



# ANNUAL REVIEW

OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION  
OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS  
AND INTERSEX PEOPLE IN EUROPE  
AND CENTRAL ASIA

**2026**



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**[WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG)**



Rue du Trône/Troonstraat

60 Brussels B-1050

Belgium

Tel.: +32 2 609 54 10

Fax: + 32 2 609 54 19

[info@ilga-europe.org](mailto:info@ilga-europe.org)

[www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

Design & layout: Giulia Parri, [www.maque.it](http://www.maque.it)



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# Introduction

Welcome to the 15th edition of ILGA-Europe's Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex People in Europe and Central Asia. This edition covers developments that occurred between January and December 2025.

ILGA-Europe has been publishing the Annual Review for fifteen years. It brings together research and expertise from ILGA-Europe staff and members, including more than 200 activists and legal professionals across 54 countries, to document developments in legal protections, discrimination, freedom of assembly and expression, health rights, asylum practices, hate crimes, intersex bodily integrity, civil society space, and other areas affecting the lives of LGBTI people. The Review also assesses how regional and international institutions, including the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and the OSCE, have engaged with or impacted LGBTI human rights.

This year's edition introduces two structural updates. First, the institutional section has been consolidated into a single chapter, providing a clearer and more coherent overview of how regional and international bodies have shaped the human rights environment for LGBTI people. Second, a dedicated thematic chapter on Pride and freedom of assembly has been added. This chapter examines trends over recent years, highlighting how restrictions on Pride events reflect broader patterns of democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space across the region.

The Annual Review provides a structured snapshot of what has taken place at national, regional, and international levels, documenting both progress and regression, and identifying broader trends shaping the human rights landscape for LGBTI people across Europe and Central Asia.

While the full publication is available online, each country and institutional chapter can also be accessed separately via ILGA-Europe's website. European country chapters are linked to the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map, providing additional context to each country's ranking.

Some parts of this publication may be potentially triggering for readers, as it documents instances of discrimination, violence, and other human rights violations. At the same time, this is not an exercise in apportioning blame. The purpose of the Annual Review is not to single out individual countries, but to serve as a tool for accountability, informed dialogue, and the exchange of good practices and policy approaches. It is also an open invitation for strengthened cooperation between governments, institutions, and LGBTI civil society.

ILGA-Europe aims for the Annual Review to meet the needs of activists, policymakers, researchers, journalists, and other stakeholders working to advance LGBTI human rights. We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement and hope that this edition will prove both informative and useful.

*ILGA-EUROPE's Annual Review Team, February 2026*

# A Note On Data Collection and Presentation

This is the 15th edition of the Annual Review, and we continue to refine and strengthen our data collection methodology each year. The Annual Review is based on a collaborative process involving ILGA-Europe staff, national experts, and regional organisations across 54 countries in Europe and Central Asia.

All information included in this publication has been verified using original legal texts, official documents, court decisions, parliamentary records, and reliable media sources. Where developments were not clearly reported or where information appeared contradictory, ILGA-Europe sought clarification directly from national experts. These experts are independent human rights defenders, activists, or legal professionals with in-depth knowledge of their respective countries.

Terminology related to LGBTI issues is not harmonised across the region and often varies significantly between legal systems and communities. For the purpose of consistency and comparability, the language used throughout the Annual Review follows ILGA-Europe's standards. At the same time, we recognise and respect the diversity of terms used by communities to self-identify at national level. As a result, references may include different formulations such as LGBT, LGBTI, LGBTQ, or other locally used terms, depending on context.

The Annual Review does not aim to provide an exhaustive account of every development in each country. Rather, it highlights the most significant legal, policy, and societal changes affecting the human rights of LGBTI people during the reporting period. The selection of developments is guided by relevance, reliability of sources, and their broader impact on the human rights environment.

Despite our rigorous methodology, certain limitations remain. In some contexts, shrinking civic space, lack of transparency, or risks faced by human rights defenders can affect the availability and completeness of information. We remain committed to improving our processes and welcome feedback that can help strengthen future editions of the Annual Review.

**For questions or comments regarding the data collection process, please contact us at [katja@ilga-europe.org](mailto:katja@ilga-europe.org)**

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# Highlights and trends

The developments recorded in 2025 suggest not a series of disconnected regressions but the consolidation of legal and administrative approaches that have been evolving across Europe and Central Asia over the past decade's reporting. Across different political systems, similar instruments recur: criminal law framed around "propaganda" or extremism; foreign funding controls and misuse of administrative powers that lead to closing of organisations; erasure of trans, intersex and non-binary people from public life through constitutional amendments defining sex in strictly biological terms; and assembly restrictions justified through child protection or public order arguments. Taken together, these measures restrict who can organise, speak, assemble, or be legally recognised in public life, reshaping the conditions for civic participation. At the same time, developments across the region remain uneven, with several jurisdictions adopting legislative or judicial measures that reinforce protections or reverse earlier discriminatory policies.

## CIVIC SPACE: LEGISLATIVE BANS AND REGULATORY CONTROL

In 2025, Hungary adopted legislative amendments banning Pride and other LGBTI-themed assemblies, introducing fines for organisers and participants and authorising police to use facial recognition technology to identify those attending prohibited events. This marked the first time a Member State of the European Union used primary legislation to prohibit LGBTI public assemblies, with organisers facing criminal proceedings in connection with such events.

In Turkey, Pride marches and Pride Week activities were again banned by governorates in several cities. University Pride events were prevented from proceeding, and participants were detained when attempting to assemble. In addition, organisers faced indictments and ongoing criminal proceedings linked to Pride gatherings.

In Russia, enforcement under the 2023 Supreme Court designation of the so-called "international LGBT movement" as extremist continued to provide the legal basis for raids on venues, administrative

penalties and the blocking of websites. Authorities blocked access to organisations including Rainbow Railroad, describing their activities as extremist.

Regulatory pressure on civil society intensified also elsewhere. In Georgia, following the anti-LGBTI legislation introduced in 2024, further restrictions were adopted through a Foreign Agents Registration Act requiring organisations receiving foreign funding to register as foreign agents, alongside amendments to the Law on Grants introducing prior government approval for foreign grants and fines of up to twice the grant amount for non-compliance. In Serbia, a draft Law on the Special Registry of Agents of Foreign Influence proposed mandatory registration for non-profit organisations and media outlets receiving more than 50 percent of their funding from abroad.

These measures rely less on immediate formal dissolution and more on sustained administrative pressure labelled as "oversight", financial constraint and reputational stigmatisation, creating conditions in which organisations face mounting compliance burdens, restricted access to funding and increasing operational costs that can ultimately render their work unsustainable.

## CRIMINAL LAW AND "PROPAGANDA" FRAMEWORKS

Criminal and quasi-criminal provisions framed around the protection of children or national values continued to expand.

In Belarus, Law No. 86-Z of 12 July 2025 amended the Law on the Rights of the Child to classify "propaganda of homosexual relations and gender reassignment" as harmful to children's psychological health, entering into force in January 2026. In parallel, draft amendments submitted by the Prosecutor General proposed criminalising the dissemination of information portraying LGBTI identities or child-free living as "attractive."

In Kyrgyzstan, a draft bill published in March proposed amendments to the Criminal Code introducing criminal and administrative penalties, including possible imprisonment of up to six months,

for actions or speech creating a "positive attitude" towards so-called non-traditional sexual orientation, with harsher implications where minors are involved.

In Russia, administrative fines under "propaganda" legislation continued to be used to populate official records, with the Interior Ministry reportedly preparing an electronic database drawing on such violations. Raids on venues were publicly justified through reference to the "extremist" designation.

These developments demonstrate how criminal law, administrative sanctions and digital monitoring mechanisms interact.

## CRIMINALISATION OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS

The criminalisation of LGBTI individuals, as well as more specifically activists, is gaining alarming momentum across the region. Despite differing political systems, governments are deploying strikingly similar legal tools and narratives to suppress visibility, activism, and basic rights.

The Turkish Court issued criminal proceedings against 11 activists in the Young LGBTI+ Association, under the Associations Law. In Turkey also, journalist Yıldız Tar, Editor-in-Chief of the LGBTI news portal KaosGL.org, was arrested and charged with "membership in a terrorist organisation". Turkish LGBTI Rights Defender and youth delegate to the Council of Europe, Enes Hocoğulları was detained and charged of "publicly disseminating misleading information," after giving a speech about erosion of democracy at the Council. In Hungary, an investigation into the Mayor of Budapest in connection with the organisation of Pride resulted in the prosecution office pressing charges and proposing that the court impose a fine through a penal order, without holding a trial. The mayor has sought a full trial to contest the charges. The organiser of Pride in the southern Hungarian city of Pécs faced similar criminal proceedings.

In Russia, following the designation of the so-called "international LGBT movement" as extremist, individuals risk criminal liability for alleged involvement in LGBTI-related activities, and organisations have been closed under extremism legislation.

In Kazakhstan, criminal and administrative measures have been used to restrict LGBTI organising and expression, contributing to legal pressure on individuals associated with advocacy.

In Moldova and Poland, political and legislative discourse has framed LGBTI identities as threats to national, moral or religious values, reinforcing an environment in which legal action against individuals and organisations is legitimised.

## EDUCATION AND YOUTH SPACES

Educational institutions increasingly function as early sites where restrictive interpretations of gender, sexuality and child protection are translated into practice.

Hungary's Child Protection Act framework continues to prohibit school content that authorities characterise as promoting gender reassignment or homosexuality, thereby restricting discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in curricula and external educational materials.

In Belarus, the July amendments concerning "propaganda" harmful to children provide a formal basis for excluding LGBTI-related information from youth and educational contexts.

In Turkey, Hacettepe University shut down its Queer Studies Club in July, alleging misuse of public funds to promote "LGBTI propaganda" and accusing the club of opposing national and religious values. The closure illustrates how restrictions extend into higher education governance.

In the United Kingdom, a Supreme Court ruling interpreting "woman" and "sex" as referring strictly to biological sex assigned at birth has implications for how equality duties are interpreted by schools and other public bodies when developing inclusion policies for trans pupils.

Taken together, these measures demonstrate how legal reinterpretations and child protection frameworks directly shape what can be taught, discussed or organised within educational and academic institutions.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE ENTRENCHMENT OF BINARY SEX DEFINITIONS

Several countries advanced or adopted measures denying appropriate legal recognition of gender identity, leading to the erasure of trans-, intersex and non-binary people from public life.

Hungary approved the 15th Amendment to its Fundamental Law in April 2025, defining sex as a biological characteristic determined at birth and linking assembly restrictions to the protection of children.

In Slovakia, constitutional amendments adopted in September 2025 recognise only two sexes and restrict legal gender recognition to exceptional cases, leading the European Commission to open an infringement procedure.

In Georgia, amendments to the Law on Gender Equality removed the term "gender" and replaced references to "gender identity" with language focused on equality between women and men.

These measures do not simply regulate procedure; they redefine core legal concepts that shape access to recognition, healthcare and public participation, blocking trans, intersex and non-binary people from recognition under the law and narrowing who is considered a full participant in civic life.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL PRESSURE ON ACTIVISTS

In addition to legislative reform, 2025 saw continued reliance on civil, administrative and criminal proceedings affecting activists and organisations.

In Turkey, the Izmir 3rd Civil Court of First Instance ordered the shutdown of the Young LGBTI+ Association's social media account following a lawsuit initiated by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Criminal proceedings were simultaneously launched against 11 activists under the Associations Law. Journalists reporting on LGBTI-related matters faced investigations under disinformation legislation, even where cases were later closed.

In Poland, a regional court upheld a defamation ruling against an LGBTI activist accused of fabricating

discrimination claims linked to foreign funding narratives, reinforcing delegitimising discourses around civil society.

These cases demonstrate how legal tools, regardless of the outcome of the proceedings, can impose costs, uncertainty and reputational harm.

## DIVERGING TRAJECTORIES AND RESISTANCE

Instances of policy reversal and reinforcement of protections were also recorded in 2025.

In April, the final remaining "LGBTI-free zone" resolution in Poland was repealed, ending a period during which local government measures had symbolised institutional stigmatisation.

In Spain, the Canary Islands Parliament unanimously rejected a proposal to repeal equality and non-discrimination laws, and the Parliament of Catalonia adopted Law 13/2025 strengthening sanctions against LGBTI-phobia, including provisions addressing conversion practices and online incitement.

In Denmark, the Region of Southern Denmark initiated the drafting of a dedicated policy and action plan to improve healthcare responses to LGBTI people, following dialogue with civil society organisations.

At regional level, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers adopted a new Recommendation on the human rights of intersex people, setting out standards on bodily integrity, legal recognition and protection from discrimination. The Recommendation stands in contrast to national measures entrenching binary sex definitions and signals continued commitment within parts of the European human rights system to safeguarding the rights of intersex people.

These examples indicate that institutional responses continue to vary and that legislative and judicial arenas remain contested spaces.

# European Institutions and the United Nations

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, the CJEU issued a judgment in the [Mousse](#) case (C-394/23), stating that it is not "necessary" under the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that it is therefore unlawful for the French national rail service, SNCF, to force customers to choose between the civil titles "Mr" or "Ms" when purchasing train tickets without providing a third option. The CJEU also stated that this practice created a risk of discrimination on the grounds of gender identity.

In February, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Bazhenov and others v. Russia](#) case, concerning the non-consensual disclosure of the applicants' personal data, including information about their sexual orientation, on openly homophobic public pages on social networks. The Court ruled that the authorities had failed to offer adequate protection in respect of the applicants' private lives and protect them from discrimination through an effective investigation of whether the dissemination of personal data had been motivated by homophobic attitude.

For developments related to the EU draft horizontal equal treatment directive please refer to the section on Equality and Non-discrimination.

## ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

In November, the Council of Europe launched an [online HELP course](#) on "LGBTI Persons in the Asylum Procedure" aimed at improving protection of LGBTI asylum-seekers' rights. The course, implemented together with the National Institute of Justice, is designed to raise awareness and deepen understanding of European and international standards for identifying and assessing asylum claims based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

In December, the Danish presidency of the Council of the EU and European Parliament negotiators reached a provisional agreement on EU legislation that revises the safe third country concept and

will expand the circumstances under which an asylum application can be rejected as inadmissible. The proposals would dismantle the now existing safeguards in the migration and asylum system and make it easier for EU countries to send migrants to other countries they are not from, and to label certain countries as "safe" so asylum claims can be rushed through and quickly rejected. The deal also creates an EU-wide list of "safe" countries of origin. Half of the countries on this list still criminalise homosexuality, which puts LGBTI people at serious risk.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, the ECtHR rendered its judgment in the [Minasyan and others v. Armenia](#) case, ruling that Armenia had failed to protect LGBTI rights activists from hate speech and discrimination. The case concerned the publication in 2014 of an online newspaper article that contained discriminatory and hateful language and incitement to discrimination and hate against the applicants, who had criticised Armenian *Eurovision Song Contest* jury members as they had made homophobic remarks regarding the victory of Conchita Wurst, and that revealed personal data and social media profiles of the applicants.

In May, the Council of Europe's anti-racism body, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), published its [2024 annual report](#) outlining key challenges including racial profiling by police, the segregation of Roma pupils in schools, and transphobia and discrimination against transgender and intersex persons. The report emphasised the need for European states to take stronger action to prevent law enforcement practices based on ethnicity or background, end de facto school segregation affecting Roma children, and ensure equal rights, dignity and access to services for transgender and intersex people, while also strengthening national equality bodies to better address racism and intolerance.

In August, the Council of Europe [published new resources](#) aimed at strengthening police action

against hate crime and discrimination. These include a Manual for Police Education on Equality and Non-discrimination and a Manual for Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI Persons – providing frameworks and practical tools for integrating equality and human rights principles into law enforcement training and responses. The new resources, published under EU-Council of Europe joint programmes, also include translations of the Committee of Ministers' recommendation on combating hate crime to make European standards on prevention, investigation and prosecution more accessible to national authorities.

The 13th meeting of the High Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime took place on the 16-17 October, where law enforcement contact points and prosecutors specialised on hate crimes and criminalised hate speech exchanged good practices, presented practical cases and needs, data related to hate crimes, and gaps and possible ways forward with regards to hate offences in EU law.

In 2025, anti-LGBTI and anti-trans action targeting the European Parliament increased significantly. A series of anti-trans events and conferences were held in the European Parliament. On 18 March, MEP András László (HU) and the Patriots for Europe group held an [event](#) titled "How Trans Policy Harms Women and Children", which promoted the MCC Brussels anti-trans and anti-LGBTI report, "[Mission creeps: How EU funding and activist NGOs captured the gender agenda](#)". Several European CSOs [wrote to the President](#) of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola (EPP, MT) raising concern about hate speech and misinformation but no formal action was taken. Two similar events, one [hosted](#) by MEP László and supported by MCC Brussels and one by the Patriots for Europe, were held in [November](#). On 9 December, the European Sovereign Nations group held a [symposium](#), hosted by MEP Christine Anderson (DE) which promoted the false argument that children are being forced into medical transition.

Beyond dedicated events, 2025 also saw a marked increase in anti-LGBTI and anti-trans rhetoric during plenary debates. Interventions

during discussions on the [Parenthood Regulation](#), legislative [developments](#) in Hungary, and [debates](#) concerning freedom of assembly and [Budapest Pride](#) included language framing trans rights as a threat to women and children, questioning the legitimacy of EU action on LGBTI equality, and portraying 'gender ideology' as incompatible with national sovereignty. This rhetoric was recorded across multiple sittings throughout the year.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, the Council of Europe and the National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Moldova [held a multi-stakeholder event](#) to build a safer and more inclusive environment for LGBTI persons. The meeting – following a regional conference in Sarajevo – brought together state authorities and civil society to discuss policies and strategies to prevent and combat domestic violence against LGBTI people, bolster social and psychological support services, and promote cooperation on inclusive public policies in line with Council of Europe standards. Participants identified needs for further capacity building, awareness-raising and strengthened cooperation platforms to better protect LGBTI individuals from discrimination and violence.

In July, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in [Bednarek and others v. Poland](#), ruling that the national authorities had failed to effectively investigate and prosecute a violent homophobic attack against a gay couple in the streets, amounting to inhumane or degrading treatment. This ruling highlighted systemic gaps in the country's hate crime laws that do not include the grounds of SOGIESC.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In October, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe unanimously adopted the [Committee of Ministers Recommendation on equal rights for intersex persons](#), CM/Rec(2025)7, with a [Presidency event](#) to launch the Recommendation under the Maltese Presidency of the Committee of Ministers where the Secretary General of the CoE gave a [keynote address](#).

Around the same time, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) delivered a [report "Discriminatory laws and policies, acts of violence and harmful practices against intersex persons"](#) to the Human Rights Council, where the first-ever full debate on intersex persons and their rights was held in [September](#).

These significant steps stand in stark contrast with the European Commission. In the 2020-2025 LGBTIQ Equality Strategies, the Commission committed to conducting a study of the lives of intersex people in the EU and to publishing a Recommendation on harmful practices covering intersex genital mutilation. Despite continued pressure from MEPs and civil society during 2025 for the Commission to fulfill these commitments, neither the study nor the Recommendation were published. The LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030 does describe intersex genital mutilation as a harmful practice, but there is no mention of the Recommendation or other activities focusing on advancing the protection of intersex human rights.

In July, the Grand Chamber of the ECtHR delivered a judgment in the case of [Semenya v. Switzerland](#), concerning an international-level athlete who challenged World Athletics' regulations requiring her to take hormone treatment to decrease her natural testosterone level in order to take part in international competitions in the female category. The Court overturned its judgment of 2023 and found a violation of the applicant's right to a fair hearing. However, it decided that the merits of her claims of violations of her rights to private life and of discrimination based on sex characteristics were inadmissible.

## DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

On 18 June the European Parliament [adopted](#) a resolution on the 2024 European Commission rule of law report, highlighting a number of rule of law concerns related to LGBTI persons in the EU.

On 8 July the European Commission [published](#) its 2025 rule of law report. Despite LGBTI civil society contributing information regarding breaches of EU law and rule of law standards during the

consultations, almost no LGBTI content was included in this year's report, contrary to the previous five years.

On 11 November the European Commission [unveiled](#) two new strategy documents which reinforce and complement each other: the EU Democracy Shield and the EU Civil Society Strategy. While both strategies are welcome, containing a good analysis of the democratic challenges as well as reinforcing the importance of civil society in protecting democracy, neither is binding, and therefore the recommendations should be linked to existing rule of law tools.

In 2025, the Council of Europe launched work on its [New Democratic Pact for Europe](#), which is a broad initiative focussed on reestablishing commitments to democratic principles, fighting attacks on democracy in the region (e.g. via disinformation and misinformation), and building understanding of the evolution of anti-democratic rollbacks. As a pillar of the work plan of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, the Pact will shape CoE work for the foreseeable future.

## EDUCATION

International and regional human rights institutions produced several studies and reports in 2025 relevant to LGBTI issues in education, highlighting the increased awareness of the role of schools in promoting inclusion and combatting hate. In February, the CoE released a [Feasibility Study on Age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education to Strengthen Responses for - Inter Alia - Preventing and Combating Violence, Including Risky or Harmful Sexual Behaviour by Children](#), which assesses sexuality education in States, including with respect to SRHR and LGBTI issues. The study examines how framing CSE as a human rights obligation can strengthen its role as a preventive tool, promoting equality, bodily autonomy and respect for diversity, including for children with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and variations in sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Similarly, the UN Independent Expert on SOGI released a [report](#) in July examining barriers to the right to education for LGBT learners and

the Special rapporteur on the right to education presented a [report on the right to be safe in education](#), and the European Commission launched an [issue paper](#) on Countering Hate in and through Education.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The European Parliament took a strong stance on the importance of intersectionality in EU policymaking in 2025, with a resolution endorsing the Roadmap / "Declaration of principles for a gender-equal society" in October and a FEMM [own-initiative report](#) and the LIBE opinion on the Gender Equality Strategy 2025 pointing to its centrality in November.

CDADI produced and adopted a Feasibility study on preventing and combating intersectional discrimination in Europe and agreed to prepare a draft Committee of Ministers Recommendation on this topic. Work on the Recommendation is set to commence in 2026.

On 12 February, the European Commission announced its intention to withdraw the draft horizontal equal treatment directive, a piece of legislation that would grant protection from discrimination across the EU, beyond just the workplace. ILGA-Europe and other equality networks [launched](#) a petition to call on the Commission to reverse this decision, including other advocacy actions as part of a broader campaign. In July, the Commission, recognising the importance of this draft Directive, reversed its decision and kept the legislation on the table for continuing negotiations. In November, the European Parliament [published](#) a Complementary Impact Assessment study of the proposal.

In June, the Advocate General of the CJEU rendered an [opinion](#) in the infringement case started by the Commission against Hungary (C-769/22), considering that the 2021 Hungarian anti-LGBTI legislation restricting LGBTI content is in breach of EU law on all grounds raised by the Commission (several directives, several fundamental rights under the Charter, as well as EU's fundamental values enshrined in Article 2 TEU). The final

judgement was expected in autumn 2025 but is now expected in the first half of 2026.

## FAMILY

In February, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Szyputa and Others v. Poland](#) case, ruling that Poland had failed to comply with its positive obligation to ensure that the applicants, a same-sex couple, had a specific framework providing for the recognition and protection of their same-sex unions, thus leaving them in a legal vacuum. The ECtHR reiterated this finding in April, in its judgment in the [Andersen v. Poland](#) case, concerning a same-sex couple married in the UK that were not authorised to register their marriage by the Polish authorities.

In July, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [M.K. v. Latvia](#) case, ruling that the domestic courts' failure to examine the issue of the applicant's interim contact with her former partner's child, pending the outcome of the main child contact proceedings and resulting in a denial of contact throughout the proceedings with severe consequences for her relationship with the child that shaped the outcome of the proceedings, breached the applicant's right to private and family life. The applicant had cared for the child for six years following the child's birth, before her separation from her partner.

In November, the CJEU rendered a judgment in the case of [Jakub Cupriak-Trojan and Mateusz Trojan v Wojewoda Mazowiecki](#) (C-713/23), stating that Member States have an obligation under EU law to recognise a same-sex marriage concluded in another Member State where the couple have exercised their freedom to move and reside, to allow them to pursue the family life they created there. Refusing to do so constitutes a discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The European Commission's proposal for the mutual recognition of parenthood across EU borders, proposed in 2023, remains stuck in Council negotiations.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSEMBLY, AND ASSOCIATION

Public condemnation of the proposal and adoption in March 2025 by Hungary of legislation banning LGBTI related public assemblies, was swift and comprehensive from Council of Europe interlocutors such as the [Commissioner for Human Rights](#), [PACE General rapporteur](#), [Deputy Standing Rapporteur](#) on Human Rights of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. In contrast, reactions from the EU were slow and non-committal, despite the EU having more power to prevent such a flagrant abuse of fundamental rights. Up until Budapest Pride, which was banned, there was no official condemnation from the EU, which claimed to still be assessing the law.

While in June Budapest Pride was supported by participants from all over Europe, including a number of EU politicians, and three MEPs from the Green Party also attended the banned Pécs Pride in October, there has been no concerted EU action against the law, despite it being legally based on the law that is [currently under an EU infringement procedure](#). The EC requesting interim measures from the CJEU in time, could have prevented the bans and following criminal repercussions both organisers of Budapest Pride (the Mayor) and Pécs Pride (Géza Buzás-Hábel) are now facing.

Just as on national level in a number of countries across Europe and globally, also on EU level 2025 saw a series of attacks on the legitimacy of civil society organisations and specifically EU funding for NGOs. At the beginning of the year, right-leaning MEPs targeted [environmental organisations](#), funded through the LIFE programme, claiming that they should not be allowed to do advocacy work on EU level through EU funding. Additionally, the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, whose allegiances in this role still [align](#) with the Hungarian government, falsely [claimed](#) in October that EU operating grants are illegal, after having [removed](#) operating grants from health NGOs despite ongoing agreements.

The European Commission has been slow to respond to the heightened pressure and disproportionate

scrutiny of right-leaning MEPs on NGO funding, and have failed to defend the health NGO operating grants, as well as [removing](#) environmental funding from the next EU budget. In parallel, the European Parliament has set up a special Working Group to scrutinise NGO funding, which progressive MEPs have [boycotted](#) due to the singling out of NGOs instead of assessing the transparency of funding of all interest representatives. Such an approach represents a disproportionate targeting of NGOs and thus a threat to freedom of association and democratic participation of EU citizens.

On 22 July, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Gina Romero, [published](#) a report on the state of freedom of peaceful assembly and association, finding that they are facing an existential threat. She highlighted how LGBTI activism is met with increasing intolerance, arbitrary and discriminatory bans, criminalisation, and harassment and attacks by police and anti-rights groups.

In February, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Klimova and others v. Russia](#) case, finding that the applicants' convictions for an administrative offence of "promotion of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors" based on Russia's "anti-propaganda" law, because they administered websites and social networking webpages providing information on LGBTI-related issues or offering support to LGBTI individual, and blocking of some of those websites, breached their rights to private life and freedom of expression.

The same month, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [P. v. Poland](#) case, ruling that the dismissal of a school teacher for writing under a pseudonym on a public blog intended for adult gay men, featuring some sexually explicit content, breached his right to freedom of expression.

In March, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Milashina and others v. Russia](#) case, ruling that verbal threats by Chechen senior public officials, religious leaders and anonymous sources against a newspaper publisher and journalists who had reported of mass abduction, arbitrary detention, torture and murder of LGBTI people by the

Chechen authorities constituted an unlawful and disproportionate interference with their journalistic activity, breaching their right to freedom of expression and right to private life. The Court also ruled that the authorities had failed to carry out an effective criminal investigation into the matter.

In June, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Străisteanu v Moldova](#) case, ruling that the authorities had interfered with the freedom of expression of the applicant (a human rights lawyer defending notably LGBTI persons' rights) by ordering her to remove from her social media profile videos showing a colleague making insulting homophobic remarks to her.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In May 2025, a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) "[Ban on conversion practices in the EU](#)" surpassed the minimum threshold of signatures to be submitted to the European Commission. The coordinators of the ECI [met with Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib](#) in December. The ECI succeeded in raising significant public awareness of the problem of conversion practices in the EU and mobilised activists and civil society organisations around the EU in a signature collection campaign.

The Commission, in its LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy, committed to conducting a study on conversion practices in the EU and put out a call for tenders to hire a consultant in September to conduct the study. Results are expected in early 2027.

## HEALTH

PACE adopted a resolution "[Preventing and combating gender discrimination in health](#)" which addressed SRHR, LGBTI issues, and women's health inequalities.

See Freedom of Expression, Association and Assembly section for information on cuts to operating grants for health NGOs from the European Commission.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

On 6 August 2025 Enes Hocoğulları was arrested for a speech he made in his capacity as Turkey's youth delegate to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, as he spoke about the government's repression of pro-democracy protests (see more in the Turkey country chapter). Enes was released from prison on 8 September, and now awaits his second trial. That same day the President of the Congress released a [statement](#) calling for Enes' release, [echoed](#) also by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights.

In its new [Civil Society Strategy](#), published in November, the European Commission stated that it will "explore possibilities to strengthen and coordinate available protection measures for CSOs and HRDs at risk in the EU". ILGA-Europe, together with other human rights organisations, are calling for an EU protection mechanism for human rights defenders inside the EU, as this is a gap in protection that the EU offers (the EU has a mechanism for non-EU human rights defenders, called Protect Defenders). Among the options [proposed](#) by this group of civil society organisations includes basing it off Protect Defenders.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In 2025, European institutions and the UN showed consistent engagement around IDAHOT+, with the Maltese government [hosting](#) the IDAHOT+ Forum and strong statements from the CoE [Secretary General](#), [Commissioner](#), and the [Advisory Council of Youth](#). UN actors also were vocal, with a [statement](#) from 20 special procedures mandate holders and four special procedures working groups, as well as a statement from [UN WOMEN](#), the [High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), and the [Secretary General](#).

In October, the European Commission published its second EU LGBTIQ+ [Equality Strategy, 2026 -2030](#). The strategy builds on the previous 2020-2025 Strategy, reaffirming the EU's commitment to equality, protection and inclusion of LGBTIQ people. The Strategy is structured around three pillars - protection, empowerment and engagement -

and prioritises implementation, consolidation and cooperation over new legislative efforts. It aims to support Member States in banning conversion practices, strengthening law enforcement training, and addressing digital hate and cyberbullying. [Civil society](#) organisations, as well as a number of [MEPs and political groups](#) have pointed to the lower level of actions in compared to the first strategy, particularly worrying in the current political climate.

During the public consultation for the LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy from April to June, there was a significant amount of anti-LGBTI misinformation and hate speech submitted via the [online platform](#), which was met with an inadequate response by the Commission.

In November, the Committee of Ministers of the CoE adopted the [report on the third comprehensive review of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on combatting discrimination on SOGI \(CM/Rec\(2010\)5\)](#), with strong inclusion of the viewpoint of civil society, to continue to hold States accountable to the commitments made in the Recommendation.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

During 2025, the CoE Commissioner published statements opposing national efforts to limit or ban legal gender recognition, including regarding [constitutional amendments in Slovakia](#) (which unfortunately were later adopted) and following his [country visit to the United Kingdom](#) in October.

The European Parliament adopted two texts with strong trans-inclusive language: one on the [application of North Macedonia to the EU](#), adopted in July, which called for legal gender recognition based on self-determination and its [resolution on the Gender Equality Strategy 2025](#), adopted in November, which made strong references to the need for gender identity-based protections and actions from the Commission.

In March, the CJEU delivered a judgment in the case of [Deldits](#) (C-247/23) stating that national authorities responsible for keeping public registers (such as asylum registers) across the EU (in that

case, Hungary) should correct data on gender identity so it reflects the person's lived gender identity, and not the sex at birth and cannot request proof or surgery to do so. The Court also said that a Member State cannot invoke the absence of a domestic procedure for LGR to limit the exercise of this right to rectification.

In June, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [T.H. v the Czech Republic](#) case, ruling that the Czech Republic violated the right to private life of the applicant, a non-binary person, by requiring forced sterilisation as a legal requirement for legal gender recognition.

In September, the Advocate General of the CJEU rendered a landmark opinion in the case of [Shipov](#) (C-43/24) according to which the Member State of origin of a trans person is obliged to issue identity documents that reflect the person's lived gender identity, rather than the sex at birth, not to create an obstacle to free movement. The case concerns a Bulgarian trans woman residing in Italy who was repeatedly refused LGR in Bulgaria. In such countries where the birth certificate is the primary document, the Advocate General considered that the lived gender identity of the person should be recorded in the birth certificate. The Advocate General also confirmed that the production of evidence of surgery cannot be required and that a Member State cannot invoke the absence of a national LGR procedure to deny its nationals identity documents necessary for exercising free movement rights.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, the ECtHR rendered a judgment in the [Derrek and others v. Russia](#) case, ruling that the applicants, victims of a police raid on an LGBT workshop during which participants faced humiliating treatment, forced drug testing and hate speech, had been victims of inhuman or degrading treatment motivated by homophobic hatred. The Court also ruled that the authorities failed to conduct an effective investigation into the police's conduct.

See section on Bias Motivated Violence for

information about Council of Europe trainings for law enforcement.

## **PUBLIC OPINION**

While many documents produced in 2025, such as the EU LGBTQ+ Equality Strategy 2026-2030 and the CDADI/ADI-SOGIESC - [Review of implementation of CM/Rec\(2010\)5](#) (on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity) reference public opinion, the most recent data are from the 2023 Eurobarometer and likely well out of date. However, in its Strategy, the EU [committed to conduct](#) another EU-wide public opinion assessment via a Eurobarometer in 2027.

## **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

In December, the Council of the European Union [adopted Council Conclusions](#) calling for the next EU development-related Gender Action Plan (GAP IV) to promote SRHR and the rights of women, girls, and LGBTI persons.

The [My Voice, My Choice](#) European Citizens' Initiative, seeking to make abortion accessible across the EU, successfully reached the required one-million signature threshold in September 2025, allowing it to be formally submitted to the European Commission. Organisers presented the initiative's demands at a [public hearing in the European Parliament on 2 December](#). Later in December, the European Parliament [adopted a resolution](#) backing the initiative and urging the Commission to act by March 2026 on possible measures in response to the citizens' call.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

For developments related to the EU draft horizontal equal treatment directive please refer to the section on Equality and Non-discrimination.

# Pride and freedom of assembly in Europe

## TRACING THE EROSION OF CIVIC SPACE BEHIND THE EU'S FIRST PRIDE BAN.

Over the past five years, Pride marches have become one of the clearest indicators of the health of democracy and fundamental rights in Europe and Central Asia. This trajectory became most visible in 2025, when Hungary adopted legislative amendments explicitly outlawing LGBTI-themed assemblies, marking the first formal Pride ban within a European Union member state. When states restrict Pride, they do not only target LGBTI visibility; they test how far they can go in restricting freedom of assembly, the rule of law, and dissent itself. The treatment of Pride increasingly reveals how governments approach public space, pluralism, and political opposition more broadly.

The contestation of Pride is not a neutral social fluctuation. While broader societal tensions form part of the context, the escalation documented in recent years reflects sustained political strategies by actors who have consistently framed LGBTI visibility as a threat to public order, morality, or children. These narratives have not emerged spontaneously; they have been cultivated over time and embedded into legislative proposals, administrative practice, and public discourse across multiple countries.

The five-year period under review in this chapter (2020–2025) captures a decisive phase in this escalation.

The [COVID-19](#) pandemic marked an important turning point. Across Europe and Central Asia, Pride marches and other public assemblies were cancelled or heavily restricted under emergency public health measures. While these cancellations were justified on public health grounds, the prolonged absence from public space risked eroding LGBTI visibility and normalising restrictions on assembly.

At the same time, beyond public health restrictions, state responses to assemblies during this period continued to involve repression. While many Pride events were cancelled under emergency measures, detentions of demonstrators were reported in Azerbaijan. In Belarus, a months-long crackdown followed protests, involving arrests, violence, and torture. Pride-related events were attacked or disrupted by extremist groups in Bulgaria and Ukraine. In several countries, assemblies were restricted through administrative means, including permit denials, while activists faced arrests and ongoing court proceedings linked to peaceful Pride participation, notably in Turkey and Russia.

Even at this stage, it was evident that restrictions were not purely temporary or health-related. Courts occasionally intervened, including rulings striking down Pride bans in Turkey.

At the European level, the European Court of Human Rights has for nearly two decades established clear standards on freedom of assembly in cases such as *Oya Ataman v. Turkey* and *Bączkowski and Others v. Poland*, affirming that states must not only refrain from unjustified bans but also ensure effective protection of peaceful assemblies, including LGBTI marches. Recent litigation, including pending cases such as *Tbilisi Pride v. Georgia*, reflects ongoing disputes not over the content of these standards, but over states' compliance with them. The issue is no longer the absence of legal clarity. Rather, it is the widening gap between established human rights jurisprudence and state practice, as bans, obstruction, and failures to protect Pride events continue despite binding legal obligations.

As COVID-related emergency measures eased, Pride [returned](#) to the streets with renewed scale and determination. [By 2022](#), every European country reported Pride marches, parades, or related initiatives. Pride expanded geographically, with first-ever events organised in new towns across multiple countries. Youth-led mobilisation was visible, including first-time local Prides organised by school-age activists and creative protest actions demanding stronger legal protections. This expansion demonstrated the continued strength and adaptability of the LGBTI movement.

However, this resurgence coincided with intensified political targeting and organised opposition. Pride increasingly became a focal point for counter-mobilisation, with parallel "family" marches and anti-LGBTI demonstrations held alongside Pride events, including during high-profile regional Prides. The rainbow flag became a politicised symbol to be attacked, removed, or publicly burned. What had previously appeared as episodic hostility consolidated into structured and repeated patterns of resistance to LGBTI visibility.

A model of systematic restriction became more visible. In Turkey, Pride bans were imposed year after year, with numerous events prohibited. Those who defied bans were met with police violence, mass detentions, and record numbers of arrests affecting both organisers and attendees. University Prides were disrupted, Pride Weeks were banned by governorates, and organisers faced indictments and ongoing prosecutions. Despite repeated interventions by domestic courts and the existence of clear European human rights standards, these practices continued.

The 2022 EuroPride in Belgrade became a landmark moment in this trajectory. EuroPride, a rotating pan-European LGBTI event that includes a Pride march and related human rights activities hosted by a different European city each year, faced a formal ban issued by Serbian authorities citing security concerns. Although the march eventually proceeded in a modified and heavily policed form following legal challenges and negotiations, the initial prohibition of a pan-European Pride event underscored that even high-profile, internationally monitored assemblies were not safe from executive bans.

Over time, bans became more and more widespread. They were imposed through a range of mechanisms, including executive decrees, decisions by municipal authorities refusing or revoking permits, police orders restricting routes or imposing disproportionate security requirements, and, in some contexts, legislative amendments targeting LGBTI-themed assemblies. These measures were justified through appeals to public order, morality, or the protection of children. Framed as neutral regulatory or security measures, these restrictions lowered the political cost of interference while limiting the freedom of assembly.

Across the region, we are seeing a number of distinct restriction models. In some contexts, executive or municipal authorities make use of repeated administrative bans or last-minute permit refusals. In others, police have imposed disproportionate security conditions, route limitations, or mass detentions that effectively curtail participation. A further model has centred on failure to protect, where authorities allow violent counter-mobilisation to proceed with insufficient intervention. Most recently, legislative codification has emerged, embedding restrictions and bans directly into national law. Alongside these institutional measures, Pride events have increasingly taken place amid rising hostility, including organised counter-demonstrations, incidents of violence, attacks on participants, and symbolic targeting such as the burning or removal of rainbow flags, both online and in public space. Together, these patterns illustrate not isolated incidents, but structurally distinct and mutually reinforcing approaches to constraining Pride and public assembly.

**Pride events have increasingly taken place amid rising hostility, including organised counter-demonstrations, incidents of violence, attacks on participants, and symbolic targeting such as the burning or removal of rainbow flags, both online and in public space.**

By 2024, despite the escalation of restrictions and hate, new Prides were organised across a wide range of countries and local contexts, even as attacks, threats, and obstruction were reported in numerous states. Pride simultaneously grew and came under greater pressure, reflecting both movement resilience and shrinking civic space.

In 2025, this trajectory crossed a qualitative threshold within the European Union. In Hungary, legislative amendments explicitly outlawed LGBTI-themed assemblies, introduced fines for organisers and participants, and authorised the use of surveillance technologies, including facial recognition, to identify attendees. The measures were adopted at state level and applied on all occasions organisations tried to register a Pride or a LGBTI related event. What had previously been implemented elsewhere through administrative bans and policing was thus formalised in national law within an EU member state. The attempted enforcement of the ban in Budapest triggered significant domestic and international attention, and large-scale mobilisation, with hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets in response. Also in Pécs, a very successful and peaceful Pride went ahead despite the ban. The mayor of Budapest was investigated as a Pride organiser (leading to an indictment and a fine, without a trial in early 2026); while similar criminal charges targeted the organiser of Pécs Pride. The development marked a shift from discretionary obstruction to codified prohibition.

The escalation has unfolded through different institutional pathways across EU and non-EU contexts. In several non-EU countries, repeated bans and failures to protect Pride events have occurred alongside weakened judicial enforcement and limited avenues for effective remedy. Within the European Union, restrictions have more often operated through legislative reinterpretation, administrative regulation, or the reframing of limitations as security or child-protection measures, allowing governments to act while formally maintaining rights commitments. The adoption of a legislative Pride ban within an EU member state therefore represents not simply another instance of restriction, but a convergence of methods previously associated with more overt forms of repression and those embedded within formal democratic frameworks.

**The adoption of a legislative Pride ban within an EU member state therefore represents not simply another instance of restriction, but a convergence of methods previously associated with more overt forms of repression and those embedded within formal democratic frameworks.**

This development does not stem from a single external precedent. Rather, it reflects a broader pattern: the gradual normalisation of increasingly invasive anti-LGBTI legislation and policy initiatives, combined with insufficient and inconsistent responses to earlier erosions of rights, including within EU member states themselves. Over time, the political and legal cost of restricting Pride diminished. Restrictions were no longer framed as temporary or exceptional; they became embedded, justified, and codified.

The implications extend far beyond Pride. When governments restrict Pride marches, they are not merely regulating a specific event; they are redefining the boundaries of lawful dissent and reshaping the practical meaning of freedom of assembly. The five-year trajectory documented here demonstrates how quickly restrictions can move from isolated administrative decisions to systemic practices and, ultimately, to formal legislative bans.

These developments also carry concrete consequences for organisers and communities. Repeated bans, legal uncertainty, and the threat of fines or criminal proceedings increase organisational risk and contribute to burnout among volunteer-led Pride committees. Heightened security requirements and related costs disproportionately affect smaller or newly established Prides, and in some contexts have prompted shifts to indoor, decentralised, or limited-access formats. Organisers have responded through strategic litigation, cross-border solidarity, and adaptive formats, but such measures require significant capacity and underscore the uneven conditions under which freedom of assembly is exercised across the region. Pride remains a visible site where these dynamics are concentrated. Its treatment continues to reveal how states understand democratic governance, pluralism, and the place of minority voices in public space.



# Albania

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

According to the 2024–2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, access to goods and services for LGBTI persons remains limited and characterised by low institutional trust and limited awareness of protection mechanisms. Only 25% of respondents reported having accessed services or visited the Aleanca LGBTI community centre or other LGBTI organisations. Awareness of public equality bodies is also low, with only 36% stating that they were aware of the role or activities of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. Institutional distrust remains widespread. 88% of respondents reported that they do not trust law enforcement institutions, and 90% stated that they had never reported discrimination or violence to any public authority. Among those who experienced serious incidents, only 11.6% reported the case, and only two cases resulted in any form of final resolution.

In 2025, Ylberofilia's [Needs Assessment of Trans People in Albania](#) highlighted persistent barriers in access to essential services. According to the assessment, 29.4% of trans and non-binary respondents reported difficulties in obtaining services, while 23.5% had avoided health services altogether due to fear of discrimination. The assessment further found that 35% of respondents reported a persistent fear of discriminatory treatment by medical staff, and that social and housing services were widely perceived as unsafe or ineffective.

## ASYLUM

Civil society organisations reported an increase in requests from LGBTI persons seeking information on asylum procedures and international protection pathways. According to the 2024–2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, 48% of respondents identified the lack of legal recognition of their relationships and gender identity as a primary reason for considering emigration. Community organisations linked this trend to growing hostile public discourse and disinformation targeting LGBTI persons, which has contributed to heightened insecurity and uncertainty regarding long-term protection in Albania.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Public [discourse](#) on LGBTI issues escalated during the reporting period, particularly in connection with the draft Law "On Gender Equality" and proposed amendments to civil registry legislation. During parliamentary debate on the Gender Equality Law, political and religious actors framed the draft as a threat to children, family values and national identity. The reform was publicly misrepresented as introducing same-sex marriage or automatic legal gender recognition. Similar hostile narratives accompanied the Democratic Party's proposed civil registry amendments, which were presented as a response to alleged "gender ideology". Although the initiative was not adopted, the public debate was characterised by stigmatising rhetoric and [disinformation](#) targeting LGBTI persons. Organised anti-LGBTI campaigns continued throughout the year, including renewed calls for a referendum aimed at blocking equality-related legislation. Hate campaigns increasingly targeted individual activists and human rights defenders. Personal data, including names and employment details, were circulated online alongside accusations of being "foreign agents" or "anti-family actors". Complaints were filed with the police; however, prosecutorial authorities refused to initiate criminal proceedings. At the institutional level, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination examined several complaints concerning hate speech. In one case involving D. Mema, the Commissioner found that public statements constituted discriminatory and degrading treatment against LGBTI persons. The decision was appealed and is pending before a national court. Strategic cases were also initiated against political figures Fatmir Mediu and Silva Caka for alleged bias-motivated public statements (see also under Equality and Non-discrimination).

According to the 2024–2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, approximately 61% of respondents reported having personally experienced or directly witnessed discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics during the previous year. Public spaces and online platforms were identified as the most frequent locations, with 67 cases occurring in streets or other public places and 65 cases online.

The Needs [Assessment](#) of Trans People in Albania documented persistent structural gaps in protection and high levels of insecurity affecting trans people. According to the assessment, 50% of respondents stated that state institutions do not adequately address the security needs of trans people. The assessment further found that 23.5% of respondents had experienced physical and or sexual violence. In 58.3% of reported cases, violence involved multiple perpetrators, indicating patterns of collective abuse. Underreporting remained significant, with 75% of respondents who experienced physical and or sexual violence not reporting the incident to law enforcement. Threats and intimidation were also widespread, with 82% of respondents reporting that they had been threatened with physical violence at least once in the preceding twelve months. The assessment noted that fear of harassment and violence further restricted freedom of movement, with some respondents incurring additional financial burdens due to reliance on private transport to avoid unsafe public spaces.

## EDUCATION

Educational environments continue to be perceived as unsafe for LGBTI students. According to the 2024-2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, 73% of respondents described Albanian schools as unsafe for marginalised groups, including LGBTI students, while only 4% considered schools safe. Respondents linked this perception to harassment, verbal abuse and social exclusion. Among respondents currently in education or who had recently attended school, 25% reported difficulties accessing or attending secondary or vocational education during the past year due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. In addition, 46% stated that they knew at least one other LGBTI person who had faced similar barriers. Approximately 2% of respondents reported not completing compulsory education, citing family rejection and persistent bullying. During parliamentary debate on the draft Law "On Gender Equality", the role of education in addressing gender stereotypes and promoting equality was publicly contested. Political and non-state actors framed gender education initiatives as harmful to children,

contributing to resistance against inclusive school policies

The Needs [Assessment](#) of Trans People in Albania found that trans people face systemic social and institutional barriers within the education system. While 70.5% of respondents reported having completed primary education, a significant proportion indicated that they were unable to progress to higher levels of schooling. The assessment identified bullying and discrimination as primary drivers of educational discontinuation, with 63.6% of respondents reporting that they ceased their education due to peer bullying. Institutional discrimination further affected educational trajectories: 41% of respondents reported changing schools due to discrimination, 64.7% discontinued further education as a result of discriminatory treatment, and 60% of those who reported discrimination stated that their situation remained unchanged.

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment conditions for LGBTI persons remain marked by insecurity and discrimination. According to the 2024-2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, 70% of respondents had been employed during the past year, while 30% were unemployed. Among those employed, 47% worked under a formal contract, 44% were in informal employment and 9% were self-employed. Income levels indicate economic vulnerability: 16% of employed respondents earned below the national minimum wage, and 48% reported monthly incomes above 70,000 ALL (approximately 700 EUR). Workplace environments are frequently perceived as unsafe. Only 23% of employed respondents reported feeling safe and respected at work, while 30% stated that they did not feel safe at all. Homophobic and transphobic jokes, differential treatment and harassment were cited as common experiences. 70% of employed respondents reported that they had never disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. Approximately half of those who remained closeted indicated that they feared losing their job. 27% reported experiencing sexual harassment at least once during the past year. Employment support services were rated as "very much needed" by 68% of respondents.

The Needs [Assessment](#) of Trans People in Albania documented severe structural exclusion of trans people from the labour market, characterised by high levels of unemployment, informality, pervasive discrimination, and limited access to institutional support mechanisms. According to the assessment, 35.2% of respondents were classified as NEET (not in education, employment, or training), and 47.05% reported engagement in sex work, reflecting significant economic marginalisation. Discrimination was reported across recruitment, employment, and job retention processes: 50% of respondents with prior employment experienced discrimination from prospective employers, 41.6% reported losing employment due to discrimination related to their gender identity, and 58.3% encountered discrimination in the workplace. Workplace environments were further characterised by violence and harassment, with 20% of respondents reporting experiences of violence and 30% reporting sexual harassment linked to their gender identity. The assessment also noted that fear of discrimination contributes to concealment, with 50% of currently employed respondents reporting that they did not disclose their gender identity in the workplace.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

As part of its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Albania accepted several [recommendations](#) aimed at strengthening the rights of LGBTI people. These include commitments to advance legal recognition of same-sex marriages and cohabitations, strengthen accountability for the implementation of the National Action Plan for LGBTI Persons (2021-2027), prohibit forced medical interventions on intersex children, and reinforce measures against hate speech and hate crimes (see also under Legal Gender Recognition).

In November, the Albanian Parliament [adopted](#) the draft law "On Gender Equality", aligning the legal definition of gender in Albanian law with the Istanbul Convention and explicitly extending protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. In the run-up to the vote, civil society organisations reported a broad disinformation campaign aimed

at weakening the bill. In August, Democratic Party MP Tritan Shehu criticised the draft law, calling it an attack on the foundations of Albanian society and warning that recognising terms such as non-binary, trans or gender-fluid would open the door to a "multi-gender society". Statements made during a televised broadcast were also cited by civil society as inciting hatred and dehumanisation of LGBTI persons. (see also under Bias Motivated Speech and Violence)

Civil society further raised concerns about public [statements](#) by opposition figures directed at the EU Ambassador to Albania, Silvio Gonzato, which framed his openness about his sexual orientation as illegitimate political pressure.

Aleanca LGBTI's 2024-2025 nationwide [survey](#) shows persistent discrimination. 38.5% of respondents experienced discrimination or violence in the previous year based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, and 22.6% witnessed such incidents. Legal counselling was rated as "very much needed" by 65% of respondents. Civil society organisations report weak enforcement of anti-discrimination guarantees and limited accountability in practice.

## FAMILY

A strategic litigation case seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriage is currently pending before the Administrative Court of Appeal of Albania. The case challenges the exclusion of same-sex couples from civil marriage under Albanian law and may have significant implications for access to family-related rights.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, the annual Pride March [took place](#) in Tirana under the unifying slogan "Side by side." The event saw hundreds of Albanian citizens. The march was attended by national political figures, including the Minister of Health and Social Protection, as well as diplomatic representatives from Sweden, Canada and the European Union, underscoring growing domestic engagement alongside international solidarity.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In July, Albania's parliament adopted a new [National Strategy against Foreign Intervention and Disinformation](#), promoted by the ruling Socialist Party. While framed by the government as a national security measure, opposition and media-freedom voices warned it could be used to restrict critical reporting and civil society activity, including work by organisations supporting marginalised groups such as LGBTI people.

## HEALTH

According to the 2024-2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, 68% of respondents accessed healthcare services at least once during the past year, while 14% reported experiencing discrimination by healthcare personnel because of their LGBTI status. Avoidance of necessary medical care remains significant. While 29% reported attending sexual or reproductive health check-ups in the past year, 25% stated that they had avoided such services despite feeling they needed them.

Healthcare access for transgender persons remains structurally limited. A national medical protocol on hormonal treatment has been drafted but has not been formally approved and therefore remains unimplemented.

The Needs [Assessment](#) of Trans People in Albania found that access to healthcare information and services remains limited for trans and non-binary people. According to the assessment, only 50% of respondents knew where to seek assistance in the event of health concerns, and 47% reported a consistent readiness to seek support from medical professionals. The assessment further documented inappropriate and discriminatory conduct by healthcare providers as a significant concern. 23.5% of respondents reported experiencing inappropriate remarks by medical personnel, as well as violations of dignity, ethical standards, and professional obligations of care.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity presented the

[findings](#) of his official visit to Albania, conducted from 1 to 12 July 2024. The report documented that LGBTI persons continue to experience discrimination in key areas, including education, healthcare, and employment. It further identified persistent obstacles to reporting bias-motivated crimes and accessing effective remedies. According to the report, these challenges are closely linked to entrenched societal attitudes. At the same time, the Independent Expert noted that Albania has established a relatively robust legal and policy framework. Planned reforms - particularly concerning legal gender recognition and the recognition of same-sex partnerships - were identified as critical opportunities to translate existing commitments into concrete and durable improvements.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

During the Universal Periodic Review process, Albania rejected a [recommendation](#) to establish legal gender recognition based on self-identification (see also under Equality and non-discrimination)

According to the 2024-2025 [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, among respondents identifying as transgender or non-binary, only two individuals were able to consult a doctor about hormone therapy or other gender-affirming medical interventions during the past year, while over 90% reported having no access to such care.

In 2025, trans activist Luana Myrto, supported by the Albanian Helsinki Committee, began pursuing legal action against the civil registry for refusing to amend her gender marker. The case stemmed from the fact that - although trans people in Albania are theoretically entitled to the same social policy benefits as other citizens - the absence of a Law on Gender Identity significantly limits their ability to fully exercise these rights as there is no legal mechanism to change gender marker on official documents or to update one's name in accordance with their gender identity.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

According to the 2024-2025 nationwide [survey](#) of Aleanca LGBTI, among lesbian and bisexual women, 19% reported having visited a gynaecologist or

reproductive health specialist during the past year, while more than 28% stated that they had intentionally avoided such visits despite feeling they needed them. Barriers are also evident in the area of family planning. Among lesbian and bisexual women who expressed a wish to become parents, 27% stated that they would consider in-vitro fertilisation in Albania, 55% stated that they would not, and 17% indicated a preference for adoption. Gaps were also identified in HIV prevention. Among gay and bisexual men, 66% expressed interest in using PrEP or PEP if available, while 18% reported having no knowledge of these prevention methods and 16% stated that they were not interested.

