

A needs assessment on how to integrate attention for LGBTIQ in institutions for vocational education in Europe

Peter Dankmeijer (GALE)

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Sexual and Gender Diversity in Vocational Education

- Limited research has been done on LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) issues in VET (vocational education and training)
- Dutch research showed LGBT students are 3 times as likely than the average student to be victim of bullying, discrimination, psychological violence and physical violence (4,3% have property vandalized; 5% is threatened with violence and has been sexually harassed; 5-25% of students feel uncomfortable with LGBT students) (ECBO, 2014)
- Since 2012 the Dutch government funds a series of projects to combat LGBT discrimination in VET
- Since 2019 also international interest in sexual diversity in VET (EU Erasmus+ projects)

The UNIQUE project

- Erasmus+ KA3, 2021-2023, 9 partners
- Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, (Netherlands, Germany)

STRATEGY & IMPACT

- Recruit VET teachers as ambassadors for LGBTIQ equality
- Train them to do this effectively
- Improve VET institutional policies
- Reduce LGBTIQ bullying, harassment and discrimination in VET institutions
- Raise wider awareness about sexual and gender diversity in these countries

Unique Needs Assessment

DESK RESEARCH

- Previous research
- National policies, context European policies

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

- Online survey, 14 questions, VET staff and students
- Aim: 100 respondents per pilot country

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- Interviews with VET staff, LGBTI experts
- Focus groups with VET students

