The main issue in Romania is that freedom of religion and freedom from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity simply never go in the same sentence - in policy texts, institutional practices and instruments. This is because the Romanian Orthodox Church holds considerable political power (via the senators and deputies publicly affiliated to a mission set in motion by the Coalition for the Family, see the Referendum in 2013) - and also because it is autocephalous, hence fully autonomous. It is not safe for LGBTQIA persons to be other than stealth in faith institutions or on religious occasions. None of the churches, including none of the (neo)evangelical ones, have so far opened their doors to the queer community, via a public statement or tacitly. The outlook for this to occur in Romania is currently excluded.

Q1:

No. Romania is heavily patriarchal, the (prevalent) Orthodox religion declaratively being a marker of authentic Romanian culture and citizenship. Intellectual and political public models and leaders routinely display and invite to upholding the traditional faith and values, and resisting the ‘loss of identity’ incurred by aligning Romania to global and European practices and attitudes related to the family, gender roles and norms, reproductive health and rights.

Q2:

No. On the contrary, given the prevailing attitude outlined above, there have been 3 different legislative initiatives in the last 4 years only, including a national referendum, aimed at banning lgbt+ persons from the right to having a family or the right to be visible in the public space.

Q3:

MP’s voicing homophobic and transphobic concerns and initiating campaigns to the detriment of the lgbt+ community are a frequent occurrence. Teachers are part of the problem of bullying, harrassment and discrimination that students have to deal with on a daily basis on Romanian campuses. For example, one trans girl in 10th grade at a Bucharest high school is periodically harassed by her Romanian teacher with religious comments and books meant to ‘help’ her ‘get well.’ Another trans woman, now a graduate of another Bucharest high school, was exposed by her Biology teacher in the corridors of the school every time they would cross paths. The Biology teacher would yell violently ‘Satan! Satan!’ and run away from the vicinity of the girl while crossing herself.

In October 2022 MozaiQ launched a national report on lgbt+ inclusion in the academic environment (enclosed). One of the key findings is that, while homophobia and transphobia are expressed more cautiously now than 10 years ago, at the same time there is an increase in the visibility and interventions of the few remaining professors who continue to be vocal against the community, on religious grounds. One such example is a professor at the reputable Babes Bolyai University in Cluj whose homophobic and transphobic discourse is motivated by his Christian religion, as recently enforced by his co-starring at a public event with the head of the Coalition for the family, Mihail Neamtu (<https://www.voceacrestinilor.com/evenimente/conferinta-crestinismul-revolutia-iubirii/>). Also, The medical system continues to have no awareness of the specific needs of lgbt+ patients - the average endocrinologist in Romania continues to not have any knowledge of HRT for trans patients. Icons and crucifixes in a doctor’s office are ever present. As a norm, queer persons avoid the public system even when their insurances covers services, for fear of humiliation and harm at the hands of medical personnel, either through ignorance or religious intolerance.

Q4;

No.

Q5:

N/A

Q6:

The Orthodox Church in Romania is autocephalous, therefore the state has no means to intervene in its practices. Other churches are as independent, though they do not have the same level of autonomy as the Orthodox one. The only exception to this general status was during the pandemic, when the state intervened to limit the possibilities of too many persons congregating on one place, including churches. But no mentions of sexual orientation or gender diversity is ever made in church discourses other than to say it is ‘against nature’ or ‘against God’s law’.

Q7:

In the case of trans students, it is common in Romania that teachers misgender and call students out by their dead name, in the name of their own personal beliefs. The Romanian teacher mentioned above (question 3) is an example in question: she claims she simply cannot call her trans student Cristina, when her ‘real’ name is a boy’s name and it is against God’s law to consider her a girl.

Q8:

Not sufficiently. Article 29 of the Romanian Constitution grants freedom of conscience but no reference is made to sexual orientation or gender identity in this frame. The second paragraph of article 29 does stipulate, however, that while freedom of conscience is granted, this freedom *‘must be manifested in the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.’*

Q9:

Art. 34 of the Deontological Medical Code stipulates that individually a doctor may refuse to serve if they feel this ‘impedes on their professional independence, their reputation or moral values.’

Q10:

Not the case in Romania. Queer persons who wish to get legally married do so in other countries, and then return to Romania - where their marriage is not recognized. One example is a lesbian couple residing in Timisoara, who got married in church in Iceland, where a religious marriage is automatically rendered a legal marriage too. This took place 8 years ago, after a couple of years of them living together already. One of them wanted very much to be married under the eyes of God, hence the Iceland option. Upon returning to Timisoara they continued to live together and be a family to this day.

a.

In the past Accept association, another Romanian lgbt+ organization, attempted to coalesce a spiritual community around a Unitarian axis, but it only worked for a few years. During this time, regular religious service and some marriage ceremonies were performed at the Accept office. This practice stopped effectively more than 5 years ago, right now some ceremonies being held highly irregularly when a notable member of the community passes away.

MozaiQ is planning to start a transhuman spiritual community, under the guidance of a MozaiQ scholar and spiritual counselor who is connected with these communities:

<https://godischange.org/earthseed-community/>

<https://terasemmovementfoundation.com/>

We believe that technology need not be separate or disjunctive to spirituality. On the contrary, the future of spirituality - like that of humanity - transcends spiritualities, welding them into one encompassing awareness of the Divine.