## **PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE**

Ahead of the parliamentary elections of 11 May 2025, the third edition of the Mendo Politikisht [analysis](#) reviewed political party programmes with regard to LGBTI rights. The report found that only one political subject explicitly referred to sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds from discrimination. All other parties and coalitions analysed either made no reference to LGBTI issues or addressed human rights in general terms without specific commitments. The majority of political programmes did not include concrete proposals on legal recognition of same-sex couples, legal gender recognition, protection from hate speech and hate crimes, or access to LGBTI-inclusive services.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Controversy erupted in Tirana after it was [revealed](#) that the municipality's new scoring formula for the social housing program "Subsidization of Loan Interest" awards two additional points to applicants who identify as part of the LGBTI community. Municipal council member Jonathan Pano denounced the measure as part of a broader political agenda, claiming it unfairly privileges one group while neglecting vulnerable segments of society.

Following public statements by Pastor Akil Pano condemning the inclusion of LGBTI persons in the 2025-2027 local social policy framework, the Municipality of Tirana removed the dedicated

chapter addressing the needs of LGBTI citizens from its social plan.

The Needs [Assessment](#) of Trans People in Albania identified stable housing as the most urgent need reported by trans respondents. According to the assessment, nearly one in three respondents lived in short-term or otherwise insecure rental arrangements. Experiences of homelessness and severe housing exclusion were also documented. 17.6% of respondents reported having slept on the streets or in public spaces, while 41.2% indicated that they had relied on temporary accommodation in shelters, underscoring significant housing precarity among trans people.



# Andorra

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Andorran police confirmed they recorded an average of two to three bias-motivated incidents each month. Diversand NGO highlighted incidents during Pride celebrations in June and called the need for a formal system to register and classify bias-motivated violence, so that it can be recognised as hate crime and inform appropriate prevention and response measures. Such a system would allow for the recognition of LGTBI-phobic violence as hate crimes and the creation of preventive mechanisms alongside appropriate penalties for aggressors.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

This year, the Ministry of Equality implemented the obligation for all companies to have a protocol for sexual and gender-based harassment.

The measure was criticised by Diversidad, which warned that existing protocols remain framed through heterosexual and traditional perspectives and fail to explicitly address gender diversity or the specific forms of harassment faced by trans people.

The organisation has communicated these concerns to the Ministry of Equality, which has indicated that potential changes are currently under consideration.

## HEALTH

In October, the decree regulating trans-specific healthcare entered into force. It allows trans and gender-diverse people aged 16 and over to access hormone replacement therapy through the Andorran Social Security system (CASS), while access to gender-affirming surgery is available from the age of 18. Trans children and adolescents under 16 are not eligible for medication coverage but are entitled to coverage for medical consultations and follow-up with healthcare professionals. Hormone replacement therapy is to be accessed through endocrinologists within the Servei Andorrà d'Atenció Sanitària (SAAS). However, only three endocrinologists practice in the country. According to testimony received by Diversand, one reportedly refuses to provide treatment, citing insufficient training. Civil society organisations have called on the Ministry of Health to ensure comprehensive training on gender diversity and trans healthcare for medical

professionals. The Ministry of Health has further indicated that gender-affirming surgeries will be carried out in Catalonia, Spain, as is the case for other specialised procedures. However, the terms of cooperation between the Andorran authorities and the Catalan healthcare system have not been made public, and questions remain regarding continuity of care, particularly in light of ongoing changes to Catalonia's own trans healthcare framework.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In July, in a joint civil society submission to Andorra's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), civil society organisations noted the absence of any public law protecting the bodily integrity of intersex people.

In a December meeting with Diversand, the Ministry of Health stated that healthcare protocols exist to safeguard the bodily integrity of intersex newborns, but these protocols have not been made public. (See also under Human Rights Defenders.)

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In August, NGOs Diversand and Stop Violències faced public backlash from sections of the media and the Council of Ministers after announcing that they would present a report to the United Nations as part of Andorra's upcoming Universal Periodic Review. The organisations were accused by critics of lying and exaggerating the information contained in the report, although these claims were not substantiated or fact-checked.

The report, prepared in July, formed part of civil society submissions to the UPR and highlighted concerns related to the protection of human rights defenders, including calls for public recognition and reparation measures. The backlash raised concerns about the treatment of civil society organisations engaging with international human rights mechanisms. Andorra's Universal Periodic Review was held in November 2025. By the end of the year, no detailed governmental position had been published addressing the specific concerns raised.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In July, concerns were raised about the continued delay in publishing the decree regulating access to

hormonal treatments in Andorra. The lack of a clear regulatory framework was highlighted as posing serious risks, as some trans people reportedly begin hormonal treatments without medical supervision.

These concerns were outlined in the same civil society [submission](#) to Andorra's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by NGOs Diversand and Stop Violències, which called on the Andorran government to publish the decree without further delay. (See also under Human Rights Defenders)

## **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

In May, on the occasion of the International Day Against LGBTI-phobia (IDAHOBIT), the Consell General d'Andorra (Parliament) hosted a [conference](#) titled "To be or not to be trans, that's not the question" by Dr. Jordi Reviriego. As part of his intervention, Reviriego stressed that biological sex and gender must not be conflated, noting that gender is a social construction. He highlighted the contradiction in society's acceptance of aesthetic surgeries for cis people, while pathologizing or criminalizing similar interventions when it comes to trans people.

## **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

In July, as part of a [report](#) prepared for the upcoming United Nations UPR (See also under Human Rights Defenders and Legal Gender Recognition), the NGOs Diversand and Stop Violències highlighted demands for the decriminalization and legalization of abortion, ensuring access that is safe, free, and confidential within the country.

## **POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

In May, institutional training aimed at strengthening awareness and sensitivity regarding LGBTI issues among police officers, firefighters, customs agents and prison staff was delivered in Andorra. The initiative, organised in the context of IDAHOBIT commemorations, was supported by the Andorran government and its equality structures. The training was delivered by the NGO Gaylespol in collaboration with Diversand.



# Armenia

## ASYLUM

In November, the European Commission presented the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan to Armenian authorities, marking a key step toward EU-Armenia visa liberalisation. The plan sets out required reforms, including effective implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy, strengthened anti-discrimination policies, protection of minority rights, access to justice, religious freedom, and awareness-raising against racism and xenophobia. It was reported that applicants to the Migration and Citizenship Service are often required to wait several months for an interview, most frequently due to the alleged lack of interpreters. As a result, an individual's lawful period of stay in the Republic of Armenia may expire, forcing them to exit the country and re-enter.

Further, civil society underscored that housing spots in state-run shelters are extremely limited, with NGOs continuing to provide social worker's services, psychological counseling, and legal assistance to LGBTI migrants.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered a judgement in *Minasyan and Others v. Armenia*, a case brought by 14 Armenian human rights defenders and activists who had been targeted by LGBTI-phobic hate speech. The Court found violations of Article 8 (right to private and family life), both alone and in conjunction with Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination), of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The case concerned discriminatory newspaper articles published in 2014, which incited hostility against the applicants and included links to their social media profiles following their public support for Conchita Wurst's Eurovision song contest victory. The ECtHR concluded that the articles propagated hate and incited intolerance against a marginalised group, directly harming the applicants' dignity and psychological wellbeing. It further held that the domestic courts failed to strike a fair balance between freedom of expression and the right to private life, offering no effective protection against hate speech.

In August, research conducted by Pink Armenia revealed the lack of effectiveness of the Criminal

Code article that criminalises public calls to violence, the justification of violence, and violent propaganda, to protect LGBTI people. The study concluded that the article cannot be regarded as an effective tool for protecting the rights of minorities as the provision has been applied almost exclusively to cases concerning political authorities or, in one instance, influential opposition figures. Notably, incidents involving calls for violence, the justification of violence, or violent propaganda targeting individuals on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity have not attracted meaningful investigative attention. In situations where preliminary reviews were initiated, the proceedings remained incomplete, and no indictments were submitted to the courts.

During the campaign for the March local elections and in subsequent public statements, Vardan Ghukasyan, a candidate for mayor of Gyumri from the Armenian Republican Party, made repeated remarks targeting the LGBTI community. His statements included explicit threats of violence against LGBTI people and those who support their rights, as well as rhetoric that perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes. This case was reported by several activists to the law enforcement bodies. However, no criminal persecution was initiated.

In December, Armenian civil society groups underscored the growing instrumentalisation - by state institutions, political actors, and the media - of LGBTI issues as a tool to discredit political opponents, underscoring that these actors increasingly exploit LGBTI identities for political gain and to actively condemn and prevent intolerance and targeted hostility.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Investigative and judicial practice continued to raise concerns, with authorities frequently failing to recognise bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor, contributing to impunity (see also under Police and Law Enforcement).

In May, the Yerevan First Instance Court sentenced a man to 10 years in prison for the murder of a trans woman. Despite efforts by the victim's

representative to request the case to be examined as a hate-motivated crime, the investigative body did not examine this aspect and the court relied solely on the scope of the indictment in its judgement.

In June, nearly seven years after the 2018 attack on nine persons perceived to be LGBTI in the village of Shurnukh, the Syunik Region First Instance Court overturned the decision to terminate the investigation, citing serious procedural failings, arguing that the inquiry had been neither timely nor thorough. The court thereby rejected the argument that the incident was unrelated to the victims' identities, criticised the failure to acknowledge a possible violation of the principle of equality, and ordered a reinvestigation. At the time of writing, the investigation was still ongoing and no significant step had been taken.

In July, a trans woman was found dead in her apartment. Although the police did not identify any sign of physical violence, they are reportedly evaluating the possibility of incitement to suicide. No outcome of the investigation has been made public.

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented 56 violations of human rights in conjunction with discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, 30 of which constituted domestic violence cases. The other incidents included physical and mental abuse, including in the army, sexual harassment, blackmailing, threats, abuse of authority, as well as discrimination in the workplace.

## EMPLOYMENT

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented three cases of violations of workplace rights of LGBTI people, underscoring discriminatory hiring practices, workplace harassment, and unjust dismissal based on sexual orientation or gender identity. (See also under Bias-motivated Violence). In these instances, LGBTI employees were either denied employment outright or removed from their positions after employers expressed explicit bias, such as stating that they "do not need such employees" or accusing workers of "discrediting" the workplace due to their identity or relationships.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Draft Law on Ensuring Equality, which has been under development for several years, remains unfinalised and fails to incorporate key elements required for comprehensive anti-discrimination protections. Notably, it does not explicitly include sexual orientation and gender identity among the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Although the law was expected to be submitted to the National Assembly in early 2025, this did not occur, and the law was not adopted during the year.

Access to effective remedies remained limited. In 2025, documented cases indicated that courts rarely examined discrimination as a distinct legal issue, and bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity was frequently not treated as an aggravating factor (see also under Police and Law Enforcement).

In 2025, Pink Armenia lodged an application to the European Court of Human Rights for a case involving the 2017 refusal, by the Ministry of Culture, to recognise and classify three awareness-raising materials promoting tolerance towards LGBTI persons as social advertisements. In 2017, the Ministry refused to grant this status without providing a written justification, and when pressed for an explanation, cited unfounded reasons, including the claim that the advertisements lacked public importance because society was already "aware of the existence of 'non-traditional' people," and that the presence of a QR code and website link rendered the materials commercial.

In October, Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, issued a statement concerning the treatment of Mamikon Hovsepian. Hovsepian had been publicly targeted by Armenia's Ministry of Health, which reportedly smeared him and unlawfully suspended him from the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), a key body addressing HIV, TB, and malaria, following his denunciations of abuses within the health sector. The Ministry of Health's response reportedly included mocking Hovsepian and questioning his status as a human rights defender.

In December, the re-emergence of political manipulation targeting LGBTI issues became a prominent [issue](#) in Armenian public debate. Civil society highlighted that both government authorities and opposition forces have repeatedly sought to discredit political opponents by associating them with the LGBTI community.

## FAMILY

In May 2025, Pink Human Rights Defender NGO [published](#) a report titled "The Human Rights Situation of LGBT+ People in Armenia During 2024" documenting 65 cases of violence and discrimination against LGBTI communities, recorded during the previous year, 38 of which involved domestic violence, making it the most prevalent form of abuse. Despite this scale, only 10 cases were reported to law enforcement authorities, and just three resulted in ongoing investigations, pointing to serious gaps in access to justice. As reported by Pink Human Rights NGO, this is due to the fact that victims frequently encounter insensitive treatment by law enforcement, including revictimisation, ridicule, and dismissive attitudes. Further, protection mechanisms for minors remain particularly weak, with authorities frequently prioritising "family reconciliation" over the protection of victims, often resulting in minors being returned to the same environment where violence occurred. At the same time, NGOs face legal constraints in assisting minors, as legal representation can only be provided with the consent of the minor's legal guardian – who may be the perpetrator or complicit in the abuse. Finally, the research underscored that the number of shelters operated by NGOs falls far short of existing needs, leaving many victims without immediate protection.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, the [Rainbow Forum](#), held in Yerevan, celebrated its 10th anniversary under the theme "Resilience of the Movement," continuing to provide one of the few semi-public spaces where the LGBTI community and allies can gather, reflect, and build solidarity amid broader constraints on freedom of assembly.

## HEALTH

In 2025, the absence of state-approved standards for legal gender recognition and trans-inclusive healthcare continued to force trans people into reliance on informal networks, as documented in a [report](#) by Pink Armenia. The report highlighted that Armenia currently lacks a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework governing gender-affirming care and underscored the systemic challenges that trans people face in healthcare institutions. In the absence of state-approved standards, trans people are forced to rely on informal networks or personal connections with healthcare professionals, resulting in inconsistent, unmonitored, and at times unsafe medical practices. Further, Armenia faces a significant shortage of endocrinologists and other specialists trained to provide gender-affirming care. Individuals are often left to self-administer treatments or depend on untrained providers, creating preventable health risks.

## FOREIGN POLICY

At the 49th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May, 26 states, including Spain, Sweden, and the UK, [urged](#) Armenia to adopt anti-discrimination legislation explicitly covering SOGI, while others called for the establishment of legal gender recognition procedures. Although legislative amendments adopted in 2024 marked progress, States also expressed concerns over insufficient legal protections against gender-based violence and attacks targeting human rights defenders, as well as over the absence of guarantees for freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In 2025, Pink Armenia documented instances of severe and degrading treatment of gay military personnel, including the forced disclosure of sexual orientation, humiliation, and coercive transfers. In one case, a young man was placed in a psychiatric institution for months solely due to his sexual orientation, while also facing violence and psychological pressure from family members. In

another, intimate videos were circulated among servicemen, leading to threats, harassment, and ongoing danger even after discharge.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In April, the Armenian government approved its Gender Policy Strategy and Action Plan for 2025–2028, outlining commitments to promote gender equality and combat discrimination. While the initiative was welcomed by human rights NGOs, it was reported that the strategy still falls short of explicitly addressing sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds against discrimination.

In May, ahead of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Anzhelika Movsesova, Advisor to the Human Rights Defender of Armenia, conveyed the Ombudsperson's message reaffirming the institution's commitment to monitoring LGBTI rights, responding to violations, and developing preventive tools to better protect vulnerable groups.

In December, the EU-Armenia Partnership Council held its sixth meeting, during which both parties highlighted the strong momentum in bilateral relations, reaffirmed shared values, and adopted a new "Strategic Agenda for the EU-Armenia Partnership." The agenda sets ambitious cooperation priorities and represents a major step toward deepening and advancing EU-Armenia ties. The Council noted the upcoming EU-Armenia Summit in May 2026 as another key milestone for enhancing the partnership. As EU-Armenia cooperation is grounded in commitments to human rights and non-discrimination, the strengthened partnership may have implications for advancing protections for LGBTI people.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In June, human rights defender Mamikon Hovsepyan was suspended from the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), the body overseeing HIV programmes. (see also under Equality and Non-discrimination). A document circulated to CCM members on 25 June announced a formal reprimand and temporary suspension, citing alleged violations of

the CCM and Global Fund Code of Conduct, including claims that Hovsepyan had spread "misinformation". In October, Hovsepyan filed a legal challenge seeking annulment of the decision. The Administrative Court transferred the case to the Civil Court, stating that the Ministry of Health was not responsible for the actions of the CCM.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, The Right Side NGO launched a strategic litigation case seeking to compel the authorities to issue an administrative act allowing the correction of the gender entry in a birth registration record. The lawsuit, submitted to the Administrative Court of Armenia on 3 April 2025, was accepted for examination. It concerns a trans applicant whose request to amend the gender marker in their passport had been refused by the competent administrative body.

In 2025, civil society reiterated that the lack of formal mechanisms for changing gender markers on official documents generates daily obstacles for trans persons in employment, banking, healthcare, and travel. As a result, many face discrimination, forced outing, and denial of essential services.

Although name changes are possible under the Law on Civil Status Acts Registration, the law does not provide any procedure for legal gender recognition. In practice, trans people are often required to undergo psychiatric evaluation or medical procedures to access rights that should be rooted in self-determination.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In 2025, Pink Armenia and the Network of Reproductive Health and Rights, operated by Women Resource Center Armenia, released a report examining the sexual and reproductive health and rights of lesbian and bisexual women and trans, non-binary, and queer people.

The research identified systemic barriers in access to gynaecological and sexual health services. In Yerevan, Private medical centres were described as relatively more accessible; however, lesbian

and bisexual women often concealed their sexual orientation and same-sex relationships to avoid discrimination and biased questioning, relying on a limited number of LGBTI-sensitive specialists referred by community organisations. These services are not free of charge and were reported to sometimes lack adequate knowledge of same-gender sexual relations.

The report documented discrimination, breaches of confidentiality, and hostile treatment of trans, non-binary, and queer people accessing sexual and reproductive health services in state-funded medical centres, which often remain the only option outside the capital. It highlighted systemic deficiencies, including a lack of basic knowledge among specialists regarding gender identity, gender expression, and gender-affirming care. In one documented case, a trans person was refused service on the grounds that the specialist was not qualified to treat them, illustrating the structural barriers faced by LGBTI people in accessing essential healthcare.

## PUBLIC OPINION

According to the [Caucasus Barometer 2024 Armenia](#), a nationwide survey on socio-economic issues and political attitudes issued in 2025, only 14% of respondents said they would be comfortable doing business with an LGBTI person, while 14% stated that they would not want an LGBTI person as a neighbour.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In November, Armenian law enforcement officers took part in a [two-day training](#) on identifying and investigating hate crimes, organised under Council of Europe and EU-Council of Europe projects. The training focused on applying Council of Europe standards and European Court of Human Rights case law, with specific attention to hate crimes affecting LGBTI communities.

In 2025, based on data documented by Pink Armenia, only 8 out of 56 cases of discrimination and harassment were reported to the police. Of these, one victim later withdrew the complaint, and in another case the victim declined to pursue proceedings

after the perpetrator compensated the damage. As a result, only one case ultimately proceeded to trial. At the same time, research indicates little progress in investigative and judicial practice, with courts rarely examining discrimination as a distinct legal issue. LGBTI communities continue to face significant structural, psychological, and social barriers that discourage reporting to law enforcement. In addition, police and courts frequently fail to treat bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor, allowing perpetrators to avoid liability or receive disproportionately mild sanctions.

# Austria

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In June, a [petition](#) was submitted in Vienna calling for the introduction of designated time slots for queer people in public saunas. The required quorum was reached, and an official hearing was held before the Petitions Committee in November. VIMÖ submitted a statement in support of the petition. In December, the Committee [rejected](#) the request.

In July, the Ombud for Equal Treatment published a model complaint [letter](#) intended to assist intersex and non-binary individuals in challenging barriers to access arising from the lack of gender diversity options in online forms. The Ombud also issued [recommendations](#) for companies on developing gender-inclusive forms. Both publications were prepared in consultation with VIMÖ and VeNiB.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, Austrian authorities [uncovered](#) a neo-Nazi network responsible for orchestrating attacks against gay and bisexual men using fake dating profiles. The group allegedly lured victims to meeting locations under false pretences, where they were then ambushed, beaten, and humiliated by masked assailants. The attacks were filmed and disseminated online. Investigators [reported](#) that the perpetrators falsely accused their victims of being paedophiles.

In May, a total of 30 LGBTI organisations from Austria demanded a national [action plan against hate crimes](#).

In July, the Linz Regional Court [convicted](#) two men for a series of hate-motivated attacks in Upper Austria's Mühlviertel region, in which they lured victims via dating apps, threatened them with weapons, and extorted money. One of the attackers received an unconditional prison sentence of 33 months; the other was sentenced to 21 months, of which 14 must be served. The convictions include aggravated robbery, extortion, dangerous threats, and property damage. The verdict is not yet final.

In August, a 64-year-old man in Vienna was [convicted](#) for threatening a neighbor with homophobic violence. The Vienna Regional Court sentenced him to five months in prison, suspended under a three-year probation due to his prior record. The court

confiscated a knife involved in the threats and ordered the defendant to pay symbolic damages of 200 euros to the victim. The judgment is not yet final, as the defendant did not have legal representation during the trial.

## EDUCATION

In February, Austria's Ministry of Education introduced [new rules](#) governing outside providers of sex education sessions. Under the updated guidelines, only organisations that receive approval via a dedicated Office for Sex Education platform may offer such programs in schools. The reform was prompted by controversy surrounding the Christian group TeenSTAR, whose earlier materials - now allegedly revised - depicted homosexuality as a condition to be "cured" and masturbation as harmful.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In August, Austria [issued](#) a gender-neutral passport to a non-binary Austrian citizen residing in Germany and Austria, following a ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union requiring Member States to recognise legally registered gender changes carried out in another EU country. Although Austrian law does not currently provide a general procedure for legal gender recognition for non-binary persons, the authorities complied with the ruling to ensure cross-border recognition. This marked the first issuance of a gender-neutral passport in Austria for a non-binary person.

In October, Austria's National Council [voted](#) to discontinue the use of gender-inclusive language in official documents, reinstating traditional grammatical forms of German.

The move ends the previous practice of using symbols like asterisks, slashes, or internal capital letters to denote gender diversity.

## FAMILY

In June, Austria introduced a [legislative package](#) amending the Private International Law Act to ensure the legal recognition of same-sex marriages, even when one partner is not an Austrian citizen. The law is expected to be adopted within the current legislative period.

## HEALTH

In March, the Vienna Labor and Social Court ruled in favor of a trans woman seeking reimbursement from her health insurance provider for laser facial hair removal. The court rejected the insurer's claim that covering such treatment would violate the principle of equality, affirming that health insurance must cover the procedure for trans women.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, Austria's Green Party submitted a proposal for the Conversion Measures Protection Act (295/A) aimed at banning conversion practices targeting sexual orientation or gender identity. The draft law specifically protects minors, young adults under 21 in vulnerable situations, individuals lacking decision-making capacity, and persons in dependent relationships, regardless of parental or legal consent. Violations could result in up to one year imprisonment or fines of up to €720 daily rates, with additional fines of up to €30,000 for advertising or commissioning such measures. The bill excludes legitimate therapeutic interventions, such as treatments for paraphilic disorders or psychotherapeutic support to strengthen queer individuals' self-esteem.

In November 2024, the Ministry of Health (BMSGPK) published new recommendations concerning medical interventions on children with variations of sex characteristics, without prior consultation with civil society organisations. In response, VIMÖ reiterated the need for a legal prohibition of non-consensual, medically unnecessary interventions on intersex minors, alongside accompanying support measures. In February 2025, the newly formed government included a provision on the protection of intersex minors in its coalition agreement.

## DATA COLLECTION

In July 2025, the Ministry of Internal Affairs published its Hate Crime Report 2024, documenting 6,786 hate-motivated offences and 7,614 recorded bias motives. Of these, 317 motives related to sexual orientation, marking a decrease compared to the previous year. Since January 2024, bias against trans persons has been recorded as a distinct subcategory within the "gender" motive, allowing for more precise statistical tracking. The report recorded multiple motives

targeting trans persons, including cases of violent offences.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Austria joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In January, Austria's Higher Administrative Court (VwGH) overturned a decision by the Vienna Administrative Court that had allowed a trans person to delete their gender entry from the civil registry. The VwGH rejected the request, asserting that gender registration is fundamentally based on biological and physical sex. The person concerned has since announced plans to appeal the ruling to the Constitutional Court.

In November, the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) presented a motion to amend the constitution to recognise only two genders, arguing that the measure was necessary to "return to biological reality." The motion was dismissed by the majority of the parliament.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In January, Austria's Supreme Court issued a ruling on the case of a trans woman who accessed legal recognition and subsequently applied for early retirement. The Pension Insurance Institution (PVA) contested the application, arguing that the applicant did not undergo hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgery and claimed that the request was pursued solely to gain retirement benefits. While a lower court initially ruled in favour of the applicant, the appeals court reversed this decision, and the Supreme Court upheld the PVA's right to challenge the request. LGBTI activists have raised concerns

that the decision undermines self-determination and could lead to individuals being recognised only by their assigned sex at birth for legal and administrative purposes, including retirement eligibility.

## **PUBLIC OPINION**

In November, parents in Lower Austria raised concerns about the inclusion of Austria's six officially recognised gender markers in a school registration form for new pupils. The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) subsequently called on the Lower Austrian education authority to amend the form and restrict it to two gender markers. No formal change to the existing administrative practice had been reported by the end of 2025.



# Azerbaijan

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In 2025, a study titled 'Licence to Hate' by the local monitoring group QueeRadar analysed hate speech on Facebook and Instagram from January to July, assessing how changes in Meta's content policies affected the Azerbaijani segment of social media. The research documented 100 instances of abusive content, often amplified by influencers, public figures, and semi-public pages, including dehumanising language, moral condemnation, and explicit incitement to violence towards LGBTI people. The study noted that some public commentary welcomed the perceived loosening of moderation rules, further normalising hostility against queer people online.

Public discourse on LGBTI communities included unfounded and stigmatising narratives promoted by professional figures. In May, Zahid Oruc, chair of the Human Rights Committee of Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis, publicly attacked the concept of gender equality in a parliamentary speech, framing it as a threat to national values, the family and the legal order. In July a lawyer publicly claimed that Azerbaijan was undergoing widespread "gayification", linking the shortage of male teachers in schools to children's upbringing and portraying LGBTI identities as a societal problem.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In November, a 19-year-old was stabbed to death in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. According to Azerbaijani Qiy Vaar organisation, the victim had previously moved to Turkey to escape family pressure but was forced to return to Azerbaijan after his residence permit expired. During his stay in Turkey, he was threatened by his cousin and told friends that his family was looking to kill him upon his return to Azerbaijan.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In March, a queer singer performing at a Novruz celebration in a public school in Baku was framed by local media as "controversial" because of their sexual orientation, inviting public judgment and negative reactions.

Later in the year, trans singer Samira Şah became the target of a massive media campaign after

performing at a cultural event attended by schoolchildren. Some outlets published footage and commentary out of context, presenting the performance as "controversial."

In July, the Court of Grave Crimes in Baku sentenced seven independent journalists linked to Abzas Media, an outlet known for investigative reporting on corruption, convicting them on smuggling and related charges. The prosecutions were linked to Azerbaijan's restrictive grant regulations, which have been used to initiate criminal cases against journalists and civil society actors.

In November, authorities issued arrest warrants and summonses against several journalists, activists, and analysts living in exile. The Prosecutor General's Office stated that the Binagadi District Court had authorised warrants in absentia under multiple provisions of the Criminal Code. The factual basis of the charges has not been publicly clarified. Those targeted are known for criticising the government and commenting on human rights issues. Independent civil society commentary consistently describes these measures as a widening and intensifying of tactics used against independent media and human rights actors.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In 2025, several short films in Azerbaijan used personal storytelling to depict LGBTI lives, bringing visibility to experiences that have historically been absent from the country's cinema.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2025, protections for LGBTI people in detention in Azerbaijan remained severely limited. Authorities continued to collect and publish no official data on LGBTI prisoners, leaving significant gaps in state oversight and reporting and forcing reliance on documentation by human rights organisations. Based on testimonies, trans women and gay men in detention were frequently placed in isolation and subjected to violence by both other detainees and prison staff. Several accounts reported that prison administrations used sexual contact involving trans detainees as a form of punishment. Although

such isolation was formally justified as being “for protection,” evidence suggests it often facilitated abuse rather than preventing it.

In February, civil society organisations reported that Azerbaijani police have begun using deceptive methods to identify the residential addresses of LGBTI persons. Community members reported receiving phone calls from individuals presenting themselves as representatives of delivery services or companies such as Umico. Callers claimed that a package had arrived, that the recipient had won a gift, or that a free product was available, and requested an address for delivery. According to the reports, once an address was obtained, police officers arrived at the location, transported the individuals to a police station and demanded large sums of money. In addition to these calls, police reportedly continued existing practices of summoning individuals directly by phone to police stations, as well as arranging meetings through Instagram while posing as potential dating partners.

In late December, Azerbaijani police carried out a large-scale raid on a venue in Baku known to be frequented by LGBTI people. According to reports by independent media and local human rights organisations, approximately 100 individuals were detained during the operation. Witness testimonies indicate that those detained were subjected to arbitrary arrest, verbal abuse, and degrading treatment by law enforcement officers. Several detainees reported being questioned about their sexual orientation and gender identity, and described being treated as criminals solely on this basis. While authorities did not provide a clear legal justification for the raid, the operation was widely perceived by the community as a targeted action against queer spaces, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and further restricting the already limited freedom of assembly for LGBTI people in Azerbaijan. At the time of writing, no transparent investigation into the conduct of the police during the raid had been announced, and no official data regarding the detainees or the legal grounds for their detention had been made public.



# Belarus

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

On 16 January 2025, Archpriest Andrey Lemeshonok of the St. Elisabeth Convent stated on the state television channel ONT that Western countries promote "an ideology of destroying personality and family," that children are "corrupted" in schools, that "Europe and America have rejected God," and described LGBTIQ+ people as "sick people."

In October 2025, Olga Shpilevskaya, head of the pro-government Belarusian Women's Union and director of the Belarus office of the interstate TV and radio company Mir, stated on the program "Editors' Club" that Belarusian children should use "traditional toys" from a state-linked manufacturer and claimed that Western toys promote "transgender dolls" and foreign ideology among children, describing this as harmful influence.

In July 2025, Oleg Gaidukevich, chairman of the pro-government Liberal Democratic Party of Belarus, commenting on legislative amendments related to restrictions on so-called "propaganda" of gender reassignment, stated that in Belarus one could speak about gender transition "only at a garbage dump," and that such a person would be detained afterward.

In 2025, the state-affiliated regional outlet "Grodzenskaya Pravda" published an article titled "Alien values, or how the Schneider family fled from the praised Western tolerance to Belarus," which portrayed "Western tolerance" as a threat to family and children and contrasted it with Belarusian "traditional values." The same article was republished on the websites of state institutions and enterprises, including the Leninsky District Administration of Grodno and the state enterprise Grodnovodokanal.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In 2025, civil society reported that the Belarusian state continued to use the register of "extremist materials" to ban books, magazines, and online media platforms, including those operating in Europe but produce information in Russian or Belarusian that deal with topics of sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights. Following court decisions of Russia, the Belarusian state banned fiction and non-fiction books, such as "Call me by your name" by Andre Aciman, "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides, and others.

In July, Belarus adopted Law No. 86-Z amending the Law "On the Rights of the Child." The amendments classify "propaganda of homosexual relations, gender reassignment, pedophilia, and childlessness" as harmful to children's psychological health. The revised wording of Article 37 includes "discrediting the institution of the family and marital and family relations aimed at the propaganda of homosexual relations, gender reassignment, pedophilia, and childlessness." The amendments entered into force in January 2026. In July, a similar draft law was submitted by the Prosecutor General against "propaganda of homosexual relations, sex change, childlessness, and paedophilia." The proposed article criminalises the "dissemination in any form of information aimed at shaping citizens' perceptions of the attractiveness" of LGBTI identities or child-free living, while equating them with pedophilia. According to the draft, any product with a mention of LGBTI themes should contain an age label of 18+, with the provision applying to books, movies, and the media at large. Penalties under the draft include fines of up to €220 for individuals, up to €1,110 for entrepreneurs, and up to €1,650 for legal entities. If the alleged information is accessible to minors, sanctions increase to short-term detention for citizens and fines up to €2,200 for companies.

In October, the lower house of the Belarusian parliament adopted, at first reading, the draft law. The bill must still pass a second reading, be reviewed by the Council of the Republic, and be signed by President Alexander Lukashenko.

Civil society groups expressed concerns on the draft law, condemning it as "an open attack on human rights and personal freedoms, including freedom of expression, the right to non-discrimination, and the right to privacy."

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In August, Belarusian authorities designated the Belarusian Association of Human Rights Lawyers (BAHRL) as an "extremist formation." In September, the LGBTI media outlet DazHip was designated as extremist by a decision of the Pukhovichy District Court of the Minsk Region. Following the designation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs added BAHRL and six

lawyers allegedly associated with the organisation to the national list of individuals and entities involved in "extremist activities." Under Belarusian law, being named as part of an "extremist formation" exposes individuals to potential criminal prosecution, with penalties of up to 10 years in prison.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In February, the Group of Independent Experts on the Human Rights Situation in Belarus presented its latest [findings](#) documenting abuses committed by Belarusian authorities since the 2020 elections. The report detailed a broad campaign of repression, including arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and the persecution of political opponents, journalists, and LGBTI people. The experts found that arrests are frequently politically motivated and carried out with excessive force, intimidation, and threats. Detainees reported beatings, electric shocks, sexual threats, and the coercion of family members. The report highlighted the particularly brutal treatment of LGBTI people, who face slurs, sexual humiliation, and targeted violence in detention. One case described a trans woman being severely beaten, threatened with rape, and forced into a false confession.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In December, Belarus [released](#) 123 political prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski and prominent opposition leader Maria Kolesnikova, following two days of talks with the United States aimed at improving bilateral relations. The releases were part of a broader agreement in which the United States announced the lifting of sanctions on Belarus.

However, state-led repressions on human rights defenders and civil activists continued. As of December, [1145](#) people were held in detention as political prisoners according to the Belarusian Human Rights Centre Viasna. During 2025, at least [1254 people](#) were persecuted on political grounds, including LGBTI community members.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In June, a ['Gender Transition Commission'](#) examined

the applications of 30 trans people seeking trans-specific healthcare and/or legal gender recognition, leading to only eight approvals. The date of the meeting was announced only a few days in advance, making preparation difficult and adding psychological strain.

Further, participants reported that the methods remained outdated and discriminatory, with members asking inappropriate and humiliating questions about intimate life, everyday habits, alcohol preferences, and even physiological details. Applicants were also unexpectedly required to retake psychological tests that are typically conducted during initial registration. Explanations given for refusals were vague and subjective, often resting on arbitrary judgments about "inappropriate" personal qualities rather than objective standards.

In September, the Ministry of Health of Belarus [amended](#) the rules governing legal gender recognition procedures and changed the composition of the Gender Transition Commission, removing a sexologist and replacing this role with a psychiatrist-narcologist.

In December, a [Gender Transition Commission](#) meeting in Minsk examined applications of approximately 36 trans applicants seeking trans-specific healthcare and/or legal gender recognition, resulting in 16 approvals. The meeting date was announced one week in advance, and at least two applicants were unable to attend due to the short notice.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, LGBTI psychologist and activist Marina A. was [detained](#) in Minsk by officers of the State Security Committee (KGB). She was not informed of the grounds for detention and was interrogated. Officers threatened to initiate criminal proceedings for alleged participation in an extremist formation if she refused to cooperate and provide information about LGBTI activists and organisations. Following pressure from law enforcement, she reduced her professional activities and later left Belarus due to fear of further persecution.

In July, a closed drag event in Minsk was exposed by pro-government Telegram channels through photos and videos. According to TG House, police detained at least two participants, confiscated phones, questioned them about event attendees and organisers, and released them without formal detention records. Both detainees reported that law enforcement asked personal questions about sexual orientation and involvement in other events.

Between August and October, Belarusian police officers exerted pressure on the parents of a trans man who had relocated to France after fleeing repression. Police made at least two phone calls to his parents demanding his contact details and social media accounts and visited his former place of residence, where they questioned neighbors about his whereabouts. Officers warned the parents that they could be summoned for questioning if they refused to provide information.

Between August and November, Belarusian law enforcement officers repeatedly visited the parents of a transmasculine non-binary person residing in Poland as an asylum seeker. Officers questioned the parents about his location, address, and activities, and demanded that he return to Belarus to cancel his residence registration. In October, he was reported to have been placed on a wanted list in the Russian Federation.

In August, in a city in the Vitebsk region, police officers detained a gay man without publicly stated grounds, examined the contents of his phone, including contacts and correspondence, and subsequently summoned and questioned other men whose details were found on the device. Some of those contacted reported threats of liability related to alleged sharing of intimate materials.

In September, OMON riot police raided a queer-friendly party in a Minsk club. According to TG House, officers stopped the event, forced visitors to lie on the floor or stand facing the wall, conducted searches, and detained approximately 10–15 people. Detainees reported humiliating and homophobic remarks; at least four people were charged with minor administrative offences.

In November, a queer woman was subjected to doxing through pro-government resources linked to security structures. After publication of her personal data, police officers contacted her and applied pressure aimed at coercing cooperation; she subsequently left Belarus.



# Belgium

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In April, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) issued a decision concerning RTBF's broadcast of "Le 128e sexe" on Le Grand Cactus, which parodied the song "Le 3e sexe." The CSA noted that the segment reinforced stereotypes about trans and non-binary people and could be perceived as offensive. RTBF acknowledged the misstep and issued a public apology. The broadcaster also engaged in discussions with LGBTQIA+ associations to improve its practices, and several training sessions were organised for staff.

In August, Belgian tennis player Greet Minnen publicly shared a homophobic threat she received after her loss at the Prague Open, including violent language targeting her sexual orientation. The case attracted media attention and highlighted the prevalence of online bias-motivated speech against LGBTI athletes.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, Belgian civil society organisations highlighted a continued rise in cases of bias-motivated violence in Belgium compared with previous years. They pointed to a marked increase in ambushes arranged through dating app, growing rates of attacks against LGBTI spaces, greater levels of workplace harassment, and expanding social-media-driven disinformation campaigns targeting and antagonising LGBTI people. At the same time, reporting rates remained low, with only 14% of assaulted LGBTI people in Belgium reporting incidents to the police.

For what concerns LGBTI-phobic ambushes, in April, the trial of several individuals accused of assaults linked to entrapments opened in Brussels, with the sentencing of two of the accused taking place in May. Similarly, in November, a 31-year-old man was sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment for the assault of a man at a gay cruising site. The incident occurred in August 2024, when the perpetrator filmed himself repeatedly striking the victim while uttering homophobic remarks.

The judgment explicitly recognised the homophobic motive as an aggravating factor in the offence. Finally, in December, prosecutors in Leuven reported that four minors were arrested in connection with

an attempt to lure two victims to a secluded place through a dating app to assault them and rob them, leading to one of the victims sustaining serious injuries.

The first half of 2025, the Rainbowhouse of Verviers was subjected to several attacks, including its rainbow flag being ripped from the facade and torn, stones being thrown against the door, and the defacement of a mural. It took several messages including public call-outs, for the local authorities to finally react. In February, three men appeared before a Belgian court in connection with a homophobic assault committed in 2024, when they attacked two individuals after perceiving them to be a same-sex couple. Also, in February, Georgian journalist Lucas Ablotia and a trans friend were assaulted on a bus in Brussels after assailants confronted them and asked whether they were gay.

## EDUCATION

In April, a study conducted by the Jeugdonderzoek-splatform (JOP) in Flanders showed that, compared to the results of a similar survey in 2018 and 2013, students in secondary school aged 16 to 18 are significantly less accepting of lesbian and gay (LG) people. The data highlighted that 1 in 5 surveyed people found aggression against a LG person acceptable. In 2018, it was less than 1 in 10.

## EMPLOYMENT

In 2025, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men launched a new guide for supporting intersex, trans, and non-binary people in the workplace. Aimed at employers, colleagues, unions, and others, it helps stakeholders understand their legal rights, duties, and responsibilities while addressing both practical and human aspects of support.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, the Brussels Regional Government reaffirmed its commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) by announcing that DEI criteria would be progressively integrated into public procurement and linked to regional economic support for employers. The Region also signalled its intention to promote DEI at federal and European levels. In June, implementation of measures under the

Brussels regional equal opportunities framework entered into force, requiring local administrations to adopt diversity plans in order to access certain subsidies.

In July, in Brussels, the court of first instance ruled in favour of a 51-year-old trans cyclist who challenged the International Cycling Union's (UCI) updated eligibility rules for women's competitions. Until mid-2023, she had been allowed to compete provided her testosterone levels remained below a set threshold for 24 months, but new rules introduced last July required that trans women must have begun their transition before puberty or before the age of 12. The court found this condition discriminatory, stressing that it excluded virtually all trans women and was unsupported by solid scientific evidence. While acknowledging UCI's aim of protecting women's competitions as legitimate, the judge held that the measures were neither proportionate nor necessary. The ruling prevents the UCI from refusing her entry into women's competitions, though the organisation may still appeal.

The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published a leaflet aiming to raise awareness of intersex variations to promote an approach based on respect, autonomy and fundamental rights, and to encourage intersex people who are victims of discrimination to contact the Institute.

## FAMILY

In April, the Flemish social-democratic party Vooruit, together with Equal Opportunities Minister Rob Beenders, announced plans to enshrine same-sex marriage in the Belgian constitution. The proposal would insert explicit protections into Article 22, which concerns private and family life. Beenders argued that, with LGBTI rights facing growing pressure worldwide, constitutional recognition would provide an "additional barrier" against any rollback.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In October, federal minister of security and internal affairs, Bernard Quintin, submitted a bill that would allow the government to issue an administrative ban on certain associations that 'pose a threat' to national security, or even dissolve them without going

through court. This project has spurred concerns from civil society organisations. In an opinion issued at the end of December, however, the Council of State highlighted a series of legal flaws, which are considered too vague to enable citizens to know what behaviours are criminalised. The minister said the government would revise the text.

## HEALTH

In January, the number of recognised specialised centres providing gender-affirming healthcare was increased from two to six, located in Ghent, Antwerp, Sint-Niklaas, Genk, Liège, and Brussels. Although people seeking care continue to face waiting times of between one and four years, this expansion makes psychosocial support more financially and regionally accessible.

In February, Belgium's first dedicated LGBTI healthcare centre, the Maison Arc-en-Ciel de la Santé (MACS), opened in Brussels. Accredited by the French Community Commission (COCOF), the centre aims to provide high-quality medical care in an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment, ensuring respect for all gender identities, sexual orientations and sex characteristics.

In July, Belgium confirmed its restrictions on blood donation by men who have sex with men (MSM). Under pressure from the Belgian Red Cross, the authorities again ruled out any prospect of fully ending the exclusion regime. Until 2017, MSM were subject to a permanent ban on blood donation. Following pressure from the Court of Justice of the European Union, Belgium replaced this with a deferral period of twelve months, which was subsequently reduced to four months as of 1 July 2023. By contrast, the MSM criterion was formally abolished for plasma donation in 2022, after the Prisme Federation successfully challenged the restriction before the Constitutional Court.

## DATA COLLECTION

In April, the University of Liège published a study highlighting heightened housing and health insecurity among LGBTI people in the Walloon Region, particularly affecting trans people and young people. The report identified discrimination in housing, family

rejection, and barriers to accessing healthcare, and noted that these issues remain largely unaddressed in regional public policy.

In late November, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men released its third nationwide [study](#) on the living conditions of trans and gender non-binary people. The report warned that trans people are increasingly drawn into polarised political debates, exposed to persistent disinformation and hostility, and experiencing a deterioration in living conditions. Respondents reported higher levels of violence and discrimination than in previous studies, as well as increased behavioural adaptation, such as avoiding certain places out of fear.

In parallel, the Institute published its annual [statistics](#) on legal gender recognition. In 2024, 748 people changed the gender marker on their identity documents, the highest number recorded to date. A majority of applicants were under 25 years old. The continued rise in administrative gender marker changes, despite worsening reported social conditions, reflects both sustained reliance on Belgium's self-determination-based procedure and heightened visibility of trans people in a polarised climate.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In March, Belgian authorities announced [plans](#) to update their travel advice for nationals heading to the United States, with a focus on risks faced by LGBTI travelers. The Federal Public Service (FPS) for Foreign Affairs confirmed it would revise its guidance in response to "the general strengthening of border controls" and the shifting legal and social climate for LGBTI people in the US. The move follows similar steps by Finland, Denmark, and Germany, after several European travelers were detained at the US border.

In May, Belgium joined a group of European States in issuing a [joint diplomatic declaration](#) condemning the introduction, by the Hungarian Parliament, of fines and potential bans on Pride events. In June, several Members of the European Parliament and national politicians, including Belgian representatives Elio Di Rupo (PS), Kathleen Van Brempt (Vooruit),

Saskia Bricmont (Ecolo), Sara Matthieu (Groen), Hilde Vautmans (Open VLD) and Christie Morréale (PS), [announced](#) they would travel to Budapest to participate in the city's banned Pride march.

In May, on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs [reaffirmed](#) Belgium's commitment to the protection of LGBTI rights. It condemned ongoing violence, harassment and disinformation targeting LGBTI people and expressed [support](#) for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

In December, Belgium joined 17 other states in a joint statement expressing concern over Kazakhstan's legislative amendments banning so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation," stating that such measures are incompatible with international human rights obligations.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, Interior Minister Bernard Quintin (MR) publicly [proposed](#) not introducing a third gender option ("X") on identity cards but instead allowing non-binary people to request the removal of the gender marker. The proposal would establish two types of ID cards: one displaying the gender marker (M/F) by default, and another without any gender indication available upon request. The proposal follows years of political deadlock and a 2019 Constitutional Court ruling which found the lack of recognition for non-binary people unconstitutional. LGBTI organisations criticised the proposal as inadequate, stressing that it does not provide full legal recognition of non-binary identities and could expose individuals to discrimination, particularly in countries hostile to LGBTI rights.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

A [draft resolution](#) was introduced in the Belgian Senate by the PS political group. Its objectives included achieving pay equality between male and female elite athletes and promoting the inclusion of LGBTI people in sport. Both texts were rejected twice by the Belgian majority.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

The Council of Europe has repeatedly called on its member states to guarantee the rights of intersex people. In Belgium, a draft bill "aimed at preserving the physical and psychological integrity as well as the bodily autonomy of persons with variations of sex characteristics" was introduced in July 2024 by the Ecolo political group. These legislative proposals explicitly build on the recommendations of the Council of Europe and seek to strengthen the protection of intersex people's rights. The proposals have been submitted on several occasions but have not been examined at plenary committee level; they remain blocked, thus preventing any progress in the legislative process.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In May, the Belgian Senate committee examined a draft resolution introduced by the Socialist Party aimed at promoting gender equality in sport, including achieving pay equality between male and female elite athletes and enhancing LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport. The committee rejected the resolution by a vote of 7 to 3, marking the second time the majority voted against the proposals.



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, the Municipal Court in Sarajevo ruled in *SOC v. MHS* that discrimination had occurred in access to advertising services. The Court established that the refusal to broadcast promotional materials for an LGBTI cultural event amounted to direct discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. It found that the service provider had selectively and unjustifiably restricted access to a service that was otherwise offered to other clients under equal conditions.

## ASYLUM

In 2025, the Council of Europe expanded its curriculum of online training programs to include a formation on "LGBTI Asylum Seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina," with several public officials, including border police officers, kickstarting the program by taking part in it.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In February Sarajevo imam Muhamed Velic called queer Bosnian singer Božo Vrećo a "monster" and a "freak" during a sermon, accusing him of disrespecting Bosniak cultural heritage through his performances of *sevdalinka*, a traditional folk genre.

In response, the head of Bosnia's Islamic Community, Husein Kavazović, addressed a letter to Vrećo on January 29, affirming the importance of diversity and Bosnia's legacy of coexistence, though he did not directly condemn Velic's comments.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH (HJPC BiH) issued a notice to relevant judicial institutions regarding updates to the National Judicial Case Management System (CMS/TCMS) for what concerns hate crimes. The update enables systematic data collection on the motives of attacks and on the belonging of injured parties to protected characteristics, including SOGI elements. The amendment entered into force on January 27.

In June, two LGBTI persons were attacked following their participation in the 2025 BiH Pride March, due to the fact that they were wearing rainbow symbols.

## EDUCATION

In June a book titled "The History of Queer Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina" was released. The book traces the experiences of LGBTI people from the Middle Ages through the Ottoman period, the Yugoslav Kingdom, and Socialist Yugoslavia, and is regarded as the first book of its kind in the country.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In 2025, civil society groups reported that - in the last five years - local governments in Republika Srpska have provided over 2 million KM in funding to 11 anti-LGBTI groups. These organisations oppose women's reproductive rights and LGBTI rights and have campaigned against laws protecting women from violence.

In February, the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo issued a final ruling establishing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics.

The ruling concerned a public statement made by the then-member of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly, Samra Čosović Hajdarević, who, following the announcement of the first BiH Pride March in 2019, published a Facebook post that, among other things, contained calls for segregation, isolation, and discrimination against LGBTI persons.

In March, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska passed amendments to its Criminal Code that erased "gender identity" from the list of 'protected characteristics' from all provisions of the law.

In June, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina amended its Criminal Code, narrowing the definition of "close person" in laws protecting individuals from violence to include only partners of the opposite sex. This change was introduced in response to unfounded claims that the previous gender-neutral definition could lead to the legal recognition of same-sex couples.

In October, the Agency for Public Officers of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, jointly with Sarajevo Open Centre, organised a training session

on discrimination based on SOGIESC for public officers.

Similar trainings were also organised in May and October for members of the judiciary both in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Commission for Human Rights of the House of Peoples of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina refused to examine a complaint submitted by the Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC), reportedly on the basis of prejudicial attitudes towards LGBTI people. Only the President of the Commission issued a dissenting opinion.

## FAMILY

In October, the first session of the Working Group of the Government of the Federation of BiH on the Same-Sex Partnership Law was held. The establishment and initial meeting of the Working Group marked a formal step forward following years of advocacy by LGBTI organisations for legal recognition of same-sex couples in the Federation entity. However, by the end of 2025, no draft law had been published and no clear timeline for adoption had been communicated.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, nearly a thousand people took part in the sixth Sarajevo Pride, highlighting the continued lack of legal recognition for same-sex marriage and adoption. Pride remains limited to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as authorities in the Republika Srpska entity have repeatedly banned such gatherings. Draško Stanivuković, mayor of the capital of the entity, previously stated that Pride in Sarajevo was sufficient, claiming such events do not align with the "spirit of the Serbian people."

## DATA COLLECTION

In May, the Sarajevo Open Centre published its Annual Report on the State of Human Rights of LGBTI People in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the report acknowledged modest progress in public discourse and some signs of institutional openness, it emphasised that systemic advancements remain limited and largely reliant on individual initiatives rather than coherent strategies or policies.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In July, the European Parliament published its annual report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, placing new emphasis on countering hybrid threats such as foreign interference and disinformation. The report expressed concern over increasing efforts by malign foreign actors to exploit ethnic divisions and institutional weaknesses to obstruct reforms and erode trust in the EU. It also criticised Milorad Dodik, current president of BiH, and members of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) for launching initiatives aimed at nullifying state laws within the Republika Srpska entity and attacking key state institutions.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBTI human rights defenders attacked in March 2023 by a mob in Banja Luka are still waiting for their assailants to be prosecuted.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In May, the Cantonal Court of Sarajevo issued a decision in favour of a trans woman whose legal gender recognition approval was declared dependent, by administrative authorities, on her divorcing her wife. Despite the ruling, administrative authorities still refused to allow the procedure to take place, leading the applicant to challenge the decision once more in front of the Cantonal Court.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2025, a total of 296 participants attended a special training program on human rights with a focus on SOGIESC issues - 23 candidates for the rank of junior inspector and 273 candidates for the rank of police officer. This training was organised by the Sarajevo Open Center and in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Interior.



# Bulgaria

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In April, in the centre of Sofia, a trans woman was attacked by a man wielding a machete. The incident occurred late at night, while the victim was returning from a gathering with friends. She was approached by a man with a bicycle who started hurling threats at her, saying that "freaks like her should not live" before slashing her on the head and legs. Once she fell to the ground, he continued by kicking her repeatedly. She has since filed a complaint with the police.

## EMPLOYMENT

In April, disinformation circulated on Bulgarian social media claiming that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) had introduced a quota system requiring farms to employ at least 10% "homosexual, bisexual, or trans workers by 2026. The Ministry issued an official rebuttal, condemning the story as gross misinformation intended to mislead the public and damage the institution's credibility. The statement stressed that the Ministry had never adopted, discussed, or agreed upon any measures related to collecting data on the sexual orientation of agricultural workers.

## EDUCATION

In August, one year after Bulgaria's parliament banned the discussion of LGBTI issues in schools, students and teachers reported that the law has deepened fear and anxiety in the classroom. The amendments prohibit so-called "propaganda" of "non-traditional sexual orientation" in schools. Educators, experts, and international organisations had warned that the law was vague, unnecessary, and likely to fuel bullying rather than prevent it. Students interviewed by national news outlets reported the law has instead introduced more stress into schools without addressing any real problems.

Previously, in February, the Prosecutors pardoned members of the Revival Party for blacklisting teachers by posting calls on Facebook to hold teachers accountable for opposing the law amendments. In September, LGBTI organization Deystvie, Single Step Foundation and Assoc. Prof. Deyana Marcheva submitted a formal request to the

Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria insisting on referring the law to the Constitutional Court in order for it to be repealed.