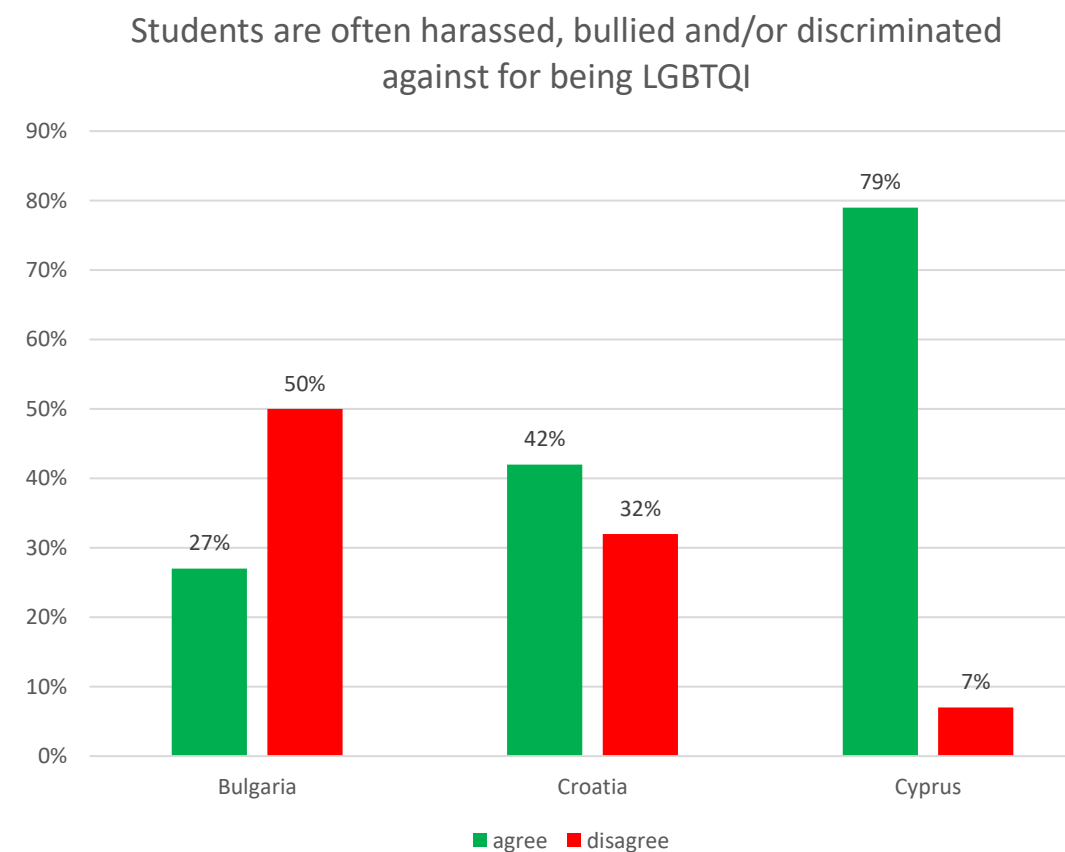
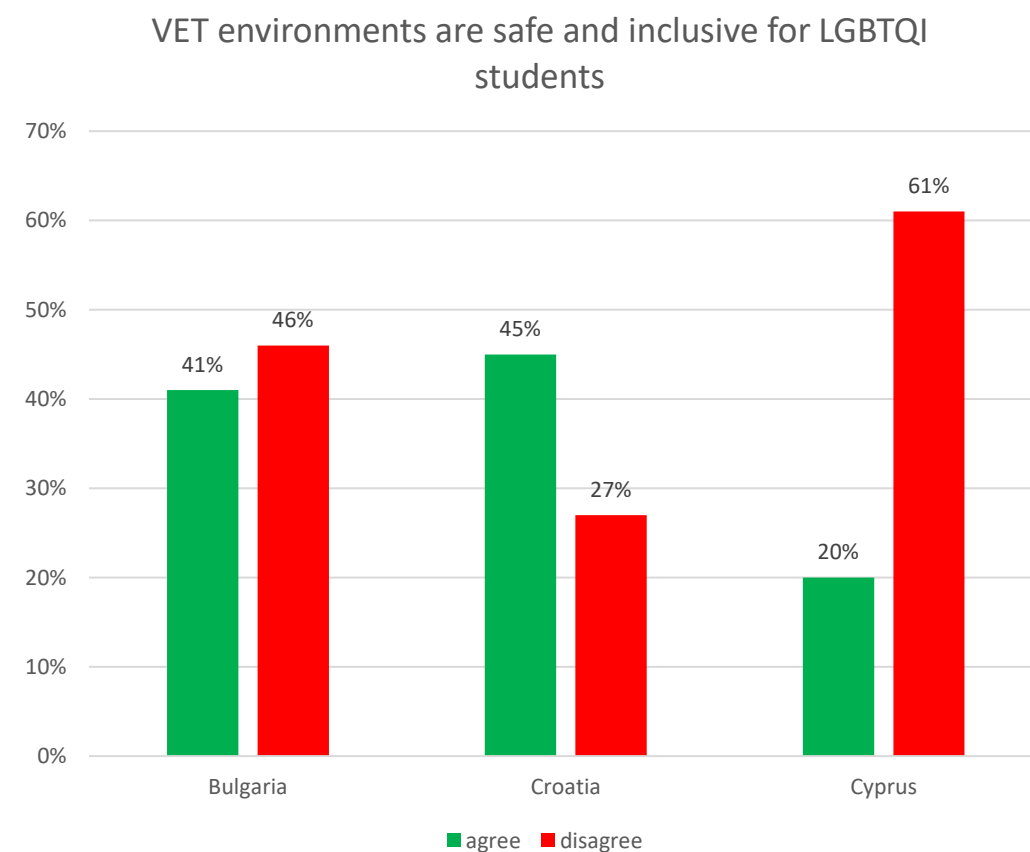
The needs analysis was supposed to be final in July but is not completed yet (in part because of COVID-19 limitations). Quantitative data from Greece and Poland are still missing. A complete overview analysis has not been made yet. This presentation is a preliminary analysis by the presenter.

