differences according to cultural-ethnic background is regarded as an important topic. This includes gays/lesbians from ethnic minorities, as well as anti-gay attitudes or convictions in various cultural-ethnic groups.

They need concrete teaching material to facilitate educating on homosexuality.

In addition, they would welcome advice on what to do if some of the youngsters are not willing to talk about it, behave offensive or aggressive towards homosexual youngsters in the group, and express anti-gay attitudes/convictions. Furthermore, they need advice on how to take good care of homosexual youngsters in the group, and how to handle a coming-out of a youngsters during the lesson.

They indicate that they lack skills for sex education in general, and for talking about sexuality of gays and lesbians in particular. Thus, methods and advice with respect to talking about and educating on sexuality of heterosexuals and homosexuals are in need.

With respect to counselling of gay and lesbian pupils/students, they would welcome information about the coming-out process, and possible problems associated with this. Also, information and advice are in need on how to recognize problems related to homosexual preference, and how to judge whether his/her homosexuality should be a theme in the counselling.

### 2. Health sector

Just as the respondents working in the educational sector, psychosocial workers and nurses/doctors are in need of information on various aspects of homosexuality, such as sexuality of gays/lesbians, the coming-out process, and problems associated with homosexuality.

A substantial portion of the respondents indicates to be inconfident in counselling gays and lesbians, and would welcome a handbook or manual for counselling gays and lesbians and, in particular, for counselling gays and lesbian from an ethnic minority. How to recognize problems related to homosexual preference and how to adequately address homosexuality in a counselling situation are just some of the possible subjects to write about in the manual.

Besides working with individual gays and lesbians, psychosocial workers also often mentioned working with the family (parents/brothers/sisters/friends etcetera) of homosexual youngsters, as a context where they need support on.

### **Dilemma's**

I think we should talk about this during our meeting, but some dilemma's are, in my opinion:

- Which subjects are we going to deal with in the manual? (as we cannot deal with them all).
- How do we account for differences in needs between countries?
- To which extent should the manual describe counselling methods? (for example, "psychotherapy" seems to me a bridge to far, but what about counselling in the family context?)