## HEALTH

In October, Single Step Foundation successfully established the first LGBTI-friendly healthcare partnership with a focus on preventative care in the areas of gynecology, internal medicine, dermatology, psychology and otorhinolaryngology with a local private health centre. The service offers free checkups and discounted cosmetic procedures delivered by supportive medical professionals. In addition to that, Single Step established the first network of LGBTI-friendly general practitioners in Sofia and expanded its trans healthcare support programme by establishing partnerships with additional endocrinologists in Sofia; thus, counteracting the lack of state-funded LGBTI-oriented healthcare

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In February, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) presented its assessment of Bulgaria's progress on two high-priority recommendations from its 2022 monitoring report. ECRI rapporteur Jens Vedsted-Hansen noted that while Bulgaria has taken steps to expand the number and regional distribution of Roma mediators in healthcare, education, and employment, it has failed to implement the recommendation concerning the rights and equality of LGBTI people. Specifically, Bulgaria has neither established a working group nor adopted a national action plan to protect LGBTI rights, as ECRI had urged.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In May, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) held a hearing in the Shipov case (C-43/24). The case was brought by a Bulgarian trans woman living in Italy, whose repeated attempts to amend her gender marker and name on official Bulgarian documents were denied by national courts, creating issues in accessing healthcare, education, employment, housing, welfare, and even exercising her freedom of movement within the EU. This case comes against a backdrop of repeated

condemnations from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), which ruled that Bulgaria was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights for failing to ensure quick, transparent, and accessible gender recognition procedures. Nonetheless, Bulgaria's Supreme Court issued a binding interpretative decision in 2023, declaring that national law does not permit courts to authorize a change of sex, name, or personal identification number for trans people in the civil register.

In September, CJEU Advocate General Jean-Richard de la Tour presented an [opinion](#) on the case, stressing that Member States are obliged to legally recognise the gender identity of their citizens and to reflect this in civil status documents, regardless of whether the person has undergone surgical interventions. He argued that if a trans person cannot obtain an identity document reflecting their gender identity, this constitutes a restriction on the fundamental rights enshrined in EU doctrine - among which the right to free movement. Further, he also underscored that the condition of surgical operation as a prerequisite for recognition of gender reassignment violates the right to personal integrity and the right to private life.



# Croatia

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In March, the Zagreb County Court ruled against the Ordo Iuris Foundation, ordering it to remove from its website a petition found to be discriminatory towards LGBTI people and their families. The case was brought by the Rainbow Families association (Dugine obitelji), which claimed that the petition – aiming to ban same-sex adoptions – was discriminatory. The judgment concluded that the petition not only promoted morally unacceptable narratives but also incited discrimination and harassment, thereby breaching legal standards.

In April, the Electronic Media Council (VEM) rejected a request by the Center for Civic Initiatives (CGI) Poreč to sanction the conservative portal Narod.hr for alleged hate speech and discrimination against LGBTI people. CGI had produced a survey identifying over 300 controversial articles on the portal, but VEM found the research methodologically flawed and the contested claims to fall under the protections awarded to free speech. The decision was discussed on Croatian Catholic Radio's Arguments programme, where it was framed as an attempt to censor conservative and Catholic voices under the guise of regulating hate speech.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In September, Zagreb Pride warned of an escalation in organised homophobic violence in Zagreb and its surroundings from July 2024 to the end of August 2025, with at least ten cases of attacks on LGBTI men lured through a dating app reported. Several organised criminal groups created fake profiles to entrap LGBTI men. All the cases documented by Zagreb Pride, as well as those reported by the Zagreb Police Department, follow a similar pattern: upon arriving at the arranged meeting place, the victim is ambushed by a group of young men, subjected to homophobic slurs, and then brutally beaten and robbed.

In May, a 22-year-old man was beaten and hospitalised after an attempted robbery arranged via Grindr; this case was formally reported with legal assistance, and a criminal investigation is ongoing.

In July, eight minors were investigated for four

violent crimes, including robbery and grievous bodily harm, after luring multiple men through a gay dating application in the Zagreb and Vrbovec areas. The police have arrested eight minors suspected of involvement in two of the attacks, while the other cases remain unsolved.

In September, Zagreb Pride called on authorities to classify the attacks as hate crimes. In October, the Municipal Criminal Court in Zagreb issued a non-final ruling sentencing three perpetrators for a homophobic hate crime committed against a same-sex couple in May 2016. The defendants were convicted of causing bodily harm, threats, and violent conduct, with the crimes legally qualified as motivated by bias against sexual orientation. Each received prison sentences ranging from eight months to one year, suspended for a probationary period of five years. The judgment followed a seven-year process, with law enforcement initially classifying the incident as a misdemeanor disturbance of public order rather than a bias-motivated crime.

After the European Court of Human Rights' 2021 judgement in *Sabalić v. Croatia*, which ruled that Croatia had failed to adequately investigate a 2010 violent homophobic attack on Pavla Sabalić the Constitutional Court of Croatia ordered the reopening of proceedings. It found violations of the constitutional rights to physical and mental integrity and non-discrimination, explicitly acknowledging the procedural dimension of state responsibility. The Municipal Criminal Court ultimately resolved the case through an expedited criminal order procedure.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, an HIV-positive gay man from Bjelovar, won his case before the Constitutional Court of Croatia, arguing that the Municipality of Bjelovar and the school had illegally processed his health data without his prior knowledge or consent. Zagreb Pride proved that information about his HIV status had been used to reassign him to a job position where he would not come into contact with pupils – supposedly as a "preventive health protection measure". Lower courts had upheld this precedent until December 2024, when the Constitutional Court ruled that his personal data had been processed and

used unlawfully, thereby violating his right to privacy, resulting finally in discrimination.

## FOREIGN POLICY

Croatia was not among the 20 EU member states that signed in May the [Statement on the Infringement of the Fundamental Rights of LGBTIQ+ Persons in Hungary](#). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [explained](#) the government "took into account the overall relationship between Croatia and Hungary as neighbouring countries linked by a number of important areas of cooperation, from economic ties to the protection of national minorities in both countries."

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In 2025, the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission published its [Country Report on Non-Discrimination in Croatia](#). While the report identifies persistent gaps and uneven national-level responses to discrimination, it highlights notable progress at the local level, particularly in Zagreb. The report underscores that civil society actors and local authorities in Zagreb have taken a proactive role in advancing LGBTI equality through structured policy initiatives. In this context, the City of Zagreb adopted the Programme for the Equality of LGBTI Persons, which will remain in force until the end of 2026.

In June, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe published its [monitoring report](#) on Croatia, noting measurable progress in addressing hate speech and improving the inclusion of Roma communities, while stressing that significant structural shortcomings persist. ECRI identified ongoing prejudice and discrimination against LGBTI persons and ethnic and national minorities as a matter of concern. In relation to LGBTI rights, the Commission highlighted that the legal gender recognition procedure remains excessively burdensome and highly medicalised, creating barriers to the effective enjoyment of rights. The Commission issued a set of targeted recommendations, including reforming legal gender recognition procedures, strengthening political leadership against racist and anti-LGBTI rhetoric,

addressing residential segregation affecting Roma families, and developing a national strategy on migrant integration that builds on existing good practices.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In March, [backlash](#) erupted in Croatia following the victory of 21-year-old singer Marko Bošnjak, in the Dora national final to pick an entry for the *Eurovision Song Contest* one of the few openly queer public figures in the region. After his win, right-wing Catholic media outlets accused the jury of privileging "non-binary" and "transgender" performers against the "will of the people." The conservative group Vigilare went further, denouncing Bošnjak's 2022 Dora entry "Pray for Us" as evidence that he had "sold his soul to the devil," while branding *Eurovision* a "fair of Satanism and perversion."



# Cyprus

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In April, an LGBTI-phobic display was reported at the Church of Saint George Havouzas in Limassol, where the acronym "LGBT" was placed on a traditional Easter bonfire (lampratzia) in the position typically reserved for an effigy of Judas. The incident prompted political and institutional reactions: AKEL Secretary-General Stefanos Stefanou contacted Justice Minister Marios Hartsiotis and Police Chief Themistos Annaoutis, urging that the matter be investigated. In the aftermath, calls were made for public vigilance and solidarity, with warnings that the incident could signal heightened risks of anti-LGBTI violence ahead of Cyprus Pride 2025.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May, Cypriot police arrested one individual in connection with the assault and verbal abuse of a 17-year-old in Nicosia. The incident occurred when the teenager was approached by two individuals who allegedly insulted and physically attacked him. While reports suggested possible homophobic or racist motives, police stated that the case is being investigated solely as an incident of assault and verbal abuse.

In May, the House Human Rights Committee in Cyprus reported a rise in racially motivated crimes. Deputy Police Chief Ioannis Georgiou stated that over the past two years, 51 attacks were recorded against food delivery drivers, while 54 racist incidents were documented in 2023. Georgiou also noted an increase in reported crimes against LGBTI people, with 14 incidents recorded in 2022 and 17 in 2023.

In June, a group of Cypriot secondary school students visiting the city were involved in a homophobic and transphobic incident, as reported by Thessaloniki Pride. According to an open letter sent to Cyprus's Education Minister Athena Michaelidou, around 20 students verbally attacked a trans woman and a gay man. Following the report, Minister Michaelidou requested an official account of the incident, with the Ministry's Director of Secondary Education, Nicholas Yiasoumi, confirming that an inquiry was underway.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In November, a draft amendment defining the terms "woman" and "gender" for the first time in

Cyprus triggered strong opposition from human rights groups, who warned that the proposal could exclude trans women from existing protections under domestic-violence legislation. The bill, submitted by DIKO MP Chrysis Pantelidis and DISY MP Charis Georgiades, seeks to revise the national law aligning with EU Directive 2024/1385 and the Istanbul Convention. Supporters argued that a precise definition is needed and insisted that the measure does not restrict gender-identity rights. Government bodies and independent institutions, however, stressed that neither the directive nor the Convention defines "woman," noted that trans women face disproportionate levels of violence, and cautioned that limiting the definition could breach non-discrimination standards. Several organisations and a number of MPs opposed the bill, prompting the parliamentary committee to request a legal opinion from the Law Office while the Justice Ministry reviews the submissions.

## FAMILY

In March, a gay couple reported being stranded in Cyprus after the birth of their twins via a surrogacy arrangement, due to ongoing delays in obtaining passports for their children. Despite submitting all necessary documents and applying for the passports in January, their application has been repeatedly delayed by administrative errors, including miscommunication and misplaced documents.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, a group dressed in black disrupted a pre-Pride march gathering, chanting homophobic slogans. The individuals carried flags featuring double-headed eagles as well as Enosis flags.

In September, the annual United by Pride event brought together LGBTI people and allies in Nicosia for a march dedicated to peace, justice, and queer liberation. Now in its fourth year, the event featured two simultaneous marches from opposite sides of the divided city, converging for a joint celebration. The organisers described United by Pride 2025 as "a beacon of hope," reaffirming their commitment to multicultural coexistence, human rights, tolerance, and the continued struggle for peace, reunification, and queer liberation in Cyprus.

## DATA COLLECTION

In November, new [figures](#) from the Interior Ministry showed that 51 people in Cyprus have changed their gender marker and name on official ID since 2021.

# Northern Cyprus

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In September, a court [ruling](#) highlighted serious shortcomings in the police response to online hate speech targeting the LGBTI community, finding that authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into harassment related to a Pride march.

The court stressed that law enforcement has a clear obligation to respond promptly and thoroughly to anti-LGBTI hate incidents.

## FAMILY

In late 2025, local authorities [announced](#) plans to declare 2026 the "Year of the Family," explicitly stating that the initiative would draw on Turkey's 2025 campaign of the same name.

As Turkey's "Year of the Family" had been widely criticised for promoting exclusionary and anti-LGBTI interpretations of "family values," the announcement prompted concern among civil society.

In 2025, Human Rights Platform together with Queer Cyprus Association continued to highlight the need for legal recognition of LGBTI relationships and of partnership rights.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, Human Rights Platform [organised](#) a public panel addressing anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rethorics within the framework of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT).

## HEALTH

According to Queer Cyprus Solidarity Line, significant requests for information submitted in 2025 concerned HIV status, access to treatment, PrEP/PEP information, psychological support, gender-affirming hormone treatments, trans-specific healthcare.



# Czechia

## EDUCATION

In February, an amendment to the Higher Education Act introduced a new provision enabling people who have changed their gender marker on official ID to obtain university diplomas reflecting their current personal data as of March. While this represents a positive step toward legal recognition, gaps in the implementing framework remain and efforts are ongoing to address these issues through engagement with higher education institutions.

In April, Jan Gregor, vice-chairman of the Alliance for Family party filed a complaint against Czech television after the company aired a Norwegian children's series that included scenes celebrating the participation of children in Pride marches. Gregor accused the broadcaster of using public funds to promote what he described as "LGBT ideology" and called for a "fundamental review" of state funding for political non-profit organisations involved in such initiatives.

In November, the newly formed government coalition stated in its programme declaration, under Section 9 (Education), that non-profit organisations should not impose political or ideological positions within the education system. Within this framework, education – particularly education addressing LGBTI issues – has been explicitly referenced as part of this narrative.

## FAMILY

In January, new rules governing same-sex partnerships came into effect in the Czech Republic following an amendment to the Civil Code. While the original draft aimed to introduce full marriage equality, parliament ultimately limited the reform to establishing "partnerships" rather than extending marriage rights to same-sex couples. The term "registered" was removed, and the updated legislation grants partners access to certain rights, such as joint property and survivor's pensions. However, restrictions remain, particularly concerning adoption.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Czechia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and

constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The programme declaration of the newly formed government coalition (See also under Education) mentions preventing funding for non-profit organisations for political activism. The proposal would also apply to non-profit organisations that seek to improve the position of LGBTI people in society, as they are often referred to as actors of political activism.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, the Czech government discussed, but did not adopt a formal position on a draft law regulating legal gender recognition. The bill responds to a 2023 Constitutional Court ruling that abolished the requirement of surgery or sterilisation for legal gender recognition. The proposed law would allow people over 18 to apply for legal gender recognition by making a personal declaration at a registry office, supported by medical certificates confirming their trans identity, the approval by an expert committee under the Ministry of Health, and a mandatory one-year waiting period before registration. The bill received largely negative feedback during the comment procedure, with ministries of Education, Interior, and Health, as well as the Commissioner for Human Rights, voicing strong objections, particularly concerning regulation of hormonal treatment and its effects on reproductive rights.

In June, the European Court of Human Rights (ECTHR) ruled that Czechia's legal requirement for sterilisation as a condition for legal gender recognition violates the rights of trans people. The case concerned a non-binary person who had spent more than a decade seeking legal gender recognition and a change to their personal identification number without undergoing surgery. The Court found this requirement to be a breach of the right to private

life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

In June the Czech Ministry of Health issued a new [methodology](#) allowing legal gender recognition without requiring surgery or hormonal treatment, effective from July. The methodology was developed in response to a 2023 Constitutional Court ruling which deemed the legal requirement for surgical intervention and sterilisation incompatible with human dignity. Under the new rules, a certification from a psychologist and signed informed consent will suffice for obtaining the certificate needed to update one's gender marker at the registry office. The organisation Trans\*parent, welcomed the removal of the requirement but reiterated that a self-determination model would provide the most effective and rights-respecting framework.

## PUBLIC OPINION

Following increased public attention to trans issues after the 2023 Constitutional Court decision (see also under Legal Gender Recognition), Czech Television (ČT) aired an [episode](#) of its *Phenomenon of the Time* series entitled "Am I a Boy or a Girl?". The episode focused on trans issues and included perspectives from trans people, expert commentary, as well as elements reflecting public opinion.



# Denmark

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In late 2024, Danish Regions confirmed that citizens who updated their gender markers on official IDs will, from 2025, be able to access health information tied to their previous CPR number, resolving a major gap that had caused loss of medical records for many trans people. Following a meeting with the Minister for Digitalisation, the CPR office also sent a directive to all public and private users of CPR data requiring systems to accommodate new personal identification numbers without disrupting access to services or records.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In June, Minister for European Affairs Marie Bjerre (Venstre) was quoted in the Danish newspaper BT stating that "it is not hate speech or hatred to say that there are fundamentally only two sexes, a man and a woman." The following day, MP Inger Støjberg, chairperson of Danmarksdemokraterne, published a similar statement in BT, asserting that "it is not hate speech to claim that there are only two sexes."

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In June, a court in Odense convicted two teenage boys, aged 15 and 16, for assaulting three gay men they had lured into an ambush via a dating app. The attacks involved kicking, beating, and filming the victims while shouting slurs. Despite these elements, the court acquitted the perpetrators of having a hate motive, prompting concern from LGBT+ Denmark about the effectiveness of Denmark's hate crime legislation and calls for the prosecution to appeal. Two other defendants were acquitted, while the convicted teenagers received prison sentences of eight and seven months, with one month unconditional.

## EMPLOYMENT

In February, the association of trade unions in industry (CO-Industri) and the association of employers (Dansk Industri), negotiated a collective agreement for employees in the industrial sector for the next three years. The agreement sets the framework for other collective agreements, including the right to fully compensated parental leave for parents in rainbow families provided the

legal parent decided to share the rights to parental leave with them.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the Danish government unveiled its new development policy strategy with broad cross-party backing, giving stronger and more explicit priority to the rights of LGBTI people than in previous strategies.

## FAMILY

In May the Parliament passed a draft bill on taxing inheritance. Under the new law, inheritance received from a biological parent who is not recognised as a legal parent - a position recognised in Danish law - will be subjected to the same taxation regime as that deriving from legally-recognised parents.

In August, Children's Conditions, Save the Children and LGBT+ Denmark released a statement urging lawmakers to ensure that all parents in multi-parent families are legally recognised, arguing that current legislation fails to reflect the realities of many families in Denmark. They stressed that the forthcoming LGBTI action plan presents a crucial opportunity to correct gaps left by the 2022 plan, which pledged to "promote the recognition of LGBTI families" but did not deliver legal equality for multi-parent households.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, Danish Pride organisers reported losing financial backing amid a broader climate of increasing attacks on LGBTI rights across Europe. Benjamin Hansen, chair of Copenhagen Pride, confirmed that 2025 had been particularly challenging, as numerous major companies had decided to scale back their sponsorship and support for Pride events.

In June, Copenhagen Pride drew an estimated 20,000 participants, far exceeding the roughly 8,000 who had registered beforehand. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Equality Minister Magnus Heunicke took part in the march, signalling continued political backing for the event. Nonetheless, for the second year in a row, Dansk Industri reiterated its inability to participate in supporting the march, citing concerns over the stance of Copenhagen Pride on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

## HEALTH

In August, the Region of Southern Denmark became the first in the country to initiate a dedicated [policy](#) and action plan aimed at improving how LGBTI people are met within the healthcare system. The decision followed a dialogue meeting held earlier in the year between regional politicians, healthcare representatives and LGBTI organisations. At the Executive Committee meeting, regional leaders agreed to begin drafting a formal policy and action plan. According to the region's 1st Vice-Chair, the discussions highlighted that presumed inclusivity often does not match patients' lived experiences, and that targeted changes are needed to ensure equitable treatment. The Danish Nurses' Council welcomed the initiative, stressing that staff training will be essential. Its 1st Deputy Chair noted that nurses are often the first and last point of contact for patients and must be equipped to meet diverse needs. The region plans to finalise and present the policy and action plan at the Regional Council meeting on 15 December 2025.

## DATA COLLECTION

A [study](#) from Aalborg University and the Statens Serum Institut, using data from the large Project SEXUS survey of 31,808 Danes aged 15–89, has revealed that 21.7% of the Danish population considers sex between people of the same sex morally unacceptable. The findings show stark demographic differences: 29.2% of men hold such views compared to 14.4% of women, and older age groups are significantly more judgmental, with the 75+ cohort twice as likely to express homophobic attitudes as the general population.

In August, a [study](#) conducted by LGBT+ Denmark and the Eating Disorders and Self-Injury Association revealed that stigma and lack of understanding from those around them contributed to the development of eating disorders and self-harming behaviours in LGBTI people. The study reported that young LGBTI people are more prone to be exposed to stigmatisation and marginalisation based on their gender and sexuality, leading to increased odds of struggling with disturbed relationships with their bodies and food.

In September, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published its [report](#) *Being intersex in the EU*, based on responses from 1,920 intersex persons across 30 European countries, including Denmark. Denmark ranked among the worst-performing EU countries in several areas, including discrimination by healthcare or social services personnel (6th place), non-reporting of discrimination (2nd place), exposure to conversion practices (6th place), and the prevalence of frequent suicidal thoughts over the past year (5th place).

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Denmark [joined](#) 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In March, Denmark [issued](#) a travel advisory for trans citizens planning to visit the United States, joining a growing number of countries responding to recent US policy changes. The advisory follows a January executive order that curtailed trans rights, ending the issuance of passports with an "X" gender marker and prohibiting gender changes on renewed passports.

In May, Aalborg Municipality's Diversity Committee unanimously [agreed](#) to begin developing an LGBTI policy and action plan. The initiative follows dialogue meetings involving local LGBTI associations and politicians. Alongside municipal efforts, the Region of Southern Denmark is set to become the first Danish region with an LGBTI policy, aimed at improving interactions between healthcare professionals and LGBTI patients.

In August, the Danish government [announced](#) that it would allocate 24 million kroner to a new LGBTI action plan for 2026–2029, citing persistent levels

of discrimination and distress among LGBTI people. The planned action plan, to be negotiated alongside the 2026 budget, aims to strengthen prevention of discrimination, improve support for victims of hate crime, and expand networks and community offers for LGBTI people across the country, with a focus on regions outside the capital. Parliamentary parties backing the initiative underlined the need for targeted measures to address hate-motivated violence, discrimination, and the wellbeing gap affecting LGBTI communities.

In August, the UN Human Rights Council issued [Report A/HRC/60/50](#), containing recommendations for member states on the protection of intersex persons. The document urges countries, including Denmark, to address discrimination, acts of violence, and harmful practices targeting intersex children and adults. It calls on states to combat infanticide, sexual violence, and other forms of physical abuse, as well as to prevent hate speech and incitement to violence both online and offline. Member states are also encouraged to integrate sex characteristics into relevant laws and policies to ensure effective protection, legal recognition, and equal treatment for intersex people.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In January, the Parliament rejected a parliamentary decision proposed by the Conservative Party to deprive young trans persons (aged between 15-17) of autonomy in healthcare regarding gender affirming treatments.

In February, a proposal from Denmark's opposition attempting to restrict the country's existing legal gender recognition framework was [rejected](#) at its first reading in the Danish Parliament (Folketing), with nearly two-thirds of MPs expressing support for the current law.

In February, the Danish People's Party submitted a [proposal](#) for a parliamentary decision requesting the state and public authorities to only recognise two genders – cognisant of the fact that, in Danish, the words for sex and gender overlap. Nonetheless the proposal did not gain political support.

In April, the Parliament passed a [proposal](#) attempting to amend the abortion law to lengthen the period under which requesting an abortion is legal. However, following comments in the public hearing from the Women's Council Denmark and the Danish Association of Midwives, the government changed the existing trans-inclusive wording to specifically using the word 'woman' to refer to the category of people concerned by the law. The LGBT Komiteen argued that the modalities through which the change was implemented were not consistent with traditional legislative processes, underscoring that the law represents the first instance in Danish legal history in which LGBTI-inclusive legislation was rolled back.

In July the government issued a [guidance note](#) outlining circumstances in which the principle of equal treatment between women and men may lawfully be set aside (for example, in gender-segregated services or single-sex activities). The Ministry of Equality subsequently submitted the draft guidance for broader consultation after arguing that its initial version lacked sufficiently clear protections for LGBTI persons. The consultation process aims to ensure that the guidance correctly balances legal exceptions to sex equality with safeguards against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In April, Denmark [urged](#) a coordinated European Union response to warnings from the United States discouraging European companies from implementing diversity programmes. The calls came after the US pledged to abolish such initiatives, prompting Danish officials to emphasise the need for a united EU stance in defending diversity and inclusion policies.



# Estonia

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Estonia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In May, on the day of the Tallinn Pride march, Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna of the Estonia 200 party publicly stated that "everyone must have the right to love." On the occasion of IDAHOBIT 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Estonian foreign missions flew rainbow flags demonstrating official governmental support for LGBTI rights as part of Estonia's foreign policy commitments.

In December, Estonia adopted a national action plan to strengthen equality and protections for LGBTI people across education, healthcare, employment, and the legal system. Developed over nearly two years by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the plan is guided by the principle that Estonia should be "a great place for LGBTIQ people to live." Key measures include improving school safety and inclusivity, updating curricula to address LGBTI topics, and ensuring mental and physical security for students and staff. Legal reforms aim to expand protections against discrimination in public services, healthcare, education, and access to goods. Changes to gender-marker procedures and protections for intersex children are also planned. Healthcare measures focus on accessible sexual health counseling and gender-affirming care, while workplaces will receive guidance on inclusion and safety, supported by annual HR and agency training. Victim support and law enforcement training will improve responses to hate crimes and discrimination, and prisons will assess and reduce risks for LGBTI persons. Internationally, Estonia commits to condemning

LGBTI discrimination and violence, with embassies participating in diplomatic statements, raising awareness, and flying Pride flags on key dates. The government plans a midterm review in 2027 and a final evaluation in 2030 to track progress.



## Finland

### BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In November, [data](#) released by Finland's Police University College indicated that reported hate crimes reached record levels in 2025, marking a significant increase compared with previous years. Police recorded a total of 1,808 suspected hate crime cases, representing a 13 per cent rise since 2023. While the majority of recorded incidents were motivated by racist hostility, with nearly 70 percent of reports linked to the victim's ethnic or national background, the data also identified sexual orientation and gender identity as recurrent motivating factors (12% of the total cases reported).

### BODILY INTEGRITY

In February, the Pirkanmaa District Court began [hearing](#) Finland's first case linked to conversion practices. A man and woman from Pirkanmaa stand accused of assault against a single plaintiff, whom they reportedly met through religious activities. While providing conversion practices is not itself criminalised under Finnish law, the prosecution argues that the practices in this case amounted to assault as they can constitute psychological violence. In March, the accused were [convicted](#) for the assault charges.

In February, the Finnish Parliament's Law Committee provisionally [backed](#) a citizens' initiative to ban conversion practices. The Finns Party and Christian Democrats had previously stated that the ban would not advance during the electoral period due to a lack of consensus, and their representatives were believed to have voted against the initiative in committee. In March, the Finnish Parliament [endorsed](#) the initiative during its plenary session with 125 votes in favour and 49 against. Nonetheless, in late March, Justice Minister Leena Meri (Finns Party) [announced](#) that the proposed ban would not advance during the current government's term, arguing that the Justice Ministry lacked the time and resources to prepare the necessary legislation. Meri also maintained that the issue required further study, stressing that the absence of consensus among governing parties complicated progress. The Christian Democrats, in particular, opposed criminalisation, citing concerns about restrictions on religious activities. Finnish Prime Minister Petteri

Orpo of the National Coalition Party echoed these comments, and by the end of 2025 the government had not introduced legislation to implement the ban, leaving the initiative stalled. Nonetheless, in November, MP Saara Hyrkkö (green party) submitted a motion to amend the criminal code to ban conversion practices. The motion was signed by over half of the MP's across parliamentary groups

### DATA COLLECTION

In March, Seta published its Pride and Hate Crimes [report](#), revealing that 2024 saw a record 56 Pride events in Finland, but 60% of them were targeted by hate crimes or harassment. Out of the Pride organisers surveyed, most described their events as peaceful, but 30 reported incidents ranging from stolen, torn, or burned rainbow flags and vandalised decorations, to egg throwing, threats, online harassment, and physical assaults. The report also highlighted that Prides were the most frequent site of hate crimes, followed by online spaces such as local Facebook groups. In addition, 42% of events faced political opposition, most frequently from the Finns Party, but also from figures in the Christian Democrats, Coalition Party, and Liike Nyt.

In June, [research](#) conducted by Queer Defense found that, in 2025, harassment and hostile language in everyday settings remain widespread, disproportionately affecting trans women, transfeminine people and lesbians. Many respondents described regular exposure to hostile attitudes in daily life, with verbal abuse, insults and the belittling of gender identity or sexual orientation identified as common forms of harm. The research underscores that discrimination against trans and queer individuals is frequently normalised and routine, manifesting through persistent low-level hostility that cumulatively undermines safety, dignity and social participation, even in the absence of overt physical violence.

### FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Finland [joined](#) 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of

facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In February, the city council of Lahti voted to end the practice of raising the rainbow flag at city hall during Pride. The decision followed an initiative submitted in November 2023 by Liike Nyt councillor Jari Pykäläinen, who argued that the city should "emphasize a neutral line" by limiting flag-raising to official and established national flag days. The proposal received support from nearly all members of the National Coalition Party and several representatives of the Social Democratic Party, the council's largest group.

Similarly, in November, an administrative court in Eastern Finland ruled on a complaint challenging a municipality's decision to fly the rainbow flag during Pride celebrations. The complainants argued that the measure violated the principle of non-discrimination and the municipality's flag policy.

The court dismissed the complaint, finding that flying the rainbow flag could be justified as an action to promote equality. It emphasised that advancing equality is a legal obligation for public authorities under non-discrimination legislation, and that the measure was consistent with this duty.

In June, the Parliamentary Rainbow Network and Seta organised a Pride Q&A session at Helsinki Pride house. The event featured members of parliament discussing current rainbow issues and included speeches from rainbow activists. Participants included network chair Elisa Gebhard (SDP), vice-chair Saara Hyrkkö (Green), Mai Kivelä (Left Alliance), Henrik Vuornos (National Coalition), Eeva Kärkkäinen (Centre) and Emma Ringbom (Swedish People's Party).

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In February, Finland's Constitutional Law Committee gave the green light to the government's proposal

on compensation for private fertility treatments. The committee decided the bill could proceed through the ordinary legislative process without requiring changes. In March, the Finnish Parliament passed the law, approving reimbursements for private fertility treatments only when infertility is medically diagnosed, thereby excluding single women and same-sex couples unless eligibility is based on a diagnosed medical condition. The Social Democrats, the Left Alliance, and Green MP Bella Forsgrén issued a dissenting opinion, arguing the legislation failed to take into account diverse family structures.

# France

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled in case C-394/23, brought by the Association "Mousse", that it is unlawful for a railway company to require customers to provide a gender marker when purchasing train tickets. The case was against the French state-owned railway company SNCF, which obliges passengers to choose between the civil titles "Mr" or "Ms," without offering a third option. The CJEU found that such a requirement violates the GDPR principles of data minimisation and accuracy, since gender information is not necessary for the provision of the service. It also recognised that collecting this data creates a risk of discrimination on the basis of gender identity, breaching the fundamental EU principle of non-discrimination. In late July, the Council of State ruled that the SNCF will not be allowed to require customers to indicate their gender when purchasing tickets on its online platform. With the ruling, the Council of State aligned itself with the previous CJEU judgment, arguing that the practice conflicted with the principle of data minimization, a pillar of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and condemning the State to pay €3,000 to the complainant.

In June, the Versailles Administrative Court of Appeal ruled that the city of Puteaux did not engage in discrimination based on gender identity during a school trip in which a 12-year-old trans boy was required to sleep in a girls' dormitory. Despite his requests to be accommodated in accordance with his gender identity, the court found that the municipality had made reasonable efforts to find a solution but was ultimately unable to do so.

## ASYLUM

In March, the Paris Administrative Court annulled a February order by the Paris police chief to transfer a trans asylum seeker to Spanish authorities. The court ruled that transferring the person, who had begun transitioning in France, would amount to "inhuman and degrading treatment." The police chief's decision had been made under the Dublin III Regulation, which prevents refugees from seeking asylum in multiple EU countries.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, the Paris Criminal Court delivered its verdict in the trial of five individuals accused of incitement to hatred and homophobic threats against singer Bilal Hassani. Four of the defendants were convicted, with one receiving a €3,000 fine for public incitement to hatred or violence on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The case stemmed from the backlash following the announcement of a concert by Hassani in the Basilica of Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains, a deconsecrated church. The announcement triggered a wave of hostile online comments, including explicit calls for violence against Hassani.

In February, the Bordeaux Court of Appeal upheld the conviction of a far-right activist, for homophobic insults during the 2022 Bordeaux Pride. Previously convicted in May 2024, he was fined €1,000 and ordered to compensate the associations Mousse and STOP Homophobia for disrupting the procession, displaying a banner hostile to LGBTI people, and chanting homophobic slogans.

In May, the Paris Criminal Court sentenced seven people to fines and suspended prison terms for sending homophobic and anti-Semitic hate messages to Thomas Jolly, the artistic director of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Jolly had filed a complaint after being targeted with threats and insults on social media.

In May, an investigation was opened in Paris following a complaint by a leader of the women's section of the Stade Français rugby club against the club's sporting director. The complaint accused him of moral harassment and lesbophobic remarks. The Paris public prosecutor's office confirmed that the complaint had been entrusted to the Brigade for the Repression of Crimes against Persons (BRDP). The club's sporting director faced internal disciplinary action, including suspension from his role with the women's team and a formal reprimand.

In June, a 21-year-old soldier was sentenced by the Tulle Criminal Court to one year of probationary prison for publishing a series of online messages

promoting extreme violence against ethnic minorities and LGBTI people.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, official data indicated that anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination remained present in France. A study published by the Observatoire des inégalités reported more than 3,000 anti-LGBTI crimes and offences in 2024, compared with around one third of that number in 2016. According to the study, people under the age of 29 accounted for half of recorded victims and men for nearly three-quarters. Data released in May by the Departmental Statistical Service for Internal Security (SSMSI) recorded 4,800 anti-LGBTI offences in 2024, representing a 5% increase compared with 2023. The recorded offences included physical violence, threats, insults and entrapments linked to contacts initiated through dating applications.

Several cases of bias-motivated assaults were reported during the year. In January, a boy under 15 was assaulted in Harfleur (Seine-Maritime) in an attack that involved an attempted aggravated rape and the theft of his mobile phone. The case remained under investigation at the end of the year and no judicial outcome has been reported. In the same month, a 19-year-old man was assaulted in Caen by a group of around 15 individuals, while a 22-year-old man was attacked on a bus in Marseille by three individuals who directed homophobic insults, spat on him and threatened him with a knife – the main suspect was charged with death threats and public insults motivated by bias against sexual orientation. In February, a 20-year-old man was assaulted in Ambarès-et-Lagrave (Gironde) by seven teenagers who beat him while directing verbal abuse linked to his sexual orientation. In April, a man from Arras was verbally harassed and spat on in Béthune before being physically assaulted in a nearby parking area. In the same month, two trans teenagers were attacked in Le Havre (Seine-Maritime) by a group of minors who punched and kicked them while shouting transphobic insults. In June, a worker was assaulted at his home in Chantilly (Oise) by two colleagues who beat and humiliated him in acts reported as motivated by his sexual orientation. In July, a 21-year-old man was assaulted in Le Mans shortly after

the city's Pride march. In September, the director of a primary school in Moussages, in the Cantal department, died by suicide after being subjected to persistent lesbophobic harassment not receiving adequate institutional support.

A number of cases also involved entrapments arranged through dating apps. In February, an LGBTI activist in Nice was lured and assaulted in what investigators described as a homophobic ambush. In March, in Bordeaux, a man was contacted via a dating site, confronted by a minor and two accomplices and forced to withdraw €1,000. At the end of March in Dijon, three men were attacked in separate incidents after being approached in a known cruising location and were beaten and robbed.

Several court decisions during the year concerned incidents involving similar methods. In January, the Le Havre Criminal Court sentenced three men aged 19 to 21 to prison terms ranging from one to three years for an assault committed in December 2023 against a young man targeted because of his sexual orientation. In February, the Lille Children's Court sentenced a teenager to 11 years' imprisonment for three attempted murders committed in August 2020, two of which were considered to have a homophobic motive. In March, the Charente Juvenile Court sentenced a man to 18 months' imprisonment for the extortion of a homosexual man whom he had lured to a meeting in 2023, where the victim was beaten, placed in a car trunk, taken to a field and robbed. In the same month, in Martinique, an assize court opened the first trial for assault and battery causing permanent disability, sentencing a defendant to 13 years' imprisonment for armed robbery accompanied by homophobic aggravating circumstances. In May, two men aged 19 and 20 were convicted for luring and assaulting a gay man in Étapes via a false meeting arranged on Snapchat. The Créteil Criminal Court sentenced two men aged 21 for attacking two gay men after arranging a meeting with the intention of stealing their cars. In June, the Nîmes Criminal Court convicted two men aged 18 and 19 for luring victims through a dating application using false profiles and ambushing them at their homes. In July, four individuals were arrested in Malesherbois (Loiret) in connection with a series of attacks in which victims were directed to buildings

where they were beaten, threatened with a weapon and forced to hand over money or make bank transfers. In October, the Bobigny Juvenile Court found five teenagers guilty of violence and attempted theft – with the aggravating circumstance linked to sexual orientation – after they used the Grindr app to arrange meetings with men who were then assaulted and robbed. A further hearing to determine sentencing was scheduled for January 2026, and the court ordered educational measures and compensation for the victims. In December, the Essonne assize court sentenced a 28-year-old man to eight years' imprisonment for a series of armed extortions committed in Paris in 2022 against men contacted through dating applications and lured to a cellar where they were threatened with weapons and robbed; on appeal he acknowledged the homophobic insults accompanying the attacks.

## EDUCATION

In February, the Official Gazette published an update to the National Education curriculum, strengthening comprehensive sexuality education to better support students in their personal and relational development. The program, mandatory since 2001 but previously little applied, is structured around current issues and covers sexual orientation, gender identity, and related discrimination.

In March, anti-Semitic, homophobic, and racist graffiti, including Nazi symbols, were found on the facade of Merleau-Ponty High School in Rochefort (Charente-Maritime). Some of the inscriptions contained explicit calls for violence. Local authorities and civil society condemned the incident, with the mayor stressing that hate and racism have no place in schools or in the country, and anti-discrimination activists linking the episode to broader patterns of bias-motivated hostility.

In June, in the Landes, a sports educator was suspended from all management duties for six months following a report to the departmental youth and sports service. The report cited repeated harassment and homophobic remarks directed at both athletes and colleagues.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, a coalition of LGBTI rights associations sent a letter to the Ministries of Sport, Interior, and Justice, highlighting a rise in homophobic acts and chants being recorded during championship matches.

In March the Stop Homophobie association reported that they would submit a complaint against Vincent Labrune, president of the Professional Football League (LFP), following an Instagram post that referenced a homophobic chant by supporters of Saint-Étienne.

In April, the Paris Criminal Court sentenced far-right YouTuber Grégory Toussaint for public insult and incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The conviction followed the broadcast of two videos which falsely accused LGBTI people of indoctrinating children, equating them with paedophiles, and advocated for public assaults.

In May, the football club FC Nantes announced that it will financially sanction its player Mostafa Mohamed for refusing to play in a match scheduled on IDAHOBIT. The club noted that Mohamed had previously refused to participate in similar matches on the same day during the past two seasons, claiming that his faith and origins influenced his choice.

In May, several racist and homophobic tags were discovered on the campus of the University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour (UPPA). The university's management condemned the messages as contrary to the institution's values of equality and respect and announced that it would file a complaint.

In June, the Professional Football League (LFP) announced sanctions against one player for uttering a homophobic insult during a halftime on IDAHOBIT, while two other sanctions were awarded to players refusing to participate in the matchday's anti-LGBTI-phobia initiative.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In late June, Inter-LGBT faced the suspension of regional subsidies from Île-de-France. Valérie

Pécresse, President of the Regional Council, confirmed that the association would not receive the €25,000 grant initially allocated for 2023. The decision followed controversy over a poster produced for the 2025 Pride March. The poster depicts a figure with a Celtic cross tattoo, a symbol associated with the far right, being held by other march participants by the tie and arm. Pécresse criticised the image as an incitement to violence, stating that it appeared to show "the corpse of a white man hanging by his tie," while the organisers rejected that interpretation and presented the imagery as anti-extremist.

In June, Yohan Pauer, founder of the masculinist and homonationalist group Eros, [announced](#) that his organisation would participate in the Paris Pride March. In reaction, LGBTI organisations and public figures issued a public statement of condemnation and mobilised against the participation of the organisation in the march. Despite this, the Préfecture de Police – acting under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior – overruled the organisers and required that Eros be allowed to participate, invoking principles of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In [January](#) and again in [April](#), the rainbow-coloured staircase at the University of Rennes 2 was vandalised. The staircase, inaugurated in 2019 as a symbol of tolerance, was painted over in blue, white, and red and defaced with a homophobic insult. In May, a similar episode [targeted](#) the rainbow-colored stairs leading to Avenue de Verdun, in the 10th arrondissement of Paris, with Mayor Alexandra Cordebar from the Socialist Party denouncing the act as a "homophobic act".

In January, a 22-year-old man was [arrested](#) in Pau for assaulting a passerby wearing a rainbow pin. The aggressor initially questioned the victim about the meaning of the badge and, believing it signalled support for an anti-fascist cause, struck them multiple times.

In April, balloons filled with white paint were [thrown](#) against the windows of the LGBTI Iskis center in

Rennes, and an insulting tag was painted on one of the walls.

In August, a Pride banner displayed on the façade of the Hôtel de Région in Rennes was deliberately [vandalised](#). Authorities strongly condemned the act, which comes amid a surge in attacks targeting locations and symbols associated with the LGBTI community in the Breton capital.

## HEALTH

In January, the Regional Order of Physicians in Nouvelle-Aquitaine [sanctioned](#) a gynecologist from Pau for refusing to treat a trans patient in August 2023. The case was decided in the first instance by the disciplinary chamber which stressed that, under the Public Health Code, "no person can be discriminated against in access to prevention or care." In December, he was [convicted](#) by the Pau Criminal Court due to the fact that, following his refusal to treat the victim due to their gender identity, he posted a series of transphobic remarks online. As part of the proceedings he was acquitted of the charge of discriminatory refusal of care but sentenced to a €1,000 suspended fine for sexist contempt.

In July, the French National Authority for Health (HAS) [published](#) its first national recommendations on the medical care of trans adults. The report formally recognises the right to self-determination and for the first time, the HAS clearly stated that being trans is not a pathology, but a legitimate personal identity. The recommendations specify that access to hormonal treatments or surgical interventions should no longer require a psychiatric diagnosis, and emphasise flexible psychological support tailored to the needs of each individual.

In August, the French Blood Establishment (Établissement français du sang, EFS) [confirmed](#) that it had begun deleting references to "homosexual relationships" from its donor databases, following concerns that the continued storage of such data violated data protection principles. The decision, prompted by a petition from the association TOUS.TES, marked the removal of a former exclusion criterion for blood donation that had remained in EFS records despite the full abolition of sexual-orientation-based restrictions in 2022.

## DATA COLLECTION

In 2024, data from the Ministry of National Education highlighted that serious incidents in French schools – including insults, physical assaults, harassment, and homophobic or racist attacks – increased. The annual SIVIS survey, conducted by the Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance (Depp), recorded 16 serious incidents per 1,000 students in middle and high schools, compared to 14 the previous year. This trend has been steadily rising since 2018-2019, when 12 incidents per 1,000 students were reported.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, France joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In May, the Senate adopted a bill aimed at rehabilitating people convicted under France's former laws criminalising homosexuality. The text, introduced by Socialist Senator Hussein Bourgi and approved unanimously, acknowledges that France pursued discriminatory policies against homosexual people between 1942 and 1982 – the year homosexuality was fully decriminalised. The bill specifically targets two former provisions of the criminal code: one that imposed a higher age of consent for same-sex relations, and another that increased penalties for "public indecency" when committed by two people of the same sex. However, the Senate rejected the compensation mechanism that had been inserted in the draft law during its first reading and approved by the National Assembly. That mechanism proposed financial reparations for those wrongly convicted: a flat €10,000 payment plus €150 for each day spent in detention. Senate right-wing and centrist groups, who hold the majority, opposed reinstating this component, arguing that it lacked legal clarity and could lead to significant litigation risks.

In June, the French Equality Body published a new framework decision on matters relating to gender identity. This text updates and expands the previous framework decision of 2020, addressing the difficulties trans people face in multiple areas: civil status and filiation, health and social protection, education, employment, sports participation, access to goods and services, police ethics, and deprivation of liberty. It also considers the specific situations of trans foreign nationals.

In June, a bill was tabled in the Senate to strengthen the legal framework against LGBTIphobic violence and facilitate the work of LGBTI advocacy associations. The text aims to address gaps identified following a priority constitutional question (QPC) filed by STOP Homophobie by providing that associations fighting LGBTIphobia could join proceedings as civil parties in cases of rape, sequestration, theft, extortion or blackmail. Another key measure aims to reinforce the ban on conversion therapies by extending criminal liability to anyone offering conversion practices, regardless of professional status. Finally, the proposal introduces "gender expression" as an autonomous ground of protection in anti-discrimination and hate speech law, attempting to align French law with recommendations from the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In late May, the Strasbourg Court of First Instance ruled in favor of a 31-year-old trans man against the Caisse primaire d'assurance maladie (CPAM) du Bas-Rhin, which had refused to cover his mastectomy. The court found this refusal discriminatory and in violation of Articles 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). CPAM was ordered to reimburse the cost of the surgery and to pay €3,000 in damages.

In June, the CPAM of Seine-Saint-Denis was condemned for refusing to cover medical care for two young men undergoing transitions. The court in Bobigny ruled that the CPAM had relied on an outdated 1989 protocol, which has since been abolished. It ordered both the local CPAM and the national health insurance fund (CNAM) to jointly pay €3,000 in damages to each plaintiff in recognition of the harm they suffered.



# Georgia

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, civil society actors reported an increasingly polarised environment marked by state-aligned disinformation and hostile narratives. According to community-based and service-providing organisations, these dynamics have contributed to declining trust in public institutions, particularly law enforcement, and have increased pressure on independent organisations already facing legal uncertainty, reputational attacks, and funding constraints.

## ASYLUM

In 2025, internal civil society data underscored that emigration among LGBTI people in Georgia continued to be a growing and persistent concern. Community-based organisations reported a recurring, "wave-like" pattern in requests for relocation or international protection support, consistent with trends observed in the previous years. The highest number of requests in 2025 was recorded in May, which may correlate with the entry into force of the so-called "Georgian Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA)" and the heightened climate of fear and uncertainty it generated. A comparable spike was observed in 2024, with peak demand in September and October - periods that coincided with the third reading of anti-LGBTI legislation and the murder of Kesaria Abramidze.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, the continued prevalence and systemic nature of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity remains one of the most pressing challenges faced by the LGBTI community in Georgia. Nonetheless, a mismatch between the official statistics and reality was induced by the obstacles hindering the effective prevention and investigation of SOGI-based hate crimes – such as delays in launching investigations, granting victims the status of 'aggrieved party', or properly qualifying criminal cases, combined with the lack of sensitivity and awareness among police officers, prosecutors, and investigators.

In July, the Tbilisi Court of Appeals upheld the life sentence of Beka Jaiani, convicted of murdering trans woman Kesaria Abramidze. The original

sentence, handed down on April 16, found Jaiani guilty of premeditated murder committed with particular cruelty, with the motive determined to be related to the victim's gender identity.

This was the last case in which "gender identity" was recognized as a hate crime motive in Georgia, following the removal of "gender identity" from the list of protected grounds in the country's hate crime provisions under the Criminal Code and the anti-discrimination law in 2025.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In March, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)31 concerning the execution of judgments in the Identoba and Others v. Georgia group of cases, including Women's Initiatives Supporting Group and Others v. Georgia and Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia. The Resolution expressed serious concern at the continued failure of the Georgian authorities to ensure effective protection against, and investigation of, bias-motivated violence targeting LGBTI persons. It noted persistent shortcomings in identifying discriminatory motives, holding perpetrators accountable, and addressing police misconduct. Despite more than a decade of supervision of these judgments, the Committee of Ministers underlined that investigations remain incomplete and that implementation of required individual and general measures has been insufficient.

In April, the Georgian Dream party advanced a series of legislative amendments in the first reading, including significant changes to the Law on Gender Equality. These amendments removed the term "gender" from the text, replacing all references to "gender identity" or "gender equality" with the narrower formulation "equality between women and men." Accordingly, the 2014 Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was also amended with "gender identity" being removed from the list of protected grounds, and the Gender Equality Committee was formally dissolved. The Georgian Dream party justified the initiation of these amendments by claiming that the term "gender" had

been purposely introduced into Georgian legislation under foreign influence as a "reflection of the global processes".

In July, a [statement](#) by the Georgian Orthodox Church, through its governing body, the Georgian Patriarchate voiced opposition to the European Commission's call for Georgia to repeal its anti-LGBTI legislation, claiming that such a demand contradicts prior EU assurances that European integration would not require changes to the country's traditional values. The Church described the 2024 law, passed under the ruling Georgian Dream party, as protecting "family purity" and restricting LGBTI "propaganda" aimed at minors. The Patriarchate stressed that the religious community fully supported the law at the time of its adoption and continues to see it as essential to maintaining a "healthy social lifestyle."

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Pride movement in Georgia, led by Tbilisi Pride, has constituted one of the most visible tests of equality, civic space, and democratic governance in the country. Pride initiatives have represented not only advocacy for LGBTI rights but also a broader indicator of Georgia's commitment to human rights standards and the protection of freedom of assembly. Pride-related events, including the March for Dignity in 2021 and the Pride Festival in 2023, were violently disrupted by far-right groups. Civil society organisations reported limited and ineffective protection by law enforcement authorities and, in some instances, inflammatory statements by senior public officials. As of 2025, no effective investigations had been carried out, organisers had not been granted official victim status, and those responsible for organising and perpetrating the violence had not been held accountable. In recent years, Georgia has undergone a marked authoritarian shift, characterised by increasing restrictions on civil society and non-governmental organisations, alongside intensified anti-LGBTI rhetoric. In this context, Tbilisi Pride reported that it was compelled in 2025 to largely suspend its activities, close its office, and relocate staff, citing the inability to organise Pride Week safely under prevailing conditions.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In April, the Georgian Parliament [passed](#) the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) in its third and final reading. The law requires that any individual or organisation deemed to act in the interest of a foreign entity – including those receiving foreign funding – register as a foreign agent and imposes penalties for non-compliance. FARA is intended to replace the 'Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence' adopted the previous year.

Almost simultaneously, the Georgian Parliament [approved](#) amendments to the Law on Grants in a third and final reading. The new provisions ban the receipt of foreign grants without prior government approval, which must be granted within ten days by the government or an authorised official. According to the law, compliance will be monitored by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and violations will be punished with a fine equal to twice the grant amount.

More recently, further [amendments](#) to the Law on Grants expanded the law's scope to treat activities such as signing ordinary service contracts for knowledge sharing or technical assistance as equivalent to issuing a grant.

In November, independent monitoring data [indicated](#) that the Anti-Corruption Bureau expanded its oversight over civil society organisations. Since 2024, independent NGOs have been required to submit extensive documentation, including personal data, relating to their activities. In September, the bureau [initiated](#) "monitoring" of more than 80 organisations under amendments to the Law on Grants adopted in April, ordering civil society organisations to provide detailed information on activities carried out since 16 April 2025. The organisations responded stating that the bureau's monitoring was unlawful due to the fact that the bureau did not reference specific provisions of the amended Law on Grants. Subsequently, the bureau filed motions with the Tbilisi City Court to enforce the monitoring. In mid-September, the court issued an order requiring nine organisations to comply, adopting the bureau's reasoning without independently examining the legal or factual basis of the request. At the end of 2025, related court

proceedings remained ongoing, and a number of organisations challenging the monitoring measures continued to operate while being subject to active investigation.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Throughout 2025, civil society actors reported a continued deterioration of the human rights environment amid broader democratic backsliding. The Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) noted that anti-Western narratives and institutionalised LGBTI-phobic rhetoric have intensified pressure on civil society organisations and independent media. According to these reports, legal and administrative measures have increasingly been used to restrict access to funding, stigmatise organisations, and expand compliance and enforcement risks for human rights defenders.

In April, the Georgian Parliament received a legislative proposal aimed at restricting LGBTI symbolism. The initiative came from the international association "Protect Your Homeland," which called for urgent adoption of a law banning LGBTI marches in Georgia and prohibiting the display of rainbow clothing in public gathering spaces. According to the Parliament's Bureau, the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee was assigned to study the proposal and report back to the Bureau.

## HEALTH

Throughout the year, a report produced by the WISG underscored that LGBTI persons remained particularly affected by stigma, confidentiality concerns, and discriminatory practices in healthcare, with trans people facing additional hurdles due to the absence of national protocols for trans-specific care, limited medical competences, and a lack of insurance coverage. Civil society organisations have also pointed to a growing gap between Georgia's obligations and its domestic legal framework. In particular, they noted that Georgia has failed to properly implement the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruling in *A.D. and Others v. Georgia*, which required Georgia to provide legal gender recognition procedures that are efficient, transparent and accessible. Instead, recent national legislation continues to

obstruct access to legal gender recognition and has introduced measures that effectively criminalise aspects of gender-affirming healthcare.

## DATA COLLECTION

Data collected by civil society organisations in 2025 indicate that, despite a decrease in officially recorded cases in recent years, bias-motivated crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity remain a significant concern. Monitoring reports identify persistent shortcomings in prevention and investigation, including delays in initiating proceedings, obstacles in granting victims formal "aggrieved party" status, misqualification or failure to recognise bias motives, and limited sensitivity among law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities. Civil society further reported continued under-reporting of incidents, attributed to fear of secondary victimisation, concerns regarding confidentiality, and low levels of trust in law enforcement institutions.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In October, the Georgian Dream party began promoting disinformation about LGBTI people to portray the European Union as interfering in Georgia's internal affairs. This came as the EU threatened to suspend visa-free travel for Georgian citizens over the government's failure to protect LGBTI rights and its enactment of anti-democratic legislation. Under Georgian Dream, the government rejected previous plans for EU membership and ignored the August 31 EU deadline to implement measures ensuring LGBTI protections and repealing anti-democratic laws.

Since 2024, the ruling party and allied pro-Russian groups have accused the EU of promoting "LGBT propaganda" and attempting to erase Georgia's national identity. Party officials have publicly framed EU recommendations as unreasonable demands, including that the EU requires Georgia to introduce marriage equality and legal gender recognition procedures.

Following an official letter from the European Commission requesting clarification on Georgia's fulfillment of conditions for continuing visa liberalisation, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli

Kobakhidze stated that the government is prepared to abandon the EU visa-free regime if it is treated as an ultimatum.

Kobakhidze described these conditions as "empty political ultimatums" lacking legal basis and emphasised that Georgia's priorities are sovereignty, peace, and stability. He stated that visa liberalisation is a matter of convenience, whereas traditional values and societal stability are existential issues.

### **FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT**

In February, a research report titled *Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections* documented the systematic use of homophobic and degrading language by police and special forces during the suppression of the November–December 2024 anti-Russian protests. The report describes repeated instances of insults, threats, degrading treatment and sexualised violence, with individuals perceived as insufficiently "masculine" reportedly singled out for particularly severe physical abuse. The documentation further indicates that minors were among those affected, with recorded cases of verbal humiliation, physical violence and confiscation of personal belongings.

### **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe voiced concern that, despite repeated requests, Georgian authorities proceeded with the adoption of the "Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minors," which bans the promotion of LGBTI identities and restricts public assemblies organised for that purpose. The Committee warned that this legislation represents a regression in the execution of previous cases and raises serious questions about Georgia's compliance with European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments. It therefore urged the Georgian state to repeal the law.