Results Desk Research

- Netherlands is forerunner, but implementation of national policy intentions in VET institutions is not very successful
- In middle European countries, access to the EU created protective laws, but this did not automatically lead to supportive attitudes
- There is a general gap between policies and VET practice (policies often with good intentions, but usually not being well implemented)
- In part, this seems to be intentional (right-wing or populist governments)
- In part, there are implementation challenges (conservative attitudes of population, opposition religious leaders, neoliberal decentralized policy mechanisms, lack of leadership and innovation management in VET institutions, fears and lack of skills of VET teachers, self-protection and hiding of LGBTI students)

Results Quantitative Research (1)

- Note: Algebra College (Croatia) and KES College (Cyprus) are quite progressive institutions

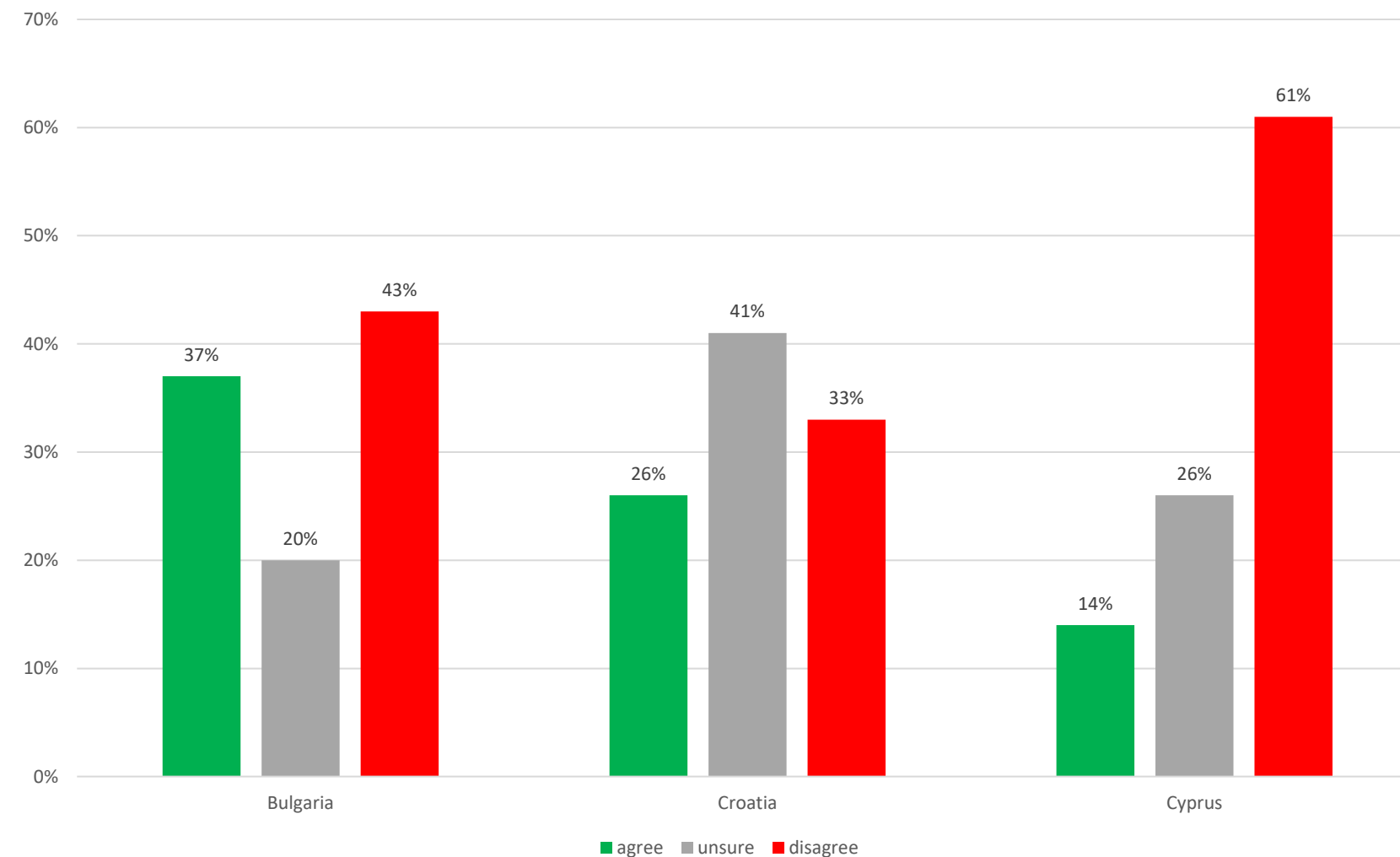


Note the difference between Bulgaria and Croatia on one hand and Cyprus on the other hand.

