

## A Mixed Methods Research Design for the Development of the Xenia Higher Education Institutions' Inclusiveness Index

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**Abstract :** While researchers, especially in academia, study and research the phenomena of inclusion of sexual minority and gender marginalized groups, seldom the European Higher Education Institutions (HEI) act on lowering the cultural and educational barriers to their proactive inclusion. The challenge in European HEIs is that gender, and sexual orientation discrimination remains an issue not adequately addressed. Following a mixed methods research design of quantitative and qualitative research techniques and tools, which is applied in five (5) European countries (Italy, Greece, Ireland, Slovenia, and Spain) and that combines desk research, evaluation, and weighting processes for a Matrix-based on Objective indicators and Survey for students and staff of the HEI to gauge the perception of inclusiveness in the HEI context, XENIA HEI Inclusiveness Index is an instrument that will allow universities to gauge and assess their inclusiveness in the domain of discrimination and exclusion based on gender identity and sexual orientation. The index will allow capturing the depth and reach of policies, programmes, and initiatives of HEIs in tackling the phenomena and dynamics of exclusion of LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and other marginalized groups on the basis of gender and sexual identity) and cisgender women exposed to the risk of discrimination.

**Keywords :** gender identity, higher education, LGBT+ rights, XENIA inclusiveness index

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