In July, ILGA World, Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG), Tbilisi Pride, and Equality Movement (EM) submitted a shadow report for Georgia's fourth Universal Periodic Review. The report assessed the situation of human rights for LGBTI people in Georgia

between 2021 and 2025, highlighting systematic rollbacks of rights, increasing state-sponsored hostility, and growing exclusion from public life. It also noted that progress on gender equality had been undermined, with measures to promote women's political participation revoked and gender-based violence, particularly by law enforcement, going unpunished, sustaining a climate of impunity.

### **LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION**

In 2025, civil society condemned Georgia's failure to implement the ECtHR ruling in *A.D. and Others v. Georgia* (See also under Health), underscoring that the September 2024 'family values/minors' law includes a complete prohibition of legal gender recognition and has been applied as a basis to restrict gender-affirming healthcare.



# Germany

## ASYLUM

In June, the Federal Cabinet adopted a [proposal](#) aimed at classifying Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, as so-called "safe countries of origin." Yet, in these states, LGBTI people continue to face imprisonment for several years, torture, and widespread societal violence.

In August, the newly elected coalition government under Chancellor Friedrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union [announced](#) its commitment to end Germany's humanitarian admission programmes. Among those targeted is the Federal Admission Program Afghanistan, which had been established to relocate and protect vulnerable Afghans including LGBTI people exposed to systematic persecution, rape, and murder under Taliban rule.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May, the Federal Criminal Police Office, together with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, published the latest [statistics](#) on politically motivated crime in Germany. A total of 84,172 such offences were recorded - the highest figure ever documented and more than 40 percent above the previous year's levels. The majority of these crimes were attributed to far-right extremism. Among the categories of hate crimes, 1,765 offences targeted individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, representing a 17.75 percent rise, while 1,152 offences were linked to gender diversity, an alarming 34.89 percent increase.

In 2023, the Conference of Interior Ministers signed off on a report from its working group on combating homophobic and transphobic violence, endorsing a set of recommendations and recognising that existing protections for LGBTI people remain inadequate. To date the report has not been made public, although federal and state authorities were asked to present progress updates by autumn 2025. Ahead of that deadline, the LSVD\* [surveyed](#) all 16 state interior ministries and the federal police about their implementation efforts. Their responses indicate that many states have taken few concrete steps or have offered little transparency, despite the persistence of violence targeting queer people.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July, Education Minister Karin Prien imposed a [ban](#) on gender-inclusive language within her ministry, prohibiting staff from using the asterisk or other special characters in official communications. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Office has underscored that such prohibitions contradict constitutional protections against unequal treatment.

In late September, the Federal Council approved a [motion](#) submitted by the governments of Berlin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North Rhine-Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein to launch a constitutional amendment process via the Bundesrat, seeking to amend Article 3(3) of the German Constitution (Basic Law), the provision that prohibits discrimination. When the constitution was drafted, LGBTI people were left out as a protected group despite their persecution under National Socialism. This omission enabled decades of criminalisation and repression in the Federal Republic. Supporters of the initiative argue that the historical gap should be closed to guarantee constitutional protection for LGBTI people now and in the future. No amendment had been adopted by the end of 2025.

## FAMILY

In June, the District Court of Pforzheim [ruled](#) that Germany's current law of descent (Abstammungsrecht) is unconstitutional in its treatment of rainbow families, finding that the exclusive automatic recognition of the birth mother as the sole legal parent violates the fundamental rights of both children and parents in same-sex families. The court referred the question of constitutional compatibility to the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, noting that existing law discriminates by preventing families with two mothers from being recognised as such at birth. Several other specialist courts have initiated similar Normenkontrollverfahren (review of legal norms) on the same grounds, and one constitutional complaint remains pending before the Federal Constitutional Court.

In July, the German Ministry of Justice presented a [draft reform](#) of the law of descent intended to implement the Federal Constitutional Court's April

2024 ruling on family life and parental rights under Article 6 of the Basic Law. The proposal mainly clarifies how paternity can be challenged. However, it does not address the automatic recognition of both parents in rainbow families, leaving existing legal inequalities unresolved. It also places greater emphasis on biological parenthood and does not clarify whether private sperm donors could be allowed to contest legal parenthood despite prior agreements.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Several Christopher Street Day (CSD) events in Germany this year took place under heightened police protection, reflecting growing concerns about threats to the LGBTI community.

In late October, a security report by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation documented a record level of right-wing extremist attacks on Christopher Street Day (CSD) events across Germany. According to the monitoring, of 245 CSDs held in 2025, at least 110 were disrupted or attacked, with at least 53 incidents linked to organised right-wing networks, including counter-demonstrations and mobilisations by extremist parties and youth groups. Queer-hostile offences recorded by civil society and reflected in federal hate-crime statistics increased by over 40 % during the year, and eastern Germany experienced a disproportionate share of disruptions. In response to the heightened threat environment, the parliamentary group Die Linke tabled a motion in the Bundestag calling for strengthened protection of CSDs and a coherent strategy to address queer-hostile violence; the motion was debated but had not been adopted by year's end.

## DATA COLLECTION

In January, the Electronic Patient Record (ePa) entered its pilot phase in three regions, with the intention of later becoming the default for all people with statutory health insurance unless they actively opt out. At the time, LSVD NGO stressed that the planned design of the ePa created risks for patients whose medical information is especially sensitive, including many LGBTI people. The organisation warned that details such as HIV status, PrEP

use, gender-affirming treatments, mental health diagnoses or reproductive care are highly personal, yet under the proposed system they would be accessible to all authorised providers. Moreover, even if patients attempted to hide individual documents, sensitive information would still be traceable through prescriptions or insurance billing data. LSVD reported that this had already sparked concern within the LGBTI community, reviving fears of targeted data collection reminiscent of the historical "pink lists" used to facilitate persecution. Germany's federal parliament ultimately rejected the draft in October. Nonetheless, since October, medical practices and pharmacies were subjected to the obligation to use the ePa, while individual insured persons were still allowed to reject its use.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Germany joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In May, Germany's federal parliament (the Bundestag) announced that it would fly the rainbow flag only once a year, on the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). Bundestag President Julia Klöckner (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) justified the decision by arguing that Christopher Street Day (CSD) is primarily a day of assembly, protest, and celebration, and that the rainbow symbol should therefore be carried by citizens rather than displayed by the parliamentary institution itself. Chancellor Friedrich Merz likewise rejected the hoisting of the rainbow flag at federal institutions for CSD, dismissing the idea by stating that the Bundestag is "not a circus tent."

In May, Sophie Koch, a member of the Saxon state parliament, was appointed as the new Federal

Government Commissioner for the Acceptance of Sexual and Gender Diversity. The role is situated within the Federal Ministry of Education, Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, with a mandate to strengthen acceptance of sexual and gender diversity across society and government policy.

This year's [National Remembrance Day](#) ceremony marked the first time that explicit mention was made of people who were persecuted and killed during the Nazi era because of their gender or sexual identity.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, doctors, psychologists and psychotherapists experienced in supporting trans and non-binary people issued a [joint statement](#) rejecting political interference in medical practice and condemning attempts to curtail health-related rights for intersex, trans and non-binary persons. The statement responded in part to a November 2024 motion passed by the Bavarian Landtag with the support of CSU, Free Voters and AfD deputies, which called on the state government to advocate federally for limiting trans-affirming medical treatments for minors, including puberty blockers, hormones and surgeries to "exceptional cases". The experts also expressed concern about party programmes advocating the abolition or restriction of Germany's Self-Determination Act (SBGG), which since late 2024 allows adults to amend their names and gender markers without medical or judicial barriers.

In February, ahead of the federal elections, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) announced [plans](#) to revise the Self-Determination Act, which came into force in November 2024 and allows people to amend their names and gender markers by personal declaration without medical or judicial barriers. A CDU spokesperson argued that the annual, unconditional possibility of changing first names and gender entries was misguided and stressed that greater protection for children and adolescents must take precedence. The party also opposed hormone therapy and other medical treatments for minors and called for a unified treatment guideline across Germany, Austria and Switzerland; under current law, gender recognition is independent of medical procedures and those treatments are regulated separately in the healthcare system.

In May, the newly formed federal government outlined its position on the Self-Determination Act in the coalition [agreement](#) for the 21st legislative period. The agreement commits to evaluating the law on gender registration by July 31, 2026, emphasizing the government's intent to uphold the rights of trans and intersex people. The review will focus on three main areas: the law's impact on children and young people, the timeframes allowed for changing gender registration, and measures ensuring the protection of women. Additionally, as part of an upcoming reform of name law, the government plans to enhance the traceability of individuals in cases where there is a legitimate public interest in name changes. The evaluation was put out to tender in October and is expected to be carried out in two phases over a period of three years.

In July, the Federal Ministry of the Interior proposed [draft regulations](#) to alter the registration system by introducing data sheets recording an individual's previous gender entry and any legal change, which would have made such information visible in the personal registration record. In September, the Ministry submitted a revised version of the ordinances to the Federal Council for approval, with a vote scheduled for [17 October](#). The planned measures remained largely unchanged, except for a stipulation that states should be excluded from conducting targeted searches for trans, intersex and non-binary persons in the system. At the Federal Council, following a recommendation from its Committee for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth to reject the draft, the topic was [taken off the 17 October agenda](#) and thus the proposed changes [were not adopted](#).

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Abortion is generally illegal in Germany, but under certain circumstances it is not punishable by law. Due to the collapse of the coalition, a bill to decriminalize abortion was not voted on in early 2025. The current federal government has effectively put long-overdue reform of abortion law on ice; a cross-party proposal to legalise abortion up to the 12th week of pregnancy and modernise the law did not [advance](#) after the collapse of the previous coalition, and reproductive rights advocates criticised the inaction as leaving Germany's outdated regulation under §218 unchanged.

## Greece

### ASYLUM

In October, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) condemned Greece for the treatment of an LGBTI refugee from Iran, who had been detained pending deportation in 2013. The Court ruled that Greece's actions violated Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment. The ECtHR also noted that the refugee had no practical or effective legal remedy at the time to challenge the detention or seek restoration of his rights. The lawyer representing the refugee highlighted the prolonged delay in the case and emphasised the importance of linking the ECHR decision to the official files of the authorities responsible, so that accountability could be reflected in personnel evaluations or promotions where applicable.

### BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In July, Greek authorities filed a criminal case against a 45-year-old man from Hanioti for an online post inciting discrimination against immigrants and the LGBTI community. The Chania Crime Prosecution and Investigation Sub-Directorate, according to the Hellenic Police, opened the case under legislation addressing certain forms of racism and xenophobia. The preliminary investigation found that the individual's post encouraged discriminatory behavior toward non-EU citizens and LGBTI people. The case file was to be forwarded to the Prosecutor of the Minor Offences Court of Chania. By the end of 2025, there has been no publicly reported update on whether the case has progressed to charges or court proceedings.

### BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In July, the Mixed Jury Court of Appeal of Crete convicted three French tourists for a 2017 attack on a same-sex couple, recognising a homophobic motive and applying enhanced sentencing under Greek law. The perpetrators had approached the couple under a pretext and then assaulted them, repeatedly striking one victim in the head. The attack ceased when a passerby intervened, causing the attackers to flee. Although they left for France the next day, authorities identified them and proceeded with the case. The Court of Appeal sentenced the three attackers to seven and eight years in prison,

invoking Article 82A of the Criminal Code, which increases penalties for crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation. This ruling represents the first final conviction in Crete explicitly recognising a homophobic motive and is among the first in Greece.

In July, a 24-year-old man was attacked in Anthoupolis as he exited the metro by a group of around five people who physically attacked him and verbally abused him with homophobic slurs. One of the attackers recorded the assault on video. The attackers eventually left, leaving the victim on the street until a neighbor intervened to help him.

In September, a male couple was subjected to a homophobic attack in central Athens after holding hands and sharing a kiss. A passerby aggressively approached them, threw a cup of coffee at them, and shouted insults. The couple filed a complaint with the Racist Violence Department. There has been no publicly reported information by the end of 2025 on the outcome of the investigation or any charges in the case.

### EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, Greece's Council of State overturned a 2022 Health Ministry decision that had lifted a ban on blood donations by gay men, effectively reinstating the exclusion pending further scientific evaluation. The court ruled that the policy change bypassed expert recommendations and lacked supporting scientific studies. The ruling came after petitions from organisations representing people with thalassemia, who argued that the ministry had failed to prioritise public health and proper blood safety protocols. The Health Ministry is now required to re-evaluate the policy to ensure it aligns with both scientific standards and constitutional protections.

### FAMILY

In April, the Greek government announced a reform restricting access to surrogacy for same-sex male couples and single men. Under the new rules, only women, whether single or in a relationship, who are medically unable to carry a child will be eligible. Justice Minister Giorgos Floridis framed the measure, part of a broader Civil Code revision, as an effort to clarify eligibility criteria.

In late May, Greece's Council of State ruled that civil marriage between same-sex couples, as stipulated by a 2024 law, is constitutional. The Court confirmed that allowing marriage between persons of the same sex, as well as the right for such couples to adopt jointly or for one spouse to adopt the other's child, does not violate constitutional provisions on the protection of marriage, family, motherhood, childhood, or equality. The case was examined following a request for annulment filed by three religious associations seeking to overturn the regulation that records spouses' and parents' details in civil registry documents.

## HEALTH

In October, a report by ANT1, a major national television broadcaster, highlighted a case of systemic invisibility faced by a trans woman in Greece's public health system. Despite having undergone bottom surgery, the woman still has a prostate for medical reasons. When attempting to book a prostate examination through IDIKA, the electronic system for appointments and health procedures in public hospitals, she was repeatedly blocked, effectively denying her access to necessary care. The issue arises because IDIKA recognises her as a woman in all official records, creating a mismatch between her medical needs and the bureaucratic system. Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis acknowledged the problem, describing it as a "technical issue with IDIKA" and stated that he would investigate the matter.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, the secretariat of the University of West Attica refused to issue a new degree to a trans graduate whose civil registration documents had been legally updated to reflect their gender identity. The refusal cited a decision of the Council of State, but under article 4 and article 6(1) of Law 4491/2017 on legal gender recognition public authorities are explicitly obligated to update all official records and issue new documents reflecting a person's corrected gender and name.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In July, 26-year-old Electra Rome Dohtsi was elected president of Volt Greece, becoming the country's first openly trans political party leader.



# Hungary

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, the Szentendre District Court fined a woman 375,000 forints (around €1,000) for a homophobic attack on a gay teacher. The incident happened in February 2023, when a cleaner at the teacher's rural school refused to clean his classroom, reportedly for prejudiced reasons. Later that day, the cleaner returned with his mother, who shouted homophobic insults and threats in front of students and staff, saying they would not allow him to teach their children and threatening to have him dismissed by the mayor. Police initially treated the case only as defamation and discontinued proceedings, but following intervention by Háttér Society, the victim's legal representative, it was reclassified as a hate crime. The court eventually rejected mediation, stressing the seriousness of the act, its prejudiced motive, and the fact that it occurred in a school setting before minors and colleagues.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In mid-March, Hungary's ruling Fidesz party submitted a set of amendments curtailing LGBTI rights and restricting civil liberties.

The first set of amendments targeted the Fundamental Law (National Constitution).

First, it modified Article L) to emphasise that "Human beings shall be male or female." (See also under Legal Gender Recognition) Second, to underpin the amendment to the Act on the Right of Assembly banning LGBTI-themed assemblies (See under Freedom of Assembly), it modified Article XVI (1) to underscore that the right of children to "physical, mental, and moral development" should take precedence over other rights except for the right to life.

Together with the constitutional amendments, gender identity was removed from the list of protected characteristics in the Equal Treatment Act. The list of protected grounds remains open, with "any other characteristic" potentially covering gender identity as well.

In April, the constitutional amendments were approved by Parliament with 140 votes in favor and 21 against.

In March, MP from the Our Homeland Movement Előd Novák announced plans to introduce a new bill aimed at prohibiting the display of rainbow flags on public buildings. The proposal argues that Hungarian law requires all users of the national coat of arms and flag to respect their authority and dignity, while the rainbow flag allegedly "offends the beliefs and feelings of the majority," creates scandal, and is displayed "against local public will" in highly visible locations. The bill was put on the agenda of the Parliament with supporting votes from the governing Fidesz and KDNP MPs, its discussion is pending in Parliament.

## FAMILY

In June, Hungary's Constitutional Court ruled that same-sex couples married abroad must be recognised as registered partners within Hungary, setting a deadline of October 31 for Parliament to enact the necessary piece of legislation. The case originated from a constitutional complaint lodged by an Hungarian-German couple, whose foreign marriage had been treated by Hungarian authorities as non-existent and was not recognised either as marriage or as a registered partnership. They argued that this lack of recognition violated their right to human dignity and respect for private and family life under the Fundamental Law, and was inconsistent with relevant European Court of Human Rights and Court of Justice of the European Union case-law. While same-sex marriage remains prohibited in Hungary, registered partnerships have been available since 2009. A 2016 draft law also stipulated that same-sex marriages contracted abroad should be treated as registered partnerships domestically. However, because the provision was eventually removed from the bill presented to the Parliament, it was never approved. No legislation implementing the Constitutional Court's decision has been tabled.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In February, in his State of the Nation speech, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared that "the Pride organisers should not bother preparing this year's parade," citing the need to "protect children." Pride organisers immediately condemned the move, insisting Hungary's Fundamental Law still guarantees freedom of assembly and expression.

Soon after, MPs of the governing majority submitted a set of amendments, including a [bill](#) to amend Hungary's 2018 Assembly Act and the Fifteenth Amendment to the Fundamental Law (See also under Equality and Non-Discrimination). The amendment to the Assembly Act was rushed through the Parliament in a day, and it expanded the list of circumstances under which police may prohibit assemblies, adding that an assembly should be banned if it "violates the prohibition set forth in Section 6/A of Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and guardianship administration (hereinafter: Child Protection Act) or that displays a substantial element of the content prohibited under Section 6/A of the Child Protection Act." Section 6/A of the Child Protection Act prohibits making available to minors content that – among others – "depicts sexuality for its own sake, or promotes deviation from the self-identity corresponding to the sex at birth, gender reassignment, and homosexuality."

The amendment to the Assembly Act was criticized by [civil society organisations](#), the [Commissioner for Human Rights](#) of the Council of Europe, [embassies in Budapest](#), and [the UN Human Rights spokesperson](#). Nonetheless, in March, Hungary became the first European Union country to [outlaw](#) LGBTI-themed assemblies, after parliament amended the Assembly Act and the Misdemeanour Act allowing fines to be imposed on both organisers and participants. Police were also [empowered](#) to use facial recognition technology to identify attendees. In response to the amendment of the Assembly Act, widespread protests [broke out](#) across the Hungarian capital. Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony also [vowed](#) to resist the ban, framing it as an attack not only on LGBTI rights but on freedom of assembly itself. In April, thousands of Hungarians [gathered](#) on Budapest's central Erzsébet Bridge to protest the reform.

Mid-May, civil society organisations notified the police of four small assemblies planned for IDAHOT and, since none of them was banned, a small [rainbow march](#) took place in the center of Budapest.

On May 24, the same group of civil society organisations [notified](#) the Budapest Police of a bigger LGBTI-themed march planned for June 1st. On May 26, the Police [banned](#) the assembly under new Section 13/A of the Assembly Act, arguing

that it resembled the "previously established Pride schedule and forms of expression". The ban drew [criticism](#) from the European Commissioner for Justice, who urged Hungary to uphold the right to peaceful assembly and confirmed that the European Commission was scrutinising the law. On May 29, the CSOs [petitioned](#) the Supreme Court (Kúria) to review the ban, arguing that the Police had not properly established the facts, had failed to give adequate reasons, and had wrongly found a conflict between the right to peaceful assembly and children's rights. In its May 31 judgment, the Court [quashed](#) the ban and ordered a repeat procedure, holding that a ban under Section 13/A is only possible if a violation of Section 6/A of the Child Protection Act is properly established. The court said the Police must fully clarify the facts and give a reasoned decision, and indicated that the "reasonably assumed" existence of grounds for a ban must be based on factual conclusions.

In the repeat procedure, on the morning of June 1st, just hours before the planned event, the Police [acknowledged](#) the march. The organisers then decided that, given the length and timing of the legal proceedings, the march could not be held "meaningfully and responsibly" that day and postponed it to June 28. The Police treated the new date as a new notification and banned the event.

The CSOs sought judicial review once more. In its June 11 judgment, the Court again quashed the Police decision and ordered a repeat procedure. It held that the Police had still not proved that the march would violate Section 6/A of the Child Protection Act. In the next repeat procedure, the Police again met the CSOs and issued a new ban. In its reasoning, the Police compared the date, time and route of the planned march with public calls for the 30th Budapest Pride. The CSOs challenged this ban as well, on 16 June. In its June 20 judgment, the Court rejected their petition and [upheld](#) the ban, making it final. The court ruled that the declared purpose of the march – to express support for the rights of transgender people to change their gender and name – raised "reasonable doubts" about compliance with the Act on Assembly and Protection of Children, which bans demonstrations deemed to promote homosexuality or gender reassignment.

Immediately after receiving the Court's ruling, the CSOs notified the Police of a new march, planned for June 28, this time explicitly to protest the unjustified restriction of freedom of assembly in breach of the Fundamental Law, the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter. On the evening of June 21, the Police banned this demonstration as well. They recognised that the organisers had cooperated and that the declared aim did not, on its own, trigger Section 13/A. However, they relied on statements and actions linked to the Budapest Pride, and argued that acknowledging this march could allow Pride organisers to circumvent the legal consequences of holding a banned assembly. The CSOs sought [judicial review](#) and on June 27 judgment, the Court quashed the ban and ordered another repeat procedure.

On June 28, the Police again banned the march, this time explicitly applying the probability standard set by the Court and relying on "contextual facts": the organisers' previous involvement in Pride, the lack of a public call for their own event compared with prominent Pride announcements, and references to domestic and foreign participants coming for Pride. Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony announced that, despite the legislative ban, the city would host the demonstration as a municipal event. On the eve of the parade, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán [said](#) police would not intend to break up the march but warned of possible legal consequences because the parade did not receive permission from the authorities. Despite the authorities' prohibition, on the day of the event organisers [reported](#) an unprecedented turnout, with between 200,000 and 470,000 participants – the largest in the history of the march. The demonstration was heavily [monitored](#) by security forces. Numerous police camera vans were deployed across the city, and according to independent MP Ákos Hadházy, facial recognition technology was actively used to track participants. Controversy emerged quickly after the march. An individual [lodged](#) a complaint with police over a drag performance that took place during the parade, alleging that children were present while drag queens performed. On 7 June 2025, the police [announced](#) that no fines would be imposed against the participants. In December, the Budapest police concluded their [investigation](#) into the organisation of Budapest Pride, resulting in a proposed

indictment against Mayor Gergely Karácsony. Karácsony publicly described the charges as absurd, emphasizing that while the municipality does not have the general right to assemble, it retains the authority to organize events in its own public spaces.

On September 4, the director of the local Diverse Youth Network [submitted](#) a notification to the Pécs Police for the organisation of a march seeking to defend the legal equality of sexual and gender minorities, to protest against the arbitrary restriction of the freedom of assembly, to remember LGBTI people murdered during the Holocaust. On September 5, the police [banned](#) the assembly on the basis of Section 13/A of the Assembly Act in conjunction with Article XVI(1) of the Fundamental Law. The organiser challenged the ban, but on September 14 the Supreme Court [dismissed](#) the appeal, finding that the police had reasonably concluded that the notification aimed to hold an assembly prohibited by law. Ahead of the event, human rights organisations publicly warned that, because the march had been banned, the organiser could face criminal liability and even imprisonment if Pécs Pride took place regardless. Despite the ban, Pécs Pride was [held](#) on October 4, and [reports](#) described the event as more peaceful and more positively received than in previous years. Shortly afterwards, however, criminal proceedings were initiated against the organiser, and on October 28 he was questioned by police as a suspect. In November, the Baranya County Police Headquarters [closed](#) the investigation into the organisation of Pécs Pride, with civil society organisations criticising the handling of the case and noting that certain [propaganda newspapers](#) were informed of the proposed indictment before the organiser himself and his lawyer.

In November, a Hungarian human rights defender, submitted an [application](#) to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) following the prohibition of an assembly he planned to organise in Budapest. The prohibition was issued under amendments to Hungary's Fundamental Law and the Assembly Act, which linked so-called child protection considerations to restrictions on public activities by LGBTI persons. Police authorities invoked these provisions to prevent the event, reasoning that

Léderer's sexual orientation, being publicly known, made his participation as a speaker subject to the statutory restriction under the 2021 Propaganda Act. The Kúria subsequently upheld the ban. The complaint submitted to the ECtHR contends that the ban was discriminatory and unlawfully restricted his freedoms of expression and assembly, as well as his right to privacy.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In May, Hungary's governing majority introduced the Bill on the Transparency of Public Life. Emerging in the context of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's announced "spring cleaning," the bill fits into a broader pattern of stigmatizing and threatening actors who challenge Hungary's democratic backsliding. The proposal enables the government to compile a blacklist of organisations if they are deemed to threaten Hungary's sovereignty by receiving foreign funds or engaging in activities that allegedly influence public life in ways considered hostile to the values outlined in the Fundamental Law. Once blacklisted, the affected organisations would face severe operational restrictions. Their access to foreign resources would be suspended pending investigation by the Tax Authority, their ability to obtain domestic funding would be hindered by administrative barriers, and the cumulative effect could lead to their effective dissolution. According to the amendment introduced by the governing majority, the bill would enter into force 15 days after promulgation, and the government could immediately issue a decree naming blacklisted entities, enabling the rapid deprivation of their financial resources.

Human rights organisations have called on the European Commission to respond urgently, warning that the bill, combined with previous "sovereignty protection" legislation currently challenged before the Court of Justice of the European Union, would erase remaining safeguards for democratic institutions and fundamental rights in Hungary. On June 4 Fidesz announced to postpone the vote on the bill and return to its discussion in the fall. No such discussion took place by the end of the year, the bill is still pending in Parliament.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January, Hungary's Supreme Court rejected a government office's request for review in a case against the Lira bookstore in Kecskemét, which had sold the book 'Evening Tales for Rebel Girls'. Under the Orbán government's 2021 "child protection" law minors' access to content on sexuality and gender diversity is restricted, and the implementing legislation prescribes (Packaging Decree) that books depicting LGBTI characters must be sealed in foil and cannot be sold in proximity to schools or religious institutions. Lower courts had already ruled that the book did not intentionally promote deviation from birth-assigned gender identity but the government office appealed, seeking to annul those judgments. The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal, stating that disagreement with a final judgment did not in itself justify legal remedy, and that no legal issue of principle had been demonstrated. In September, a Budapest court requested a preliminary ruling on the restrictions introduced by the Packaging Decree (C-638/25).

In June, European Union Advocate General Tamara Čapeta issued an advisory opinion in case C-769/22 Commission v Hungary, declaring that Hungary had crossed several "red lines" of EU fundamental values, including equality, human dignity, and respect for fundamental rights, in its treatment of LGBTI people. The opinion addressed the European Commission's challenge to Hungary's 2021 "child protection" law, which, while framed as a measure to protect minors and crack down on paedophile crimes, prohibits access to LGBTI content for those under 18. Čapeta considered the Commission's appeal to be "well-founded on all grounds," finding that the law interferes with the prohibition of discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation, the right to private and family life, freedom of expression and information, and the right to human dignity under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán rejected the Advocate General's conclusions, calling them "shameful." He accused Brussels of prioritising "the freedom to spread sexual propaganda" over the protection of children, insisting that Hungary does not forbid LGBTI people from gathering or

expressing themselves, but drawing a distinction between public Pride events and what he portrayed as genuine expressions of free speech.

In late March, six opposition deputies in Hungary were hit with [sanctions](#) after staging a protest against the newly passed amendment to the Assembly Act. The lawmakers set off smoke bombs inside the chamber to denounce the amendment, which prohibits assemblies deemed to "promote homosexuality" (See more under Freedom of Assembly). As punishment, the deputies were denied access to the parliament building, effectively suspending them from parliamentary activity for 12 days.

In June, the Pázmány Péter Catholic University opened an [ethics case](#) against three psychology lecturers after they published an article ahead of Budapest Pride arguing that every relationship built on love is equal, discussing the exclusion of gay people and rainbow families ahead of Budapest Pride. The piece argued that children's wellbeing depends on a loving family environment, not the gender of their parents. The authors also criticised political measures justified as child-protection, pointing out that scientific studies consistently show no developmental differences between children raised by same-sex couples and those raised by heterosexual parents. The outcome is still pending, but if the committee concludes that a serious violation occurred, the lecturers could face dismissal. The disciplinary procedure ended with a warning issued by the University. All three lecturers [decided to leave](#) their position at the University. In June, a fourth professor at the same university was [dismissed](#) after criticising the institution for allegedly withholding a publication bonus. He claimed that the bonus had been denied because the article concerned the role of religion in shaping attitudes towards gay people. The professor subsequently initiated legal proceedings challenging his dismissal.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In late March, the European Parliament's AI Act expert and monitor [warned](#) that Hungary's plan to use AI-powered facial recognition to identify and fine participants in Budapest Pride would breach EU law. The Hungarian Parliament had just voted to ban

the march (See also under Freedom of Assembly), threatening violators with fines of 200,000 forints and allowing the use of digital biometric surveillance to track those who defied the ban. In April, the European Commission officially [announced](#) it would review the legal compliance of such legislative changes, especially in relation to any potential violation of European rules on artificial intelligence, which prohibit real-time and remote biometric identification systems, such as facial recognition in public spaces.

In late March, 21 European countries and Australia issued a [joint diplomatic statement](#) condemning Hungary's decision to ban the annual Pride parade. The embassies stressed that the new legislation adopted by the Hungarian Parliament "results in restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression."

In April, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, [urged](#) Hungary's National Assembly to amend its law on the right of assembly, which effectively prohibits events such as Pride marches. In a letter addressed to Assembly President László Kövér, O'Flaherty warned that banning peaceful events promoting LGBTI equality violates the right to freedom of assembly.

In April, several Members of the European Parliament [announced](#) they would attend the Budapest Pride march in June, despite a new law passed by Viktor Orbán's government banning such events (See also under Freedom of Assembly). Speaking during a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Hungarian MEP Csaba Molnár described the ban as a "homophobic measure" disguised as child protection and urged colleagues to join: "We will go to Pride this year too, come and participate too." In June, EU Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib also [expressed](#) her willingness to attend Budapest Pride.

In April, Human Rights Watch [condemned](#) Hungary's newly adopted constitutional amendments restricting the right of assembly, calling them further evidence of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's dismantling of democracy and the rule of law (See also under Freedom of Assembly).

In May, a group of Members of the European Parliament sent a [letter](#) urging Brussels to freeze all EU funding for Hungary in response to what they described as "further alarming regression" on democracy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms. Simultaneously, twenty European Union countries have put out a [joint statement](#) accusing Hungary of violating the fundamental values of the European Union by passing laws that target LGBTI people.

In June, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [urged](#) the Hungarian authorities to lift the ban on Budapest Pride. "Our Union stands for equality and non-discrimination. These are our fundamental values, enshrined in our treaties," she declared, calling on Hungary to ensure that Pride could take place. In parallel, a small [solidarity Pride march](#) was held in Brussels, organised by Amnesty International, to protest the Hungarian ban.

In June, 33 embassies, one diplomatic mission and eight cultural institutes issued a [joint statement](#) to mark the 30th Budapest Pride. Among the signatories were the embassies of countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany and Spain, while the United States notably did not join. The statement reaffirmed the participating missions' support for LGBTI people in Hungary and elsewhere, underscoring their commitment to equal treatment, non-discrimination, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and protection from verbal and physical violence – principles grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In September, Budapest Pride was [nominated](#) for the European Union's Sakharov Prize for human rights by the Greens in the European Parliament. The nomination highlighted Budapest Pride's role in defending fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to freedom of assembly and association as guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The nomination did not result in an award.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In late February, the Hungarian government announced [plans](#) to amend the constitution to explicitly state that "Human beings shall be male or female." (See also under Equality and Non-

Discrimination). In April, the Hungarian Parliament [approved](#) these constitutional amendments by a vote of 140 to 21, officially enshrining that a person can be defined exclusively as either male or female. The change codifies a binary definition of sex into the country's Fundamental Law, and according to the explanatory memorandum, the new wording bars any legal gender recognition. Following the approval, the European Commission [announced](#) it would closely analyse the amendment, stating that changes must be examined "with great care and from a European legislative perspective," and stressing that the EU "will not hesitate to act if necessary" should the amendment be found to breach EU law. The Section of Biological Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences issued an [official statement](#) calling the binary definition of sexes "imprecise", which might result in "marginalizing those people who do not fit in these categories (...) and expose them to systemic discrimination in education, healthcare and employment". The [Venice Commission](#) noted that the explanatory memorandum "aims at strengthening the existing legislative legal basis for the prohibition of the legal recognition of gender identity" by entrenching a binary understanding of gender.

In March, the CJEU [affirmed](#) that member states have to offer the possibility to rectify data on gender in state registries, and such rectification cannot be made conditional on proof of surgery. The case concerned an Iranian refugee in Hungary who, despite medical certificates confirming his male gender identity, had been registered as female in the asylum registry. Hungarian authorities refused to amend the record on the grounds that he had not undergone gender reassignment surgery. The Budapest court referred the matter to the CJEU, which ruled that under the GDPR, national authorities must correct inaccurate data relating to gender identity when sufficient evidence is provided. The judges [concluded](#) that a surgical requirement would infringe on fundamental rights, notably the right to physical integrity and private life, and is neither necessary nor proportionate to ensure the reliability of public registers.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In July, Budapest police confirmed they will not bring legal proceedings against participants in the Pride march that took place at the end of June, despite the fact that the event had been formally banned. (See also under Freedom of Assembly). Police said in their statement that no prosecutions would be launched, emphasising that participants could reasonably have believed the march was legal given both the organisers' communications and the visible involvement of the municipal government. In early August, Budapest's mayor Gergely Karácsony was nonetheless questioned over allegations that he had helped organise this year's Pride march, which the Hungarian government had officially banned. Afterwards, Karácsony revealed that the prosecutor's office had rejected the complaint he had filed. "According to the prosecutor's office, there is also a suspicion of a crime because we stood up for diversity, equality and love – and because we did not allow the government to restrict freedom of assembly," he wrote.

In July, Hungarian police opened a criminal case against Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg for her participation in Budapest's Pride March on June 28, which had been banned by the government but nonetheless went ahead with record turnout. According to local media, the Fifth District Council of Budapest announced on July 11 that police had initiated proceedings, though no official details were provided on the precise grounds for the case. The case was discontinued.



## Iceland

### ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, all of Reykjavík's public swimming pools received Rainbow Certification. The certification aims to make workplaces and public services more inclusive for LGBTI people, both as employees and service users, and to prevent direct and indirect discrimination. All workplaces under the city's administration are eligible to apply. The process includes mandatory staff training on LGBTI issues, an assessment of workplace policies and conditions, and the development of an action plan to improve inclusion and awareness.

### ASYLUM

In January, Iceland's national LGBTI organisation Samtökin '78 reported a surge in inquiries from people in the United States seeking information on relocating to Iceland following the election of Donald Trump as president.

### EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, Hinsegin kórinn, the Reykjavík Queer Choir, announced that it would withdraw from its scheduled performance at World Pride in Washington, D.C., citing concerns for the safety of trans and non-binary people in the United States.

### DATA COLLECTION

In 2025, the results of The Health and Well-being of LGBT+ People research project were published, examining key factors affecting the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people in Iceland and highlighting the health-related challenges faced by the community. The study found that LGBTI people generally experience poorer health and lower levels of wellbeing than non-LGBTI individuals, underlining the need for targeted measures to address these disparities. The project was carried out as a collaboration between Reykjavík City and Samtökin '78, the National Queer Organisation of Iceland.

In August, a Gallup National Poll found that most Icelanders consider their communities welcoming for LGBTI people. The survey showed that 89% of respondents who expressed an opinion felt their area is a good place for LGBTI people to live, up slightly from 86% a decade earlier. Younger Icelanders were

the most positive, with 99% of 18- to 29-year-olds agreeing, compared with 76% of those aged 60 to 69. Over a third of participants either did not know or had no opinion.

### FOREIGN POLICY

In March, Iceland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the preparation of travel guidance specifically for LGBTI people, with an emphasis on personal safety. Foreign Minister Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir said the initiative reflects the need for greater caution in the current international climate. The chair of Samtökin '78 also underlined the importance of being alert when travelling abroad, particularly to the United States.

### PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In September, the new Icelandic Queer Film Festival took place at Bíó Paradís from September 4 to 7. The inaugural festival showcased documentaries, feature films, and short films, combining new releases with curated classics.

# Ireland

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In February, the Irish Prison Service (IPS) announced further delays in issuing its long-awaited policy guidance on the housing of trans inmates. Despite reports on its imminent completion in June, no policy had been published by the end of the year. The forthcoming policy aims to provide clear guidance on the management of trans prisoners and consider the supports for gender diversity in the prison environment more broadly.

In June, the Mental Health Commission (MHC) launched a guidance document and a training resource to support mental health services staff working with LGBTI service users. The material provides guidance to mental health professionals on how to meet the needs of LGBTI people accessing services, with the aim of promoting "a deeper understanding" of the unique challenges faced by LGBTI people and to improve service-user experiences across Ireland's mental health system. The guidance was based on an evidence review commissioned by the MHC.

## ASYLUM

Figures published by the Department of Justice showed that 94 US citizens applied for international protection in Ireland in 2025, compared with 22 in 2024, representing a more than fourfold increase. The number has risen steadily since 2022, when 13 US citizens applied. The Department of Justice did not disclose whether any of the 2025 applicants were granted protection.

In April, the Minister for Justice, Jim O'Callaghan, secured Cabinet approval for publication of the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill 2025, intended to transpose the EU Migration and Asylum Pact into Irish law. Civil society organisations, including the Coalition on the EU Migration Pact, warned that the proposed framework contains significant human rights gaps. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission expressed concern in particular about expanded detention powers, limitations on access to legal representation and counselling, and safeguards for children and other vulnerable applicants. Advocacy groups cautioned that the proposed measures could have

serious consequences for international protection applicants, including LGBTI persons, who may face heightened risks in detention settings, barriers to confidential legal advice, and insufficient recognition of sexuality- and gender-based protection claims.

In August, a gay Nigerian man who had been among 35 passengers removed from Ireland on a government-chartered flight in June was granted permission to reapply for asylum. New evidence highlighted the acute risks he faces in Nigeria due to his sexual orientation.

In August, UNHCR Ireland announced a new project, Supportive Spaces: Trauma-informed Practice in International Protection Accommodation, which will train civil servants in the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) and staff in accommodation centres how to best support the wellbeing of residents. LGBT Ireland has engaged with UNHCR to ensure LGBTI International Protection Applicant (IPA) specific content is included in the training.

In October, a series of protests and attacks targeting IPAS centres occurred. Following the alleged sexual assault of a young girl, protests took place at Citywest IPAS Centre, Co. Dublin over the course of several nights, which escalated into violent clashes with Gardaí (Irish police), with fireworks and other missiles thrown, a garda vehicle set on fire, and numerous public order incidents. Separately, an IPAS accommodation centre in Dublin's south inner city was attacked by a group of individuals who set fire to wheelie bins and damaged property while shouting slogans demanding the removal of the centre, while in Drogheda, Co. Louth, an arson attack was carried out on an IPAS centre on Halloween night.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In February, Six O'Clock Show host Brian Dowling revealed that he had hired a hate crime investigator after facing severe online trolling. Dowling and his husband have been targeted with significant online hate since the birth of their children via surrogacy.

In July, the Coalition Against Hate Crime, a network of 22 civil society organisations representing

communities commonly targeted by hate crime and hate speech in Ireland, sent a [letter](#) to Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan regarding Ireland's response to an infringement procedure initiated by the European Commission concerning the transposition of the EU Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia. The Coalition expressed concern at reports that the Department of Justice intended to assert that existing Irish legislation already fully complies with EU obligations, warning that this position appeared to contradict commitments in the Programme for Government and the National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy to strengthen incitement to hatred legislation. The letter emphasised that effective protections against hate crime and hate speech must be substantive and comprehensive, addressing not only Ireland's EU law obligations but also its broader human rights commitments, including the protection of LGBTIQ+ people and other communities targeted by hate. It called for transparency around the infringement process and for the development of a holistic approach to combating hate, including the adoption of a National Action Plan to Combat Hate beyond the criminal law.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several homophobic and transphobic incidents were reported throughout 2025, reflecting ongoing hostility in public spaces and online. In February, a taxi driver deliberately [drove](#) toward a lesbian couple while shouting homophobic abuse. In October, two drag performers were [assaulted](#) in Cork during the Jazz Festival, and police [investigated](#) a suspected homophobic attack in Limerick in which two people required hospital treatment.

Court proceedings also continued in relation to earlier incidents. In June, a judge [issued](#) a bench warrant in a case involving assault and incitement to hatred linked to a 2022 homophobic attack on a Dublin Bus, brought under legislation in force prior to the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024. In September, a 19-year-old was [charged](#) with the murder of a man he had met via a gay dating app; no further developments were publicly reported by the end of the year.

Far-right mobilisation remained a concern. In July, a member of the Irish People party [appeared](#) before court in connection with alleged harassment of a librarian during protests over the inclusion of an LGBTI-themed book in a public library. In November, following the arrests of men suspected of links to a violent far-right organisation, the Coalition Against Hate Crime [warned](#) of rising hate-driven extremism and called for a coordinated national response.

## EDUCATION

In November, Belong To – LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland [held](#) its annual Stand Up Awareness Week from 3 to 7 November, aiming to reduce homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools and youth services. Record levels of participation were reported, with around 75% of post-primary schools nationwide engaging in the initiative by hosting talks, presentations and dedicated lessons on LGBTQ+ inclusion and respect. The campaign received official support from Ireland's Minister for Education and Youth, Helen McEntee, and was formally endorsed by major education unions, including the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland and the Teachers' Union of Ireland, reflecting broad institutional backing for inclusive practices in educational settings.

## EMPLOYMENT

In October, Red Umbrella Éireann, Sex Workers Alliance Ireland (SWAI), and the Street Workers Collective [published](#) a draft legislative proposal calling for the full decriminalisation of sex work, with an emphasis on the safety and labour rights of sex workers. The proposal was formally introduced as a Private Members' Bill by independent TD Ruth Coppinger at the Red Umbrella Film Festival. The draft sought to remove criminal penalties for sex workers working together or engaging support staff, such as security personnel or drivers. By the end of 2025, the proposal had not advanced through the parliamentary process.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, a gay employee at a recycling company was [awarded](#) €12,000 in compensation by the Workplace Relations Commission after being subjected to harassment based on his sexual orientation.

In June, the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley, [announced](#) the publication of the National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II (NLIS II) for 2024-2028, alongside its first Action Plan for 2025-2026. The Strategy sets out government commitments across key areas including safety and protection from violence, inclusive education, health and mental health services, legal recognition, equality in public services, and improved data collection. At the launch, Minister Foley [highlighted](#) that the Strategy was developed in cooperation with government bodies and LGBTI civil society organisations.

In July, a [bill](#) was introduced in the Dáil to expunge historic convictions for consensual sexual activity between men, more than three decades after homosexuality was decriminalised in Ireland. Sinn Féin TD Aengus Ó Snodaigh described the legislation as an overdue measure to "right a wrong" affecting hundreds of men who were convicted since the State's foundation. The Disregard of Historic Offences for Consensual Sexual Activity between Men Bill was developed in consultation with campaign groups and co-signed by Opposition parties and Independents. The bill had not progressed beyond initial stages by the end of 2025.

In September, a trans man [received](#) €5,000 in compensation after the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) found that he had been discriminated against on the basis of his gender identity by a youth organisation. He had volunteered as a leader for 18 months before discovering in 2024 that his original application, submitted in late 2022, had been put to a vote without his consent. During that meeting, his gender identity was disclosed and discussed without his permission. Although he was ultimately accepted as a leader, the organisation imposed a condition preventing him from working with younger groups, a restriction the WRC found to constitute discrimination.

## FAMILY

In February, Cuan, Ireland's national agency addressing domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV), [launched](#) The Hardest Stories campaign. Through fictionalised narratives, the

campaign seeks to break the silence and foster a society where all individuals can live free from the threat of violence. Among the stories shared as part of the campaign is one that specifically targets the LGBTI community.

In April, the LGBTQ+ Parenting Alliance (comprising Equality for Children, Irish Gay Dads and LGBT Ireland) launched a [petition](#) calling on the Irish Government to urgently introduce legislative reform to ensure all children born into LGBTI families are afforded full legal recognition and protection in respect of both parents. The Alliance emphasised that, under the current legislative framework, a significant number of children in LGBTI families continue to lack comprehensive legal recognition of both parents, leaving children without essential rights and creating inequalities between family types. Representatives of the Alliance met with the Minister for Health to reiterate the need for urgent legislative action to amend the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024 through the proposed Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) (Amendment) Bill. Although the Minister indicated in July 2025 that the proposed amending legislation was "at an advanced stage", by the end of 2025 the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024, enacted in 2024, remained largely uncommenced, and no general scheme or draft amendment Bill had been published.

In April, the Irish High Court [ruled](#) that children of same-sex couples born abroad are entitled to Irish passports. The court found that the State cannot deny citizenship solely because of a parent's gender or the child's place of birth. The cases involved two Irish mothers, who had been refused recognition as legal parents of their children born in Australia and Spain.

In October, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health published a pre-legislative scrutiny [report](#) containing 18 recommendations to make Ireland's assisted human reproduction and surrogacy framework more inclusive of diverse family structures, including those of LGBTI families. The recommendations are intended to inform the drafting of the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) (Amendment) Bill, which remains under development, and include mechanisms to recognise parentage for second

parents in international donor-assisted reproduction and surrogacy arrangements. During the same period, the government established the Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority (AHRRA) with appointed leadership, marking a key step toward implementing and overseeing the 2024 Act and future legislative changes. Certain provisions of the 2024 Act have also been commenced via secondary legislation, even as full commencement and further reform await the forthcoming Amendment Bill.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, the Labour Party was compelled to relocate its planned Marriage Equality anniversary event in Dublin due to threats from far-right protesters. The event was intended to commemorate ten years since Ireland's historic vote in favor of Marriage Equality but concerns were raised about the safety of staff and public representatives arose after a wave of online threats targeting the event and its attendees.

In May, Trans and Intersex Pride Dublin announced that Sinn Féin would be barred from participating in the city's Pride march in July due to ongoing concerns about the party's stance on trans rights. The decision followed months of dialogue in which Pride organisers sought clarification from Sinn Féin leadership on key issues affecting trans people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties hosted a discussion on how to challenge attempts to limit LGBTI people's rights to express, assemble and associate in Ireland. The discussion saw contributions from the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Graeme Reid and Irish LGBTI advocates and organisations.

## HEALTH

Gender-affirming healthcare remained under significant pressure in 2025, with continued concerns about capacity and access. In May, the Professional Association for Trans Health Ireland (PATHI) warned that long waiting times, restrictive clinical practices and limited service availability within the National Gender Service (NGS) were leading some trans people to self-medicate. The Minister for

Health acknowledged in the Dáil that services were failing to meet demand and committed to developing a new model of care. The State established the National Clinical Programme for Gender Healthcare which is tasked with developing a new Model of Care for gender-affirming care. The National Clinical Programme includes a scoping review of research into gender-affirming care, and in August, the Health Service Executive (HSE) launched a public call for submissions to the scoping review. In August, the Health Service Executive (HSE) a public consultation to inform this reform.

In December, the NGS announced its intention to close its waiting list to new patients from March 2026, prompting strong criticism from trans advocacy organisations, which warned that more than 2,470 people could be left without access to care. The Department of Health and the HSE responded that the NGS does not have authority to close its waiting list, which remained open to new referrals. During the same month, the Labour Party tabled a motion calling on the government to provide a model of gender-affirming care in primary care settings with a focus on GP led care, based on informed consent as per WPATH and WHO guidelines and international best practice.

Oversight of gender services was also subject to legal scrutiny. In April, two senior clinicians from the NGS initiated judicial review proceedings in the High Court concerning the Health Information and Quality Authority's (Hiqa) handling of a complaint about the HSE's care pathway for children and adolescents, including referrals abroad for assessment. Leave to proceed was granted in May; no final judgment had been reported by the end of the year.

In June, St James's Hospital publicly apologised to a trans patient following deficiencies in her emergency treatment after complications from gender-affirming surgery abroad. The matter, initially brought before the Workplace Relations Commission under the Equal Status Act 2000, was resolved by agreement, with the hospital committing to engage with trans advocacy organisations to improve care pathways.

Alongside these systemic challenges, several institutional initiatives were introduced. In June,

the Mental Health Commission published guidance and training [resources](#) for staff working with LGBTI service users. In July, the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation [endorsed](#) the adoption of World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) standards as the basis for a future model of trans healthcare. In August, public [reporting](#) highlighted uncertainty over whether trans women are eligible under Ireland's free Hormone Replacement Therapy scheme, prompting requests for clarification from the Department of Health. In October, the National Women's Council published [research](#) documenting healthcare inequalities affecting marginalised women, including LGBTI communities. Community-led initiatives also expanded, with the organisation Transgress the NGS [broadening](#) its Injection Supply Programme to improve access to safe hormone administration materials for trans and non-binary people.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In April, Belong To and Trinity College Dublin published the Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland - Intersex Sub-[report](#), based on responses from 31 intersex participants. The report found that 39% had undergone medical interventions related to their intersex variation, with most describing these as non-consensual or lacking informed consent. High levels of psychological distress were recorded, including lifetime self-harm (60%), suicidal thoughts (74%) and suicide attempts (50%), and the report highlighted ongoing concerns regarding bodily autonomy and transparency in medical care.

In July, the Council of Europe Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) [recommended](#) Ireland to introduce legislation that expressly acknowledge the right of intersex persons to bodily integrity and prohibit the performance of medically unnecessary surgeries and other non-therapeutic treatment until the intersex child is able to participate in the decision. ECRI also recommended other actions to enhance intersex healthcare.

In November, a trans woman who used her frozen sperm to have a child with her wife was [granted](#) permission by the High Court to challenge the State's refusal to grant Irish citizenship to the child. The case arises from the State's refusal to recognise her

as the birth mother, requiring her instead to claim the role of "father" on official documentation. The woman, an Irish citizen, is seeking a declaration that she is legally and genetically a parent of the child, an order compelling the State to register the child on the Foreign Births Register, and the granting of Irish citizenship under the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act.

## DATA COLLECTION

Throughout the year, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality published, in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin and Belong To - LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland, two new [sub-reports](#) of the 2024 Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland research, across two new perspectives: 'Wellbeing and Mental Health in the Older LGBTQI+ Population in Ireland' and 'Mental Health in the Irish LGBTQI+ Population with Disabilities'.

In June, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) released [findings](#) from its Equality and Discrimination Survey 2024, revealing that LGBTI people in Ireland experience the highest levels of discrimination compared to other groups. The survey, which included 7,852 respondents, found that 22% reported facing some form of discrimination in the two years preceding the interview, marking a 4% increase from the previous survey conducted in early 2019.

In August, a [study](#) by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) highlighted that LGBTI children in Ireland are at heightened risk of bullying. The study showed that, when asked about specific experiences – such as being hit, called names, or excluded – the figure for 13 year-olds rose sharply to 62%, indicating that targeted forms of bullying are widespread among older children.

In November, it was [announced](#) that Ireland's upcoming census, scheduled for 2027, will include questions on gender identity and sexual orientation. This decision follows a public consultation and the results of a national pilot survey, aiming to provide more comprehensive data to inform policy-making and better reflect the diversity of Ireland's population.

In December, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), in collaboration with ShoutOut and Transgender

Equality Network Ireland (TENI), published a [guide](#) outlining the rights of trans and non-binary people in Ireland. The guide covers a wide range of areas including legal gender recognition, healthcare, family life, education, workplace protections, access to goods and services, interactions with law enforcement, prison, sports, and overall safety and protection from harm. Trans and non-binary people were consulted throughout the project.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In March, the Irish government [aligned](#) itself with a broad coalition of EU member states in publicly denouncing new Hungarian legislation that, in practice, outlaws Pride marches. In May, Ireland [joined](#) 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden. Speaking at the Marriage Referendum +10 Conference in May, the Tánaiste and then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Harris, highlighted Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2026 as a key opportunity to build on the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy, affirming that Ireland "will work closely with EU institutions and Member States to combat inequalities experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, and promote respect for equality as one of the Union's fundamental values." In November, the Irish Government launched a public consultation on the development of the Priorities and Policy Programme for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026.

## HOUSING

The national Youth Homelessness Strategy, which [concluded](#) in 2025, recognised LGBTI young people as a group at particular risk of homelessness and disproportionately represented among affected youth. The strategy included targeted actions aimed at prevention and improved supports

for vulnerable groups, including LGBTI youth. An evaluation, [published](#) in January, reported that only 7 of 27 planned actions had been completed and that the number of young people aged 18-24 experiencing homelessness had increased significantly, underscoring slow implementation of key measures.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In November, Minister for Children, Disability and Equality Norma Foley [announced](#) €1.7 million in funding through the 2025 LGBTIQ+ Community Services Fund. The initiative aims to promote inclusion, protect rights, and enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of LGBTI people in Ireland, enabling full participation in social, economic, cultural, and political life. A total of 43 community service projects received grants of up to €100,000 each under this programme.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

2025 marked the 10th anniversary of the Gender Recognition Act 2015, which made it possible for trans people to legally self-declare their gender and update their official documents accordingly. However 10 years on, the gender recognition process still cannot be accessed by non-binary people, trans and gender diverse youth under 16 and citizens in Northern Ireland.

In April, following a Supreme Court ruling in the UK defining women solely by their biological sex (See under United Kingdom), Irish Equality Minister Norma Foley [reassured](#) trans people that Irish law will continue to protect them from discrimination. In Ireland, concerns arose over sports policies, prompting calls for compliance with national equality protections or potential legal challenges.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In April, Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Mary Butler, Minister of State for Mental Health and Government Chief Whip, [presented](#) the 2025-2027 implementation plan for Sharing the Vision. Butler highlighted the government's intention to back the strategy with sustained funding across the full spectrum of mental health services, from

promotion and prevention to specialist care. She also pointed to continued support for suicide-prevention measures, including the LGBT Ireland Champions Programme, which provides cultural awareness training for health and social care services.



# Italy

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

For the second consecutive year, the [Ministry of Education](#) omitted any reference to the persecution of LGBTI people during the Holocaust in its official circular for Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In September, Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, [commented](#) on Church teaching regarding homosexuality during a ceremony in Belmonte del Sannio, Molise, where he was being granted honorary citizenship. Speaking to reporters, Müller stated that "homosexual acts are a mortal sin" and that the Church "must reject this policy," referring to individuals entering the Holy Door "to propagandise for themselves and not to receive penance through a change of life." He also said that, "according to the Book of Genesis, God blessed marriage between a man and a woman; sin cannot be blessed." Müller argued that it was necessary to "correct the misunderstanding that the Church had almost accepted this behavior as something to be blessed and upon which to invoke God's blessing."