It may be that KES College staff and students have a clearer view of the situation.

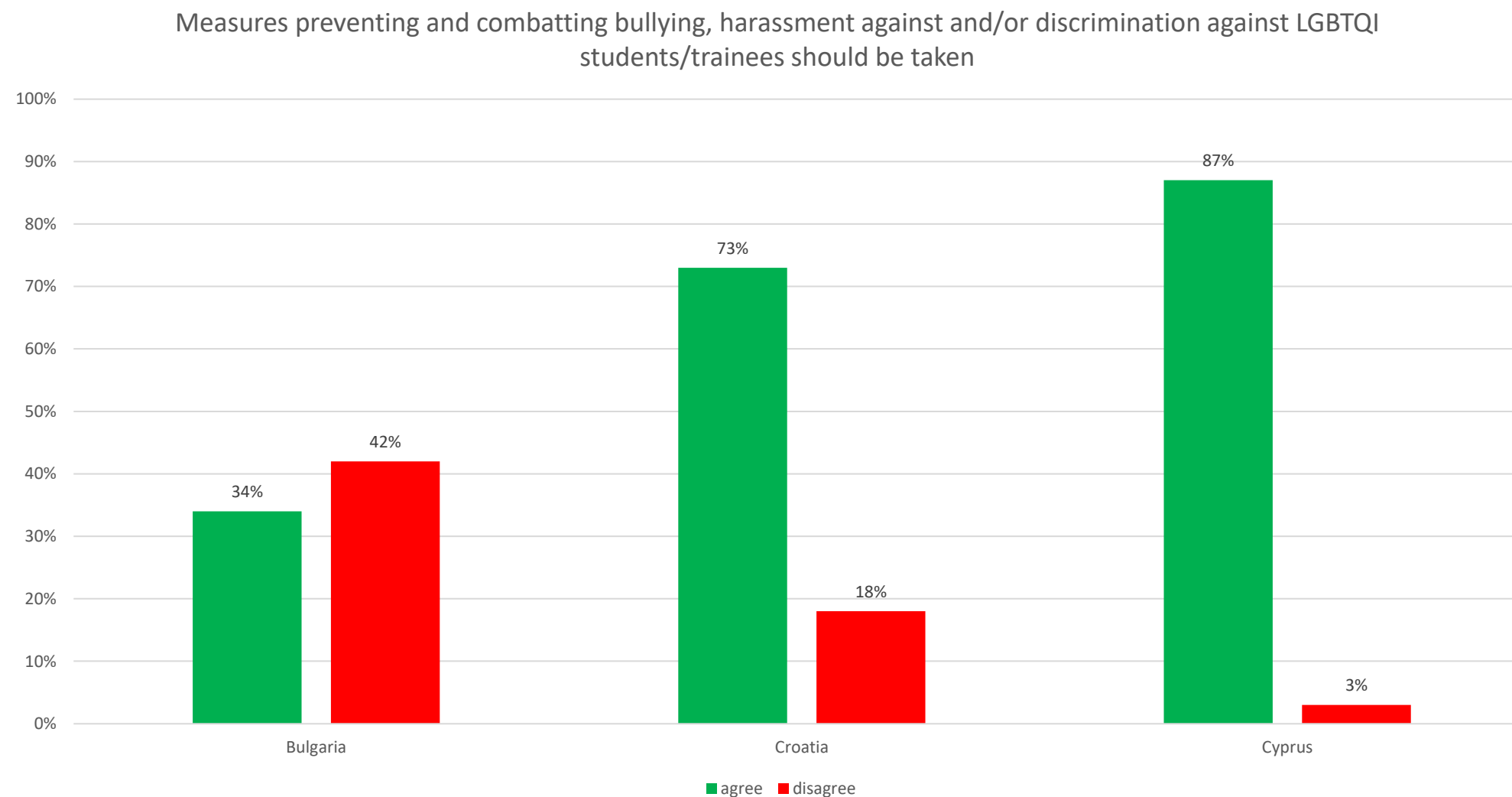
Results Quantitative Research (2)