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, homophobic and transphobic violence continued to be reported across Italy, including domestic abuse, public assaults and organised entrapment schemes targeting gay men via dating applications.

In January, the father of a 15-year-old boy in Naples was arrested after threatening to kill him. This followed years of physical and psychological abuse.

In March, the Civil Court of Asti [recognised](#), for the first time in Italy, the existence of physical and psychological harm resulting from homophobic mistreatment in a case involving prolonged abuse by a father against his son.

Several cases involved organised entrapment through dating applications. In Padova, members of a gang that lured gay men via Grindr to rob and assault them [received](#) five-year sentences in Padova; a third suspect was [arrested](#) in September. In July, a man in Bergamo was [sentenced](#) to five years and ten

months for robbery and extortion targeting gay men through Grindr, although no discriminatory aggravating circumstance was applied.

Multiple public assaults were recorded during the year. In June, two people were [attacked](#) after leaving Padova Pride Village; in Rome's Pigneto district, two men were [assaulted](#) with a baseball bat after being seen kissing; and in Vicenza, a trans man and a friend were [attacked](#) following a Pride event. In Bologna, two men in a same-sex relationship were [found](#) dead with knife wounds; a suspect was arrested, but no judicial outcome had been reported by the end of 2025.

Other attacks were reported in [Catania](#), [Trento](#), [Rome](#), [Ventimiglia](#), [Parma](#), [Milan](#) and [Treviso](#), including cases involving groups of perpetrators, minors among attackers, and serious injuries such as facial fractures and stab wounds. In several cases, investigations were ongoing at year's end.

In December, the Court of Appeal in Cuneo [upheld](#) a prison sentence in a homophobic assault case and confirmed the application of the discriminatory aggravating circumstance.

Civil society actors [noted](#) persistent under-reporting of incidents, particularly in Naples and suburban areas, citing fear of family pressure, blackmail and lack of autonomy among young victims.

In December, an alleged sexual [assault](#) of an 11-year-old boy in Palermo, investigated as bullying, reignited debate over the absence of comprehensive sexuality and affective education in schools amid continued political efforts to restrict such programmes.

## EDUCATION

In October, the Culture Committee of the Chamber of Deputies approved an [amendment](#) further restricting access to sexuality and relationships education in schools. The [amendment](#), introduced by League MP Giorgia Latini, expanded a government proposal by Education Minister Giuseppe Valditara, which already required written parental consent for school activities related to sexuality in secondary education. While the initial proposal banned such

education in kindergarten and primary schools and imposed consent requirements in upper secondary schools, the amendment sought to extend these restrictions to lower secondary schools as well, citing concerns about so-called "gender ideology" and emphasising parental control.

In December, the Chamber adopted the bill with 151 votes in favour, 113 against, and one abstention. The final text did not include a ban on sexuality and relationships education in lower secondary schools, but it confirmed the obligation for schools to obtain written parental consent before organising such activities in both lower and upper secondary education. Schools are also required to inform families in advance about the content of programmes, teaching materials, and the qualifications of any external educators involved. The bill was subsequently transmitted to the Senate for further consideration.

## EMPLOYMENT

In July, Italy's Constitutional Court ruled that a non-biological mother in a same-sex couple is entitled to mandatory parental leave equivalent to paternity leave. The Court found that the exclusion of intended parents in same-sex female couples from such leave under existing legislation was unconstitutional, stressing that children's rights to care from both parents and parental responsibilities are not dependent on parents' sexual orientation. The case was referred by the Brescia Court of Appeal following a discrimination claim supported by Rete Lenford against the Italian Social Security Administration, which had refused to grant mandatory leave to a non-biological mother in a same-sex couple.

In November, the Department of Penitentiary Administration (DAP) issued a circular stating that Law 104/1992 on benefits (permitting leave to care for disabled family members) does not apply to civil union partners' relatives, arguing that civil unions do not create legal "affinity" relationships. This contradicted a 2022 INPS circular that extended these benefits to civilly united couples. The decision affected prison workers nationwide.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In March, the Ministry of Education and Merit issued a new circular banning the use of schwa (ə), a symbol used to express gender-neutral forms, and the asterisk in all official communications. The measure is framed as part of the government's wider campaign against what it calls gender theory and follows earlier steps such as recent statements by Minister Giuseppe Valditara from the Brothers of Italy Party, who openly admitted the government's intent to escalate its opposition to inclusive language and gender-related discourse in schools and institutions.

In April, Italy did not sign a condemnation statement by 23 European embassies against Hungary's ban on Pride events. In May, Italy again did not sign a declaration by 20 EU countries condemning Hungary's Pride ban and anti-LGBTI laws.

In July, Italy's women's national football team captain, Elena Linari, became the first Italian national team player to wear a rainbow armband during an international match, doing so during the game against Spain on 11 July. The gesture was widely interpreted as a public show of support for LGBTI equality and inclusion in sport.

## FAMILY

In March, the Constitutional Court ruled that single people, including LGBTI people, are eligible to adopt foreign minors through international adoption procedures, overturning a 40-year restriction that had limited such adoptions to married couples.

In April, the Italian Court of Cassation ruled in favour of changing the wording on national identity cards, replacing the distinction of "father" and "mother" with the term "parents." With this ruling, which followed an appeal brought by civil rights associations, the Court emphasised the need for administrative and bureaucratic language to keep pace with social and legal developments. The reform will apply to all newly issued identity documents across Italy.

In May, the Constitutional Court declared the constitutional illegitimacy of Article 8 of Law 40/2004 insofar as it excludes recognition of children born in Italy through assisted reproductive technologies (ART) abroad to two women. The

Court ruled that when both women have given prior informed consent to the procedure, the child must be legally recognised as the child of both, with full parental responsibility. Nonetheless, the ruling still did not provide similar legal protections for single women resorting to ART.

In September, the Court of Cassation issued a ruling confirming that partners in a civil union are eligible for the dissolution allowance provided under the 2016 law on civil unions. In Italian law, civil unions do not include a separation phase, and therefore do not provide for a maintenance allowance. Dissolution occurs through an administrative process lasting approximately three to four months, after which the economically weaker partner may request the dissolution allowance. Since 2018, divorce allowances have been granted either to individuals who lack adequate means of subsistence or to those who, despite being economically self-sufficient, have made personal or professional sacrifices in the interest of the family that result in a significantly unequal economic position compared to the other partner. The Court of Cassation applied these criteria to civil unions, reiterating that the dissolution allowance is available under the same conditions as for heterosexual couples, as established by existing legislation since 2016.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In April, the Security Decree was approved, restricting the scope of dissent and redefining the relationship between citizens and authorities in a repressive manner. After parliamentary stalemate and reservations from the President of the Republic, the government forced the process through with a decree-law ensuring immediate entry into force. As already occurred in Hungary, the measure opens possibilities for the right to ban dissent demonstrations, including Pride events.

In April, Rome hosted Italy's first Dyke March, an event mobilising the LGBTI community across Europe in resistance against discriminatory policies and for lesbian and LGBTI women's visibility.

In September, approximately over 1,000 LGBTI Catholics from around the world gathered in St. Peter's Square for a dedicated Jubilee pilgrimage.

The group, organised by "La Tenda di Gionata," crossed the Holy Door, marking a historic moment of visibility for LGBTI believers within the Vatican.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In 2025, Italy dropped to 49th place out of 180 countries in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, with journalists facing intimidation, lawsuits, spyware, threats, and gag laws, while RAI (the Italian national broadcaster) remained under political occupation.

## DATA COLLECTION

A survey by the Youth and Sexuality Observatory found that nine out of ten young people support the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in schools, and that 80% of parents are in favour of such education.

In December, Amnesty International published a report titled The Meloni Government at the Turning Point, highlighting a sharp regression in human rights and noting the lack of progress on legislation to combat hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In February, Italy's fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN in Geneva concluded with a record 19 recommendations on LGBTI rights, the highest number ever received. In July, Italy rejected 12 out of 19 of the recommendations. Italy accepted only seven recommendations on general principles such as combating discrimination, promoting equality, and fighting hate speech, which associations criticised as commitments with no concrete obligations.

In October, following the adoption of legislation criminalising surrogacy abroad, the Italian government engaged in advocacy against surrogacy at the United Nations. Through statements by Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities Eugenia Roccella, the government promoted its opposition to surrogacy in international forums, framing the practice as incompatible with human rights.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, two proposals emerged to exclude trans women from women's sports were submitted: one legislative proposal from Laura Ravetto of the Lega party, and another initiative from Fratelli d'Italia party at the European Union level.

In August, the government approved a draft law introducing tighter controls on gender-affirming healthcare for minors. The text, which must now be examined by parliament, sets out new regulatory requirements for the prescription of puberty blockers and gender-affirming hormones to people under 18 diagnosed with gender dysphoria. According to the government, the measure aims to protect the health of minors and ensure effective data monitoring. Until the new protocols are adopted, each treatment would require authorisation from a national ethics committee composed of paediatric specialists. The proposal also provides for the creation of a national database within the Italian Medicines Agency (AIFA) to monitor the use of these medications and collect detailed medical information on minors receiving gender-affirming healthcare.

In December, during deliberations on the 2026 state budget, the parliamentary majority rejected an amendment proposed by the Democratic Party that would have established a dedicated fund for sexuality and relationships education in schools. This marked a shift from December 2024, when the government had approved a similar amendment tabled by +Europa party, allocating €500,000 for the same purpose.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Winter Olympics Milano-Cortina 2026 will host Pride House Milano 2026, an LGBTI space promoted by Milano Pride to unite sports and human rights. The venue will operate from February 6-22 at MEET in Porta Venezia, Milan, featuring talks, cultural events, and live viewing of competitions.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In July, serious allegations of sexual violence and abuse emerged at La Dogaia prison in Prato,

prompting an investigation by the Prosecutor's Office into reported cases of abuse, threats, and torture within the facility. Among the victims was a gay man imprisoned for the first time, who reportedly suffered prolonged physical and sexual violence at the hands of other inmates. Investigators described the situation in the prison as having become severely out of control.



# Kazakhstan

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In February, a coordinated defamation campaign targeted the LGBTI community through the circulation of a fabricated end-of-term video purporting to present USAID's "achievements" in Kazakhstan. The video falsely alleged that LGBTI organisations and individual activists had received millions of dollars in foreign funding. These unsubstantiated claims were widely disseminated and contributed to renewed hostility towards LGBTI groups, reinforcing existing prejudice through deliberate disinformation and further stigmatising human rights defenders working in the country.

In March, Nauryzbay kazy Taganuly, head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (DUMK), issued a public statement opposing LGBTI equality. In a video published on the DUMK's official Instagram account, he claimed that initiatives framed around women's rights and combating violence were being used to promote what he described as an unacceptable movement. Taganuly characterised LGBTI identities as immoral and foreign to Kazakh society, calling for their rejection in the name of tradition and cultural values.

In mid-March, during a meeting of the National Kurultai, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev commented on global political developments, arguing that "globalism is losing its relevance" and that state nationalism and regional power dynamics were becoming more prominent. He criticised what he described as the long-standing promotion of "so-called democratic moral values, including LGBTI," through international NGOs and foundations, claiming that such efforts had interfered in countries' internal affairs. Tokayev also expressed support for the policies of the United States administration under President Donald Trump, praising its stated commitment to opposing what he referred to as the "deep state" and restoring "traditional moral values."

In late October, a group of members of the Majilis, Kazakhstan's lower chamber of parliament, established a working group to promote draft legislation aimed at banning what it described as LGBTI and paedophile "propaganda". Several ministries publicly indicated their support for the

proposal and signalled their readiness to enforce it. On 12 November, the Majilis adopted the draft law, which prohibits the dissemination of information relating to so-called "non-traditional sexual orientation" in public spaces, media and online, and provides for administrative penalties. In December, the Senate approved the legislation, and it was signed into law by the President at the end of the year.

## EDUCATION

In January, it emerged that Kazakhstan's Ministries of Health and Education had submitted to the government a purported review of international research on the alleged impact of LGBTI issues on children. The analysis reportedly relied heavily on a Russian-language article critical of LGBTI equality. These materials have since been used in government deliberations on whether to introduce legislation restricting what authorities describe as LGBTI propaganda. The review followed developments in the previous summer, when the Ministry of Culture partially endorsed a public petition calling for restrictions on "LGBTI propaganda," agreeing to limit the circulation of sexualised content involving minors. At that time, the Ministries of Science, Health, and Education were instructed to assess the claimed impact of LGBTI issues on children and to prepare an official report.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, deputies of the Majilis complained about what they described as "information attacks" by representatives of the LGBTI community following their public statements against LGBT people and requested intervention from the security services. In response, the Chair of the National Security Committee (KNB) stated that the agency would not investigate such matters, indicating that they did not fall within its mandate.

In 2024, Kazakhstan's Ministry of Health commissioned a study examining the alleged impact of so-called propaganda of same-sex relations on young people. In March 2025, the research concluded that sexual orientation cannot be altered through external influence or propaganda, and that the presence of LGBTI

people can have a positive impact on adolescents by supporting self-understanding, reducing isolation, and providing access to peer support for minority youth. According to reports, the findings provoked dissatisfaction among authorities, who had reportedly expected the study to justify restrictive measures against LGBTI people similar to those adopted in Russia. Shortly after President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev publicly criticised what he described as so-called democratic moral values, including LGBTI, and accused international NGOs of using them to interfere in domestic affairs, the Ministry of Health removed the report from its website without explanation.

In June, the organisers of Miss Kazakhstan issued a statement after media reports suggested that trans women might be eligible to participate in the national beauty contest. The reports stemmed from comments made by the contest's director during a press conference, which, according to the organisers, were taken out of context. The organisers underlined that this year's theme, Freedom of Choice, is intended to highlight respect for diversity, individuality, and the right of every woman to be herself. Within this framework, they said they are open to public debate on issues of stereotypes, beauty standards, self-expression, and inclusiveness. However, they emphasised that the official rules of participation remain unchanged.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In February, Magerram Magerramov, head of the People's Party of Kazakhstan (PPC), submitted a request to the Minister of National Economy and the Minister of Justice regarding the activities of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Magerramov demanded a full audit and the publication of reports on all funds received in Kazakhstan from international sponsors. He also called on the government to draft a bill aimed at protecting the mental, psycho-emotional, and physical health of Kazakhstani children. Citing a White House press release on "dubious projects" funded by USAID, Magerramov pointed out that between 2020 and 2024 Kazakhstan received about \$2 million from the agency for human rights and equality programs in Central Asia. According to him, the implementing partner of this program was the European International Organisation for LGBT

Protection. Further details emerged on March 14, when reports indicated that USAID had canceled contracts in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. These funds had been allocated for the projects 'Strengthening Civic Participation in Kazakhstan' and 'Strengthening Human Rights and Equality', the latter of which was intended to support LGBTI organisations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in their human rights advocacy.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Between February and March, members of the NGO Feminita faced administrative [charges](#) linked to the organisation's lack of official registration. Co-founders Zhanar Sekerbayeva and Gulzada Serzhan were charged with leading an unregistered organisation and fined 393,000 tenge (approximately €800) each. The Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights noted that Feminita's repeated applications for registration have been denied, effectively preventing the organisation from operating lawfully. (See also under Human Rights Defenders)

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January, Yedil Zhanbyrshin, a member of parliament from the ruling Amanat party, publicly praised the policies of US President Donald Trump and cited recent rhetoric from the United States on LGBTI issues to argue in favour of introducing restrictions on what he described as "LGBTI propaganda." At the same time, the government promoted public petitions as part of its stated effort to reflect public opinion. One of the first petitions to exceed the 50,000-signature threshold required to trigger official consideration was submitted by the Union of Parents of Kazakhstan and called for a ban on both overt and covert expressions related to LGBTI issues.

In late July, Majilis deputy Edil Zhanbyrshin proposed introducing criminal liability for individuals who engage in LGBTI propaganda, whether openly or indirectly. His proposal came during a parliamentary session otherwise focused on labour legislation and Kazakhstan's obligations under International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. Zhanbyrshin's intervention shifted the discussion toward

restricting expressions of LGBTI identity, calling for punitive measures at the criminal law level.

## DATA COLLECTION

In July, a survey by the foundation Strategy found that 67.3% of respondents in Kazakhstan support restricting LGBTI propaganda at the legislative level, while 79.8% consider such propaganda a threat to youth. Overall, 84.2% expressed support for government measures aimed at protecting traditional values. The project coordinator at Strategy emphasised that the widespread use of social media has increased young people's exposure to harmful content, which she listed as including pornography, violence, and non-traditional relationships. She argued that governments must actively counter externally imposed behavior models that contradict cultural traditions. According to the survey, the main concern expressed by respondents was the negative influence of LGBTI content on the physical and emotional development of teenagers. Civil society responded to the survey by underscoring that the study is not supported by any scientific data and is only a subjective opinion that may affect the rights of Kazakhstanis.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In February, the activities of USAID in Kazakhstan and across Central Asia were significantly reduced under the administration of US President Donald Trump. Mazhilis Deputy Magerram Magerramov accused the agency of lobbying for LGBTI rights and argued that LGBTI and feminist activism in Kazakhstan is externally driven through such financial support rather than internal social demand, and alleged that USAID has financed minority protests in the country. Political scientist Gaziz Abishev also weighed in, stressing the importance of distinguishing between humanitarian aid and political influence. While supporting funding for education, science, and assistance to vulnerable groups, he warned that politicised projects often serve as tools of foreign pressure under the guise of development.

In May, Zhanarbek Ashimzhanov, Member of the Mazhilis of the Parliament, called on the Deputy Prime Minister to tighten control over social networks, scrutinise the activities of NGOs, and to release the Ministry of Culture's study on the influence of LGBT

on minors. Ashimzhanov reiterated his demand for a legislative ban on so-called LGBTI propaganda. He argued that organisations active on platforms like TikTok promote phenomena alien to our culture and deliberately target vulnerable children and adolescents. According to him, such destructive ideas are introduced into Kazakhstani society with the help of foreign grants, which he claimed threaten national security. His request was supported by nine other deputies. In response, Kosherbayev stated that the Ministry of Culture monitors social networks around the clock to prevent the spread of harmful content among minors.

In July, representatives of Feminita spoke at the 144th session of the UN Human Rights Committee, held under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), highlighting violations of the civil and political rights of LGBTI persons in Kazakhstan. As Kazakhstan is obliged to report under the ICCPR every eight years, the intervention posed questions to the Kazakhstani delegation on the rights of LGBTI persons, the ongoing petition against so-called LGBTI propaganda, the absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, and access to medical services for trans people.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

On 21 and 22 November, further incidents targeted human rights defenders participating in public events. Activists Ardzh Tursykhan, Temirlan Baimash and Zhanar Sekerbayeva were detained by law enforcement authorities. During detention, Tursykhan was reportedly threatened with rape and subsequently fined for allegedly using obscene language. Baimash and Sekerbayeva were subjected to surveillance following their release, and the Prosecutor's Office initiated criminal proceedings against Sekerbayeva. These measures formed part of a broader pattern of pressure against Feminita members and associated activists during the reporting period.

Between February and March, members of Feminita were subjected to detentions and short-term arrests. In early February, following the disruption of a Feminita meeting by members of the Union of Parents, police detained 25 participants. While all were later released, co-founders Zhanar Sekerbayeva and Gulzada Serzhan were held for

several hours and subsequently fined for allegedly leading an unregistered organisation. In late February, Sekerbayeva was reportedly lured from her gym under false pretences and sentenced to 10 days of administrative detention. The sanctions were linked to Feminita's May 2024 march in Almaty, during which activists demanded accountability in a high-profile femicide case. (See also under Freedom of Association)

## **LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION**

In late February, members of Kazakhstan's parliament proposed a legislative ban on gender-affirming surgeries. The initiative was introduced by Majilis deputy Magerram Magerramov, who called for such procedures to be prohibited in law, using stigmatising language to portray trans people as mentally ill and framing gender-affirming healthcare as incompatible with Kazakh culture. He argued that allowing these procedures would normalise what he described as "destructive" ideas influenced by Western values, and asserted that Kazakhstan should reject such approaches in favour of what he characterised as traditional norms.

## **PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE**

In late December 2024, the Almaty Defense Department issued a statement regarding a trans blogger who had received a military summons from the Medeu district office in Almaty. The Defence Department clarified that summonses are issued to all citizens eligible for conscription, regardless of social status, profession, or other factors. Whether she will ultimately serve will depend on the outcome of a medical examination and a review of the documents she provides.



# Kosovo

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, cases of refusal of services, particularly in housing, hospitality, and healthcare, remained underreported due to fear of outing, retaliation, and lack of trust in institutions.

## ASYLUM

As of 2025, Kosovo recognises sexual orientation and gender identity as potential grounds for asylum in line with international standards. However, procedural safeguards, specialised training for asylum officers, and adequate reception conditions for LGBTI asylum seekers remain limited.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Throughout the year, bias-motivated speech against LGBTI persons remained widespread, particularly during election periods and on social media. Hate speech was often disseminated by public figures, political actors, and media outlets.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, cases of violence against LGBTI persons continued to be reported, including physical attacks, threats, and harassment. Underreporting remained a serious issue due to fear of secondary victimisation and lack of confidence in law enforcement.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Kosovo's acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti officially opened Pride Week, emphasising government support for equality and inclusion, which is more visible institutional backing than in some previous years. The event was attended by the capital's mayor, Përparim Rama, alongside several foreign ambassadors, including representatives from the UK and Germany.

## DATA COLLECTION

In September, Dylberizm, the world's first Albanian-language queer media platform, together with Pro Peace, presented Kosovo's first research on the experiences of queer people during and around the Kosovo War. Conducted in partnership with Pro Peace and the University of Prishtina, the study highlights the lives of those whose stories have been erased from public memory, historical research,

and documentation. The research explores how queer people lived, loved, formed relationships, and imagined the future during the conflict.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In July, the European Parliament adopted its report on Kosovo, expressing concern that the draft Civil Code of Kosovo has yet to be adopted. The report highlighted that the draft code addresses key issues of gender equality, including equal sharing of joint marital property between spouses. It also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Civil Code protects the rights of all individuals, including members of the LGBTI community, in line with constitutional guarantees and fundamental EU values.



# Kyrgyzstan

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In April, the NGO Kol-Kabysh reported that their coordinator received a call from a special detention centre informing her that five trans women held there were critically ill with high fevers and urgently needed fever-reducing medication. When she asked to speak directly with them, the women were given only a minute on the line. The call was then taken over by a detention centre employee, who demanded the medicines be delivered within the hour.

In January, LGBTI organisations and initiatives across the country lost more than half of their funding due to the executive order "On the Reassessment and Reorganisation of US Foreign Assistance" signed by the United States in January 2025. The freezing and subsequent dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at the beginning of 2025 also led to the halting of many development projects, threatening the funding of independent media, and creating uncertainty for U.S-funded laboratories. As such, 83 percent of programs were canceled, with the remaining ones transferred to the State Department. As a result, local queer health organisations were unable to distribute outreach packages to the community or provide comprehensive counselling on health and HIV-related issues.

## ASYLUM

In 2025, there were two documented cases of asylum-related requests addressed to the feminist queer organisation Qun Jelesi, where individuals received support through case accompaniment and consultations. These cases primarily involved LGBTI persons who had experienced hate crimes or those already living outside Kyrgyzstan and seeking asylum.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, the Qol Qabysh (Kol Kabysh) Collective reported the disappearance of one of their members. According to the group, the young man was last heard from on November 19, 2024, when he told a friend he was going home. He never arrived, and his phone was quickly switched off. He was reported missing and – as of the end of 2025 – no public update on his whereabouts or the outcome of any investigation has been reported.

In February, the Qol-Kabysh Collective reported a case in which a trans woman was subjected to physical assault and degrading treatment by members of her community. Despite reporting the incident to the police, no effective action was taken against the perpetrators. Following the attack, the victim was evicted by her landlord and excluded from a community messaging group, further exacerbating her isolation and vulnerability.

In March, a trans woman engaged in sex work was ambushed after arriving at a pre-arranged booking. Three men assaulted her, recorded the attack, subjected her to blackmail, and stole her cash and bank card, subsequently withdrawing money from her account. A week later, she was summoned to a police station and informed that the alleged perpetrators had been detained.

Between 2024 and 2025, local LGBTI organisations conducted a needs assessment of key population groups to evaluate the situation following the 2023-2024 amendments restricting so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations". The findings indicated increased vulnerability for lesbian, bisexual and queer women, including reports of family-based violence, forced confinement and threats following involuntary disclosure of sexual orientation. In documented cases, individuals were reportedly removed from their place of residence by family members, subjected to restrictions on movement and communication, expelled from their homes, and threatened with serious harm.

In 2025, Qun Jelesi and members of the LGBTI movement submitted a communication to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, outlining several emblematic cases of violence and arbitrary detention targeting LGBTI persons, including the April detention of five trans women in Osh (see also under Police and Law Enforcement). The submission raised concerns about systemic barriers to justice and intimidation of activists.

## EMPLOYMENT

In late January, the blocking of 23 websites offering sex work services in Kyrgyzstan cut off many trans

sex workers from their only source of income. For many trans women, sex work was the sole viable form of livelihood, as mismatches between their appearance and official documents make securing employment nearly impossible.

In March, a trans woman was summarily evicted from a hostel after the owner learned of her gender identity, according to the Kol-Kabysh Collective. The termination, delivered without cause or procedure, left her without income or prospects. Kol-Kabysh is seeking redress and mobilising support. No publicly reported update on the outcome of this case or any accountability measures had emerged by the end of 2025.

Since 2020, trans people in Kyrgyzstan experienced difficulties in employment due to the absence of procedures to change their official gender markers. Trans women are particularly vulnerable and often rely on sex work to cover living expenses but since 2024, pressure has intensified, especially from law enforcement officers. While sex work is administratively prohibited, initial detention previously allowed the option to pay a fine. However, recent trends restrict access to lawyers and the right to reduced penalties. In December 2025, a trans sex worker in the south of the country was detained for the first time, held for one day in a pretrial detention centre, and then, by court decision, was denied the option to pay a fine and spent an additional three days in detention.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, for the first time after a two-year crisis, the feminist queer organisation "Qun Jelesi" organised a Pride Month event, bringing together activists from across the country and fostering a renewed sense of community and resilience. Qun Jelesi also organised the first open queer art exhibition in Kyrgyzstan in recent years.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In March, Kyrgyzstan's national parliament published a draft bill proposing criminal sanctions for spreading information about LGBTI issues. The bill, though released for public discussion, had not yet been officially registered for parliamentary consideration.

The draft seeks to amend the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Responsibility, the Law on Peaceful Assembly, and the Law on Mass Media, introducing criminal and administrative penalties for actions or speech that create a positive attitude toward non-traditional sexual orientation. Under the proposed amendments, anyone found guilty of creating a positive attitude toward non-traditional sexual relations through media or telecommunications could face up to six months imprisonment and a fine between 2,000 and 5,000 som (€20-52). If such actions involved minors or repeat offenses, the penalties would rise to one year in prison and fines between 3,000 and 6,000 som (€31-62).

## HEALTH

In January 2025, the Kol Kabysh Collective filed a complaint with the Prosecutor General's Office against Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Health and the management of a dispensary, citing negligence and transphobia that contributed to the death of a community member. According to the collective, the woman had been discharged from hospital with the promise that the dispensary would secure her a place in a hospice. Nonetheless, when her condition deteriorated, she was left without proper care and denied a referral, which was required for admission to a hospice that was ready to receive her. In November 2024, after being forced to wait 2.5 hours in a car while in severe pain and requiring oxygen, she passed away. Kol Kabysh stressed that correspondence confirmed that she had a diagnosis for hospice admission, contradicting later claims by the dispensary's director, who reported to the Ministry of Health that the refusal came from hospice staff. The collective accused the dispensary of falsifying facts to evade responsibility. In late January, the Collective reported that the Prosecutor General's Office had transferred the case to the Pervomaysky District Department of Internal Affairs. By the end of 2025, no publicly reported update on the outcome of the investigation or potential accountability measures was available.

In March, during a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy, deputy Zhyldyz Sadyrbayeva raised criticism over what she

described as the alleged misuse of funds allocated to Kyrgyzstan by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. According to Sadyrbayeva, millions of dollars earmarked for HIV/AIDS support are not reaching children living with HIV, but are instead being spent on flavored condoms, lubricants, and LGBTI community programs. She appealed directly to Health Minister Erkin Checheibayev to take personal oversight of the Country Coordination Committee (CCC), which manages Global Fund programs.

## **FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT**

In April, Kol-Kabysh Collective reported that a trans woman had been held in a Russian special detention centre for four months. She was detained on January 30 and, after a rapid trial two days later, remained in custody in the village of Novoukrainskoye near Kropotkin. Kol-Kabysh reported that her passport has expired, all of her bank accounts are blocked, and when a close friend appealed to the Kyrgyz Embassy for assistance, officials refused help due to discrepancies in her documents, suggesting instead that she provide a certificate of gender-affirming surgery. From within detention, however, she has no way of securing such documentation. In May, her conditions worsened to the point of requiring medical attention, and advocacy undertaken by the Kol-Kabysh led to the officialisation of her renewed identification documents, which formalised her return to Bishkek. Mid-June, the victim confirmed she was getting transferred to Moscow to be flown back into Kyrgyzstan and, on June 18, Kol-Kabysh welcomed her arrival.

In June, a trans girl was detained and held overnight in the Leninsky District Department of Internal Affairs, where her health worsened significantly. Despite repeatedly asking for a bandage, officers dismissed her requests and instructed her to wait until a report was drafted. The staff eventually fell asleep in the office, leaving her in pain without medical assistance. The following morning, she recorded an officer insulting her with obscenities and pressuring her to sign a confession in exchange

for release. Kol-Kabysh immediately appealed to the National Centre against Torture.

## **HOUSING**

In March, a trans woman was expelled from her accommodation in the middle of the night. The Kol-Kabysh Collective stepped in to provide temporary housing, raised money for hotel and transport, and search for longer-term solutions. The Collective noted this was the third such case recently, with overcrowded LGBTI shelters forcing trans women to rely on general shelters where they often face severe discrimination, including eviction or harassment by residents.

## **PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE**

In June, the participation of a Kazakh trans blogger in a fashion show in Bishkek caused [controversy](#). According to the blogger, her appearance on stage led to immediate backlash from local authorities. She reported that event organisers informed her of a conflict with the State Committee for National Security (SCNS), which objected to her participation.

## **POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Throughout the year, multiple instances of arbitrary arrest and alleged mistreatment by police and other law enforcement authorities were reported in Kyrgyzstan. In late January, police in Osh [detained](#) a trans man on drug-related charges. Civil society organisations were repeatedly denied permission to deliver a parcel to him until, after weeks of advocacy and coordination with human rights defenders, the parcel was ultimately [delivered](#) in late February.

Several incidents reported during the year concerned the arbitrary arrest and detention of trans and non-binary people. In March, a [video](#) circulated on social media showing police officers at the apartment of a trans woman. After she opened the door and requested identification, three uniformed officers entered, pushed her out of the apartment, and led her away without presenting a warrant or documents explaining the grounds for detention. The footage showed her being taken to an office where she was questioned and asked to sign documents.

In April, two trans women were detained following the circulation of a video showing a physical altercation with a man after he allegedly refused to pay for sex work. All parties were initially taken to a police station. The man later signed a reconciliation letter and was released, while the two women were fined 20,000 soms (approximately €200). The following day, they were detained again, transferred from a police station to a drug treatment centre and then brought before the Leninsky District Court. The court sentenced them to three days of administrative detention on charges of petty hooliganism.

In April, five trans women and an LGBTI activist were detained in Osh following a confrontation reportedly linked to a livestream by one of the activists. According to civil society groups, masked individuals entered apartments without presenting warrants, assaulted those present, and transferred them to police custody. The detainees were reportedly denied access to legal representation and subjected to physical mistreatment and compulsory medical examinations. An administrative court sentenced all five trans women to five days of detention for "minor hooliganism" under Article 126.

Additional incidents during the year involved arbitrary arrests, compulsory drug testing, and discriminatory treatment of trans and non-binary people by police, including detentions in Osh in late April, June and August.

In late April, June and August, several trans women were detained in Osh and reported being subjected to discriminatory treatment by police, including derogatory remarks, compulsory drug testing and administrative detention.

In July, Kyrgyzstan's State Committee for National Security (SCNS) carried out [raids](#) on three Bishkek nightclubs, closing them down on accusations of corrupting young people through alleged drug use and involvement in the LGBT community. Authorities framed the closures in the context of Kyrgyzstan's 2023 children's information security law which bans the promotion of non-traditional sexual relations and material deemed harmful to traditional family values.



# Latvia

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In late December 2024, a singing protest was staged in front of the Saeima House in Riga to highlight the persistence of hate speech in Latvian society. The protest was organised by the informal youth group Harp in cooperation with the Riga Queer Choir and the association Safe Space. Participants and organisers drew particular attention to hate speech directed against the LGBTI community, stressing that victims often face dismissal of their complaints by law enforcement, reflecting institutional indifference and further discouraging reporting.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, a criminal case concerning the assault against two individuals in Daugavpils was still pending, following the lodging of a cassation appeal against the appellate judgment. The proceedings originate from a violent incident that occurred in 2023, when two people were attacked in Daugavpils after attending a community-organised picket held in support of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (See also under Equality and Non-discrimination). One of the victims reportedly received more than 20 blows to the head. The assault was prosecuted as hooliganism causing bodily harm and was alleged to have been motivated by the victims' perceived association with the LGBTI community. In 2024, the court of first instance found a perpetrator guilty of the offence and sentenced him to seven months' imprisonment. The court further ordered the payment of €840 in court costs and compensation for material damage and non-pecuniary harm to the victims. The judgment was appealed by all parties, including the defendant, the victims, and the prosecutor, leading to appellate review.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the Latvian Saeima voted to submit for further consideration amendments to the National Flag Law proposed by the opposition party Latvia First (LPV). The amendments would prohibit the rainbow flag from being displayed alongside the Latvian national flag. According to the LPV's annotation, state and municipal institutions must remain "neutral" toward different lifestyles and identities, and displaying the rainbow flag alongside the national flag undermines this neutrality.

In October, the Latvian parliament (Saeima) voted to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, following sustained political campaigns framing the treaty as an expression of so-called gender ideology. The vote was made possible after a conservative partner within the governing coalition broke ranks, supporting the withdrawal against the stated positions of both the Prime Minister and the President of Latvia.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In 2025, Pride took place amid a hostile public climate marked by political debates over the display of rainbow symbols and claims of institutional neutrality. The march, organised by the LGBTI and their Friends Association Mozaika, provided a platform for participants to assert visibility, reaffirm fundamental rights, and challenge societal prejudice. A small number of counter-protesters were present.

## DATA COLLECTION

Between March and May, the Safe Space association, in partnership with the informal youth group HARP, the Riga Queer Choir, and a team of interdisciplinary researchers, carried out the largest-ever survey of Latvia's LGBTI community. According to the report, 84% of LGBTI people in Latvia feel poorly represented at the national level, and more than a third avoid being open about their identity with wider society or even loved ones due to fear of discrimination, violence, or social exclusion. The survey also highlighted the persistence of hate speech and violence. Only 36% of respondents had not encountered hate speech in the past year, while 6% reported experiencing physical violence. The survey results also outlined that 49% of respondents identified marriage equality as the top priority, followed by adoption and parental rights (24%), education and public attitudes (23%), trans rights (18%), and safety and security (16%).

In June, the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published its Sixth Report on Latvia. The report highlights several positive developments, including the entry into force of a legal framework on civil partnerships in July 2024. At the same time, the report notes the absence of a dedicated national LGBTI equality strategy, insufficient cooperation

between government institutions and civil society, and the lack of data collection on racist and anti-LGBTI incidents in schools. On hate speech and violence, the Commission underlined that half of all documented online hate speech in Latvia targets LGBTI people, while racist, xenophobic and anti-Russian rhetoric has also increased since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

## **FOREIGN POLICY**

In May, Latvia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.



# Liechtenstein

## FAMILY

In January, following a May 2024 parliamentary vote, same-sex marriage became legally recognised in Liechtenstein.

## DATA COLLECTION

In previous years, the government committed to commissioning a study on the lived experiences of LGBTI people in Liechtenstein. However, no such study had been published or made publicly available by the end of 2025.



# Lithuania

## ASYLUM

In February, the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania (LVAT) clarified that belonging to the LGBTI community does not automatically justify granting refugee status and a real risk of persecution in the country of origin must be demonstrated. The court noted that while same-sex relations may be criminalised in some countries, this alone does not constitute persecution which, according to authorities, must be real, systematic, or severe enough to meet international and EU standards.

Throughout the year, the Lithuanian Gay League (LGL) continued to receive reports from LGBTI asylum seekers regarding poor living conditions in Foreigners' Registration Centers. Several Central Asian asylum seekers reported experiencing persecution from fellow nationals already residing in Lithuania.

A class action lawsuit supported by Amnesty International was initiated in Lithuania in June 2024 and remained ongoing in 2025, challenging the unlawful detention of asylum seekers, including a number of LGBTI applicants.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In October and November, Lithuanian law enforcement initiated two separate pre-trial investigations into online hate speech targeting LGBTI people following complaints by activists Lina Plieniūtė, director of "Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children," and Jonas Valaitis, editor of the LGBTI news portal jarmo.net. The investigations, conducted under Criminal Code Article 170 addressing incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation, concern repeated derogatory, threatening, and inciting comments posted on Facebook pages associated with the LGBTI community.

In July, media reported that TV host Paulius Ambrazevičius filed a complaint after police declined to open a criminal investigation into homophobic and threatening comments posted under a photo from Baltic Pride 2025. Law enforcement authorities determined the comments did not meet the threshold for prosecution under hate speech provisions, and Ambrazevičius announced he would appeal that decision.

In 2020, the European Court of Human Rights found that Lithuania's refusal to initiate a pre-trial investigation into discriminatory comments on a Facebook post violated the prohibition of discrimination under the European Convention on Human Rights. In 2025, authorities upheld the refusal to initiate a pre-trial investigation into two anti-LGBTQ+ hate speech comments posted on the GayLine.lt Facebook page in March and June. Although the court acknowledged that the comments were discriminatory and offensive, it held that they formed part of a continuous offence for which the perpetrator had already been convicted in October 2025.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In September, the Vilnius Regional Court rejected an appeal in a hate crime case on procedural grounds. The case involved a two-year pattern of homophobic and xenophobic harassment targeting a same-sex couple (one Lithuanian, one Finnish citizen), including death threats, xenophobic statements, physical assault with pepper spray, and over 30 documented police interventions. Two official forensic linguistic expert reports confirmed elements of both hate speech and death threats, explicitly identifying homophobic content and threatening language. Nonetheless, the Court dismissed the appeal based on a six-day delay in filing, calculated from electronic notification, rejecting the complainant's documented evidence of a work-related trip abroad during that period.

## FAMILY

In April, the Constitutional Court of Lithuania ruled that the Civil Code's provisions limiting civil partnerships to opposite-sex couples are unconstitutional. Specifically, Article 3.229 was found to violate the constitutional principles of human dignity, protection of private life, equality, and family protection. This decision stemmed from a request from the former conservative-liberal government - comprising the Homeland Union (TS-LKD), the Liberal Movement, and the Freedom Party - which requested the Court to assess two provisions of the Civil Code and its enacting law. The Court later clarified that, although Parliament has not yet established a legal framework for registering partnerships, same-sex couples

can now seek recognition through the courts. Following the ruling, two same-sex couples applied to register civil partnerships while the Parliament faced mounting pressure to regulate the matter through law. Notably, President Gitanas Nausėda emphasised in his sixth annual State of the Nation Address that the previous parliament failed to act despite ambitious promises and urged the Parliament to finally take a decision that reflects societal expectations regarding partnership recognition for same-sex couples.

In July, representatives of the LGL met with Ministry of Justice officials, academics, and NGOs to present their priorities for the forthcoming Partnership Institute legislation. The Ministry of Justice committed to preparing legislative amendments by October. Due to the change in the Ministry of Justice leadership, a set of amendments to the Civil Code that would establish a legal framework for gender-neutral registered partnerships on November 4th, 2025, were registered by 11 members of the Lithuanian parliament (Seimas) instead.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Baltic Pride 2025 attracted a record number of participants, with approximately 20,000 attendees, marking the first occasion on which law enforcement authorities and civil society organisations reported matching attendance figures. However, an emerging trend was observed whereby anti-gender actors recruited minors to disrupt Pride events through the harassment of participants, including verbal intimidation and the throwing of objects.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In July, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe closed its supervision of the *Macate v. Lithuania* case, which concerned restrictions on the distribution of a children's book depicting same-sex relationships. The case arose from a 2014-2015 suspension of the book's distribution under the Minors Protection Act, followed by its re-release with warning labels stating that the content could be harmful to children under 14. The European Court of Human Rights had ruled that these measures violated Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, finding that the restrictions aimed

to limit children's access to depictions of same-sex relationships without legitimate justification. The Committee noted that, in December 2024, Lithuania's Constitutional Court had declared the contested legal provision unconstitutional, affirming that the Constitution's concept of family is gender-neutral. The Court held that restrictions on information about diverse family models impede children's development as mature and well-rounded personalities and contradict the state's duty to ensure their harmonious growth in a spirit of equality, pluralism, and tolerance.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In November, a Russian LGBTI activist residing in Lithuania experienced online harassment that escalated to physical threats at her residence. Following coordinated cyberattacks on several human rights organisations' social media channels, the activist received direct death threats from members of a closed online community that promotes "traditional values" and supports Russia's war in Ukraine. Unknown individuals visited her home in Vilnius, leaving threatening messages, yet local police declined to open an investigation, citing insufficient evidence of criminal intent despite documented threats and video evidence.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In January, an international conference on demographic challenges and family policy was held at the Seimas, organised by the Temporary Family Policy Group of the Lithuanian Parliament. Among the principal speakers was Jerzy Kwaśniewski, president of the Polish organisation Ordo Iuris, known for its advocacy against gender equality and LGBTI rights. During his visit, Kwaśniewski also met with the Minister of Justice. Civil society organisations raised concerns about the participation of actors associated with transnational anti-gender initiatives in parliamentary discussions on family policy.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In September, Lithuania's Constitutional Court refused to examine a challenge of the absence of legal gender recognition procedures in Lithuanian law. The Court declined jurisdiction over the case

brought by the Vilnius Regional District Court, which questioned whether the failure to establish procedures for changing gender markers in civil status records and the unchangeable nature of personal codes violated constitutional principles. While acknowledging that Lithuania has still not implemented its obligations stemming from the European Court of Human Rights' 2007 judgment in *L. v. Lithuania*, the Court ruled that addressing legislative inaction falls outside its mandate. The Court suggested that lower courts could fill these legal gaps on a case-by-case basis using constitutional principles, but emphasised that comprehensive legislation remains the responsibility of parliament.

In October, the Seimas Commission on Suicide and Violence Prevention and the Human Rights Committee organised a joint session on "ensuring the rights of LGBTQ+ persons in the healthcare sector." The session emphasised that accessibility of legal gender recognition-related healthcare depends on legislative changes, as the current provision in the Civil Code does not include protections for minors.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Lithuania joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.



# Luxembourg

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In July, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, head of the Catholic Church in Luxembourg, participated for the first time in the commemoration ceremony for victims of queerphobic violence, which traditionally opens Luxembourg Pride Week. His participation marked a notable gesture of engagement from the Catholic Church in a context where religious institutions have historically played a significant role in public life.

In July, Yuriko Backes, Minister for Gender Equality and Diversity, presented the updated National LGBTI Action Plan (PAN LGBTIQ+). The plan comprises 81 measures and 147 concrete actions structured across 15 thematic chapters. On 21 July, the plan was subsequently discussed with members of the parliamentary Committee on Family, Solidarity, Living Together, Reception, Gender Equality and Diversity during a dedicated exchange session. While Luxembourg's national LGBTI organisation Rosa Lëtzebuerg ASBL and the Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CCDH) welcomed the update, both organisations expressed concerns about its substance and direction. According to the CCDH, the new plan does not include the depathologisation of trans identities, maintaining the requirement for trans people to obtain a psychiatric certificate to start their transition process.

In October, during the accession ceremony of Grand Duke Guillaume, an internationally broadcast ceremonial event aimed at reflecting the diversity of Luxembourgish society included a segment on "Living Together." Rosa Lëtzebuerg, as the national advocacy organisation for LGBTIQ+ people, was invited to participate alongside public institutions and human rights organisations. The invitation was widely viewed as the first explicit recognition of queer communities by the Luxembourg monarchy.

## EDUCATION

In January, following two opposing public petitions - one calling for the removal of LGBTIQ+ topics from schools and a counter-petition advocating for a more consistent integration of queer topics into the curriculum - both initiatives reached the required number of signatures and were referred

to the competent parliamentary committee. On 28 January, their respective initiators, accompanied by experts, presented their positions at a public hearing before the committee.

On 29 January, Education Minister Claude Meisch met with representatives of the LGBTIQ+ community, including Rosa Lëtzebuerg, ITGL, the Centre LGBTIQ+ CIGALE, LEQGF and queer loox, to discuss how queer topics could be integrated into education policy in a more consistent and age-appropriate manner, with a focus on the best interests of students.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Luxembourg joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.



# Malta

## ASYLUM

In May, following statements by Prime Minister Robert Abela indicating that Malta would place the reform of human rights conventions related to migration on the agenda of its upcoming Council of Europe presidency, a coalition of 16 NGOs held a [press conference](#) outside the Safi detention centre. The organisations, including Moviment Graffiti, aditus foundation, the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM) and Jesuit Refugee Service Malta, criticised the detention of vulnerable migrants, including women, children, LGBTI people, and persons with serious health conditions. They raised concerns about longstanding detention practices and conditions at Safi, recalling a 2021 Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture [report](#) that described prolonged confinement in overcrowded units with limited access to the outdoors.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In May, the hosts of the comedy podcast Bajd u Bejken publicly [addressed](#) criticism over a transphobic joke made during a live performance earlier in the month. In a subsequent interview, they acknowledged that the content, while having been reviewed for legal compliance, was inappropriate and ethically wrong, and expressed regret for the harm caused.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In June, a rainbow flag displayed outside the Kaktus Café in Sliema was [torn down and ripped](#), marking the third such act of vandalism against the establishment.

In March, eight teenagers aged between 15 and 17 were [charged](#) in court after admitting to luring an 18-year-old man to an abandoned hotel in Mellieħa through a dating app, where they beat him and stole his phone. The youths faced charges of aggravated theft, grievous bodily harm, and illegal detention, with the offences aggravated by hatred based on sexual orientation. All eight pleaded guilty. Magistrate Rachel Montebello, who presided over the case, banned publication of their names and granted them bail against a personal guarantee of €8,000 each. By the end of 2025, no publicly

reported update on sentencing or final judicial disposition had emerged.

## EDUCATION

In January, a couple [withdrew](#) their children from St Clare College Primary School in San Ġwann after learning that their son's teacher was gay. The parents argued this went against their Christian values, telling the school they did not want their children mixing with people who are not straight. The incident sparked wide criticism. Equality Parliamentary Secretary Rebecca Buttigieg said it showed how much work remained to change mentalities, while Education Minister Clifton Grima thanked the school for supporting the teacher. By late January, Grima [confirmed](#) that the parents had decided to keep their children enrolled at the school.

## HEALTH

In May, the Minister for Health [confirmed](#) in parliament that Mater Dei Hospital had carried out 17 gender-affirming surgical procedures since 2020 which included mastectomies, orchiectomies and a hysterectomy. However, the hospital does not provide genital reconstructive surgeries for trans people, meaning transfeminine and transmasculine bottom surgeries are not available within the public healthcare system.

In July, regular provision of trans/non-binary healthcare services at the Gender Wellbeing Clinic [resumed](#) after many services were at a standstill for around two years due to its psychiatrist resigning. This is due to psychiatrist consultations being mandatory before any medical services can be offered. The Health Minister confirmed that a contract for psychiatric services was approved and clinical sessions resumed that same month.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In April, Malta's Foreign Minister Ian Borg expressed his [discomfort](#) with Hungary's constitutional amendment banning LGBTI gatherings but refrained from outright condemnation. Borg added that he would raise the matter directly with his Hungarian counterpart to seek clarification, while underscoring that Malta's government had made significant advances in LGBTI rights over the past 12 years.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In May, Prime Minister Robert Abela stated that while the government must continue fostering a culture of equality, Malta has already "done all that was needed to be done" in terms of LGBTI legislation. Speaking after his keynote address at the European IDAHOT+ Forum, Abela pointed to the introduction of civil unions, same-sex marriage, and other reforms as evidence that Malta had already enacted the key legislative changes required.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In February, a 30-year-old Brazilian man reported that police officers stopped him from kissing another man during carnival celebrations on St Anne Street in Floriana. The victim said he and a male friend shared what he described as a normal kiss. Two police officers then approached them and told them such behaviour was not allowed in a public place.



# Moldova

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In April, former Moldovan President and Socialist Party leader Igor Dodon publicly accused the ruling Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) of promoting LGBTI rights at the expense of traditional Christian values. Dodon claimed that PAS, having consolidated control over the judiciary, is now using legal mechanisms to target the Orthodox Church and its followers. His remarks followed a court ruling that rejected a complaint challenging a 2022 decision by the Equality Council that found the Church's opposition to an LGBTI parade in Chisinau to constitute incitement to discrimination based on sexual orientation.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, a gay man was assaulted near his home in Chisinau. The victim believes the attack was motivated by his sexual orientation and filed a complaint with the police but expressed dissatisfaction with their response, stating that he has yet to receive any update or action regarding the case.

## EDUCATION

In March, Vladimir Odnostalko, a deputy from the Bloc of Communists and Socialists, proposed draft amendments to the Law on the Protection of Children from Harmful Information. The proposal aimed to ban so-called "LGBT propaganda" and pornography in media accessible to children. In justifying the initiative, Odnostalko criticised what he described as the influence of "civilised Europe" and argued that legislative intervention was necessary to shield children from such content. The initiative was submitted for inclusion on the parliamentary plenary agenda but was rejected by the parliamentary majority (see also under Freedom of Expression).

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the opposition parliamentary group Pobeda (Victory) submitted a draft law seeking to protect what it described as the family and moral foundations of Moldovan society by restricting the activities of LGBTI people. According to a statement published on the group's Telegram channel, the proposal would prohibit the promotion of non-

traditional sexual relations and gender identity in schools, the media, and public events. It further sought to restrict adoption by LGBTI people and to ban assemblies, marches, and parades that promote non-traditional family relations (see also under Freedom of Expression and Family).

## FAMILY

Proposals submitted by opposition actors during the year sought to restrict adoption rights for LGBTI people by framing non-traditional family relations as incompatible with Moldovan moral and cultural values. These initiatives formed part of broader legislative efforts to curtail LGBTI visibility and participation in public life (see also under Equality and Non-discrimination).

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, Moldova Pride took place in Chisinau amid significant political opposition and attempts to restrict the event. Ahead of the march, Chisinau Mayor Ion Ceban signed an order opposing the organisation of the Pride event, effectively banning the planned march scheduled for June. The national government subsequently demanded that the municipal authorities reverse the ban, arguing that it violated constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly and expression. The State Chancellery issued a formal notification asserting that prohibiting the parade constituted an infringement of constitutional rights. Mayor Ceban rejected the demand, framing it as political pressure from the ruling PAS party.

Despite these developments, the Pride march went ahead. Following the event, police fined the organisers 1,500 lei (approximately €80) for blocking the road without authorisation. On the same day, a counter-demonstration branded as a "Family March," organised by the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) under the leadership of former President Igor Dodon, took place in Chisinau (see also under Police and Law Enforcement).

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Throughout the year, political actors advanced initiatives and rhetoric aimed at restricting LGBTI expression in public space. In May, the Party of

Socialists of the Republic of Moldova announced its intention to pursue legislation banning LGBTI marches and introducing criminal liability for so-called "LGBTI propaganda" directed at minors. Party chair Igor Dodon framed the initiative as a defence of Orthodox values and urged municipal authorities to deny authorisation for LGBTI marches.

Following this, Chisinau Mayor Ion Ceban publicly opposed LGBTI marches and what he described as propaganda in the capital. He signed an order restricting the promotion of LGBTI topics in state schools and at public events, and announced the preparation of a draft municipal decision to regulate public meetings on so-called sensitive topics, including sexual orientation and gender identity. Civil society organisations and legal experts criticised the measures as discriminatory and legally unenforceable. Genderdoc-M announced its intention to file a complaint with the Equality Council, while the People's Advocate condemned the measures as an unjustified interference with freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Activist Vasile Micleuşanu filed a police complaint invoking criminal law provisions on violations of equal rights. Police confirmed that they were reviewing the complaint (see also under Freedom of Assembly and Education).

In April, the authorities in Moldova's Transnistrian region advanced a draft law aimed at banning the so-called propaganda of non-traditional values among both adults and children. The proposal, approved in first reading by the region's unrecognised parliament, sought to amend seven existing laws to prohibit the dissemination of content related to non-traditional sexual relations, gender reassignment, and the choice not to have children, and to introduce administrative penalties, including fines and the suspension of operations for legal entities.

In July, the Supreme Council adopted the law in final reading. It was subsequently signed by the region's self-declared President and entered into force following official publication.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on the case of a Moldovan lawyer and human rights advocate. The applicant, known for her human rights advocacy on behalf of the LGBTI community, reported being insulted with homophobic remarks and threatened by colleagues and that the authorities failed to protect her. Although the Moldovan courts ruled against her and framed the incident as a "neighborly quarrel," the ECHR, by contrast, concluded that the insults and aggression directed at Straisteanu had wider implications, as they targeted both her personally and the LGBTI community she represents.

In mid-June, the Moldovan Interior Ministry condemned the violence and provocations that targeted the LGBTI march in Chisinau on June 15. The Ministry argued that conservative and religious groups deliberately sought to destabilise the event, not only by confronting participants but also by clashing directly with police officers tasked with guaranteeing public safety. An incident in which a counterprotester carrying a child tried to push through police lines, nearly causing the boy to fall, was the subject of an investigation by the Children's Ombudsman, who expressed concerns about the deliberate exposure of minors to volatile confrontations

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In June, Moldovan police intervened in Chisinau to ensure the Pride march could proceed and to prevent clashes with counter-demonstrators. The counter-march, organised by PSRM and attended by several thousand participants, was monitored by law enforcement. Police also imposed an administrative fine on Pride organisers for a traffic-related violation following the event (see also under Freedom of Assembly).



# Monaco

## FAMILY

In October, National Council member Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo called for reforms to address legal inequalities affecting same-sex families in Monaco. Speaking as President of the Commission for Women's Rights, Family and Equality, she emphasised that "children's rights must be protected in all circumstances; this principle is neither negotiable nor conditional." Fresko-Rolfo denounced the existing "legal loophole" that leaves non-biological parents in same-sex families without recognition, urging legislative action in the name of equality and child welfare.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In April, Mon'Arc En Ciel Monaco became the principality's first LGBTI association. Its mission is to increase visibility for the local LGBTI community, combat social isolation, and foster dialogue on rights and inclusion.



# Montenegro

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, two [attacks](#) targeting LGBTI people took place in Podgorica. The first incident occurred when around 15 young assailants threw stones and glass bottles at two people walking down the street, while shouting homophobic insults. One person sustained minor hand injuries, while the other escaped unharmed. A few days later, the same individuals were again attacked outside their rented apartment. A group of minors armed with metal rods and stones surrounded their taxi. The attackers attempted to force open the vehicle's door and caused damage to the car. The NGO Queer Montenegro condemned the incidents and called on authorities to take measures to identify and prosecute those responsible, but no outcome has been reported by late 2025.

## FAMILY

In November, Montenegrin institutions [met](#) in Podgorica to review progress on harmonising national legislation with the 2020 Law on Same-Sex Partnerships, five years after its adoption. Despite the law's entry into force, full alignment across sectoral legislation remains incomplete, particularly in areas such as social security, taxation, and administrative procedures, limiting the practical enjoyment of rights by same-sex couples. The meeting, organised under the joint EU-Council of Europe action Combating Hatred and Intolerance in Montenegro, brought together representatives of relevant ministries to assess progress since July, identify remaining gaps, and outline next steps. Participants agreed to continue regular coordination, with a follow-up session scheduled for March 2026.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, the European Parliament [published](#) its periodic report on Montenegro, highlighting concerns that the draft law on legal gender recognition was not adopted in 2024, despite it being a measure under Montenegro's EU accession programme.

In November, the European Commission released its latest [report](#) on Montenegro, noting that, while some progress has been made, the country continues to face outstanding obligations in key EU accession chapters 23 and 24. The report [highlights](#)

that Montenegro has not yet adopted the Draft Law on Legal Recognition of Gender Identity based on self-determination, despite completing prior legislative steps and consultations with the European Commission. In addition, the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination and the Law on Life Partnership of Persons of the Same Sex remain pending full implementation, with delays exceeding five years in some cases.



# Netherlands

## ASYLUM

In July, the Dutch House of Representatives adopted a new family reunification rule for asylum seekers, under which only legally married partners are eligible to join them in the Netherlands. Opposition MPs argued for an exemption for LGBTI asylum seekers, given that same-sex couples from most countries of origin cannot legally marry and would therefore be unable to meet the new condition. The government argued that LGBTI asylum seekers could still attempt to rely on European human-rights law (Article 8 ECHR). The NGO COC Netherlands underscored that this does not guarantee family reunification and creates a clear disparity between heterosexual married couples, who retain certainty, and same-sex couples, who are left without it.

In August, a 28-year-old trans woman from the United States launched a legal challenge against the rejection of her asylum claim in the Netherlands. She had applied for political asylum stating that she no longer felt safe in the US. Her lawyer's office explained that she travelled to the Netherlands because policies introduced under the Trump administration made her feel unsafe as a trans person. Official data show 29 Americans applied for asylum in the first half of 2025, without giving the cited grounds.

In late October, following the publication of NGO COC Netherlands' research on the safety of LGBTI asylum seekers (see also under Data Collection), COC and the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) signed a renewed cooperation agreement. Under the agreement, COA committed to strengthening measures aimed at ensuring safe and inclusive living conditions for LGBTI residents in asylum reception centres.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In November, rapper Emirhan X and members of his band were attacked during the Popronde festival in Venlo after performing in the festival's designated queer space. According to reports, a group of young people made Nazi salutes and subsequently verbally and physically assaulted the musicians after confronting them. One band member sustained a concussion and required stitches. COC Netherlands condemned the attack and called for clarity on the incident, noting that it reflects a broader rise in violence targeting LGBTI people.

## DATA COLLECTION

In October, NGO COC Netherlands published a research report on the conditions of LGBTI asylum seekers in the Netherlands. The report found that around half of LGBTI asylum seekers experience insecurity in reception centres, with 57% reporting incidents of discrimination, ranging from verbal harassment and bullying to threats and violence. The findings also showed that only 20% of LGBTI asylum seekers are open about their identity to everyone in shelters, with insecurity identified as a key contributing factor (see also under Asylum).

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, the Reformed Political Party (SGP), joined by the Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB), Forum for Democracy (FvD), and JA21, submitted a motion calling on the government to withdraw a draft bill amending the Transgender Act before parliamentary debate. The proposed reform would have removed the requirement for a medical or psychological expert statement to change one's legal gender marker, replacing it with a self-determination procedure following a mandatory reflection period. It also provided for a court-based procedure for applicants under 16 with parental consent. Transgender Netwerk Netherlands criticised the motion, warning that halting the legislative process undermined democratic standards and negatively affected the safety and legal certainty of trans people. On 8 April, the House of Representatives adopted the motion, effectively ending the legislative process. In July, State Secretary Struycken confirmed that the cabinet had formally withdrawn the bill. In October, during an election debate organised by COC Netherlands, NSC MP Willem Koops acknowledged that withdrawing the bill before full parliamentary debate had been a mistake, while reiterating that his party would nevertheless have opposed the reform.

## FAMILY

In late October, the body of independent experts responsible for monitoring the implementation by the parties of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO) urged

the Netherlands to ensure its policies reflect that domestic violence disproportionately affects women, and said its gender-neutral approach could leave women at risk. GREVIO's feedback was aimed at recent Dutch laws against harassment and discrimination in which references to gender had been removed.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, the Dutch public broadcaster AVROTROS announced that it would formally object to a new rule introduced by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) prohibiting all flags other than national ones during official segments of the Eurovision Song Contest. According to the updated EBU policy for the 2025 contest, only national flags are permitted in official contest areas, including the stage and the Green Room, which excludes flags such as the rainbow flag, the Palestinian flag, and the EU flag.

## HEALTH

In July, Transgender Netwerk organisation reported that waiting times for an initial intake appointment in trans healthcare had reached six years in the Netherlands. The organisation's chair described the situation as a crisis that has gotten completely out of hand, noting that waiting lists continue to grow while no structural solutions are being implemented.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In January, a broad coalition of civil society organisations called on the House of Representatives to adopt a ban on conversion practices. In February, the Dutch Senate opened its first round of debate on the proposal, focusing on the scope of the ban, enforcement mechanisms, and potential exemptions. The House of Representatives subsequently published an explanatory note clarifying that the bill aims to criminalise attempts to suppress or change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Christian medical association and a UK-based Christian lobby group criticised the proposal, warning that it could affect pastoral conversations and counselling. In September, a revised version of the bill was introduced. The updated text limits criminal liability to *systematic and intrusive* attempts to change or suppress sexual orientation or gender identity, explicitly excluding

casual conversations and voluntary counselling. Following these amendments, several parties that had previously opposed the proposal, including NSC, CDA, and BBB, indicated increased support. On 9 September, the House of Representatives adopted the revised bill by majority vote. By the end of 2025, the bill had not yet been adopted into law. It remained pending further consideration in the Senate, with no final vote having taken place.

## DATA COLLECTION

In July, research by Act4Respect and NNID showed that intersex people in the Netherlands face multiple forms of violence that accumulate and often occur at the same time, resulting in long-term psychological stress. The findings indicate that intersex people are exposed to sexual violence and other forms of sexually abusive behaviour from an early age, alongside ongoing structural violence directly linked to being intersex.

In August, the television programme *EenVandaag* published its annual Pride survey, based on responses from more than 2,400 LGBTI people. The survey found that 42% of respondents had experienced negative incidents in the previous year, including insults, harassment, or derogatory remarks framed as "jokes." Twelve per cent reported having received threats, while 9% reported being spat on. Incidents were reported not only in public spaces, but also in workplaces (18%) and private settings (20%). Respondents frequently described verbal harassment by groups of young people in public spaces. Researchers noted that intolerance was reported across different social groups, while highlighting recurring patterns in respondents' accounts. Separate research commissioned by the government also indicated an increase in reports of violence or discrimination to the police, with annual reports rising by more than 600 over the past four years, reaching over 2,700 cases per year (see also under Freedom of Assembly).

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Survey data published by *EenVandaag* indicated that LGBTI people continue to experience hostility in public spaces, including around Prides. Respondents reported verbal harassment, threats, and other forms of intimidation occurring in streets and other

public settings, contributing to feelings of insecurity when expressing their identity openly. These findings align with government-commissioned [research](#) from 2024 showing a sustained increase in reported incidents targeting LGBTI people, raising concerns about the safety of public participation and visibility. (See also under *Data collection*)

## FOREIGN POLICY

In March, the Transgender Netwerk Netherlands put out a [statement](#) advising trans people in the Netherlands to avoid traveling to the United States unless "absolutely necessary," citing executive orders issued by President Donald Trump and restrictive state laws as reasons for concern. In April, the government echoed similar concerns as it [joined](#) several countries that updated their travel guidance for trans citizens traveling to the United States, following federal rollbacks on trans rights under the Trump administration.

In May, the Netherlands initiated a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

In late May, State Secretary Mariëlle Paul (VVD) [announced](#) that she would not take part in the Budapest Pride march, citing uncertainty about the situation and the risk of possible arrests. Paul had travelled to Budapest to address Hungary's human rights record on behalf of the Dutch cabinet. She stated that she would base her decision on the circumstances surrounding the march and concluded that the situation was too unclear for her in her capacity as a cabinet representative.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In late October, leaders and representatives of seven political parties [signed](#) a Rainbow Ballot Agreement 2025 with COC Netherlands. Through

the agreement, the parties committed to advancing safety, emancipation, and human rights for LGBTI people during the upcoming cabinet period. The agreement was signed by Frans Timmermans (GL|PvdA), Henri Bontenbal (CDA), Rob Jetten (D66), Dilan Yeşilgöz (VVD), Bastiaan Meijer (SP), Ines Kostić (PvdD), and Marieke Koekkoek (Volt).



# North Macedonia

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Between June and July, multiple [instances](#) of bias-motivated violence were recorded in North Macedonia, coinciding most often with Pride-related activities. In late June, a crowd of over 30 people surrounded the LGBTI Support Centre building, hurling stones, bottles, and bricks, while shouting homophobic slurs and issuing threats. Just days later, a mob gathered outside the home of an openly gay actor and activist, pelting his house with stones and shouting homophobic abuse while he and his partner were inside. In early July, unidentified assailants attempted to set fire to the LGBTI Support Centre, with police investigations revealing that tiles had been removed from the roof and petrol poured onto the beams before being ignited.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, the sixth [Skopje Pride](#) took place in the capital of North Macedonia under the slogan "We stand. We persist. Together!". Unlike the previous five editions, which had followed a celebratory format, this year's Pride was deliberately structured as a protest march. Ahead of the march, participants released the Skopje Pride Manifesto, denouncing "misogyny and hetero patriarchal demographic hysteria promoted by the highest echelons of government" and criticising persistent bureaucratic barriers, including the two-year suspension of legal reforms concerning gender recognition.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, the European Parliament [published](#) its periodic report on North Macedonia, highlighting widespread hate speech on social media targeting Roma and LGBTI people, as well as other marginalised groups and calling for the systematic prosecution of hate speech, hate crimes, and intimidation. The report also called for the inclusion of hate speech in the Criminal Code.



# Norway

## ASYLUM

In March, Norway updated its official travel advice for the United States, joining several other European countries in warning citizens of stricter entry conditions and issues related to gender recognition.

In March, Norway's Green Party (MDG) announced its proposal to establish a separate fast-track visa scheme for trans people fleeing persecution in the United States. Party leader Anild Hermstad explained in a press release that what began as so-called "anti-woke" rhetoric in the US has now escalated into a systematic denial of rights and security for trans people, stripping them of recognition, healthcare, and participation in public life.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In May, Håvard Jensen, group leader of the Progress Party (FrP) in Indre Østfold, was reported to the police after making a threatening statement about people carrying a rainbow flag. During a break in a municipal council meeting, he stated that he would "chase [someone] with an axe" if a person carrying a rainbow flag came onto his road. The remark was directed at a representative of FRI – the Organisation for Gender and Sexual Diversity – who was present at the meeting, and the organisation subsequently filed a police report. There have been no further public developments reported on this incident since the police report was filed.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In its new 2025 prioritisation circular, the Attorney General has decided to remove hate crime as an explicit priority area, despite the fact that reported cases have been steadily increasing year by year. In response to questions, the Attorney General explained that even though the term no longer appears in the circular, hate crime should continue to be treated as a priority. Nonetheless, omitting it from the new circular poses a risk that this focus will be weakened, leading to reduced resources and a gradual erosion of the expertise that has been developed.

In June, In Vinje, a trans activist and organiser of Pride events, faced a potentially targeted attack when her garage burned down. The police are investigating the incident as a possible hate crime.

In June, three teenage boys were arrested in Bodø for setting fire to a Pride flag at Hunstad Primary School.

In July, the Queerness art collective's Pride project, *The Missing T*, was vandalised at City Hall Square. The installation, which debuted during Pride Week, featured large letter figures initially displaying "LHB-Q+," with the "T" added on Friday, symbolising the visibility and inclusion of trans people.

## EDUCATION

In December, FRI, Queer Youth and PKI formally handed over more than 25,000 signatures to the Minister of Children and Families in support of FRI's appeal "Protect queer children and young people." The petition calls for stronger measures to ensure that all staff in schools and kindergartens have solid knowledge of the lives and living conditions of queer youth.

In June, the Directorate of Education instructed Christian independent schools to cease teaching content that portrays same-sex relationships or diverse sexual orientations as sinful or morally wrong. The directive follows an inspection of four schools affiliated with the Church of the Society in Kristiansand and Egersund, which found multiple violations of the Education Act. The report specified that schools must revise teaching materials on topics including same-sex relationships or diverse sexual orientations, cohabitation, sin and fear, gender equality, democracy, critical thinking, and creation.

In December, Norway's Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal (Diskrimineringsnemnda), sitting in an extended panel, issued opinions on complaints about Drammen municipality's Pride/rainbow-flag marking in schools and kindergartens. The majority found no unlawful discrimination.

## EMPLOYMENT

In May, news emerged that Accenture, the American consulting firm with around 1,000 employees in Norway, is ending its global diversity and inclusion initiatives following US President Donald Trump's executive orders. Accenture CEO Julie Sweet informed all employees that the company's goals

for diversity, inclusion, and equality are being discontinued, including career development programs aimed at specific demographic groups. This change affects the Norwegian branch, which has offices in Oslo, Bergen, and Stavanger.

## FAMILY

In July, the Storting reached a majority in favor of granting automatic legal parenthood to co-mothers in same-sex relationships. Previously, co-mothers had to apply to the state to be recognised as legal parents, but the upcoming amendment to the Children's Act will give them full parental rights from birth. The change in law will also include unmarried couples, who will now be able to declare co-maternity in the same way as paternity.

## HEALTH

In June, the Health Centre for Gender and Sexuality (HKS) in Oslo announced it will no longer initiate hormone treatment for minors with gender dysphoria. The decision follows a supervisory report by the Norwegian Board of Health Supervision (Statens helsetilsyn), which concluded that aspects of the centre's treatment practices for minors were not in line with specialist healthcare requirements. In July, the Grünerløkka district in Oslo also decided to halt medical treatment for underage trans patients at the district level. This followed the supervisory process, although neither HKS nor the State Administrator had formally required the district to suspend care entirely. Subsequent reporting indicated that the district's decision to restrict treatment went beyond the specific recommendations made in the supervisory findings. Following these developments, the Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence (PKI) held a demonstration in front of the Oslo Opera House to protest such restrictions on healthcare for underage trans people.

In June, the Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence (PKI) released a report highlighting the experiences of trans patients at Oslo University Hospital (OUS). The report found that many trans people describe abusive treatment and experiences resembling conversion therapy.

In October, the Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence raised concerns on the research practices of the National Treatment Service for Gender Incongruence (NBTK), suggesting that the National Hospital may have mishandled – or even effectively falsified – documentation in order to conduct studies on trans people without their knowledge or consent. The controversy follows a recent decision by the Integrity Committee at Oslo University Hospital, which dismissed NBTK for using material from a quality register in research without securing the necessary consent. A second, comparable case is now under review by the same committee, and yet another related matter is being examined by the Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK) South-East. In November, new questions were raised after the same team of researchers submitted yet another complaint to the Integrity Committee. As reported by Forskning.no, the group at the NBTK may have carried out additional violations.

## DATA COLLECTION

In June, a study on the aftermath of the June 25, 2022 terrorist attack in Oslo revealed that LGBTI people directly affected by the shooting experienced nearly ten times more targeted hatred than non-LGBTI survivors. Among the 229 study participants, one in three LGBTI respondents reported experiencing hatred directly linked to their identity in the aftermath. The survey also showed lasting fear with two out of three participants who had previously attended queer events are now hesitant to do so, leading many to reduce visible expressions of queerness to protect their safety. Similarly, the Norwegian centre for violence and traumatic stress studies released a report about the findings of an inquiry with people who were present that day, revealing that many have not received adequate health care for both physical injuries and trauma.

In July, a survey conducted by Sentio Research on behalf of Khrono and the National Union of Students (NSO) revealed that many students are critical of teaching and research on equality, diversity, LGBTI issues, and racism. According to the results, one in three students believes universities "should limit

topics such as diversity, equality, LGBTI, and racism" in their teaching and research. Criticism is highest among the youngest students, aged 18 to 20, with 41 percent supporting such limitations, compared with 24 percent of those aged 26 to 29. The survey also found a gender gap: 39 percent of male students support limiting these topics, compared with 26 percent of female students.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Socialist Party (SV) politician Kathy Lie raised concerns about Norway's European Economic Area (EEA) cooperation with Hungary following the country's ban on Pride events. In a written question to the Minister of Culture and Equality, Lie asked how EEA funds could be effectively used to promote human rights and support civil society in Hungary, given that Norway opposes the Pride ban and other authoritarian measures by the Hungarian government. Similarly, the Green Party (MDG) national board adopted an emergency resolution demanding that the government freeze EEA funds for Hungary until further notice, if the Hungarian government does not lift the ban on Pride events.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, the Norwegian government announced plans to establish a memorial site for the Pride terror attack on June 25, 2022. According to Minister of Culture and Equality Lubna Jaffery from the Labour Party, the memorial is intended to serve as a place of collective grief, reflection, and resistance, symbolising the community's stand against hatred and violence.

In June, the rainbow flag was raised for the first time outside Oslo Cathedral, accompanied by a performance from the Norwegian Broadcasting Orchestra. The event was attended by Oslo Cathedral's dean, Pål Kristian Balstad, who emphasised the church's commitment to celebrating diversity and promoting a safe, inclusive society.

In October, the presented state budget underscored that the Norwegian Organisation for Gender and Sexual Diversity (FRI) would face cuts to its capacity-building initiatives. Among the targeted initiatives are Pink Competency Child Welfare, which will receive a

reduction of 275,000 NOK (approximately €24,000) in 2026. Initially, Pink Competency Justice, a program meant to increase knowledge on hate crimes and equitable treatment of queer people by the police and the correctional system, was cut from the original budget proposal but eventually secured funding

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, the Progress Party (FrP) reiterated its opposition to the introduction of a third legal gender category. Simen Velle, leader of the Progress Party's youth wing, stated publicly that he recognises only two genders, framing this position as a reflection of what he described as "biological realities."

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In February, Elisabeth Meling became the first trans person in Norway to top a parliamentary election list. The decision was confirmed when the Centre Party held its nomination vote in Vestland county. Meling was placed first on the party's list in the Hordaland electoral district, while also being nominated in second place on the list for the Sogn og Fjordane district.

In June, the Oslo District Court removed a judge from the upcoming terror trial against Arfan Bhatti after he wrote an editorial in support of Pride. District Court Judge Steinar Backe had criticised teachers who opposed Pride celebrations in an Aftenposten editorial in May of last year. Bhatti's defense attorney, John Christian Elden, argued that these statements made the judge unfit to preside over the trial.

In June, the Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) continued work on guidelines for the participation of trans women in football, involving consultation with trans players and a review of international practices. A draft framework had been prepared, but no final guidelines were published or adopted by the end of 2025.

In October, Tromsø Municipality announced that it had entrusted the Arctic Pride organisation with coordinating the development and implementation

of the municipality's forthcoming action plan on gender and sexual diversity. The mandate includes delivering capacity-building activities in cooperation with civil society partners.

## PUBLIC OPINION

In September, the newly-elected bishop in Nord-Hålogaland expressed his support for the inclusion of LGBTI people in the Church. In October, the Church of Norway publicly apologised to the LGBTI community during an event in Oslo. Preses Olav Fykse Tveit acknowledged that the Church had, for decades, caused profound harm by excluding qualified queer people from working in the Church, refusing to pray for or marry same-sex couples, and contributing to the stigmatisation of HIV-positive individuals by framing AIDS as divine punishment.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In June, the Oslo Police District launched an appeal for victims to come forward following reports of harassment outside Pride Park. According to the operations manager, the police are seeking to identify individuals who had their Pride flags forcibly taken and were spat on near the festival area.

In June, the Minister of Justice, Astri Aas-Hansen from the Labour Party, addressed concerns over the placement of two trans women convicted of rape in a women's prison. She clarified that while Norwegian guidelines generally direct trans women to serve time in women's prisons, exceptions can be made if such placement would threaten the safety of the individual or other inmates, or otherwise appear clearly inappropriate. There was no publicly reported outcome tied to the case by the end of 2025.

During this year's Oslo Pride, London Pub praised the Oslo Police for their strengthened cooperation, which contributed to a heightened sense of safety for clientele. The focus on safety has been particularly important since the terror attack on June 25, 2022, with nightclub clientele and Pride attendees seeking reassurance when returning to spaces that can be triggering or traumatic.

In November, prosecutors requested a 30 – year prison sentence for Arfan Bhatti, whom they

describe as the driving force behind the 2022 terrorist attack against Oslo Pride. In their closing arguments before the Oslo District Court, state prosecutors Sturla Henriksbø and Aud Kinsarvik Gravås argued that Bhatti played a decisive role in enabling the mass shooting outside the London Pub and Per på Hjørnet, where two people were killed and several others injured. They stressed that Bhatti shows no remorse, poses a high risk of reoffending, and should therefore receive the maximum penalty under Norwegian law—30 years, with a minimum term of 20 years.



## Poland

### BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The Regional Court in Warsaw upheld a lower court judgment convicting journalist Rafał Ziemkiewicz of defamation against LGBTI activist Bart Staszewski. The case concerned social media statements published in January 2023, in which Ziemkiewicz used degrading language towards Staszewski and accused him of accepting foreign funding to fabricate allegations against Poland. The court sentenced Ziemkiewicz to four months of community service, ordered him to pay PLN 5,000 (approximately €1,150) to the Victims Assistance and Post-Penitentiary Assistance Fund, and required him to issue a public apology to Staszewski.

In February, Polish MEP Grzegorz Braun was sanctioned by the European Parliament for anti-LGBTI remarks. Braun publicly stated that there are only "men, women, and people with personality disorders" and made additional derogatory comments targeting LGBTI people. The sanctions were imposed under the Parliament's disciplinary rules.

In February, an appellate court upheld a ruling in favour of Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in a defamation case brought by the conservative legal organisation Ordo Iuris. The case stemmed from a 2020 post in which Sikorski referred to Ordo Iuris as a "fundamentalist sect" while criticising its support for local resolutions targeting so-called "LGBT ideology." A first-instance court had found the statement to fall within the limits of political criticism and freedom of expression; the appeal was dismissed, making the judgment final.

In February, a Warsaw court ruled that conservative activist Kaja Godek must apologise to the LGBTI people she insulted as part of repeated claims in media interviews that homosexuality is a "perversion" often linked to paedophilia. She had also criticized openly gay figures, such as former Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, for "flaunting his strange orientation." In 2019, she claimed the "homosexual lobby" sought to sexualise children and adopt them for abusive purposes.

In June, the District Court in Gdańsk ruled against the use of so-called "homophobe vans," vehicles

circulating with homophobic slogans. The case, brought forward by the Tolerado Association, a Tricity-based LGBTI rights group, had been ongoing since 2019 and targeted the Pro Right to Life Foundation, the organisation responsible for both anti-abortion and anti-LGBTI campaigns. The court found that the foundation's materials promoted disinformation and anti-scientific theories, including claims about a supposed shorter life expectancy for homosexual men and false associations between LGBTI identities, paedophilia, and sexualisation of children. In its ruling the court ordered the foundation to cease disseminating such slogans, issue a public apology to both Tolerado and the wider LGBTI community, and pay PLN 30,000 (approximately €6,900) in damages plus interest.

In late August, Sejm (the lower house of parliament) Speaker, Szymon Hołownia opposed the organisation of an exhibition and intervened during the debate on the "Stop LGBT" bill, both of which sought to present LGBTI people in the context of paedophilia. Hołownia refused to allow the controversial exhibition to take place in the Sejm building, where it was to be organised by the Life and Family Foundation, and stepped in during the first reading of the citizens' bill of the same name.

### BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In April, President Andrzej Duda referred amendments to the Penal Code to the Constitutional Tribunal instead of signing them into law. The bill, adopted by parliament in March and previously approved by the government in November 2024, sought to extend hate crime and hate speech protections to include sexual orientation, gender, age and disability. The President argued that the provisions risked infringing freedom of expression and could lead to abuse or preventive censorship. On 30 September, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled the amendments unconstitutional, including the extension of protected characteristics and provisions covering crimes motivated by assumed or associated traits. As a result, the reform did not enter into force.

In July, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) condemned Poland for failing to properly address

the homophobic motive in an attack against a same-sex couple and their friend. The case, *Bednarek and Others v. Poland*, concerned an incident in central Warsaw where the victims were subjected to homophobic insults before being physically assaulted. While Polish authorities prosecuted and convicted the attackers, the homophobic motive was disregarded in the proceedings and sentencing. The Court stressed that ignoring the discriminatory aspect "renders the essential feature of the crime invisible and without criminal significance."

In October, the District Court for Warsaw-Śródmieście delivered its judgment in a case concerning homophobic threats and calls for violence posted in 2017 under a Facebook post by a same-sex couple. Although the victims had identified 34 individuals and submitted evidence to the prosecutor in 2017, proceedings against several suspects were discontinued due to the statute of limitations. In April 2024, a penal order was issued against seven identified authors, imposing fines and restrictions of liberty; following objections, the order was annulled and the case proceeded to a full hearing. In its October judgment, the court again found the defendants guilty but imposed lower penalties. In several instances, the legal classification was changed from public incitement to commit a crime under Article 255 §1 of the Criminal Code to insult prosecuted by private charge under Article 216, resulting in conditional discontinuations or fines replacing liberty-restricting penalties.

## EDUCATION

In late August, Poland's Catholic Church appealed to parents to withdraw their children from the new, non-mandatory school subject "health education," introduced from 1 September. In a statement, the Polish Episcopal Conference (KEP) described the curriculum, which includes elements of sexuality education, as "anti-family" and "gender destabilising," claiming it would undermine traditional family values and promote "gender ideology." The conservative think tank Ordo Iuris also criticised the reform, accusing Education Minister Barbara Nowacka of introducing sex education under the guise of health lessons, and objecting to content addressing contraception, abortion, sexual orientation, gender identity and LGBT rights.

In February, the Court of Appeal in Warsaw upheld a September 2023 ruling in favour of the Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) and the Society for Anti-Discrimination Education (TEA) in a case against the Association of Large Families of Warsaw and Mazovia (SRWWiM). The courts found that SRWWiM had disseminated false and homophobic claims in publications and letters to schools in 2016-2017, alleging that anti-discrimination education promoted LGBTI behaviour and undermined social norms. The statements were held to be untrue and harmful to the plaintiffs' personal rights. SRWWiM was ordered to remove the publications, issue public apologies, submit a statement to the Ministry of National Education, and pay PLN 3,000 in damages to KPH. The appellate ruling made the judgment final.

## EMPLOYMENT

In February, the Supreme Court of Poland ruled in favor of a non-binary former casino dealer in Wrocław, marking the first time Polish law explicitly recognised that non-binary individuals can be subject to gender-based discrimination. The applicant was fired in 2021 after refusing to comply with strict appearance rules requiring female employees to wear make-up, skirts, and high heels.

In February, the Polish Supreme Court rejected an appeal by IKEA in the case of a Christian employee who had been dismissed for criticising the LGBTI community under a company post encouraging staff participation in pro-LGBTI initiatives. The Lower Regional Court of Krakow had previously ruled that Komenda's dismissal was unlawful and ordered his reinstatement, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court. The Court emphasised that workplaces must remain "free of ideological indoctrination" and allow employees to express their personal values and beliefs.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, Łańcut County, the last Polish local government that had maintained an "LGBTI-free" status through the Local Government Charter of Family Rights, formally repealed the resolution. The move was prompted primarily by pressure from the European Commission, which warned that local governments maintaining discriminatory laws risk losing access to EU investment funds.

## FAMILY

In February, the ECtHR ruled against Poland in a case concerning same-sex couples who were denied certificates of non-impediment to marry abroad. These certificates, issued by Polish registry offices (USC), confirm that no legal obstacles prevent a marriage. The Court determined that the absence of legal recognition for same-sex unions infringed Article 8 of the ECHR, which guarantees respect for private and family life. The Court held that by refusing the certificates, Poland had "left the applicants in a legal vacuum" and failed to recognise and protect same-sex couples in stable, committed relationships.

In April, the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) stated that Poland must recognise same-sex marriages lawfully concluded in another Member State. The case concerned two Polish nationals, married in Berlin in 2018, whose request to register their marriage certificate in Poland was refused on the basis of domestic provisions limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples. Following a referral from a Polish court, the CJEU ruled in November that, under the EU principle of freedom of movement, Poland must recognise marriage certificates issued in another Member State where necessary to ensure the effective exercise of EU rights. The Court found that refusal to transcribe such certificates is incompatible with EU law insofar as it interferes with free movement, requiring Poland to enable registration to the extent necessary to give effect to those rights.

In April, the ECtHR issued a ruling in *Andersen v. Poland*, finding Poland in violation of Article 8 of the ECHR due to its failure to provide a legal framework that recognises and protects same-sex unions. The Court noted that Poland must provide legal recognition and protection for same-sex partnerships, emphasizing that, under Polish law, same-sex couples - even if married abroad - are treated merely as de facto relationships.

In April, the District Court in Zielona Góra issued a final judgment in *Marta v. Gmina Sława* (Sława Municipality), ruling that the term "closest family member" under the Polish Civil Code includes same-sex life partners. The case concerned

compensation for the death of Marta's partner in 2015, which resulted from the municipality's negligence in maintaining trees. The court held that an informal, committed relationship should be treated equivalently to a marriage for the purposes of compensation, irrespective of the partners' gender. Marta had initiated the proceedings nearly ten years earlier, seeking recognition of her harm and loss as an immediate family member.

In July, the Lewica Party introduced a draft law on civil partnerships to the Sejm (the lower house of parliament), aiming to establish a new form of legal recognition for couples in Poland. The initiative is designed to extend legal protection and stability both to same-sex couples and to different-sex couples who either cannot or do not wish to marry. The proposal addresses issues like the inability of partners in informal relationships to file joint taxes, inherit automatically, be covered under a partner's health insurance, or take leave to care for a sick partner.

In October, the government introduced a draft bill on the status of the 'closest person' and the agreement of cohabitation. The bill was formally presented to parliament in mid-October, with media reports suggesting that it offers a very limited set of rights for same-sex couples, primarily addressing fiscal and inheritance matters, but not covering adoption or broader rights for rainbow families. The cohabitation agreement would be formalised before a notary, without altering the partners' civil status, meaning they could not marry another person simultaneously.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, the ECtHR ruled against Poland in the *P. v. Poland* case, finding that the dismissal of a secondary school teacher for maintaining a blog aimed at adult gay men violated Article 10 of the ECHR, which guarantees freedom of expression. The teacher had written an illustrated diary under a pseudonym that contained sexual content, which the authorities deemed offensive to Polish social mores and a potential threat to the moral education of students. In March, Grzegorz Braun, a Polish MEP for Lesser Poland and Świętokrzyskieand, vandalised an LGBTI exhibition in Opole's main square by spray-painting

anti-LGBTI slogans. Witnesses reported that Braun arrived with black paint and wrote "stop pervert propaganda" across panels documenting local LGBTI activities. Following the incident, speaker Szymon Hołownia said there was "no place for hooligans in the Sejm (the lower house of parliament)," and announced that Braun had been escorted out by security and banned from the building.

In April, Professor Magdalena Pecul-Kudelska, an activist affiliated with the Citizens of Poland movement, was set to appear before a Warsaw court following a police intervention in 2020, when Pecul-Kudelska placed a rainbow flag bearing the inscription "Solidarity with the Persecuted" on the pedestal of the Sursum Corda statue of Christ, located in front of the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Warsaw.

In July the Regional Court in Bolestawiec delivered a first instance judgement acquitting journalists Grażyna Hanaf and Krzysztof Gwizdała from istotne.pl media of defamation charges. The journalists were accused by former local priest Andrzej Jarosiewicz and celebrity Adrian Drenkowski of defamation due to the fact that they published a cycle of articles focusing on their same-sex relationship. The verdict of the court of first instance is not final.

In October, the Ministry of Justice presented a draft bill to implement Directive (EU) 2024/1069 on Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), aimed at protecting individuals engaged in public debate from abusive or intimidatory litigation. The Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) submitted comments on the proposal, expressing concern that requirements such as high deposits and early-stage fines could deter activists and smaller organisations from pursuing claims. KPH also argued that certain provisions should be incorporated into the Civil Code or Code of Civil Procedure to enhance clarity and warned that some measures risked placing disproportionate burdens on plaintiffs.

## DATA COLLECTION

In November, a study conducted by economist Pawel Adrjan (University of Oxford) and Jan Gromadzki (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

analysed the impact of anti-LGBTI resolutions adopted by over 100 Polish local authorities between 2019 and 2020. Some municipalities declared themselves "free from LGBT ideology," while most introduced "Charters of Family Rights" that restricted marriage to opposite-sex couples and pledged to "protect children from moral corruption." The researchers examined job search behaviour using data from 67 million job advertisement clicks by Polish users between 2016 and 2021, comparing municipalities that adopted anti-LGBTI measures with neighbouring areas. The findings show that, following the adoption of these resolutions, residents of affected municipalities increased searches for employment outside their home region by approximately 12%, and searches for jobs abroad rose by about 15%.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In January, the Polish government signaled plans to simplify the process for changing gender markers on official documents. At the time, one government bill had already been submitted to the Sejm (the lower house of parliament), with up to three proposals expected, including one from the Rainbow Socialists Association.

In March, the Polish Supreme Court ruled that people seeking to change the gender marker on their birth certificate no longer need to sue their parents in the process, and such cases will proceed through non-litigation procedures. The decision overturned a long-standing principle dating back to the late 1980s, which treated trans identities as insufficient grounds for correcting the gender designation on official documents. The Court clarified that requesting a change in gender marker is analogous to correcting civil status certificates and should therefore be handled in a non-contentious manner.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In late September, a report by a special commission established by the Ministries of Justice and Interior concluded that Poland's public media had engaged in systematic repressive and defamatory actions against activists, non-governmental organisations and civil society during the Law and Justice (PiS)

government (2015-2023). The commission found that public broadcasting was used to promote the government and marginalise or discredit opponents, including civil-society actors. It cited imbalanced media coverage, noting that in debates on tightening abortion law in 2016 and 2020, Polskie Radio invited 61 guests, 55 of whom presented anti-abortion views, while no pro-choice activists were included. The commission announced that it would forward its findings to prosecutors to assess potential criminal liability.



# Portugal

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, two trans women, including a minor, were attacked in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, Azores. Two attackers chased the women by car, hurling transphobic insults and threats. When the older woman, 18, defended herself, the assailants stopped the car and beat her with punches and kicks resulting in severe injuries. The younger woman, 16, was also endangered when the attackers threatened her with a car and brandished razors.

In early June, a trans woman was assaulted while returning home in Portimão. The attack was sudden and unprovoked, with the perpetrators targeting her immediately upon recognising her as a trans person. She sustained significant injuries to her face and hands.

## EDUCATION

In July, the Minister of Education and Science announced that content on "sexuality" and "sexual and reproductive health" would be removed from the Citizenship and Development curriculum. The decision, which replaces the existing 2017 scripts and references, drew sharp criticism for leaving the topic of sexuality absent from all years of schooling. This shift follows the Prime Minister's promise last October to "free [the Citizenship discipline] from the ties of ideological projects," appeasing more conservative sectors.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, in response to the announcement of the "1st Heterosexual Pride March" in Porto, organised by the neo-Nazi group 1143, over 20 LGBTI collectives in Portugal issued an open letter condemning the event. The signatory collectives, comprising organisers of LGBTI Pride marches and queer activist groups emphasised that the demonstration represents an attack on freedom.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, around 60 organisations, including LGBTI, feminist, human rights and Palestinian collectives, issued a joint statement raising concerns that EuroPride Lisbon 2025 risked prioritising commercial interests over genuine activism. They

cited a lack of transparency and inclusiveness in the organisation of the event, questioned its representativeness, and criticised what they described as an excessive focus on tourism and branding over grassroots advocacy. The signatories cautioned that the event's promotion could amount to pinkwashing, using the LGBTI cause for marketing or political purposes rather than advancing substantive social change.

In March, the far-right group Habeas Corpus (HC) disrupted an LGBTI rights conference at the Bar Association (OA) in Lisbon. The event had barely begun when HC members attempted to interrupt it. Similarly, in May, the group targeted and disrupted a reading club organised by the Lisbon Libraries in partnership with ILGA Portugal.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In March, Pedro Alexandre Costa, Professor of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Porto, noted that limited progress had been made one year after Portugal's ban on conversion practices entered into force. He highlighted that the law required the completion, within one year, of a study assessing the prevalence of such practices and their impact on the physical and mental health of victims. The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) responded that procurement procedures were still being prepared, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Health (DGS), in order to launch a market consultation.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Portugal joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.



# Romania

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

During the 2025 presidential electoral campaign, anti-LGBTI rhetoric intensified and was repeatedly instrumentalised for political mobilisation. In February, presidential candidate Călin Georgescu publicly declared that he was "against LGBTQ". Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu stated that he would not want Nicușor Dan to win the elections because he "does not want to be forced to wear a skirt", and made additional remarks suggesting that amendments to identity documents to accommodate legal gender recognition would create confusion and erode traditional norms.

In June, ACCEPT lodged a complaint with the National Audiovisual Council (CNA) concerning the debate programme "News Pass", broadcast by B1 TV on 5 June 2025 in the context of Bucharest Pride. The complaint addressed on-screen captions and statements framing Pride as a "provocation" against religious celebrations and portraying LGBTI visibility in derogatory terms. Following monitoring and public deliberation, the CNA issued a public warning to B1 TV in August for breaching provisions of the Audiovisual Code prohibiting generalised defamatory statements against groups defined, inter alia, by sexual orientation.

In August, the Deputy Mayor of Ploiești, member of the far-right AUR party, announced on Facebook that he would "never accept" the organisation of an LGBTI event in the city, signaling continued institutional hostility at local level.

In October, following the publication by the European Commission of the LGBTI Equality Strategy 2026–2030 recommendations, several Romanian political figures contributed to misinformation on social media, claiming that children would be able to "choose their gender without parental consent."

In October, Nicolae Păun, leader of the Party of the Roma and former Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Religious Affairs, and National Minorities, was removed from his position as head of the Human Rights Committee. In the weeks preceding his dismissal, Păun published a series of social media posts targeting LGBTI

people and Romani organisations. He alleged that several Romani NGOs had been "founded and financed by Soros" to "poison the minds of young Roma" and called to "stop the campaigns promoting homosexuality in Roma communities." In his statements, Păun characterised homosexuality as a "sin" and associated it with "Satan," asserting that he could not be compelled to "sit at the table" with LGBTI people or organisations. He also publicly defended early child marriage as a purported means of preventing homosexuality, in contradiction to Romania's obligations under the Istanbul Convention. In addition, he circulated a list naming Romani, human rights, feminist, and LGBTI organisations, further contributing to a climate of hostility and stigmatisation.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the NGO MozaiQ reported that an abandoned apartment block was defaced with a giant homophobic message: "STOP LGBT". Although authorities were notified, the Capital Police initially refused to act, citing the absence of a formal complaint.

During the 2025 presidential campaign, several electoral posters of candidate Nicușor Dan, who was perceived as supportive of LGBTI rights, were vandalised with messages stating that "he should be voted if you want to legalize LGBTI marriage." Following a complaint by ACCEPT, they were removed by the Central Electoral Bureau.

## FAMILY

Despite the binding ECtHR judgment in *Buhuceanu, Ciobotaru and 20 other families v. Romania*, requiring the state to provide legal recognition and protection for same-sex families, no legislative initiative has been adopted to guarantee family rights for LGBTI couples. In December, the Constitutional Court of Romania examined a case concerning equal access to healthcare for same-sex families, specifically regarding the recognition of same-sex spouses as co-insured persons within the public health insurance system.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

June 2025 marked the 20th anniversary of Bucharest Pride. For the first time, Pride was celebrated through an entire Pride Month, expanding beyond the traditional one-week format preceding the march. Despite the tense political climate following the turbulent presidential elections, approximately 31,000 people participated in the Bucharest Pride March. The march highlighted demands for civil union legislation, simplified procedures for legal gender recognition, and protection against hate speech and prejudice-based crimes. Although counter-protests were set up before the march, authorities managed to deescalate the situation quickly.

At the local level, however, restrictions persisted. In July, Oradea Pride took place despite the Municipality's renewed attempts to ban the event, continuing its pattern of obstructing Pride for the third year in a row. The local organisation Ark Oradea once again faced administrative refusals when attempting to organise the march. Although the event ultimately took place under strict conditions and heavy police supervision, nine organisers and participants were fined following the march. ACCEPT and Ark Oradea jointly lodged an application before the European Court of Human Rights concerning the repeated obstruction of Pride events in the city. The situation generated significant solidarity across civil society: 47 organisations publicly supported Oradea Pride and condemned the municipality's restrictive approach. Pride events in Cluj-Napoca, Braşov, Timişoara, and Iaşi took place without incidents, with few protesters on the side of Pride.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In May, Nicuşor Dan was elected president of Romania defeating far-right rival George Simion. In a subsequent report, the newly-elected president had initially parted ways with his party on the basis of their opposition to equal marriage, but he avoided taking strong public stances on the matter during the campaign and after his election.

In October, three training-of-trainers sessions were organised by ACCEPT for police officers,

prosecutors and social workers, aimed at strengthening institutional capacity to recognise, investigate and effectively respond to hate crimes targeting LGBTI people.



# Russia

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In December, Russia's federal media regulator blocked access to the US-based online gaming platform Roblox, citing alleged violations of the country's law banning so-called LGBTI "propaganda." The regulator claimed that the platform contains "inappropriate content" that could harm the "spiritual and moral development of children."

## ASYLUM

Since the beginning of the year around 700 people have migrated to Russia under the 2024 decree creating a so-called "shared values" visa program, popularly referred to as the "anti-woke" visa, aimed at attracting Western conservatives opposed to liberal gender norms. The scheme offers a three-year residency permit with minimal requirements, convertible into Russian citizenship, and is framed as "providing humanitarian support to individuals who share traditional Russian spiritual and moral values."

In December, Russia blocked access to the website of Rainbow Railroad, a global non-profit organisation that helps at-risk LGBTI people reach safety. Authorities labelled the organisation's work "extremist."

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In December, a mass stabbing occurred at the Assumption School in Odintsovo, Moscow region. A ninth-grade student, armed with a knife, attacked classmates, fatally wounding a fourth-grader, injuring a security guard, and attempting to locate a teacher. The assailant, reportedly influenced by the Columbine school attack and holding extremist ultra-right views, attributed societal problems to Muslims, LGBTI people, Jews, anti-fascists, liberals, and political opposition.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered its judgment in *Bazhenov and Others v. Russia*. The Court held that Russia had violated Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) in conjunction with Article 8 (right to respect for private life), as the authorities did not effectively investigate the homophobic publication of the applicants' private

information and photographs by extremist groups online. The disclosure exposed the applicants to harassment and threats, creating a climate of fear for their safety. The ECtHR stressed that sexual minorities are a particularly vulnerable group requiring heightened protection, and reiterated its established principle that any differential treatment based on sexual orientation demands "particularly convincing and weighty reasons."

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In early December, authorities in Ulyanovsk placed three individuals under house arrest in connection with the organisation of drag events, according to regional branches of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Rosgvardia. One defendant, a 30-year-old resident of Ulyanovsk, is accused of organizing a branch of the "international LGBT movement" under Part 1 of Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code, while the other two face charges of participation under Part 2 of the same article. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, from January 2024 to December 2025, the defendants organised events at a hookah bar in the Leninsky District, promoting "non-traditional intimate relationships and preferences." Security forces documented items associated with drag performance, including costumes, heels, cosmetics, and a sewing machine.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In April, Russian authorities banned the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), citing its support for LGBTI rights as grounds for the decision. The foundation has long been involved in HIV prevention and treatment programmes while also advocating for the rights of LGBTI people. Russia's prosecutor general's office declared EJAF an "undesirable organisation," a designation that prohibits it from operating on Russian territory and places staff and partners at risk of criminal prosecution. In its statement, the office accused the foundation of promoting "non-traditional sexual relationships, western family models, and gender reassignment."

In July, the State Duma adopted a package of reforms that expands the scope of Russia's anti-extremism framework. The amendments broaden the definition of "extremist organisation," no longer

requiring a separate, final court ruling for such a designation. Instead, individuals convicted under Article 282.1 of the Criminal Code ("participation in an extremist community") can serve as the basis for declaring an organisation extremist.

In July, the Investigative Committee in Orenburg announced that it had transferred to court the criminal cases against three employees of the Pose gay club, accused of creating and participating in an "extremist" community. According to investigators, the club's owner, art director, and administrator organised public events in 2024 that "spread and promoted non-traditional sexual relations," allegedly with minors among the attendees. Officials framed these activities as knowing participation in the so-called "international LGBT movement," elevating what had previously been considered an administrative offense of "propaganda" into a criminal matter. The case stems from a March 2024 incident when security forces and members of the neo-Nazi group "Russian Community" raided Pose during a closed party. This was the first criminal case in Russia explicitly linked to "LGBT extremism."

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, in Kuzbass, a prisoner had his sentence extended after being accused of "involving other convicts in the LGBT movement," marking the first known conviction under Russia's ban on the "international LGBT movement." The Yaysky District Court of the Kemerovo region found the man, already serving an 18-year sentence for multiple counts of sexual violence against a child under 14, guilty of engaging in "LGBT activities" and recruiting others into an "extremist organisation" while in detention.

In February, the ECtHR issued its judgement in *Klimova and Others v. Russia*, unanimously ruling that Russia had violated Article 10 (freedom of expression) in six joint applications and Article 8 (right to respect for private life) in one. The case concerned the prosecution and censorship of LGBTI-supportive online platforms under Russia's laws banning the "promotion of homosexuality among minors." The ECtHR found that the Russian authorities' measures – including fines, criminal charges, and content

bans – were motivated purely by sexual orientation considerations. The Court concluded that these actions lacked a clear legal basis and failed to satisfy the criteria of being "prescribed by law" or "necessary in a democratic society,"

In April, the Russian Justice Ministry for the first time designated an individual as part of the so-called "international LGBT movement," declared extremist in 2023, by naming journalist Vadim Vaganov as a member. Vaganov, who is already challenging his inclusion on Russia's "foreign agents" register, learned of the designation during a court hearing.

Since the beginning of the year, Russian police carried out raids on bookstores using a list of 48 prohibited titles, ordering staff to remove the books and launching administrative cases that resulted in fines. In May, the situation escalated, with Russian security forces detaining at least ten people in Moscow in connection with a criminal investigation into the publication of LGBTI-themed books, under charges of "involvement in the activities of an extremist organisation," "participation in its activities," and "organizing its work using official position". On May 15, three individuals were formally charged. If convicted, they could face prison terms of up to 12 years.

In July, Russian lawmakers approved a bill that penalises internet users for deliberately seeking out information considered "extremist." The bill introduced fines of up to \$64 (approximately €59) for first-time offenders who "search for and access extremist materials" online. In September, the law officially entered into force in the Russian Federation. Concretely, the law introduces administrative penalties for individuals who use search engines to access or seek out "extremist" material. Since 2024, LGBTI activism and related content have been formally classified as "extremist" under Russian law, placing them squarely within the scope of these provisions. Independent experts and human rights defenders underline that this framework represents a substantive escalation in repression: liability now extends beyond the creation or dissemination of content to the mere act of searching for information.

In June, a Russian court imposed a fine of six million

roubles (approximately €60,000) on US tech company Apple for allegedly violating the country's strict legislation against so-called "LGBT propaganda." As part of the package of reforms adopted in July on Russia's anti-extremism framework (see also under Freedom of Association), changes were also introduced to the Administrative Code, updating the rules on how media must mark content deemed extremist. At the same time, the Duma's Committee on State Building and Legislation advanced a draft law introducing liability for the search and access of extremist materials online. The proposed Article 13.53 of the Administrative Code would penalise the intentional search for content included in the federal list of extremist materials or otherwise restricted under the 2002 law on countering extremism. Even the use of VPNs or other tools to access blocked resources could trigger sanctions, with fines ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 rubles.

In July, a Moscow magistrate's court fined Alexander Dunaevsky, General Director of the online streaming service Kinopoisk, 250,000 rubles (approximately €2,500) for allegedly allowing "LGBT propaganda" through the platform. The case was initiated by the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor), which claimed that the online cinema made available a film presenting same-sex relationships in a positive light. The expert report concluded that such representation amounted to propaganda, arguing that the film risked shifting public attitudes "from negative to positive" toward same-sex relationships.

In August, Moscow's Tagansky District Court fined the online comic library Mangalib a total of 14 million rubles (approximately €140,000) for hosting seven manga titles found to violate Russia's law against so-called "LGBTI propaganda." Judge Alexandra Anokhina imposed separate fines of 2 million rubles (approximately €20,000) for each title. The court upheld a state expert assessment claiming that at least one of the comics constituted a "cultural threat to national security." According to the prosecution, the seven publications contained elements described as "destructive ideology," including same-sex romantic relationships and themes of gender transition.

In early September, a court in Tatarstan fined twin brothers 100,000 rubles (approximately €1,000) each for posts on their joint lifestyle blog. The brothers were found guilty under Part 3 of Article 6.21 of the Administrative Code for "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" online. The case concerned Instagram posts, which authorities claimed promoted LGBTI content, though the specific content cited by the court was not detailed. The blog covers travel, daily life in Russia, training, and recipes. Authorities from the Center for Counteracting Extremism in Tatarstan had flagged the blog in August and issued the initial administrative protocol. During the trial, the brothers partially admitted wrongdoing but stated they did not intend to promote non-traditional sexual relations. The court rejected this argument, concluding it was an attempt to avoid punishment.

In September, a historical reenactment centre in Kaliningrad known as Kaup, which presents itself as a "Viking village," was fined 800,000 rubles (approximately €8,000) under Russia's law banning so-called "LGBTI propaganda." According to Mediazona, the case was linked to an event titled From Dusk Till Dawn, organised by a local businessman who had rented the venue. During the event, a humorous photo booth featuring the letters "BDSM" was installed, which authorities cited as one of the grounds for the fine. Police also opened a case over a photograph allegedly depicting two women kissing on the premises and for the alleged presence of sex toys at the venue, for which the centre was fined 1 million rubles (approximately €10,000).

In December, the Cherkess City Court (KCR) sentenced a local resident for participating in activities associated with what the authorities described as an "extremist" LGBTI group. The charges related to comments he posted in a Telegram chat created for male dating. According to the KCR courts' joint press service, he was considered "an adherent of the international public movement 'LGBTI'."

The court statement indicated that the man's posts "have psychological signs of propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations – propaganda of ideas that do not correspond to the spiritual and moral values of Russian society; ideas of permissiveness

and immorality promoted by the LGBT community." Despite the administrative nature of "propaganda" offences, the criminal case resulted in a non-conditional sentence.

In December, the Basmanly District Court of Moscow registered an [administrative protocol](#) for alleged "LGBT propaganda" under Article 6.21 of the Russian Administrative Code against the feminist publishing house No Kidding Press. The grounds for the protocol have not been disclosed.

In December, St. Petersburg courts confirmed the [conviction](#) of activist and human rights defender Igor Kochetkov under Article 6.21 of the Administrative Code for "LGBT propaganda." The ruling imposed a fine of 100,000 rubles (approximately €1,000).

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In September, Mariana Katzarova, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, presented her [report](#) to the 60th session of the Human Rights Council. The report underscores the expansion of legal restrictions on access to materials listed in the Ministry of Justice's Federal List of Extremist Materials. Katzarova's findings highlight a growing pattern in which these extremism laws are applied disproportionately against minority groups, with a documented increase in prosecutions targeting LGBTI people and operators of LGBTI-friendly spaces.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In January, reports surfaced that Russia's Interior Ministry is preparing to establish an [electronic database](#) of LGBTI people, in the wake of the Supreme Court's 2023 ruling designating the so-called "international LGBT movement" as an extremist organisation. The system would draw on administrative violations, such as fines issued under Russia's propaganda laws, to populate the registry. Human rights monitors note that immediately after LGBTI people were officially labelled as "extremists," security services began actively seeking access to the medical records of trans people.

At the end of 2024, Russian authorities carried out [raids](#) on multiple venues associated with LGBTI people. In St. Petersburg, police stormed the independent

art space *Appellance*. Officials described the event held as linked to the so-called "International LGBT Movement" and reported the presence of "dozens of participants, including transsexuals, transgenders, and feminists." The crackdown extended to Moscow the same weekend, with security forces raiding clubs. Authorities claimed to have found prohibited substances, stage costumes, and BDSM equipment, framing it as evidence of "non-traditional" gatherings.



# San Marino

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In July, San Marino's Association 121 officially took part in Rimini's Summer Pride, carrying the voices, faces and colours of San Marino's LGBTI community for the first time.

## HEALTH

In June, San Marino introduced a structured pathway for accessing PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) through the State Hospital. Individuals begin by calling the dedicated clinic number, where an answering machine usually provides instructions for follow-up via WhatsApp. By sending a short message describing their situation and expressing interest, they can initiate contact with the clinic and begin the process of accessing PrEP.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In 2025, momentum has been recorded by civil society in the identification of legal gender recognition processes. Several cases were discussed throughout the year by Associazione 121 and the San Marino National Health Authority which - at the time of writing - completed a draft of procedural guidance for handling requests for LGR and trans-specific healthcare.