VET teachers/trainers usually have skills to handle cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination against LGBTQI students



Like in the assessment of safety and bullying in the previous slide, there seems to be a high level of disagreement and uncertainty among VET staff and students about the capabilities of teachers in Bulgaria and Croatia.

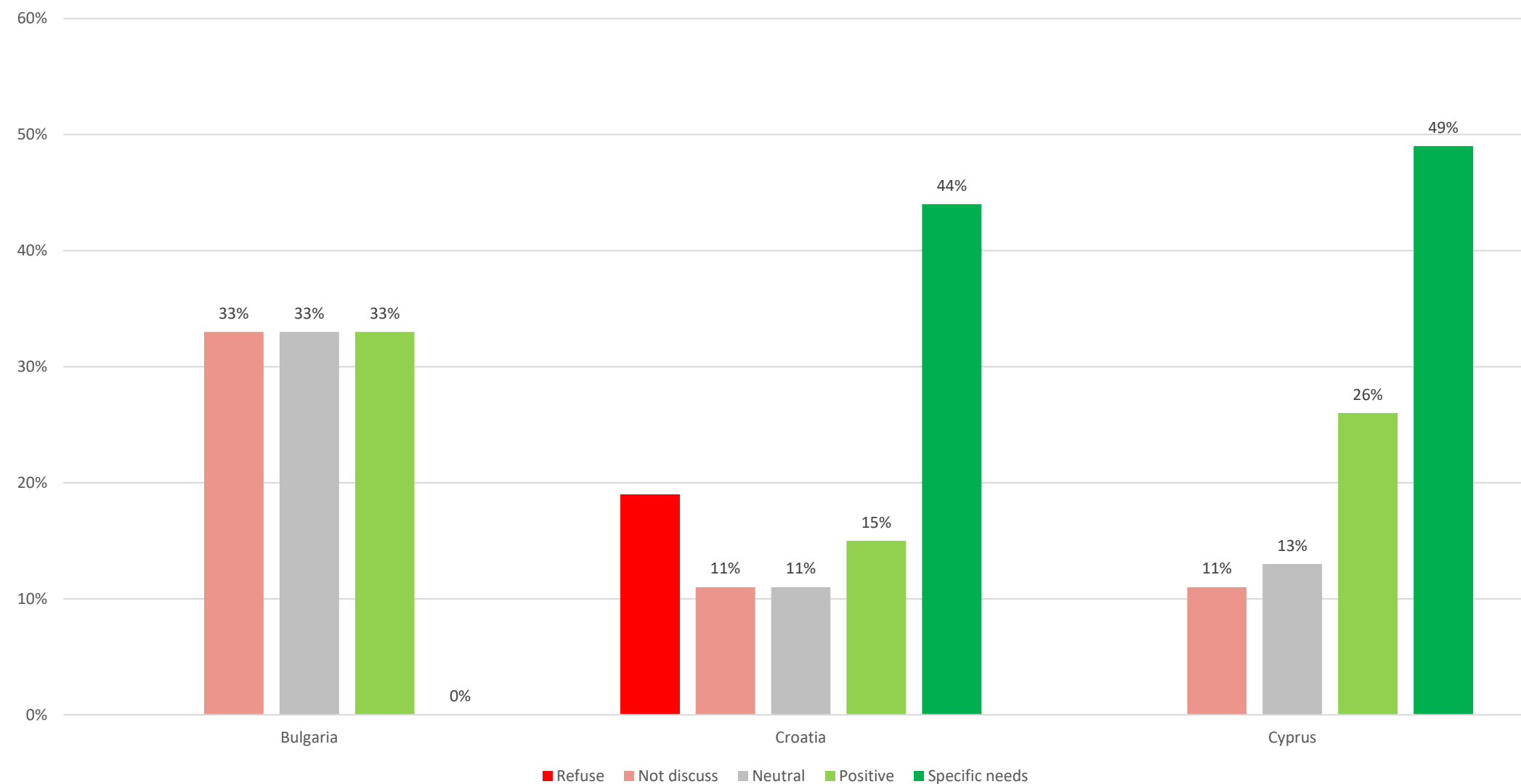
Results Quantitative Research (3)



It seems that a better awareness of the situation leads to more support for improvement of institutional policy.

Results Quantitative Research (4): how to teach

VET teachers' intentions on how to teach LGBTQI issues

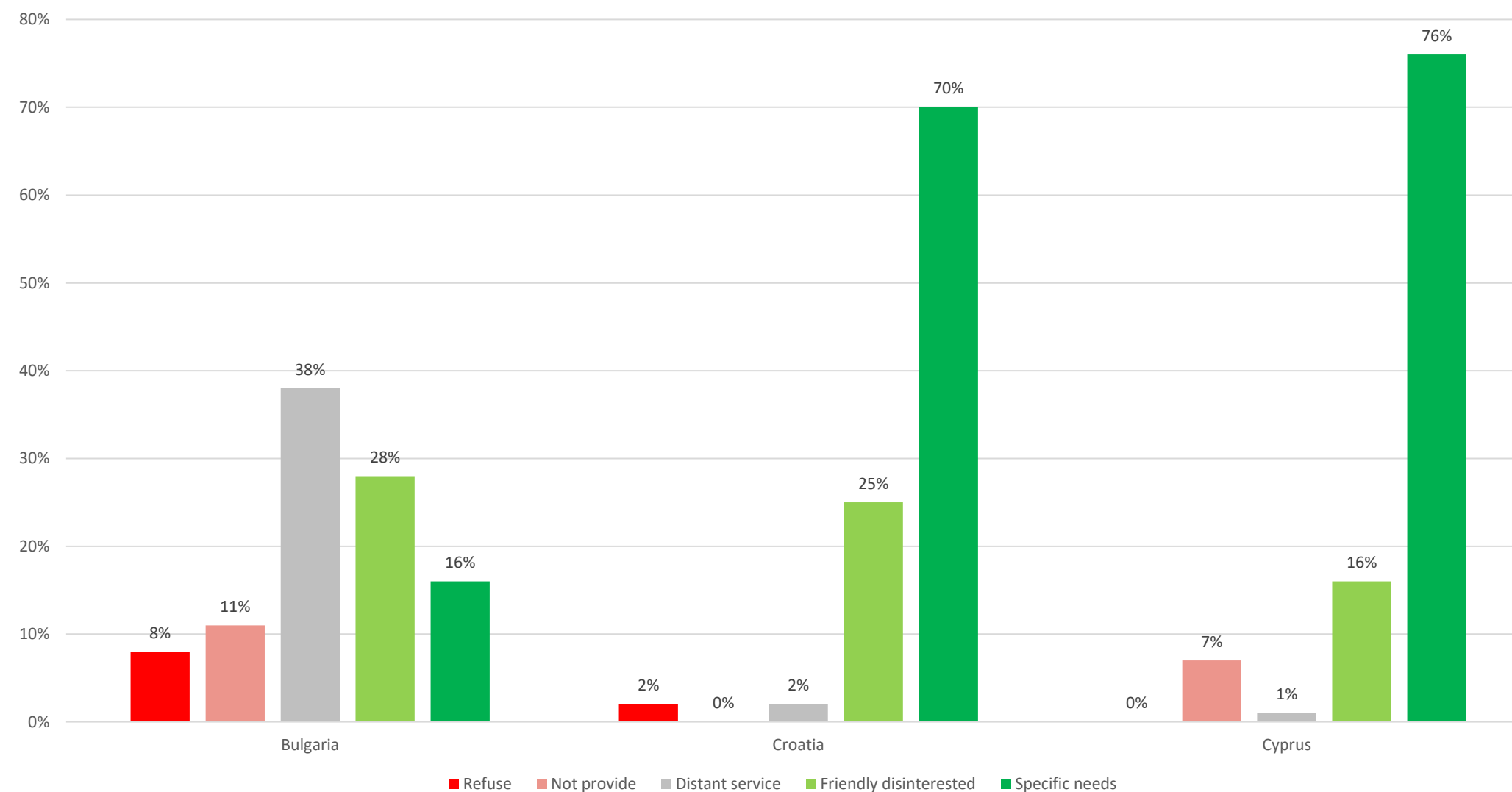


- a) I refuse to discuss LGBTQI issues in my courses
- b) I prefer not to discuss LGBTQI issues in my courses
- c) I will provide neutral information on LGBTQI issues in my courses
- d) I will be generally positive towards LGBTQI issues in my courses
- e) I will urge the students to take the specific needs of LGBTQI persons into account

It seems that national and institutional contexts have a substantial influence on the intentions of teachers to adequately teach LGBTQI client-friendliness

Results Quantitative Research (5): how to deal with clients

VET students' intentions on how to treat future LGBTQI clients



- a) I will refuse to provide my services to them
- b) I will prefer not to provide my services to them
- c) I will provide my services to them while being distant
- d) I will be friendly/professional but not interested to their needs as LGBTQI persons despite the fact that these needs may be linked to the services provided.
- e) I will be friendly/professional and take their needs as LGBTQI persons into account

It seems the supportive policy of Algebra and KES College has a substantial influence on the professional intentions of students.

Results Qualitative Research

- VET staff don't know about supportive legislation
- VET staff are only vaguely aware of their institution's policy and measures
- Discrimination is more common in Beta studies dominated by men than in Alfa studies
- VET staff say they have limited skills to deal with negative discriminatory emotions and to change negative attitudes