# Serbia

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, [Rainbow Ignite](#), in its report *The Rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Serbia*, recorded instances of same-sex couples being denied rental housing or services due to perceived sexual orientation. [Amnesty International](#) similarly noted persistent structural discrimination against LGBTI persons in everyday transactions and service access.

## ASYLUM

In September, a European Parliament [report](#) noted that Serbia has enacted a legal framework recognising persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity as a basis for granting asylum. While commending this legislative development, the Parliament urged the authorities to improve sensitivity training for asylum officers in order to prevent refoulement and secondary victimisation in practice.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Throughout 2025, hate speech by politicians and religious officials – particularly from the Serbian Orthodox Church – remained unpunished, as reported by [Human Rights Watch](#) and by [Rainbow Ignite](#), which further documented similar institutional tolerance for homophobic discourse and the normalisation of anti-LGBTI rhetoric in media and politics.

## EDUCATION

In 2024, the [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance \(ECRI\)](#) recommended that Serbian authorities urgently establish a comprehensive system for effectively monitoring racist and LGBTI-phobic incidents in schools, including clear procedures for reporting, sanctioning perpetrators, and supporting victims. Serbia has since developed the national platform "[Čuvam te / I Protect You](#)" to prevent and respond to violence involving children, but the platform fails to explicitly recognise or address violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

## EMPLOYMENT

According to Open for Business, workplace exclusion

and wage gaps [contribute](#) to income insecurity among LGBTI people in Serbia, increasing their risk of poverty and limiting access to adequate food. These findings draw in part on data and qualitative input from the Serbian LGBTI organisation Rainbow Ignite, which contributed to the Open for Business analysis. Within this research, a significant proportion of LGBTI respondents reported having no income, while more than half earned below the national average, highlighting the link between economic discrimination and basic living standards.

In 2025, Rainbow Ignite [reported](#) in *The Rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Serbia* that, although Serbian labour law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and, through the provision of "other personal attributes," indirectly protects gender identity and expression, the lack of explicit recognition of gender identity leaves many trans and non-binary individuals vulnerable in practice. The report also underscored that persistent barriers to equality remain in the labour market, including low rates of permanent employment, high unemployment levels, and widespread workplace mobbing and harassment against LGBTI persons. Within this context, women and non-binary respondents reported the highest exposure to hostile work environments, reflecting the intersectional challenges faced by marginalised groups within Serbia's workforce.

## FAMILY

In September, Jelena Jerinić of the Green-Left Front (ZLF) [submitted](#) a draft Law on Civil Partnership to the National Assembly. The proposal seeks to provide legal recognition for same-sex partnerships, an issue long advocated for by LGBTI organisations in Serbia. The next procedural step depends on whether the President of the National Assembly, Ana Brnabić, places the draft law on the parliamentary agenda for debate and potential adoption.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, Novi Sad Pride Week [took place](#) under heightened police security, following an attack earlier in May when a lit flare was thrown at participants during a drag performance. Organisers described

the attack as "indicative" of the broader climate in Serbia, where authorities have been accused of fostering a culture of violence and tolerating assaults on activists.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In December 2024, members of the Movement of Socialists (Pokret Socijalista), led by Aleksandar Vulin, introduced a [draft Law](#) on the Special Registry of Agents of Foreign Influence to Serbia's National Assembly. The proposal would require non-profit organisations and media outlets receiving 50% or more of their funding from abroad to register as "foreign agents." The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) issued a [warning](#) that the draft law poses a significant threat to Serbia's democratic development and its progress toward European Union integration, expressing concern that such legislation would severely restrict civil society, media freedom, and citizens' associational rights. The draft had not been adopted by the end of 2025 and remained pending before the National Assembly.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In November, the European Commission [2025 Report on Serbia](#) flagged back-sliding in freedom of expression. While formal legal guarantees exist, the Commission highlighted that media remain subject to strong political and economic influence, undermining newsroom independence and pluralism. Journalists and media outlets face an environment where self-censorship and external interference prevail.

## HEALTH

In 2025, access to gynecological and reproductive healthcare for lesbian, bi+ and trans (LBT) women in Serbia remains legally guaranteed but often undermined by stigma and provider bias. [Rainbow Ignite's 2025 survey](#) found that 42% of lesbian and bisexual respondents delayed or avoided gynecological visits due to fear of discrimination, and only 27% felt safe disclosing their orientation to doctors. While national cervical screening programs exist and formal equality is guaranteed by the Law on Patients' Rights, implementation gaps persist. The Equality Commissioner previously ruled that excluding people with same-sex relationships from reproductive cell donation was discriminatory,

showing how institutional bias can infiltrate regulations.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In 2025, in Serbia, the right to bodily integrity for LGBTI people remains under serious pressure according to the Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) ["Country Factsheet on Serbia."](#) The factsheet noted that 32% of respondents reported they had experienced conversion practices to change their sexual orientation or gender identity - compared to 24% for the EU's 27 member states.

## PUBLIC OPINION

According to the FRA's ["Country Factsheet on Serbia"](#), 80% of respondents reported avoiding holding hands with a same-sex partner often or always (compared to 53% for the EU-27 average) and 43 % said they avoided certain places for fear of assault (EU-27: 29%). Only 29% of respondents said they were "fairly or very open" about being LGBTI (EU-27: 51%), 45% of respondents reported feeling discriminated against in at least one area of life in the preceding year (EU-27: 37%).



# Slovakia

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In October, Prime Minister Robert Fico declared that "the left cannot be about homosexuals" in response to the European Socialists' decision to expel his party, Direction-SD (Smer-SD), from the Party of European Socialists (PES). The expulsion, confirmed at the PES congress in Amsterdam in October 2025, marks the culmination of years of estrangement between Fico's party and mainstream European social democracy. Fico used the occasion to denounce Brussels and frame his movement as an "authentic Slovak left" that rejects what he described as imposed "European values." He accused EU institutions of failing to understand Slovakia's needs and reaffirmed his party's opposition to progressive social policies, including supporting LGBTI rights.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, a 13-year-old boy from Ťahanovce near Košice died by suicide. According to the Human Rights Institute, the tragedy was linked to homophobic bullying and police confirmed they were investigating the case following reports that bullying may have contributed to the suicide. However, the city of Košice denied the claims, stating after an internal review that there was no evidence of bullying at the boy's school.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, Prime Minister Robert Fico announced plans to amend the constitution to recognise only two genders. Speaking at a press conference in Bratislava, he argued that Slovakia must have the final say on such matters, even if it contradicts EU law. Fico said the amendments were needed to curb what he called "progressive ideologies", claiming that people today "change their gender identity on a daily basis" and that Slovakia must safeguard its heritage. Under his proposal, transitioning would be permitted only in "exceptional, justified cases", and adoption rights would be restricted to couples recognised as parents in the constitutional sense – excluding same-sex couples, since marriage in Slovakia is defined solely as the union of a man and a woman. In April, the amendments were discussed in first reading by the Slovak Parliament. In light of the second reading, in June, the Office of the

Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe issued a warning to Slovak lawmakers against proposed constitutional amendments that could undermine human rights protections. Also in June, the European Commission echoed similar concerns, underscoring that the proposed changes would breach European Union law by attempting to deny the supremacy of EU rules over national legislation. After the vote had been suspended in June due to a lack of sufficient support, in late September Slovakia's parliament ultimately approved the constitutional amendment. The adopted changes formally recognise only two genders, restrict comprehensive sexuality education in schools, and limit adoption rights exclusively to married heterosexual couples and undermine supremacy of EU law.

On 21 November the European Commission launched an infringement procedure against Slovakia for its Constitutional amendment package adopted in September. This package includes a number of amendments that discriminate against LGBTI persons, as well as amendments that stipulate that Slovakia retains sovereignty over what are described as "national identity" matters, with the stated aim of ensuring that Slovak domestic legislation may take primacy over all international law, including EU law and the ECHR in these areas. The Commission has launched infringement in relation to the primacy of EU law. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Venice Commission, the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union, and multiple UN Special Rapporteurs in the fields of education, health and privacy expressed their concern regarding the amendments, and prior to their approval in Parliament, called for withdrawal or rejection of the proposed changes. These concerns are also shared by the European Parliament, as expressed following the LIBE mission to Slovakia of 2-3 June 2025, the plenary debate of 10 September on "the Rule of law and EU funds management in Slovakia", and the open letter which over 50 MEPs sent to the Slovak National Council on 16 September.

In October, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) issued a statement condemning Slovakia's newly adopted constitutional reform on LGBTI

rights. The FRA warned that the amendment (See more above) "undermines the principles of equality, human dignity, and respect" guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It denounced the legal definition of sex as "male or female, biologically determined," arguing that it erases the "lived experiences" of trans, non-binary, and intersex people. The agency also criticised the new requirement for parental consent for minors to attend sex education classes, describing it as an undue "restriction on access to objective and reliable information."

In October, the Human Rights Coalition warned that the situation of LGBTI people in Slovakia continues to worsen. The coalition stated that hatred has "shifted into political speeches, legislation, and public discourse." The coalition criticised both the government and parliament for failing in their duty to protect all individuals regardless of identity, orientation, or faith, calling the recent constitutional amendment (see more above) "a frontal attack on human rights, particularly those of queer people." In response, the Justice Ministry maintained that Slovakia's Constitution already prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation and asserted that the state "provides protection to all citizens without distinction." It said the constitutional amendment affirming two genders "is not a legal novelty but merely a confirmation of the current state," adding that "the rights and status of trans persons remain unchanged."

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In April, Slovakia's parliament passed a law on nongovernmental organisations, promoted by Prime Minister Robert Fico from the Smer – sociálna demokracia Party. Following pressure from both domestic actors and international observers, the version of the law ultimately passed removed the original classification of NGOs as 'lobbyists' but still imposed significant new obligations on NGOs, particularly in the areas of financial reporting and compliance with freedom of information requirements.

Nonetheless, in mid-December, the Constitutional Court ruled that the law violated the constitutional

right to privacy and therefore repealed it. The Court held that mandatory public disclosure was not necessary to achieve the law's stated objectives of promoting transparency and preventing criminal activity, noting that these aims could be pursued through less intrusive means. Judges further concluded that the legislation was internally inconsistent and ill-suited to its declared purpose, while also posing risks to the reputation and personal dignity of both donors and the organisations concerned.

## FAMILY

In October, Justice Minister Boris Susko (Smer) presented a draft reform to Slovakia's Civil Code, which included a provision stating that a marriage would end - without the consent of either partner - upon the change of gender marker by one of the spouses. The legal consequences, including division of property and child custody arrangements, would be handled as in divorce proceedings. The proposal is currently in public consultation, where institutions and citizens can file objections. Parliament is expected to debate it next year, with the goal of introducing the new code in 2027.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In early November, news outlets reported that the Netherlands was willing to invoke the procedure under Article 7 of the EU Treaty against Slovakia, which could potentially suspend a member state's voting rights in the Council if serious violations of fundamental EU values are found. The Netherlands is contesting Slovakia's recent law, which enshrines only two genders in the constitution, restricts adoption to married heterosexual couples, and bans surrogacy.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In March, a joint police operation in Austria and Slovakia led to the arrest of 15 people suspected of luring and assaulting queer men. Around 400 law enforcement officers carried out 23 house searches detaining 12 men and three women aged 14 to 26. According to investigators, the suspects created fake online profiles to arrange meetings under the pretence of sex. Instead, the men were ambushed by groups of four to eight masked

attackers, who robbed, beat, and humiliated them. Videos of the assaults were then shared in closed online groups and forums. Police confirmed at least 17 victims, noting cases of serious bodily harm and even an attempted murder.



# Slovenia

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In March, the TransAkojia Institute published a report analysing media reporting on LGBTI issues in Slovenia over the past year. The analysis identified a significant increase in hostile and stigmatising narratives targeting sexual minorities, including the use of inflammatory language, the framing of LGBTI people as a societal threat, and the repetition of misleading or negative stereotypes. The report linked these media trends to a broader climate of intolerance, noting their contribution to the normalisation of bias-motivated hostility and violence against LGBTI people.

In July, the Journalists' Tribunal of Honour (NÖR) – a joint body of the Slovenian Journalists' Association and the Journalists' Union – issued its decision in the case of *Legebitra Society v. journalist* and Nova24TV's editor-in-chief Marko Puš. The complaint argued that a piece published by Nova24TV contained factual inaccuracies, misleading images, opinion presented as fact, and the promotion of stereotypes and intolerance towards LGBTI people. The NÖR found that the article in question violated multiple provisions of the Code of Journalists of Slovenia.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In late December 2024, an LGBTI event at the Pritličje bar in Ljubljana was targeted by two masked men, who entered the venue, performed Nazi salutes, and tore down an event poster. Ljubljana Pride Association underscored that this attack is not an isolated case but part of a wider pattern of organised hate speech and far-right intimidation.

In April, Ljubljana inaugurated Park Ada Škerl and Sonja Plaskan, the first park in Slovenia named after a same-sex couple. However, the park has since become a recurring target of vandalism. Just a month after its opening, the sign marking the park was damaged. In June, the Lesbian Quarter Festival team reported that the sign had been vandalised for a third time, describing the repeated attacks as homophobic acts against a symbol of inclusion and equality. By early September, the sign was stolen entirely. The Ljubljana City Municipality confirmed that the sign had been recovered and was being held by the Center Police Station as part of pre-

trial proceedings. The municipality announced that the sign would be reinstalled and reiterated its commitment to protecting what it called an "important symbol of tolerance."

In June, the Mariborka bookstore in Maribor was once again the target of a bias-motivated attack as three men aged between 30 and 40 forcibly tore down a rainbow flag displayed behind locked doors, also destroying signage and leaving homophobic graffiti. One of the perpetrators was eventually tracked down and arrested by the police.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Ahead of the Pride march in Maribor, organisers expressed concern about rising levels of hostile rhetoric and social tensions directed at LGBTI people in public discourse. A small group of counter-protesters gathered near the march route and attempted to provoke conflict on the margins of the event, though the Pride march itself proceeded without reported major incident or injury.

## HEALTH

In April, Slovenia's Advocate of the Principle of Equality found that a gynecologist discriminated against a LGBTI patient by refusing to provide pregnancy care citing a conscientious objection against services related to same-sex couples. The Advocate ruled that this refusal amounted to discrimination, as the patient was treated less favorably solely on the basis of her sexual orientation, depriving her of the right to healthcare. According to a public announcement from the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, the patient reached a settlement in January 2026, and the gynaecologist paid compensation to the patient.

## DATA COLLECTION

On 10 January, the Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies published a national report on anti-LGBTIQ hate crime in Slovenia. The report draws on desk and field research and highlights the need to strengthen cooperation between civil society and public institutions, including to improve support for people targeted by hate-motivated violence and to prevent re-victimisation.

According to data collected by Legebitra, the organisation provided legal counselling and advocacy support in a significant number of cases affecting LGBTI people in Slovenia during 2025. Legebitra worked on six cases involving homophobic and transphobic speech, seven cases of bias-motivated violence, and four cases of discrimination. In addition, the organisation supported 17 cases related to parental rights and 26 cases involving LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum seekers.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In May, Slovenia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In June, the National Assembly adopted [amendments](#) to the Act on Infertility Treatment and Biomedically Assisted Fertilisation Procedures to align Slovenian law with a Constitutional Court ruling that found restrictions on access to assisted reproduction unconstitutional. The changes, which were signed into law and entered into force in November, revise the purpose of the law to cover measures that help people conceive and enable them to decide on childbirth, and expand access to include single women and women in same-sex relationships, including through the use of donated reproductive cells (eggs and sperm).

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In February, Slovenia's Ministry of the Interior [acknowledged](#) that police officers in Maribor had acted unlawfully and inappropriately in their response to a series of hate-motivated incidents targeting the LGBTI community. The incidents originated in June, during Pride Month, after a rainbow flag displayed at the Mariborka bookstore

prompted escalating acts of hostility, including verbal abuse, Nazi salutes, spitting, vandalism, attempted theft, intimidation, and direct threats against staff (see also under Bias-motivated violence). Despite the seriousness of the situation, officers responding to the scene failed to secure evidence or initiate formal proceedings and instead attributed responsibility to the bookstore.



# Spain

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, the promoters of a self-appointed Moroccan nightclub in Torremolinos (Málaga) published [admission rules](#) on social media that explicitly excluded LGBTI people. The Torremolinos City Council confirmed that the venue had no commercial licence and announced a complaint to the National Police for a hate crime. Subsequently, the Junta de Andalucía formally initiated [proceedings](#) to open a sanctioning file, while the Ministry of Equality confirmed that the conduct would be considered a serious infraction under equality and non-discrimination legislation and could result in fines ranging from €6,001 to €60,000. The organisers of the event were consequently [arrested](#) by the National Police.

## ASYLUM

In March, the Sumar Movement, Spain's left-wing political platform led by Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz, [announced](#) plans to register a proposal in Congress urging the government to expand training for immigration personnel to better identify discriminatory legislation against LGBTI people.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Throughout 2025, Spanish courts issued several convictions for homophobic abuse and harassment. In February and March, courts in [Lugo](#), [Madrid](#) and [Cáceres](#) sentenced individuals to prison terms and fines for directing homophobic insults and degrading treatment at victims in public spaces. In one ruling, the Supreme Court [confirmed](#) that repeated homophobic insults constitute an attack on moral integrity based on sexual orientation under the Criminal Code.

In March, the Córdoba Prosecutor's Office referred a [complaint](#) to Madrid concerning the campaign "Women are born or made", promoted by the Catholic Association of Propagandists, following allegations of hate crimes and violations of the rights of trans people. The case remained under examination by the end of 2025.

In May, a court in Granada [ruled](#) in favour of trans activists Juani Bermejo and Néstor Román, finding

that a media outlet had violated their right to honour by mocking and misgendering them in coverage linked to debate around the LGBTI Law.

In June, political controversy arose after Vox spokesperson Antonio Ortolá publicly [questioned](#) the prohibition of so-called conversion practices, prompting criticism from civil society for echoing narratives associated with such practices. That same month, transphobic remarks by former minister José Luis Ábalos sparked public [condemnation](#), including from Daniela Requena of the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE).

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Courts and law enforcement authorities addressed multiple cases of anti-LGBTI violence during 2025. In January, the Provincial Court of A Coruña [sentenced](#) the main perpetrator in the 2021 murder of Samuel Luiz to 24 years' imprisonment for aggravated murder motivated by discrimination based on sexual orientation; the Spanish Supreme Court [confirmed](#) the outcome in December, bringing the proceedings to an end.

Several other cases involved assaults and harassment in public spaces. In Barcelona, a drag venue owner was repeatedly [assaulted](#) and a restraining order was issued against the alleged perpetrator. Courts in [Bizkaia](#) and [Valladolid](#) issued convictions in cases involving [assaults](#) against gay men, though in some proceedings hate motivation was upheld and in others it was not. In Andalusia, the High Court of Justice partially overturned a lower court ruling connected to an [assault](#) during the Seville Fair, reducing some convictions and acquitting several defendants.

Authorities also investigated and prosecuted incidents involving both homophobic and transphobic violence. These included the arrest of a man accused of [attacking](#) two people in the Madrid metro because of their sexual orientation; the [conviction](#) of four minors for sustained harassment and abuse of a trans boy in the Vall d'Albaida region; and [arrests](#) in Barcelona following a transphobic assault filmed by assailants. Trials were scheduled in several additional cases involving alleged hate crimes, including the burning of an LGBTI flag in

Pamplona and a homophobic assault in Port de Sagunt.

A separate murder case in Bilbao involving a victim met through a dating app resulted in a conviction and a lengthy prison sentence, and authorities examined whether the perpetrator may be linked to a wider pattern of violent crimes targeting gay men living alone.

## EDUCATION

In January, the Government of Navarre's Department of Education approved a new Coeducation Plan aimed at preventing sexist violence and promoting equality in schools. The Plan defines coeducation as fostering equal opportunities and explicitly rejects sexist, homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic stereotypes within the education system.

In March, the Vox party presented a non-binding parliamentary initiative calling for the creation of a new criminal offence targeting what it described as the "inclusion of gender ideology in the classroom." The proposal framed such content as harmful to minors and sought parental authorisation requirements for educational activities addressing sexuality or moral and religious issues.

In March, the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE) published a report criticising regional education protocols that allow social transition measures for trans pupils without parental consent. FEREDE argued that practices such as recognising a student's chosen name or gender identity in schools undermine parental authority and religious freedom.

In April, concerns resurfaced regarding a teacher in Alaquàs accused of subjecting students to conversion practices. Despite earlier assurances that he had been reassigned, testimonies indicated his continued presence at the school, prompting calls for full suspension. The case, which began in 2024, was referred to the Prosecutor's Office, and in September the teacher was formally suspended from his position.

In June, the High Court of Justice of Navarre ruled against the implementation of the SKOLAE

programme, declaring it unlawful. SKOLAE is a regional equality education programme that includes content on gender equality, diversity, and sexual orientation and gender identity, and is implemented across different educational stages. The programme had previously received international recognition, including the UNESCO Award for Education of Girls and Women in 2019.

In September, FELGTBI+ published a report on experiences of LGBTI students in secondary education, which found that more than half of LGBTI respondents had experienced hate or discrimination at school. The findings were later cited by the organisation in October in the context of calls for measures to address hate speech, misinformation, and bullying affecting young people.

## EMPLOYMENT

In January, the Labor Inspectorate of Catalonia sanctioned the delivery app Glovo with a fine of €30,000 for asking job applicants about their gender identity and possible disabilities during recruitment processes. According to the Inspectorate, the practice constitutes a very serious violation under the LISOS (Law on Social Infractions and Sanctions), as it invades candidates' privacy and infringes on their fundamental rights. Although Glovo indicated the survey was voluntary, anonymous, and unrelated to hiring decisions, the Inspectorate ruled that the mere act of asking placed applicants in a position of pressure and therefore violated their rights.

In May, the Social Court No.5 of Málaga ruled that the termination of an employment contract constituted discrimination based on sexual orientation. The case stemmed from an incident in April 2024 in which the worker received a payslip containing an offensive reference to his sexual orientation, which the court found had been deliberately inserted by the company's direct manager. Shortly after this incident, the worker's employment was terminated. The court found that the dismissal amounted to a violation of the worker's fundamental rights. The company and the manager were ordered to pay €10,000 in moral damages, as well as €3,759.94 in compensation related to the termination of the contract.

In July, Podemos party General Secretary Ione Belarra, Political Secretary and MEP Irene Montero, together with LGBTI Secretary and President of the Trans Platform Mar Cambrollé, registered a non-legislative motion in the Congress of Deputies. The initiative calls for the creation of a job quota for trans people in civil service examinations. The aim is for the Public Administration to reserve positions in order to address structural discrimination and ensure fair access to public employment.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In late January, the Vox parliamentary group in Murcia submitted a motion calling for the repeal of the region's 2016 LGBTI Equality Law, which provides protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Vox justified the proposal by attacking so-called "gender ideology," linking it to education, healthcare for minors, and women's rights.

In February, the People's Party (PP) announced plans to amend Law 4/2023 on trans and LGBTI equality and Law 39/2022 on Sport. The party stated that the reform aims to regulate access to women's sports competitions on the basis of sex, a proposal criticised by civil society for excluding trans athletes and undermining non-discrimination protections.

In February, the Parliament of Catalonia advanced amendments to Law 11/2014 on LGBTI equality, aimed at strengthening protections. The reform updates the sanctioning regime, classifying conversion practices and online incitement to discrimination as very serious infractions.

In late February, Vox introduced initiatives to repeal equality and non-discrimination laws in six autonomous communities: Madrid, Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, La Rioja, and Murcia. In March, the Canary Islands Parliament unanimously rejected one such proposal.

In April, the Sumar platform introduced a bill in Congress to recognise and protect the rights of intersex and non-binary people. The proposal includes a legal definition of non-binary identity, adaptation of official documents, data collection,

and reparations for intersex people subjected to non-consensual medical interventions.

In April, the Spanish government appointed the state prosecutor, María Teresa Verdugo, as president of the Independent Authority for Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination after a two-year delay. Her mandate started in June.

In May, LGBTI organisations in the Canary Islands denounced an internal education directive ordering the removal of the non-binary gender marker from administrative forms. Following public criticism, the regional government acknowledged the measure as an error, announced its correction, and opened dialogue with civil society.

In June, the Asturian government announced that a long-awaited regional LGBTI law would be introduced during the legislature. However, despite repeated assurances, the law had not been approved or adopted by the end of 2025.

In July, the Compromís coalition requested that the Ombudsman file an appeal before the Constitutional Court against amendments to the Valencian Trans Law introduced by the PP and Vox. Compromís argued that the reforms dismantled core protections for trans people. By the end of the year, the appeal remained pending before the Court.

In December, the Parliament of Catalonia passed a law against LGBTI-phobia (Law 13/2025) that updates the regulations in force since 2014, expands the areas of protection, adds offenses, and defines a new range of penalties ranging from €300 to €500,000. This regulation, which will come into force in 2026, not only intensifies the penalty system, but also requires companies with more than 50 employees to have a specific protocol in place and includes mandatory LGBTI clauses in public procurement, among other aspects.

## FAMILY

In June, a lesbian couple pursued a claim for patrimonial responsibility after a Civil Registry official refused to register their child because the couple were not married. Although an

administrative complaint was filed, the Galician authorities classified the official's conduct as a minor infraction and closed the case. The couple subsequently sought compensation from the Ministry of Justice, but by the end of 2025 no final decision had been issued.

In July, the Ministry of Justice approved an instruction clarifying that lesbian couples may register their newborn children in hospitals regardless of marital status. The measure aims to resolve inconsistent practices following the 2023 LGBTI law and will be published in the Official State Gazette.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, the mayor of Alcorcón, Candelaria Testa, announced that the courts had dismissed two lawsuits filed by Vox and the Christian Lawyers association against the City Council over a storytelling activity led by drag queens. The event, held in June 2024 at the Los Pinos Cultural Center, was part of the municipality's Pride celebrations and aimed at children aged 3 to 11.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In March, the Court of Instruction No. 4 of Gijón opened preliminary proceedings against two members of the feminist collective AMA Asturias, over their role in organising the "Santina Queen" procession, which featured a doll of the Virgin of Covadonga with a trans symbol as a halo and carried on a platform draped in the rainbow flag. The case followed a complaint by the Spanish Foundation of Christian Lawyers, which alleged that the act constituted an offence of discrimination. In April, Judge Ana López Pandiella rejected the appeal presented by the Prosecutor's Office to close the case and with it, decided to go ahead with the proceedings.

In June, the High Court of Justice of Madrid (TSJM) annulled a 2022 ruling that had forced the temporary removal of LGBTI flags from the municipal groups' building on Calle Mayor, following a lawsuit by the Vox party. The TSJM has now overturned that decision, rejecting Vox's appeal as it was filed after the legal deadline.

In July, the Supreme Court upheld the legality of displaying the LGBTI flag on the balcony of Valladolid City Council on June 28, 2020, during the tenure of socialist mayor Óscar Puente. The ruling definitively rejects the appeal filed by the Christian Lawyers Association, which had already been dismissed by both the Contentious-Administrative Court No. 3 of Valladolid and the High Court of Justice of Castilla y León.

## HEALTH

In March, the Administrative Litigation Chamber of the High Court of Justice of Asturias (TSJA) rejected the lawsuit of a trans woman who had sought the completion of her gender reassignment surgery and €1 million in damages. The plaintiff argued that the Asturian Health Service (SESPA) had provided inadequate care since her transition process began in 1992, leading to ongoing health problems including severe discomfort, dizziness, nausea, urethral complications, and chronic groin pain.

In May, the Galician Observatory against Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity approved a new Primary Care health protocol for trans people, developed by the regional Ministry of Health with input from the Directorate-General for Equality Promotion. The protocol, drafted by a Primary Care working group, sets out guidelines to strengthen healthcare provision for trans people. In July, the Official Journal of Castilla-La Mancha published a resolution from the Management Directorate of Sescam establishing the Health Care Unit for Trans and Intersex People. The resolution provides a formal regulatory framework and legal backing for the unit, detailing its benefits, scope, access, and protocols. According to the regional government, this will help normalise and improve the quality of care provided.

In July, the Plenary of the Interterritorial Council of the National Health System (CISNS) approved an update to the catalogue of procedures and pathologies requiring specialised care in Reference Centres, Services and Units (CSUR). For the first time, this catalogue now explicitly includes healthcare for trans people and those

with diverse sexual development, recognising the need for a "comprehensive health response, expert and respectful of gender diversity." The update, agreed between the Ministry of Health and Spain's autonomous communities, establishes three CSURs dedicated to the care of trans people and those with diverse sexual development. FELGTBI+ had [reported several inequalities between regions](#) within Spain and demanded coherent protocols and the implementation of the national LGBTI law, which guarantees equal access to health care.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In January, the Association against Conversion Therapies filed a [complaint](#) with the Ministry of Equality against seven Catholic dioceses and affiliated entities over the programme "Transformados", alleging the promotion of practices aimed at changing sexual orientation in violation of Law 4/2023 on LGBTI equality. The Minister of Equality subsequently [met](#) with the Spanish Episcopal Conference amid ongoing scrutiny of [alleged](#) conversion practices linked to diocesan structures.

Throughout the year, legislative initiatives were introduced to criminalise so-called conversion therapies, which are currently prohibited under administrative law. In February, the Ministry of Equality [announced](#) it was studying a reform of the Penal Code, and a proposal was registered in Congress seeking to [establish](#) criminal penalties for practices intended to modify or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. In June, a bill [introduced](#) by the Socialist Party began parliamentary [processing](#).

At the same time, political divisions persisted. A proposal in the Madrid Assembly to urge criminalisation was [rejected](#), while local motions in the Valencian Community opposing conversion practices failed after votes by the Popular Party and Vox.

Individual cases also emerged. In February, a young man from Valencia [filed](#) a formal complaint against an association accused of subjecting youths to conversion practices. The Provincial Prosecutor's

Office of Valencia opened an [investigation](#) into alleged practices linked to diocesan schools but later [dismissed](#) the complaint, referring the matter to education authorities for possible administrative review. Further complaints were [announced](#) by opposition parties by the end of the year.

## DATA COLLECTION

In September, FELGTBI+ published, in collaboration with the University of Salamanca, [the first research](#) about exodus from birthplace on the basis of SOGIESC. The report highlights that 13% of the LGBTI population have changed residence, while 21.5% have considered doing so.

In October, FELGTBI+ released [research on hate speech on X](#) (formerly Twitter), linking it to a rise in violence against LGBTI people in public spaces.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In April, the PSOE introduced a [proposal](#) in Congress calling for a formal condemnation of hate speech by international leaders such as Argentina's President Javier Milei and former US President Donald Trump against the LGBTI community. The initiative urges the Spanish government to take a leading role within the EU and the United Nations in promoting a global effort to combat the criminalisation of LGBTI people.

In June, the Foreign Office issued [Spain's Foreign Action Strategy 2025-2028](#), which underpins diversity as a core value of its foreign policy, stressing areas such as labour relations or development cooperation. Spain is also committed to the decriminalisation of same-sex relations, which is the main goal of the Equal Rights Coalition, co-chaired by Spain and Colombia in 2025 and 2026.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In February, the association Arcópoli [criticised](#) the Madrid regional government's decision to eliminate specific subsidies for LGBTI initiatives and instead include them in the broader personal income tax funding pool. As a result, funding for Arcópoli's Observatory, created in 2016 to monitor and make hate crimes visible, was cut from its longstanding €40,000 annual subsidy to €28,000.

In February, the Government of Castilla-La Mancha announced the creation of a new €107,000 funding line to support organisations working on equality, sexual orientation, and anti-discrimination initiatives.

In March, Spain's Ministry of Equality finalised the State Strategy for Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination of LGBTI People, sending the draft to all Autonomous Communities for consultation. The strategy, mandated by the 2023 LGBTI law (Law 4/2023), outlines a four-year roadmap with measures aimed at advancing and safeguarding LGBTI rights. Structured around three main axes - addressing LGBTI-phobic violence, promoting diversity and preventing discrimination, and strengthening support, protection, and memory - it seeks to translate the law's commitments into concrete mechanisms. In July, the Council of Ministers approved the Strategy as well as the country's first State Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Trans People. The State Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Trans People, Spain's first strategic framework dedicated specifically to trans communities, was designed to fulfil the constitutional obligation to remove barriers preventing full equality, will operate on a four-year cycle, and will serve as the main instrument for coordinating and implementing the policies foreseen under Law 4/2023.

In June, the regional parliament of Castilla y León approved a bill introduced by the Socialist Group to provide the region with its first LGBTI law. The measure was able to advance thanks to the abstention of the Popular Party (PP), which allowed the bill to pass despite the votes against Vox and two former deputies expelled from the far-right party. Until now, Castilla y León, as well as Asturias, had been the only autonomous community in Spain without a dedicated LGBTI law and without an observatory to monitor hate crimes and discriminatory acts against LGBTI people.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, the Constitutional Court began deliberations on the Popular Party's appeal against key provisions of Spain's Trans Law, which recognises gender self-determination and prohibits conversion therapies.

The law allows minors aged 12 to 16 to rectify the sex marker in the Civil Registry with the support of a legal representative, a provision challenged by both the PP and Vox. The draft ruling prepared by magistrate Juan Carlos Campo supported nearly all aspects of the law and sought to affirm constitutional protection for self-determination from the age of 16 without medical requirements. However, provisions concerning minors caused divisions within the Court, leading the Court president to postpone a vote in late April. In early May, the first round of deliberations was closed without a decision, leaving the case pending.

In May, the Valencian regional government, led by the PP and Vox, rolled back protections in the Trans Law. Schools are no longer required to explicitly address gender identity, expression, or family diversity, and restrictions on conversion practices were softened, with only coercive forms remaining prohibited. In July, Compromís announced it would challenge the reforms before the Constitutional Court, arguing that they undermine fundamental rights. In September, the Court admitted the appeal for consideration.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In April, the Constitutional Court upheld the appeal of unconstitutionality filed by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez against the reform introduced in 2023 by Madrid's current governor Isabel Díaz Ayuso to Madrid's law against LGBTI-phobia. The reform aimed to limit the role of LGBTI associations, human rights organisations, and other entities as "interested parties" in administrative procedures seeking protection against discrimination. While the original law allowed such organisations to intervene in defence of collective rights and, with consent, represent individual victims, Ayuso's reform excluded this possibility in both criminal and administrative sanctioning proceedings. The Court ruled that the measure was unconstitutional, declaring it null and void on the grounds that it infringed on the State's exclusive competences over procedural legislation.

In May, the Socialist Party of the Valencian Community called for disciplinary proceedings

against an advisor to the Presidency of the Valencian parliament following the expulsion of LGBTI organisations from a plenary session. The removal occurred during a control session after representatives chanted in support of the Trans Law. Vox, which holds the presidency of Les Corts, publicly opposed any disciplinary action.

In June, the Official State Gazette published an order from the Ministry of Culture amending the rules for film cost recognition and state aid to cinema, introducing new measures to promote the "real and effective" equality of trans people. The reform stipulates that all state production aid will award additional points when trans people are part of the project team in the positions specified by the calls.

## PUBLIC OPINION

According to an opinion poll conducted by the Spanish Center for Sociological Research (CIS in Spanish) at the behest of FELGTBI+ on the 20th anniversary of equal marriage legislation, 87.3% of respondents agreed that this milestone marked a first step towards achieving broader rights for the LGBTI community.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In March, a Barcelona court acquitted an LGBTI activist who faced a two-year prison sentence for allegedly assaulting a police officer during a protest that ensued in front of a bookstore promoting a transphobic publication. The court considered that the identification did not offer sufficient reliability and could not be deduced that it was the accused who assaulted the police officer involved in the altercation.

In March, the Provincial Court of Alicante began proceedings against two local police officers accused of humiliating and insulting a trans woman because of her gender identity while on duty in a patrol car. The Prosecutor's Office has requested prison sentences of two years and two months for each officer on charges of a hate crime. The incident took place in May 2020, when one officer directed degrading remarks at the woman, including mocking her appearance and making offensive comments about sex work.

In July, the NGO Irídia filed an indictment before the Provincial Court of Barcelona against two plainclothes Mossos d'Esquadra officers for what it describes as a "serious homophobic assault" in the Raval district in December 2020. The organisation accuses the officers of torture as well as injuries, all with the aggravating factor of discrimination based on sexual orientation, and is seeking penalties of up to six years in prison and 12 years of disqualification from public office. According to the victim's account, the officers never identified themselves as police, but physically subdued him, seized his phone and attempted to take his backpack, leading him to believe he was being robbed. He reports being punched in the face, beaten with batons on his leg, and insulted with homophobic slurs. Nonetheless, in late July, the Prosecutor's Office requested the shelving of the case, claiming that there are insufficient indications to substantiate the alleged crimes of injuries and torture.



# Sweden

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In November, Regnbågsdalen, Stockholm's second LGBTI senior residence, opened in Enskededalen. The residence includes 18 apartments, as well as shared facilities including a gym, library, cinema, and spaces for activities.

## ASYLUM

In 2025, following identified shortcomings in the legal quality of the Swedish Migration Agency's decision-making, the government instructed the authority to improve consistency and legal certainty in its case reviews, with particular attention to LGBTI asylum claims and cases involving conversion practices. In October, the Agency reported measures including implementation of EU Asylum Agency guidance on LGBTI-related protection grounds, revised methodological guidance, and new staff training. The civil society organisation RFSL nonetheless reported continued reliance on credibility assessments that conflict with Swedish and international standards, including stereotypical expectations regarding applicants' narratives.

During 2025, legislative processes continued to tighten Sweden's asylum and migration framework. Proposals under consideration include abolishing permanent residence permits as a general rule and expanding the possibility of revoking residence permits and citizenship in certain circumstances. These reforms, developed by the government in cooperation with the Sweden Democrats and linked to implementation of the EU Asylum and Migration Pact, are expected to be adopted before the 2026 general election. Civil society actors have expressed concern that stricter rules may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including LGBTI asylum seekers.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In July, the Court of Appeal of Skåne and Blekinge upheld the conviction of a 15-year-old Landskrona student for incitement to hatred, confirming in full the sentence by the Lund District Court imposing 30 hours of youth service. The case stemmed from an incident in October 2024, when the student delivered a speech that included calls for violence against LGBTI people.

In October, the Svea Court of Appeal upheld a conviction for incitement against a group of people in connection with hateful comments directed at the children's storytelling initiative *Bland drakar och dragqueens*. The original judgment, issued by the Nacka District Court on 23 April, concerned a 61-year-old man who posted comments in a Facebook thread alleging that drag artists were engaged in abusive behaviour. The District Court found him guilty of a lesser form of incitement against a group of people and sentenced him to 80 day-fines. The Court of Appeal rejected the appeal and upheld the ruling in full.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May, the Stockholm District Court delivered its verdict in the case of a homophobic assault at Målarpaviljongen, a well-known LGBTI-run venue in the city. The incident occurred after an intoxicated client, denied further service by an employee, began shouting homophobic slurs and urged a companion to join him outside, declaring his intent to kill the staff member. Together, the two men physically assaulted the employee, while the main perpetrator shouted that the bar was "a gay place." The court concluded that these actions were motivated by hostility toward the employee's sexual orientation, while the accomplice, though central to the violence, was not found to have expressed similar homophobic remarks. Both convicted men received suspended sentences and 100 hours of community service, alongside an order to pay nearly 24,000 SEK (approximately €2,100) in damages.

In May, just days before the seventh edition of Lakeside Pride in Askersund, every Pride flag lining the city's main streets was vandalised in what officials describe as a deliberate and coordinated attack.

In July, Expressen published an investigation into a crime wave in Uppsala, where young men have systematically targeted men who have sex with men through dating apps. Under the pretense of intimate dates, victims were threatened, beaten, or extorted with the warning that their sexual orientation would be exposed to families, employers, or religious communities.

## EMPLOYMENT

In August, a [report](#) funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and conducted in partnership with RFSL examined labour market outcomes among trans people in Sweden and Finland. Based on survey responses from just over 1,000 participants, the study found higher levels of unemployment and economic vulnerability among trans respondents, with an unemployment rate of 14 percent. The report also noted 56 percent of trans respondents reported reduced work capacity, which it linked to experiences of discrimination, minority stress, and insufficient workplace support. Notably, respondents who had transitioned in a workplace setting were more likely to report full work capacity than those who had not, highlighting the importance of inclusive and supportive working environments.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In May, the government presented a [proposal](#) introducing a new crime classification of psychological violence. The draft legislation defines psychological violence as repeated acts such as insults, coercion, threats, or surveillance that seriously damage a person's self-esteem. Importantly, the law would extend protection to victims of conversion practices, when these are carried out through coercion, threats, or sustained psychological pressure.

In November, the Church of Sweden [decided](#) that new priests must be willing to marry same-sex couples. At the 2025 Church Council, a vote determined that those seeking ordination must adhere to the Church of Sweden's order for marriage. The decision passed with 141 votes in favor, 99 against, and four abstentions. Previously, since 2009, priests who opposed marrying same-sex couples could still be ordained and employed.

## FAMILY

In July, a [study](#) conducted by the Institute for Social Research (SOFI) for Stockholm University revealed that women in heterosexual relationships experience the steepest decline in income after becoming mothers, while birth mothers in female same-sex relationships face significantly smaller losses. The research examined register data from

more than 170,000 different-sex couples and over 2,800 female same-sex couples and highlighted how gender roles and welfare policies shape parents' financial outcomes.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In July, members of the group [Queers for Palestine Malmö](#) [staged](#) a demonstration at Scandic Triangeln, the hotel hosting Malmö Pride's Pride House, following their participation in a seminar. Activists unfurled a Palestinian flag, displayed a banner reading "End complicity to end apartheid," and chanted slogans while distributing flyers calling on Malmö Pride to take a clear stance on Palestine. Malmö Pride later described the protest as peaceful. The demonstration ended when hotel staff and a security guard escorted the activists from the premises. Malmö Pride subsequently criticised the actions of the hotel staff and announced that it would suspend further collaboration with the establishment.

## DATA COLLECTION

In March, researchers from Stockholm University, Uppsala University and the University of Liverpool released the first comprehensive [study](#) of gender-affirming care in Sweden. Using decades of registry data, they found that by 2020 around 0.07% of the Swedish population had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria and about 0.03% had legally changed their gender. Since the early 2010s, the numbers seeking care have increased sharply, particularly among young trans men, though growth slowed somewhat in 2019-2020.

In June, a [survey](#) revealed that a clear majority of Swedes are critical of companies that have scaled back their commitment to LGBTI and diversity initiatives. The survey, carried out by Sifo and published in the Always Open report by 7-Eleven and the Rainbow Foundation, shows that six out of ten respondents view such retreats negatively, while only a small minority approve of the trend. The survey also highlights that women and older respondents are the most critical of corporate backtracking, whereas men are considerably more likely to regard it positively.

In October, a [report](#) from the European Forum of LGBTI Christian Groups placed the Church of Sweden at the top among Europe's major churches when it comes to LGBTI inclusion. The findings come from the Rainbow Index of Churches in Europe (RICE), published for the second time, which measures levels of inclusion across four dimensions: institutional equality and non-discrimination, church practices, language and symbols, and public positions. The Church of Sweden receives an inclusiveness score of 93 percent. According to the report authors, the Church of Sweden performs particularly strongly in the areas of equality, non-discrimination, and church practices.

In November, the Public Health Agency of Sweden released its first comprehensive [review](#) of intersex people's health and living conditions, revealing major gaps in knowledge, legal protections, and societal support. The review found reliable research only for two specific diagnostic groups: people with X chromosome deviations affecting puberty, menstruation, fertility, and heart health, and those with atypical hormone production from the adrenal glands, which affects genital development and requires lifelong treatment. For the remaining 20-plus variations, almost no systematic research exists, leaving the majority of intersex experiences undocumented. The report also highlights that Sweden has lagged behind international legal developments and has put no legal protections of intersex human rights, including a ban on intersex genital mutilation, in place.

## **FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT**

In June, the Attunda District Court handed down its [ruling](#) in the case of Gustav Hemming, the former regional councilor who resigned last year after being accused of sexual misconduct. The court found him guilty of sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy during a train journey. While the judges considered the act serious enough to warrant a prison term, they ultimately imposed a suspended sentence, reasoning that Hemming was unlikely to reoffend.

## **FOREIGN POLICY**

In May, Sweden joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

In January, the Swedish government [launched](#) a new LGBTI action plan for the period 2024-2027, aimed at combating hostility, promoting safety, and strengthening inclusion in working life. A key innovation is the expansion of "LGBTQI strategic agencies" tasked with implementing the plan. The Swedish Work Environment Authority has now been added to this framework, and the Swedish Defence Research Institute (FOI) will conduct a comprehensive survey of anti-LGBTI hostility in digital spaces. While welcoming the plan, civil society stressed the need for greater clarity, particularly on the issue of banning so-called conversion practices.

In September, the Swedish Government [presented](#) its 2026 budget, underscoring an increase in the funding awarded to 'measures against discrimination and racism', as well as to the Discrimination Ombudsman, LGBTI organisations, women's and girls' shelters, and measures against honour-related violence, as well as additional resources for combating ill health and involuntary loneliness among older people.

## **LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION**

Since Sweden's new Gender Identity Act [came into force](#) in July, applications have surged, with the National Board of Health and Welfare receiving 77 requests in the first four days of application. The law, which lowered the minimum age for legal gender change to 16 with parental consent, also removed the previous requirement of gender-affirming healthcare, favoring instead a medical certificate to complete the process.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In June, the Västernorrland region expanded its HPV vaccination program to cover all residents up to the age of 45, making it the first region in Sweden to offer free vaccination beyond the usual age limits. Announcing the decision, Moderate regional councillor Anna Strandh Proos underscored that access to healthcare should never depend on gender or sexual orientation, presenting the measure as part of a broader commitment to inclusion and prevention.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In November, two members of the Open Christian Democrats (KD), Sara Bystam and Maria Hansson, requested to leave the party in protest after the leader of the party, Deputy Prime Minister Ebba Busch, announced that KD will work to dismantle the recently passed Gender Identity Act.

## PUBLIC OPINION

In September, data from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) revealed a decline in young people's acceptance of same-sex parenting and widening gender gaps in attitudes towards LGBTI issues and gender equality. According to the report, 69% of young people aged 16-29 believe that homosexual couples are just as good parents as heterosexual couples. While still a majority view, this represents a drop compared to 2018. Among these, 83% of young women agree that same-sex couples make equally good parents, compared with just 56% of young men. Further, among 16-19-year-olds, only 59% agree with the statement, while support rises to 78% among those aged 25-29. The report further finds that nearly one-third of young men (32%) say it is important for boys to be masculine and girls feminine, compared with 11% of young women.

# Switzerland

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May 2025, the Transgender Network Switzerland (TGNS), the Swiss Lesbian Organisation (LOS), and Pink Cross published their annual report on hate crimes against LGBTI people, based on cases documented through the LGBTI Helpline. The report recorded 309 incidents in 2024, corresponding to an average of nearly six hate crimes per week and representing a fivefold increase in reports since 2020. Reported incidents included physical assaults, verbal abuse, sexual violence, and discrimination in employment, healthcare, and public institutions. According to the report, trans people accounted for approximately half of all recorded cases.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Switzerland violated the rights of South African athlete Caster Semenya. The judgment confirmed a 2023 finding in her favor, overturning earlier international court decisions that had supported restrictions imposed by the World Athletics Association. Semenya, an Olympic gold medalist and intersex woman with naturally high testosterone levels, had been required by World Athletics to undergo medical treatment to reduce her hormone levels in order to compete in women's events. She refused, arguing that the regulation was discriminatory and harmful, and pursued legal action. While the Court of Arbitration for Sport and Swiss courts had initially upheld the rule, the ECtHR determined that Switzerland had failed to adequately protect Semenya's rights. The judges found that she was discriminated against and denied a fair trial.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In June, Schaffhausen became the latest Swiss canton to initiate legislation against conversion practices, joining a growing alliance of cantonal governments seeking to outlaw such practices. Neuchâtel, Vaud and Valais have already adopted bans, while Geneva, Zurich, St. Gallen, Aargau, Bern, Fribourg and Jura are in the midst of legislative processes. Advocacy groups welcomed the move but underlined that, while medical and therapeutic associations already prohibit conversion practices

among their members, many are carried out by religious organisations, "life coaches" or self-styled advisors who operate outside any formal professional framework.

In July, the canton of Zurich urged the federal government to consider banning gender reassignment surgery for minors and restricting access to puberty blockers to clinical study settings. The initiative was presented as a protective measure for adolescents still forming their gender identity but medical experts and advocacy groups criticised the proposal, describing the move as "unfounded and not based on valid data" and stressing that current practice already allows surgery under 18 only in rare, carefully assessed cases.

## DATA COLLECTION

The Swiss LGBTIQ+ Panel – a longitudinal survey launched by researchers at Uni Zürich – began its sixth wave in 2025. The study collects data on living conditions, health, workplace experiences, and social integration of LGBTI people in Switzerland. Over 6,000 people have participated so far.

## PUBLIC OPINION

In August, a study by Swiss research and polling institute gfs-Zürich found that support for LGBTI equality and protection is broadly shared across German- and French-speaking Switzerland. Among 1,010 surveyed adults (April 2-28, 2025), 83% expressed support for LGBTI rights, with attitudes remaining consistent across gender, age, language region, education level, party affiliation, and settlement type. At the same time, 69% expressed concern about rising anti-queer attacks and discrimination, with the only exception being supporters of the SVP (57%), who reported lower concern. The study also found strong backing for legal protections: 84% supported workplace anti-discrimination legislation based on sexual orientation, and 72% favored a national ban on conversion therapies.



# Tajikistan

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, civil society actors reported that many LGBTI people avoided seeking support from legal service providers due to fear of stigma, discrimination, and their heightened economic vulnerability.

They underscored that many lawyers were reluctant to take on cases involving LGBTI clients. This reluctance was linked to concerns about reputational damage, pressure from judicial or state authorities, and fear of being stigmatised or targeted due to their professional involvement in LGBTI-related cases. As a result, access to effective legal representation remained limited.

## ASYLUM

Civil society organisations documented over four cases in which LGBTI people from Tajikistan sought asylum in European countries due to well-founded fears of persecution. These fears included threats to personal safety, harassment, blackmail, and the risk of disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity, compounded by the lack of effective protection within the country.

Access to information about asylum procedures remained extremely limited. Many LGBTI individuals did not know how to apply for protection, which countries could provide it, or what evidence was required.

Consequently, some LGBTI people sought to leave the country through informal channels, resulting in underreporting and limited documentation of cases, despite the presence of real and ongoing risks to their safety.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

As of 2025, Tajikistan continues to lack legislation explicitly prohibiting incitement to hatred or bias-motivated violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The lack of legal guarantees and effective government responses contributes to impunity and further exacerbates the problem of underreporting of violence and persecution against LGBTI people. For instance, in 2025, civil society reported that various LGBTI bloggers were directly targeted by online hate speech. These bloggers were subjected to numerous hostile, derogatory, and offensive comments.

In December, a trans woman was arrested on charges of distributing pornographic materials. The case received widespread coverage in national media and online platforms, alongside numerous hostile and derogatory comments which led to a significant wave of hatred against LGBTI people.

## DATA COLLECTION

In 2025, a country-of-origin information brief published by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) highlighted the scarcity of official data on the situation of LGBTI people in Tajikistan and the reliance on civil society documentation to assess patterns of abuse and discrimination.

ECOM's national monitoring remained one of the few sources systematically documenting cases and identifying recurring practices, including the use of criminal provisions and coercive interactions with law enforcement. Individual cases identified through this monitoring are referenced under the relevant thematic chapters of this report.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Civil society reporting continued to indicate that Tajikistan's legal framework does not provide explicit protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. The absence of hate crime and anti-discrimination provisions contributes to limited accountability and a lack of official monitoring (see also under Data Collection).

## EMPLOYMENT

ECOM documented cases in which law enforcement officers disclosed individuals' sexual orientation to employers, resulting in dismissal or forced resignation. Trans people were reported to face particularly severe barriers to employment due to the lack of legal gender recognition, pushing many into informal or precarious work without access to labour protections (see also under Data Collection).

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Throughout the year, civil society organisations advocating for human rights, including LGBTI rights, faced government monitoring, inspections,

and threats that limited their ability to operate effectively. According to civil society sources, this pressure contributed to restrictions on organizing meetings and disseminating information.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2025, the space for human rights defenders in Tajikistan continued to shrink significantly. Human rights defenders reported high levels of fear, stress, and psychological burnout linked to the ongoing pressure and uncertainty surrounding their professional activities. Concerns about reprisals, loss of funding, and personal safety led to increased self-censorship and reduced public engagement, particularly on sensitive issues such as LGBTI rights.

According to [reports](#) by the IPHR, the broader human rights environment in Tajikistan in 2025 was characterised by restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as by intimidation and surveillance of civil society actors.

## HEALTH

ECOM [documented](#) cases in which LGBTI people were subjected to forced or coerced HIV testing, including during police raids and detention. In several instances, individuals living with HIV were threatened with prosecution under Article 125 of the Criminal Code solely on the basis of their HIV status. Civil society reported that fear of disclosure, criminalisation, and breaches of confidentiality continue to deter LGBTI people from accessing healthcare and HIV-related services (see also under Data Collection).

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

As of 2025, Tajikistan does not have a clear or accessible legal framework governing legal gender recognition, despite provisions in the Law on Civil Status Acts that formally allow for changes to name and gender markers in official documents.

In practice, some trans persons have succeeded in amending their documents through court proceedings, but the process is widely described as complex, lengthy and financially or procedurally inaccessible for many. Fear of retaliation or stigma further discourages individuals from publicly sharing their experiences.

In June, the Smolninsky District Court in St. Petersburg received an [application](#) from a citizen of Tajikistan seeking official legal gender recognition. The applicant requested that changes be made to their birth record, specifically to amend the gender marker from male to female. In February 2023, the applicant received a 'certificate of sex change' from a private medical institution. However, when they applied to the registry office with this certificate, the request was denied, as the document was not on the official list of documents recognised by Russian law for confirming legal gender recognition. According to court spokesperson Daria Lebedeva, the applicant's attempts to request legal gender recognition began as early as 2022.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

ECOM documented 27 cases of human rights violations against LGBTI people in Tajikistan, with law enforcement officers identified as perpetrators in the majority of cases. The most common violations involved extortion, threats, and arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Police frequently confiscated mobile phones and other devices without judicial authorisation, using personal messages or images to threaten prosecution under Article 241 of the Criminal Code (pornography-related offences), primarily as a means of coercion and extortion. (see also under Data collection)

Throughout the year, over 30 cases of police mistreatment targeting LGBTI persons were documented by civil society. These incidents involved arbitrary detention, harassment, extortion, and blackmail by law enforcement authorities, with some individuals being accused of distributing pornographic materials and intentionally transmitting HIV. Due to fear of reprisals, ongoing criminal investigations, and limited access to official records, many incidents went unrecorded, and organisations did not have access to all relevant cases.