- VET staff fear negative responses of students, parents and lack of institutional support
- A general negative public opinion on sexual/gender diversity makes teaching about it challenging
- The newest "generation Z" students may have less social awareness and skills

Preliminary Conclusions

- **Coming-out** is an important mediating factor in doing research on LGBTIQ bullying, harassment and discrimination; not coming out can shield LGBTIQ from negative treatment
- Rejection of **non-conforming gender expression** seems to be a main trigger for negative treatment
- **LGBTIQ are not one group**; each subgroup is rejected in different and more/less serious ways; transgenders, non-conforming gay boys and bisexuals are treated worst
- There are substantial **differences between countries**; a country-specific approach is needed
- VET staff are often “technicians”, **they lack skills** to support 21st century skills like client-friendliness
- A **school-only approach is likely to fail**, as LGBTIQ discrimination is part of a wider public attitude

Preliminary Recommendations

- Create **awareness** that sexual and gender diversity is an issue in VET and in society that needs improvement
- **Dispel common myths** about LGBTIQ (a mental illness, a lifestyle choice, a threat to society)
- **Include heteronormativity** in training, explain why non-conforming expressions tend to be stigmatized and how these exclusion mechanisms can be countered
- Focus not only on knowledge of VET ambassadors about LGBTIQ, but train them also in how to **teach social skills and client-friendly attitudes** and behavior
- Link the action in VET institutions to a **wider societal approach**

Unique

EqUal iNcluslon of **LGBTIQ** stUdents in VET

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Presenter: Peter Dankmeijer
info@gale.info