Broader human rights monitoring reports further indicate that civil society organisations and human rights defenders faced heightened scrutiny, surveillance, and restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association.



# Turkey

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In early December, SPoD NGO announced the opening of the Suna Sözer Community Centre to create a new inclusive space for LGBTI people in Turkey. The launch was attended by consuls general from Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, and Brazil, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In March, psychiatrist Mustafa Merter made several media appearances in which he disparaged queer identities, describing the process of transitioning as "madness," and denying the existence of LGBTI people.

In March, President Erdoğan accused opposition-led municipalities of sponsoring LGBTI people and movements and declared that "protecting the family and keeping family values alive is a national duty."

In May, Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, during the opening of the 3rd International Family Symposium, argued that "degenderisation, individualisation, weakened social ties under the impact of digitalisation, and the transforming family structure are no longer just individual issues but a problem that concerns the future of our country."

In November, President Erdoğan delivered a speech at the "Family and Culture-Art Symposium" held at the Beştepe National Library, in which he targeted LGBTI people while framing the protection of the family as a core state priority. In his remarks, he portrayed LGBTI identities as a threat to social and moral values and stated that the government was taking measures against what he described as attempts to undermine the family structure. He also emphasised the need to combat digital and social media content that he claimed endangered the family, society, and "sacred values".

In November, President Erdoğan, answering journalists' questions while returning from Azerbaijan, targeted LGBTI people by stating that Turkey would "never allow perversions like LGBTI."

Erdoğan emphasised that the family institution was under pressure, citing efforts to weaken it through LGBTI activities, and highlighted government initiatives to encourage marriage and childbirth.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, Mustafa Fidan was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of trans woman and sex worker Ecem Seçkin in Alsancak, Izmir. Seçkin was brutally killed in January 2023. While Seçkin's lawyers demanded an aggravated life sentence, the court rejected the request and handed down a standard life term instead. The decision has been appealed, and the case file is now before the Court of Cassation for review.

In March, during the Newroz celebrations in Yenikapı Square in Istanbul, a group assaulted participants carrying LGBTI flags.

In August, a trans woman was murdered in her home in Antalya's Muratpaşa district. Following an investigation, one of the suspects confessed to committing the murder and was formally arrested on charges of intentional homicide.

In December, Pink Life reported the death of a trans man in a ward at Sincan Prison. The circumstances raised concerns as the public prosecutor reportedly only came to the prison two days later, and no witness statements were taken in the aftermath.

## EDUCATION

The İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education has imposed disciplinary sanctions in the form of reprimands on three teachers for giving lessons on gender equality in schools on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, following a decision by the Education and Science Workers' Union.

In April, Minister of National Education Yusuf Tekin declared his opposition to LGBTI inclusion in education and added that the government is firmly "against LGBT imposition."

In July, Hacettepe University shut down the Hacettepe Queer Studies Club, citing vague

allegations of misconduct and claiming that the club was employing public funds to promote LGBTI propaganda. The decision was issued by the Student Clubs Establishment and Functioning Commission, which claimed it had received complaints about the club and, after evaluation, opted for closure. In its reasoning, the Commission accused the club's activities and members of "opposing religious, national, and social values" and "acting against social harmony." The club had first been shut down in 2023 but reopened in early 2025.

In August, a group of trans women living in Beyoğlu were attacked by an intoxicated man in the middle of the night. After footage showing the women chasing the attacker circulated on social media, trans people became targets of further online hostility. Trans Blok reported that the man had persistently harassed the women, assaulted one of them, and attacked nearby shopkeepers. They stated that police collected camera footage the following morning, and that the recordings clearly showed the man's aggression. Despite this, the women were taken to the police station and were arbitrarily kept waiting for a prolonged period of time.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, President Erdoğan declared 2025 the "Year of the Family", portraying LGBTI people and gender equality initiatives as threats to traditional values. Following a cabinet meeting, he announced a nationwide campaign focused on "protecting and strengthening the family." Shortly thereafter, the government held a Year of the Family Promotion Meeting, during which the Minister of Family and Social Services, Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, warned against what she described as "harmful movements" undermining family values. In October, President Erdoğan submitted the 2026 Central Government Budget Law Proposal to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. The proposal allocated approximately 22 billion Turkish lira (around €600 million) to programmes aimed at the "protection and strengthening of the family."

In May, during the International Family Forum in Istanbul, President Erdoğan announced the designation of 2026–2035 as the "Decade of Family

and Population." In his remarks, Erdoğan framed opposition to LGBTI rights as part of a broader struggle to protect society and freedom. The Minister of Family and Social Services stated that what she described as "gender-neutral ideologies" posed a threat to the institution of the family.

In June, during a Family Workshop organised under the Union of Religious Officials' Family Year Action Plan, the organisation's president, Ali Yıldız, made statements targeting LGBTI identities and gender equality frameworks. In his remarks, he characterised LGBTI identities as a threat to moral and social values, criticised what he described as "genderisation", and denounced the Istanbul Convention, portraying Turkey's withdrawal as a positive development. He further called for restrictive approaches towards media, daytime television programmes, and online platforms, which he claimed promote immorality.

In late October, protests took place across Turkey in response to the proposed 11th Judicial Package, which initially included provisions aiming to expand criminal liability for expressions and conduct deemed contrary to "biological sex" and public morality, introduce prison sentences related to same-sex engagements or marriages, and increase penalties for certain public order offences. In late November, the government removed the proposed anti-LGBTI provisions from the package prior to its submission. Other elements of the reform package, including provisions affecting the prosecution and sentencing of children, remained under consideration.

In late November, the Republican People's Party (CHP) adopted its renewed program, which covers a wide range of areas including Democracy, Governance and Justice, Development, Social State, Foreign Policy, Security, and Resistance. While LGBTI issues were not explicitly listed as a separate section, the program emphasised ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

## FAMILY

In May, the General Directorate of Family and Community Services issued a nationwide directive

to all units of the Ministry of Family and Social Services and to provincial directorates in all 81 cities, instructing staff to avoid using terms such as "gender," "gender identity," and "sexual orientation".

In July, Turkey's Presidential Communication Centre (CİMER) introduced a new [survey](#) that frames LGBTI people as a threat to the family. One question asks respondents which public policy should be prioritised to protect the family, listing "combating LGBT" alongside options such as promoting marriage, expanding family counseling services, and increasing birth-related subsidies.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In January, Turkey [submitted](#) its defence before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the case brought by Kaos GL concerning bans on LGBTI marches and events in Ankara. The case combines two applications: the prohibition of the 2016 Anti-Homophobia March and the indefinite ban on all LGBTI activities imposed during the 2017 State of Emergency. The government denied discrimination, arguing that restrictions were based solely on security concerns. It also requested the Court to dismiss third-party interventions as "political." The ECtHR asked Turkey to clarify the legal grounds for imposing an indefinite city-wide ban and whether this violated freedom of assembly and the prohibition of discrimination under the European Convention on Human Rights. The case remained pending at the end of 2025. In July, the 30-day ban [imposed](#) by the Eskişehir Governor's Office in 2023 to block Pride Week events was [brought](#) before the Constitutional Court after lower courts had upheld the prohibition.

In January, Pink Life Queerfest [took place](#) despite authorities formalising a ban on both the festival and the scheduled screening of the documentary BELLEKVARİ: An Oral History of QueerFest. University Pride events also faced obstruction. In May, the 13th METU Pride March was [met](#) with heavy police and riot control presence, while private security attempted to block participants. Similarly, Hacettepe University Pride was [confronted](#) by university security and prevented by police from proceeding. In June, Ankara Pride [went ahead](#) despite

repeated police attempts to block the procession. Marchers delivered their press statement and dispersed peacefully. The İzmir Governor's Office [imposed](#) a three-day ban on the 13th İzmir Pride Week in late June, prohibiting marches, press statements, sit-ins and cultural activities across the province. Activists briefly marched despite the ban but dispersed under threat of detention. In November, the İzmir 5th Administrative Court [annulled](#) the ban, finding that the governorship had failed to demonstrate a concrete and imminent danger justifying the restriction. In late October, the Çanakkale Governorship [banned](#) the Kuir-Feminist Forum organised by Çanakkale Pride and imposed a two-day prohibition on public activities, explicitly referencing LGBTI events.

In March, nearly 200 people were [detained](#) during International Women's Day mobilisations across several cities. In December, the first [hearing](#) took place in the case against trans activist Iris Mozalar, one of 112 people detained during the Feminist Night March in Istanbul. She was charged under Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. The court postponed the case to June 2026. Organisers reported that Mozalar had been singled out and released under judicial control with a travel ban. In May, 23 people were [indicted](#) for participating in a gathering at Istanbul University commemorating the Gezi Resistance. The indictment explicitly referred to the display of LGBTI flags as evidence and sought custodial penalties. In June, prosecutors filed [charges](#) against 36 individuals for participating in the 11th Trans Pride March in Istanbul. The indictment relied on alleged violations of the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations and cited prior participation in LGBTI events and personal phone messages seized during detentions. In July, the first [hearing](#) was held in the trial concerning the 2022 METU Pride March, during which defendants described the use of rubber bullets, physical violence and threats during detention. The case was adjourned to September.

In July, 11 activists charged in connection with the 2022 Istanbul Pride were [acquitted](#). The court declined, however, to pursue complaints regarding alleged excessive police force. Similarly, eight activists [detained](#) during the 2024 Istanbul Pride

were acquitted in a separate proceeding. In October, 2 activists charged after the 2024 Trans Pride March were also acquitted by an Istanbul court.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In June, Boysan's House – a communal and cultural space for LGBTI people in Beyoğlu and Şişli – announced its closure. Founded in 2016, the space had served as a hub for socialisation, organising, and collective memory, but volunteers explained that changing living conditions, mounting pressures, and the fragility of financial sustainability had made it impossible to continue.

In December, the Izmir 3rd Civil Court of First Instance ruled to shut down the social media account of the Young LGBTI+ Association on the grounds of "obscenity," "encouraging LGBTI+ identity," and "violating the Turkish family structure," following a lawsuit filed by the Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. At the same time, criminal proceedings were initiated against 11 activists who were former members of the association's executive and supervisory boards for violating the Associations Law.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, journalist Yıldız Tar, Editor-in-Chief of the LGBTI news portal KaosGL.org, was arrested and charged with "membership in a terrorist organisation" as part of a wider crackdown in which 52 people, including journalists, opposition MPs, artists, and activists, were taken into custody. After being held in pre-trial detention, Tar was released in May under judicial control, including an international travel ban. The case was transferred from Istanbul to Ankara following a ruling of lack of jurisdiction. At the first hearing, held on 13 October before the Ankara High Criminal Court, the court decided to maintain the judicial control measures and adjourned the proceedings. The trial is ongoing, with the next hearing scheduled for February 2026.

In February, LGBTI activist İris Mozalar was acquitted of charges of "publicly inciting hatred and hostility" over social media posts condemning racist attacks against Syrians in Kayseri. Mozalar had been detained in July 2024 for four posts and

briefly arrested, before being released two days later. During the third hearing at the 61st Criminal Court of First Instance in Istanbul, the judge ruled that the posts were protected under freedom of expression.

In March, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the Istanbul Family Foundation signed a "Cooperation Protocol on the Protection and Strengthening of the Family." According to RTÜK, the agreement aims to align digital and television content with so-called family values, protect children from "harmful" material, and promote national and spiritual values through the media. Under the protocol, initiatives include the creation of a "Family Broadcasting Hour," as well as short film, animation, and documentary competitions designed to promote family unity and encourage the production of content that reinforces "positive family values." In light of the protocol, RTÜK Vice Chair Feyzullah Tecirli declared 2025 the "Year of the Fight Against LGBT," while Vice Chair Abdülkerim Gün stated, "We will never allow LGBT content."

In April, Turkey's government coalition partner HÜDAPAR introduced the "Bill on Amendments to the Turkish Penal Code and Certain Other Laws" containing an explicit ban on LGBT propaganda. The proposal would impose severe prison sentences, while banning any form of LGBTI-related content across virtually all media, communications channels and the work of civil society organisations, regardless of their field of activity. The bill would also criminalise trans people who fail to disclose their sex assigned at birth before marriage, classifying such unions as "fraudulent marriages" punishable with imprisonment. In June, the Free Cause Party's (HÜDA-PAR) Chairman met with the leader of the New Welfare Party (Yeniden Refah) to express joint support for the bill.

In June, the Istanbul 12th Criminal Judgeship of Peace ordered an access ban on the online newspaper KaosGL.org, along with its newly created X account and its Facebook and Instagram pages. This came shortly after the platform's original X account had already been blocked by a separate court order.

In June, pro-government media reported that the

Ministry of Culture canceled concerts by several prominent artists because of their outspoken defense of LGBTI rights.

In September, the RTÜK issued [fines](#) against several LGBTI-themed films available on major digital platforms. RTÜK justified the penalties by claiming that the films violated Article 8 of Law No. 6112, specifically the clauses prohibiting content deemed "contrary to national and spiritual values, general morality, and the protection of the family," as well as provisions against "obscenity."

In late November, trans activist Janset Kalan was [sentenced](#) to five months in prison and fined 400 TL on charges of "obscenity" for a social media post depicting her legs and cleavage, shared on an account that did not belong to her. The Ankara 48th Criminal Court of First Instance ruled on the case, with the official announcement of the sentence postponed. The indictment specifically referenced the visibility of her legs and cleavage as the basis for the obscenity charge.

## HEALTH

In January, Turkey's Ministry of Health [appointed](#) a series of Audit and Evaluation Scientific Commissions – among which the "Gender Change Audit and Evaluation Scientific Commission" – tasked with monitoring medical services for compliance with legislation and efficiency in the use of public resources, but also to launch investigations based on citizen complaints and to impose administrative or penal measures when deemed necessary. The move comes after pro-government media outlets had singled out hospitals providing trans-related healthcare and the Turkish Pharmacists' Association announced that hormone replacement therapies would face new supply restrictions under an order from the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency.

In February, leaked government draft [amendments](#) to Turkey's Criminal and Civil Codes revealed plans to severely restrict access to legal gender recognition and trans-specific healthcare. The proposals included criminal penalties not only for those seeking or providing such healthcare, but also

for "any person who publicly encourages, praises or promotes attitudes and behaviours contrary to innate biological sex and public morality."

In June, the Ministry of Health, through the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency, issued a [directive](#) to provincial health authorities introducing a minimum age of 21 for access to hormone treatment in the context of gender affirmation. The directive, titled "Abuse of Gender Hormone Medications," restricted the prescription of testosterone, GnRH analogues, and oestrogen-only medications for individuals under the age of 21. This measure goes beyond existing provisions of the Civil Code, which set the minimum age for eligibility for gender-affirming surgery at 18.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In March, psychiatrist Ahmet Akin publicly [acknowledged](#) having subjected minors he identified as LGBTI to practices commonly referred to as conversion practices. In September, the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued a [decision](#) of non-prosecution in a case brought against journalist Can Öztürk of T24, who had reported on these statements and related allegations. The investigation, initiated under Turkey's disinformation law following a complaint by Akin alleging the dissemination of misleading information and defamation, was closed after prosecutors concluded that the reporting was factually grounded, fell within the scope of press freedom and freedom of expression, and did not constitute a criminal offence.

## DATA COLLECTION

In November, the Human Rights Association (İHD) [published its 2024 Human Rights Report](#). The report emphasises that rights violations against women and LGBTI people in Turkey accelerated during the year, linking these attacks to the government's family-centered discourse. It notes: Regarding homophobic and transphobic violence, the report records at least four deaths and seven injuries in 23 attacks targeting LGBTI people throughout 2024. The report also documents state repression of Pride Month events: at least 23 participants were detained during demonstrations – 10 in Eskişehir

and 13 in Istanbul. Of those brought to court, five were subjected to judicial control measures.

## FOREIGN POLICY

In November, the Russian Embassy signaled support for Refah Party's anti-LGBTI stance by attending the party's 3rd Ordinary Grand Congress. In a statement on its social media accounts, the embassy highlighted the "similarity of our attitudes on issues such as the preservation of traditional values, especially family values, and the need to counter the practices of neocolonialism of our age." During the congress, Refah's Deputy Chairman Erbakan claimed that, if elected, his party would abolish the Istanbul Convention, alleging that the foundations of the family had been undermined. Erbakan also declared that LGBTI associations and activities represent "one of the most important indicators of social collapse and immorality," signaling his intention to end such associations and activities if his party came to power.

## HOUSING

In July, authorities in Izmir issued an order to close 14 apartments where many trans women lived. Officially justified as part of a "fight against prostitution," the measure was preceded by police reportedly contacting local real estate agents to obtain tenants' lease contracts.

In August, trans women in Diyarbakır faced escalating evictions and forced displacement as a result of mounting police pressure and arbitrary sealings. Under the pretext of combating sex work, police imposed fines and sealed homes under the Misdemeanor Law and Article 104 of the 1930 Regulation.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In November, the European Commission released its enlargement report for Turkey, noting that previous recommendations had largely been ignored. The report stressed the need for Turkey to align its anti-terrorism laws with European standards and implement ECHR rulings.

The situation for LGBTI people was described as alarming. Civil society organisations advocating for

women's and LGBTI rights face heavy administrative and legal pressure, including audits and smear campaigns. The report also highlighted the lack of adequate anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation, leaving vulnerable groups without proper legal protection.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2025, participation in international political and human rights forums continued to expose LGBTI activists to criminal proceedings. This was illustrated by the prosecution of Enes Hocoğulları, a Council of Europe youth delegate for statements made during an official session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, addressing police violence, shrinking civic space, and the arrest of opposition mayors.

In September, the first hearing in the case was held before the Ankara 86th Criminal Court of First Instance. During the hearing, Hocoğulları stated that he was the only member of the Turkish delegation investigated in relation to the session, and argued that the indictment relied on significant translation inaccuracies that distorted the content and context of his remarks. The prosecutor recommended that he be tried without detention, and he was released on 8 September pending trial.

In December, a trans activist was detained during a home raid by the Counter-Terrorism Branch, citing an investigation initiated three years prior to the arrest. It was announced to the public in a press statement made at the Ankara Branch of the Human Rights Association that the victim was repeatedly questioned without a lawyer, subjected to ill-treatment, and that during the detention process, their views on LGBTI associations, solidarity networks, financial resources, and the concept of family were questioned.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In September, the Ministry of Family and Social Services requested that access to the song 'Perperişan' by Turkish singer Mabel Matiz be blocked, claiming that its content could "harm the family institution, negatively affect the mental

development of children and young people, disrupt public order, and cause outrage in society." Following this, the Ministry of Interior filed a criminal complaint against Matiz with the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor's Office under Article 226 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalises "obscenity" under the broader category of "crimes contrary to general morality." The song was blocked on September 18, and Matiz testified to the prosecutor on September 22. By October, the Ankara Criminal Court of Peace sentenced him to six months to three years in prison for "mediating the publication of obscene publications," rejecting the singer's defense.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, during the "Youth Standing Up" march in Ankara, police detained a trans woman using violence that bystanders reported could amount to torture. Footage of the assault quickly spread across social media but rather than condemning the brutality, the Ankara Governorship attempted to justify the police action by referring to the victim in a statement as a "so-called woman."

In April, during the protests sparked by the detention of the Mayor of Istanbul Ekrem İmamoğlu in March, reports emerged of women and LGBTI people being subjected to torture and sexual violence at the hands of police. A university student detained in Saraçhane recounted that while being transported to Vatan Police Headquarters, one of the officers attempted to grope their genitals over their clothing and mocked them with homophobic slurs.

In June, Trans Pride in Istanbul was violently dispersed, with 46 human rights defenders detained across the city, five of whom now face judicial controls and travel bans. According to news outlets, police confiscated banners and sealed off the area with patrol vehicles. Activists Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi, and Doğan Nur were among those arbitrarily detained during the March and held in pre-trial detention on charges linked to their participation in peaceful assembly. Their first hearing is scheduled for August at the Istanbul Criminal Court of First Instance No. 51. In late June, Nur was released following a court appeal while

Selen and Çelebi remained in detention (see also under Freedom of Assembly).

In August, police carried out a large-scale operation targeting trans women in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district. On the evening of July 31, watchmen surrounded several residences, preventing trans women from leaving their homes for nearly two hours. Around 30 women were detained from different parts of the district and taken to the police station, where they were held in the courtyard for about an hour. Despite repeatedly asking, they were given no explanation for their detention and were pressured to switch off their phones.



# Turkmenistan

## ASYLUM

Throughout the year, travel bans and restrictions on freedom of movement continued to be recorded in Turkmenistan, with authorities systematically restricting citizens – including LGBTI people, activists, and HIV-positive people – from leaving the country.

In August, reports emerged of the case of a 30-year-old gay man living with HIV who fled Turkmenistan in 2018 to escape persecution. Since then, he has been residing in a European territory, where he recently lost both his job and access to antiviral treatment. Because his passport has expired, he cannot leave his current location, and renewal would require returning to Turkmenistan, where homosexuality is criminalised and punishable by imprisonment. Human rights organisations have confirmed that LGBTI people and people living with HIV in Turkmenistan are routinely targeted, imprisoned, tortured, and often "disappeared" within the prison system. At the same time, they also warned that deportation to Turkmenistan would expose him to immediate risks of imprisonment, torture, and denial of medical care.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July, David Omarov, founder of the "Invisible Rainbow Turkmenistan" initiative, released a video address to UN agencies, EU institutions, diplomatic missions, and international experts, urging recognition of systemic repression, violence, torture, and the erasure of LGBTI people in Turkmenistan. He called for acknowledgment of the harm enabled by Articles 133 and 116 of the Criminal Code and stressed that state bodies carry out abuses; officials publicly deny these realities in international forums.

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In 2025, Turkmenistan remained de facto closed to international human rights NGOs, UN special procedures, and independent media. Combined with pervasive internal censorship, this near-total isolation severely restricted international oversight and made independent information-gathering extremely difficult.

## HEALTH

In 2025, reports indicated a lack of reliable access to HIV treatment inside Turkmenistan, including inconsistent availability of necessary medications and instances in which detainees were denied treatment.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In April, during its 82nd session, the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) reviewed Turkmenistan's third periodic report. The Committee expressed concern over the treatment of prisoners, highlighting enforced disappearances, prolonged solitary confinement, lack of legal and medical safeguards, absence of independent monitoring, and failures to investigate or prosecute torture and ill-treatment. It also denounced Turkmenistan's restrictive abortion laws, warning that the five-week legal limit, high costs, and limited contraception access force women into unsafe practices. The Committee further criticised the criminalisation of homosexuality and reports of police abuse against LGBTI persons, urging immediate steps to safeguard their rights.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2025, enforced disappearances within Turkmenistan's prison system remained a grave concern. The 2025 review by the Committee Against Torture highlighted ongoing cases of disappearances and the absence of independent monitoring mechanisms, leaving detainees in consistently life-threatening conditions.

Throughout the year, the Ministry of National Security maintained control over the country's central internet gateway and officials blocked a wide range of websites and major social media platforms they deemed sensitive, including most VPN services used to bypass state restrictions. Reports also indicated that security services summoned some individuals who used VPNs to question them about their online behaviour. Phone inspections remained common practice, with officers routinely checking devices for messages and photos, and conducting entrapment operations as part of broader surveillance efforts.

In September, new cases of torture and mistreatment of LGBTI detainees by Turkmenistan's prison authorities following their arrests and imprisonment were reported. The report also included allegations of abuse against prisoners living with HIV. It further noted that UN bodies and NGOs have repeatedly documented the use of forced anal examinations by Turkmen authorities in an attempt to "prove" same-sex activity.

In September, two survivors who escaped Turkmenistan publicly recounted their experiences of abuse. One man stated that he had been arrested on suspicion of homosexuality, tried behind closed doors, and given a two-year prison sentence for "sodomy." He described being repeatedly beaten by police and raped by other inmates during his imprisonment, which drove him to attempt suicide. The second survivor recalled being detained in 2019, during which security officers tortured him to compel him to disclose the names of other gay men. He reported that interrogators beat him while wearing gloves – telling him it was "to avoid touching [his] blood" – and that he was sexually assaulted while in custody.

In October, it was reported that Turkmenistan's police and Ministry of National Security had intensified a coordinated campaign targeting LGBTI people. In Turkmenabad, authorities were allegedly focusing on teenagers first, using them to identify older and wealthier LGBTI people. A local resident reported that two boys aged 15-16 were located and tortured, though no charges were filed. Though not formally charged, their detention led to the identification and targeting of approximately 20 other young men. Parallel raids occurred in Ashgabat. One detainee, a 20-year-old man, was said to have been held naked for ten days in the basement of the "sixth department," beaten, and pressured into informing on others after officials reviewed his family's financial situation and concluded he was not wealthy.



# Ukraine

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In August, [Ukraine's government](#) introduced a [bill](#) aimed at strengthening legal protections against discrimination, hate crimes, and hate speech, explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity. The initiative forms part of Ukraine's commitments under its Association Agreement with the European Union. [Registered](#) as draft law No. 13597, "On Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Criminal Code of Ukraine to Combat Manifestations of Discrimination," the bill seeks to enhance accountability for hate-motivated crimes and expand the legal tools available to combat discrimination. The draft legislation introduces criminal liability for acts of discrimination and broadens the list of protected groups as existing laws often classify hate-motivated crimes as administrative offenses or simple "hooliganism," allowing perpetrators, including those committing violence against activists, to avoid meaningful criminal responsibility.

Ukrainian civil society organisations, including Gender Stream, continued to advocate for the adoption of the draft law, engaging with members of parliament, law enforcement bodies, and international partners to strengthen accountability for hate-motivated offences. By the end of 2025, the draft law remained pending before parliament and had not been adopted.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, Ukrainian violinist Daniel Skrypnyk was physically [attacked](#) in Kyiv by an unidentified man. According to Skrypnyk, the assailant used homophobic language, stating that Skrypnyk "had no right to speak because he was gay," and threatened to kill him before physically assaulting him. Skrypnyk reported that he contacted the police multiple times over approximately 30 minutes before officers arrived. Despite the reported homophobic motivation and severity of the assault, the alleged perpetrator was allowed to leave the scene.

In March, a blogger and activist was subjected to [harassment](#) and threats by a group of young men in a city centre. According to the activist, the group surrounded her and her friends, directed verbal

abuse at them referencing the LGBTI community, and poured beer on her. In a video later published by the activist, the men can be heard stating that LGBTI people "have no right to stay in Ukraine" and making explicit threats of violence, including threats to kill. One individual also claimed that, upon reaching adulthood and acquiring weapons through military service, he would commit violence against LGBTI people. By the end of 2025, no public information had emerged about arrests, charges or investigative outcomes.

In May, a trans woman was physically [attacked](#) during the "Strip" festival at the Closer club in Kyiv. According to the woman, an unidentified individual threatened her with violence because of her gender identity and subsequently struck her in the face, causing her to fall down a staircase. The victim filed a complaint with the police but reported that officers initially attempted to dissuade her from pursuing the case. She also stated that the club's security later accused her of provocation, and that the venue's administration did not follow up with her after the incident.

In October, a man in Kharkiv threatened and [pursued](#) an LGBTQ+ activist with what appeared to be a firearm on a subway platform after identifying her as a member of the community. According to the activist's account, the assailant chased her while making violent threats before fleeing when police were called. The activist filed a report with police following the incident, and colleagues urged authorities to classify it as a hate-motivated offence under Ukrainian law. There are no confirmed reports how the case was classified.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July, the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) [withdrew](#) Bill No. 5488, which would have introduced criminal liability for hate crimes, following the resignation of Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal's government. The bill, drafted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2021 and submitted on behalf of the former prime minister, formed part of Ukraine's European integration agenda but never reached its first reading. According to the National LGBTI Consortium, while the bill was ultimately abandoned, the advocacy efforts surrounding it helped

consolidate both state and non-state actors around principles of equality and non-discrimination. This stalled reform was later followed by a separate legislative initiative, introducing a new draft (see also under Bias-Motivated Speech).

In January, the commander who discriminated against non-binary soldier Evelyn Schönbrenner in the International Legion was demoted following an investigation prompted by the public organisation Ukrainian LGBT+ Military for Equal Rights. Schönbrenner, a US national who joined the International Legion in March 2022, faced repeated harassment over their gender identity and sexual orientation. In November 2022, their commander forbade them from wearing a unicorn patch and demanded the removal of a TikTok video in which they publicly supported LGBTI rights in Ukraine, claiming such acts "humiliated Ukraine." In December 2023, they filed a report to the Gender Adviser of the Land Forces Command and Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada for Human Rights, whose investigation confirmed the discrimination and resulted in demotion of the commander.

## FAMILY

In July, Kyiv's Desniansky District Court issued a landmark ruling formally recognising a same-sex couple as a family under Ukrainian law. The case, brought by diplomat Zoryan Kis and his partner Tymur Levchuk, marked the first legal precedent of its kind in Ukraine. The couple, together since 2013 and married in the US in 2021, had filed a complaint after the Foreign Ministry refused to acknowledge Levchuk as Kis' spouse and denied him diplomatic spousal rights. In September, the Kyiv Court of Appeal upheld the landmark decision recognising same-sex couples as families and rejecting appeals that cited "traditional family values" against the ruling.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In January, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Ukraine had violated Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, protecting the right to peaceful assembly, and Article 13, guaranteeing effective legal remedies. The case arose from an LGBTI rights march planned for May 2013 in central Kyiv. The Kyiv City

State Administration sought to block the event, citing Kyiv Day festivities and alleged risks to public order. Despite proposals from organisers to adjust the route, authorities instead imposed a blanket ban on the march in the city center, forcing it to relocate to the outskirts. After the march, organisers appealed the ban in Ukrainian courts. The ECtHR found that the Ukrainian authorities had imposed disproportionate restrictions and further denied the organisers an effective opportunity to defend their rights.

In March, plans to hold Lviv's first-ever Trans Day of Visibility action were cancelled under pressure from far-right groups and local authorities. The demonstration, organised by Bilkis, Cohort, and Resistance, was meant to take place in Rynok Square and draw attention to the prejudice and discrimination that trans people continue to face in Ukraine, despite recent reforms simplifying the transition process. However, after news of the event spread online, radical groups began issuing threats and calls for violence. Local police suggested that organisers relocate but ultimately, under mounting pressure, the demonstration was called off.

In April, the Sunny Bunny LGBTQ+ film festival in Kyiv was disrupted by far-right protesters. Members of the extremist group Prava Molod ("The Right Youth") gathered to denounce the event in the name of "traditional values," sparking clashes with police. Officers detained the demonstrators to verify their identities, though it remains unclear whether charges will follow.

In April, a discussion event, held in a non-public setting, titled "LGBT+ and Christianity: In Search of Dialogue" was disrupted in Lviv when a group of masked individuals attempted to forcibly enter the private residence where the event was taking place. The organising NGO condemned the incident and rejected media characterisations of the attackers as "activists" or "concerned citizens," stating that the actions constituted intimidation and violence rather than lawful expression.

In June, over 1,500 people joined the Kyiv Pride march despite counterprotests, marking one of the most visible demonstrations for equality in wartime

Ukraine. That same day, [KyivPride Park](#) – an open-air forum of public discussions, speeches, and creative performances – took place beneath the Foreign Ministry building after terrorism threats forced a venue change.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In March, commanders of the A4030 military unit [pressured](#) openly gay serviceman Volodymyr Veselovskyi and the news agency Ukrinform to remove an interview he had given. According to the association Ukrainian LGBT+ Military and Veterans *for Equal Rights*, the demand was explicitly linked to Veselovskyi's sexual orientation. The incident drew a swift reaction from the Ministry of Defense, with the Gender adviser and the Department for the Protection of Military Rights expressing support for Veselovskyi.

In June, Russian occupation authorities in Sevastopol [fined](#) a 19-year-old college student a total of 99,000 rubles (approximately €990) on charges of "discrediting" the Russian army and "promoting non-traditional sexual relations." According to occupation police, the young man held "pro-Ukrainian beliefs," criticized Russia's war in Ukraine, and openly identified as gay in Telegram chats.

## HEALTH

In January, Ukraine [adopted](#) a norm that guarantees equal access to medical services regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. The provision is part of the newly adopted Strategy for the Development of the Health Care System until 2030. The inclusion of "family status" was also described as a major achievement, as it compels healthcare workers to recognise diverse family constellations, including same-sex couples and households with multiple children.

## DATA COLLECTION

In December, the Nash Svit LGBTI Human Rights Centre published its [report](#) on the situation of LGBTI people in Ukraine covering January-September 2025. The report notes that, since the beginning of the year, there have been no significant legislative advances in the protection

of LGBTI rights. However, the adoption of relevant laws has been included in Ukraine's EU accession roadmap, and some regulatory documents from various state institutions now explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. While the Ukrainian government has demonstrated willingness to implement international recommendations to meet European standards, progress in parliament remains limited.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In September, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [appointed](#) Ivan Verbytskyi, who is known as a human rights activist and an open representative of the LGBTI community, as Deputy Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications, the Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications announced. In this role, Verbytskyi will oversee the protection of cultural heritage, guide the development of the museum sector, and supervise the processes of export, import, and repatriation of cultural assets.



## United Kingdom

### ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In late April, following a ruling by the UK Supreme Court on the interpretation of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 (see also under Legal Gender Recognition), the Equality and Human Rights Commission warned that public authorities, including the National Health Service, could face enforcement action if they failed to update guidance on the provision of single-sex services. Shortly afterwards, the Commission published an interim update for public bodies and businesses, stating that workplaces were required to provide single-sex toilets and that access to single-sex spaces should be determined in line with "biological sex" as defined in the ruling.

In late May, the EHRC issued a more detailed update to its draft code of practice on service and launched a public consultation. The code advised that service providers, including sports clubs and hospitals, could request a birth certificate where there was a "genuine concern" regarding eligibility for single-sex services, and reiterated that access to such facilities should be determined on the same legal basis of "biological sex at birth". Following criticism, the EHRC amended its interim update in mid-May to clarify that toilets, showers, and changing facilities may be mixed-sex where provided in separate, lockable rooms.

In response, the Good Law Project launched a legal challenge to the interim update, arguing that it exceeded the scope of the Supreme Court ruling and was incompatible with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. In July, the High Court granted permission for the challenge to proceed. The claimant argued that the guidance amounted to a de facto exclusion of trans people from facilities, risked breaches of privacy and equality rights, and went beyond what the Court had required.

During the consultation period, Museums Galleries Scotland warned that the proposed EHRC code could leave trans people without access to appropriate facilities and, in some cases, force smaller institutions to close if they were unable to implement the required changes. In early September, the EHRC submitted its proposed final code of practice to the UK Government, which

had not adopted it by year's end. In November, the High Court heard the Good Law Project's judicial review challenge. After two days of hearings, the Court reserved its judgment. In November, the High Court heard the Good Law Project's judicial review challenge to the EHRC's interim update. In February 2026, the High Court issued judgment. It ruled that the interim update was not unlawful, but that service providers could lawfully choose to operate trans-inclusive sex-segregated services such as toilets. On that basis, it appears that the EHRC's proposed code of practice is inaccurate, but that is still to be decided.

In July, the women's rights group Sex Matters announced plans to sue the City of London Corporation for £50,000 over its policy of allowing trans women to use the Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond. In line with the opinion of regular swimmers, the corporation has permitted trans women to swim at the Ladies' Pond since 2019 and reaffirmed the policy following April's Supreme Court's ruling (See also under Legal Gender Recognition). In response LGBTI rights groups, local residents, and allies have taken to social media and community forums to express solidarity with trans swimmers while praising the Corporation's inclusive stance. In November, Sex Matters formally filed its High Court claim seeking a judicial review of the City of London Corporation's policy allowing trans women to use Hampstead Heath's Ladies' Pond. In response, civil society announced that a commemoration of trans joy and community celebration will take place to "reclaim Hampstead Heath from the TERFs".

In January 2026, the High Court refused permission for Sex Matters to pursue its legal challenge at that level, with Mrs Justice Lieven ruling that an individual alleging direct discrimination, rather than the charity itself, would be the appropriate claimant and sending the matter back to the county court for any further action.

### BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, a man appeared in court in London after verbally abusing comedian Matt Lucas with homophobic slurs while he was on his way to a football match. The defendant was also charged

with racially aggravated harassment of police officers. He was granted bail, with the case set to continue at Crown Court.

In March, the Football Association launched an [investigation](#) into homophobic abuse allegedly directed at Crystal Palace defender Ben Chilwell by Millwall fans during a match. Chilwell was targeted with homophobic chants from a section of the away support. The FA confirmed it will examine the incident under anti-homophobia rules.

In April, Tranmere Rovers midfielder Sam Finley [received](#) a 13-match ban after admitting to using a homophobic slur against Walsall's Jamille Matt during a league fixture. The sanction was lengthened due to two previous aggravated breaches of FA Rule E3 on his record.

In May, comedy writer Graham Linehan [pleaded](#) not guilty to charges of harassment and criminal damage against a 18-year-old trans activist. The charges relate to abusive social media posts made in October 2024 and the alleged destruction of the activist's phone during a conference in London, where Linehan was a speaker. He was granted bail on condition that he has no contact with the complainant. In September, Linehan faced [trial](#) in London over accusations that he persistently posted abusive comments online targeting a trans woman. Nonetheless, in late November, he was [cleared](#) of harassing the victim on social media but found guilty of criminal damage of their mobile phone outside a conference in London and ordered to pay costs of £650 (approximately €760) and a statutory surcharge of £200 (approximately €235).

In June, Tottenham Hotspur were [fined](#) £75,000 (approximately €87,750) by the Football Association over homophobic chants from their supporters during a September 2024 match against Manchester United. The chants, directed at Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and United midfielder Mason Mount, prompted the FA to charge Spurs with misconduct in November.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, four teenagers were [jailed](#) for luring an 18-year-old trans girl to a roller disco in Harrow,

north-west London, where they stabbed and beat her while shouting transphobic slurs. The attackers later boasted about the assault on Snapchat. All admitted causing bodily harm with intent, with one also pleading guilty to possession of a knife. Nonetheless, the judge described the attack as only partly motivated by the woman's gender identity.

In early May, the Scottish government [confirmed](#) it would not introduce the bill to criminalise misogyny before the next Holyrood election in May 2026 (Scotland's parliamentary elections), citing a lack of time to draft legislation. Instead, ministers said they would amend existing hate crime laws to extend protections on the basis of sex. In August the Scottish Government started a [consultation](#) on proposed secondary legislation to do this. The proposal defined "sex" as "biological sex at birth". In January 2026, the secondary legislation was [laid in the Scottish Parliament](#). As secondary legislation, there is very little opportunity for members of parliament to debate it. It will come to a vote in March 2026. If it is agreed by the Parliament, Scotland will be the first part of the UK to write "sex means biological sex at birth" into statute.

In October, the UK Home Office released its latest hate-crime [statistics](#) for England and Wales (year ending March 2025), including updated data on offences recorded by the police across all monitored strands, such as sexual orientation and trans identity. According to the report, police forces outside London's Metropolitan Police Service recorded 115,990 hate crimes during the year, a 2% increase compared with the previous year. Race-based offences rose by 6%, while religiously motivated hate crimes increased by 3%. By contrast, recorded hate crimes linked to sexual orientation fell by 2%, disability-related offences by 8%, and crimes targeting trans people by 11%.

In late December, UK police leaders [indicated](#) that the current system of recording "non-crime hate incidents" could be abolished, arguing that it is no longer fit for purpose. A forthcoming review by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing will recommend replacing the category with a new, more limited framework based on what they describe as a "common-sense" approach. Under

the proposed model, only the most serious cases would continue to be formally logged, and then as antisocial behaviour rather than as a separate hate-incident category. Non-crime hate incidents refer to behaviour perceived as motivated by hostility or prejudice towards characteristics such as race or gender but which does not meet the legal threshold for a criminal offence.

## EDUCATION

In January, the University of Brighton launched a new PhD [scholarship](#) dedicated to advancing trans and non-binary inclusion. The scholarship is designed to support a researcher committed to improving the wellbeing and dignity of trans and non-binary people by providing financial assistance and access to resources.

In July, the UK Government published its [update](#) to the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance for England. The guidance, which will become statutory in September 2026, introduces expanded content on consent, respectful relationships, and mental health. The document reaffirms that schools must teach about different kinds of relationships, including same-sex relationships, and that this should be delivered in an age-appropriate and respectful manner. However, the new framework adopts more cautious language when addressing gender identity. LGBTI organisations have welcomed the continued commitment to ensuring that same-sex relationships are part of the curriculum, but have also voiced concern that the softened language around gender identity could embolden schools to avoid or minimise trans-inclusive education.

## EMPLOYMENT

In January, more than 700 current and former employees launched [legal action](#) against McDonald's over allegations of discrimination, homophobia, racism, ableism, and harassment across more than 450 restaurants. The lawsuit followed the company's [failure](#) to uphold a legally binding agreement with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to protect staff from sexual harassment and discrimination. Appearing before MPs, UK chief executive Alistair Macrow [admitted](#)

that McDonald's had received 75 allegations of sexual harassment in the past year, 47 of which led to disciplinary action and 29 to dismissals. The proceedings were ongoing at the end of the year, with no final outcome reported.

In February, a tribunal heard the [case](#) of a nurse who had been suspended from Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy after objecting on Christmas Eve 2023 to a trans woman colleague, who was a doctor, using the women's changing room in the A&E department. Following the incident, the doctor [lodged](#) a complaint alleging bullying and harassment, and the nurse was suspended. The nurse subsequently brought a tribunal claim alleging sexual harassment or harassment related to a protected belief under the Equality Act. In June, NHS Fife [cleared](#) the nurse of gross misconduct at a disciplinary hearing, concluding that none of the allegations against her were substantiated. In December, the employment tribunal [ruled](#) that the nurse had been harassed by NHS Fife in relation to her beliefs. But all allegations against the trans doctor were dismissed, and the tribunal said that the nurse had unlawfully harassed the doctor.

In February, the Court of Appeal [ruled](#) in favour of a Christian school worker dismissed in 2019 from Farmor's School in Gloucestershire after posting on Facebook criticising plans to teach LGBTI relationships in primary schools. The claimant, who served as a pastoral administrator and work experience manager, had previously won an appeal in June 2023, but the case was sent back to an employment tribunal for reconsideration. The court found that the decision to remit the case back to an employment tribunal was "unlawfully discriminatory". In May, Farmor's School sought to [challenge](#) the ruling with the Supreme Court, but three justices denied permission, holding that most grounds were outside the Court's jurisdiction and the rest did not raise an arguable point of law.

In March, a teacher lost a High Court [challenge](#) against findings that she had acted unprofessionally by telling pupils during a lesson at Bishop Justus Church of England School in Bromley that being LGBTI is "a sin" and that trans people are "just confused." The remarks, made in February 2022,

led to her suspension and dismissal two months later. A professional conduct panel concluded her comments lacked respect for others' rights and risked upsetting pupils, though she was not prohibited from future teaching. The claimant argued that publication of the findings of the panel was unlawful and harmed her privacy and job prospects, but the High Court rejected her case, ruling that the decision was lawful and proportionate.

In late May, an employment tribunal dismissed claims of unfair dismissal and religious discrimination brought by a teacher who was dismissed after accessing and transcribing a trans pupil's safeguarding report onto her personal computer. The teacher had previously refused to use the male name and pronouns requested by the child's parents. Suspended in September 2021 and later dismissed after the safeguarding breach was uncovered, she argued her treatment amounted to detriment, wrongful dismissal, and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. The tribunal rejected all claims.

In July, the Welsh Government faced criticism for continuing to identify trans women as women in its official HR guidance on trans inclusion, despite April's UK Supreme Court ruling (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). The Welsh Government stated that its policy remains that "trans women are women, trans men are men, and non-binary identities are valid," framing this as part of its commitment to an inclusive and diverse workplace.

In February 2026, in the case of Good Law Project vs Equality and Human Rights Commission (see above), the High Court ruled that employers who provide separate toilets for women and men employees must do so based on "biological sex at birth". But the court said that trans people should not be required to use the toilet for their biological sex, and other arrangements - although unspecified by the Court - should be made for trans employees.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In late January, plans drafted by the Home Office proposed longer sentences for offenders

convicted of hate crimes against LGBTI and disabled people in England and Wales. Currently, hostility towards LGBTI and disabled people can be treated as an aggravating factor at sentencing, but it is not embedded in the charge itself. In June, the government pledged to equalise sentencing for anti-LGBTI and anti-disability hate crimes by treating them as aggravated offences. The move followed a debate on an amendment introduced by Labour MP Rachel Taylor, backed by over 100 cross-party MPs, which aims to strengthen legal recognition and sentencing in cases where crimes are motivated by hostility towards sexuality, trans identity, or disability. In February 2026, the UK Government introduced legislation to implement this. Scotland has had such legislation since 2021.

In January, England Hockey announced that from the next season trans women would no longer be eligible to compete in the female category. Under the new participation policy, competitions will be divided into a female category and an open category. In May, the Football Association introduced a ban on trans women competing in women's football in England, aligning its policy with the UK Supreme Court ruling defining "woman" in the Equality Act by biological sex (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). Similar restrictions had previously been introduced in cricket, where the England and Wales Cricket Board barred trans women from the top two tiers of elite women's cricket.

In March, the University of Edinburgh adopted a policy allowing staff to use toilet facilities in line with their gender identity, irrespective of possession of a gender recognition certificate. In April, eight nurses from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust brought legal proceedings challenging the Trust's decision to permit a trans colleague to use female changing rooms. The claims include sexual harassment, discrimination, victimisation and alleged violations of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In May, the Scottish Parliament announced that some toilet and changing facilities would be converted to gender-neutral use, while access to remaining single-sex facilities would be restricted on the basis of sex assigned at birth, following the UK Supreme Court ruling on the definition of "sex" under the

Equality Act 2010. In July, the Scottish Government [confirmed](#) it would meet with the campaign group Sex Matters, which had threatened legal action, and stated that the policy [remained](#) under review.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, the High Court [heard](#) arguments in the case involving the British pop-rock band The 1975, after Malaysian authorities shut down the Good Vibes Festival in July 2023 when frontman Matty Healy kissed bassist Ross MacDonald on stage in protest of the country's anti-LGBTI laws. Festival organisers, Future Sound Asia (FSA), allege the band breached its contract and that members owed a duty of care. However, the band's lawyer argued that Healy and his bandmates should not be personally liable for the authorities' decision to cancel the festival and blacklist the group from performing in Malaysia.

In March, the Office for Students (OfS) [fined](#) the University of Sussex a record £585,000 (approximately €685,000) following a three-and-a-half-year investigation into its handling of the case of philosophy professor Kathleen Stock. Stock resigned in 2021 after sustained protests by students and staff in response to views she had expressed on gender identity and related policy debates. The OfS concluded that the university's trans and non-binary equality policy, which required teaching materials to "positively represent trans people" and prohibited "transphobic propaganda," had created a chilling effect on lawful speech and academic freedom. The University of Sussex rejected the ruling as disproportionate and politically motivated and, by the end of 2025, had initiated judicial review proceedings challenging the fine. The case remained pending at year's end.

In late May, the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) prepared to [cancel](#) the party's national women's conference rather than uphold its policy permitting trans women to participate. According to LabourList, the NEC was also considering preventing trans women from standing on all-women shortlists, citing concerns about potential legal challenges from groups opposing the inclusion of trans women in women-only political spaces.

## HEALTH

In February, a legal [challenge](#) was filed in the High Court against a general practitioner (GP) practice concerning the prescription of hormone treatment to a 16-year-old patient. The claim, brought by the patient's father, alleged that treatment had been provided without parental consent and contrary to guidance issued by the National Health Service (NHS), the United Kingdom's public healthcare system. The challenge focused on the clinic's use of an informed consent approach and argued that it did not reflect the cautious approach outlined in the Cass Review in relation to gender-affirming healthcare for under-18s. The case remained ongoing at the end of the year.

In late April, [reports](#) revealed that the National Health Service (NHS) plans to screen all children referred to gender clinics for autism and ADHD, as well as assess their mental health, family relationships, and sexual development, including same-sex attraction.

In May, England's Health Secretary Wes Streeting [announced](#) a review into the prescribing of gender-affirming hormone treatment for trans people under the age of 18, following earlier restrictions on the use of puberty blockers. The review was intended to assess the available clinical evidence, with expert recommendations initially expected in July. However, by the end of 2025, no formal recommendations or policy decisions arising from the review had been published.

In July, the High Court [dismissed](#) a legal challenge to the registration of England's first private clinic providing gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents. The claim, brought by a former nurse and another individual, alleged that the Care Quality Commission had acted irrationally in approving the clinic. The court rejected the challenge, with Mrs Justice Eady finding that the CQC's assessment had been rational and that patient safety had been given primary consideration.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, Scottish ministers [announced](#) that criminalising conversion practices has been removed from the government's immediate

agenda. Instead, they committed to working with the UK Government on a "four-nations approach" to legislation banning these practices. If no UK-wide bill is introduced, ministers pledged to bring forward a Scottish bill in the first year of the next parliament, after the 2026 Holyrood elections.

In July, Amnesty International published a [report](#) revealing a sharp rise in funding and activity by anti-LGBTI groups in the UK, particularly those promoting so-called "conversion therapy." The research identified 65 active organisations, including 12 promoting conversion practices and 13 crisis pregnancy centres. UK branches of US-based organisations spent £34 million, ultra-conservative Christian advocacy groups £31.5 million, and anti-abortion organisations £28.5 million.

## DATA COLLECTION

In May, a YouGov poll commissioned by organisation Sex Matters [found](#) that a majority of respondents supported the UK Supreme Court's recent ruling on biological sex (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). The survey of 2,106 adults in Great Britain also indicated that nearly three-quarters agreed with decisions by sporting bodies to exclude trans women from female competitions.

In March and July, reports were published as part of the Sullivan Review, commissioned by the previous Conservative government to examine the collection and use of data on sex and gender. The review was led by Alice Sullivan, a member of the advisory group of the organisation Sex Matters. The Review recommended that data collection should prioritise biological sex at birth. These recommendations have raised concerns among LGBTI organisations and researchers regarding the potential implications for future government policy, research frameworks, and the recognition of trans people in official data collection systems.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, culture minister Sir Chris Bryant [criticised](#) the decision by Pride organisers in Birmingham, Brighton, London, Manchester, and Oxford to bar political parties from marching, calling it a "retrograde step." He argued that political parties

had been essential in advancing LGBTI rights, a view echoed by Conservative shadow culture secretary, Stuart Andrew.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, Scottish Green equalities spokeswoman Maggie Chapman [urged](#) the UK Government to overturn its use of Section 35 of the Scotland Act, which blocked the Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill from taking effect. The bill, passed by Holyrood in 2022, was designed to simplify the process of obtaining a gender recognition certificate by removing the requirement for a medical diagnosis.

In July, the High Court [dismissed](#) a legal challenge to the registration of England's first private clinic providing gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents. The claim, brought by a former nurse and another individual, alleged that the Care Quality Commission had acted irrationally in approving the clinic. The court rejected the challenge, with Mrs Justice Eady finding that the CQC's assessment had been rational and that patient safety had been given primary consideration.

In April, the UK Supreme Court [ruled](#) that the terms "woman" and "sex" in the Equality Act 2010 refer to sex as recorded at birth, rejecting arguments that trans women holding Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs) should be recognised as women for the purposes of the Act. While the Court emphasised that trans people remain protected from discrimination under the Equality Act, the ruling [confirmed](#) that holders of GRCs may lawfully be excluded from single-sex services where this is justified under the legislation. The judgment prompted public bodies and private organisations to review policies relating to single-sex services, facilities, and quotas. The ruling was [welcomed](#) by organisations opposing the inclusion of trans women in women-only spaces, while trans communities and civil society organisations [expressed](#) concern about the implications for the legal recognition and practical effect of Gender Recognition Certificates. In August, Dr Victoria McCloud, the UK's first openly transgender judge, [initiated](#) proceedings before the European Court of

Human Rights. Dr McCloud, who resigned from the judiciary in 2024, argued that the Supreme Court's refusal to permit her to intervene in the case violated her right to a fair hearing under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, on the grounds that she was denied the opportunity to demonstrate how the Court's interpretation directly affected her legal status and rights.

In June, the parents of a 17-year-old initiated a High Court challenge seeking to prevent their child from continuing gender-affirming healthcare. The claim followed the parents' discovery that the teenager had forged a parent's signature in order to access hormone treatment. The parents argued that the treatment had been provided without an adequate assessment of the child's mental and physical health and raised concerns about potential harm. The court adjourned the proceedings, with Mr Justice MacDonald noting that the teenager maintained that, under the law, they were entitled to make their own healthcare decisions.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In June, MPs urged the government to accelerate compensation for LGBTI veterans who were persecuted under the pre-2000 "gay ban" in the armed forces. The £75 million (approximately €87.75 million) redress scheme, established in December 2024, offers payments of up to £70,000 (approximately €82,100) to acknowledge the abuse, assault, and dishonourable discharges suffered by LGBTI service members. Nonetheless, of the 1,300 who have applied, only 84 veterans have received payments so far.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, the British Transport Police announced changes to its custody policy concerning strip searches following a ruling by the UK Supreme Court on the interpretation of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). The force stated that trans women arrested on Britain's railways would, as an interim measure, be strip-searched by officers in accordance with sex as defined in the ruling, rather than gender recognition status. Previously, detainees holding a

Gender Recognition Certificate could be searched in line with their acquired gender. British Transport Police indicated that the revised approach would apply while the implications of the judgment were under review.

In late April, following the UK Supreme Court's ruling on the Equality Act (see also under Legal Gender Recognition), authorities were asked to clarify the status of Downview's Prison transgender unit. The wing, created in 2019 after a trans prisoner sexually assaulted two women at another facility, houses trans women with a history of sexual or violent offending who hold Gender Recognition Certificates. Campaigners demanded that the eight inmates currently on the wing be transferred to the male estate, arguing the unit undermines single-sex protections, consumes scarce resources, and causes distress to female prisoners.

In July, the mother and stepfather of a trans teenager, who died by suicide after going missing in 2022, launched High Court proceedings against Sussex Police, alleging that the force's failings contributed to his death. At an inquest held last year, a jury concluded that Sussex Police had "responded inadequately" after he was reported missing. Jason was reported missing by his family, but according to their legal claim, around 10 hours passed before an officer first attended their home. His parents argue that the police "failed properly or at all to protect Jason against the risk of suicide," insisting there was a "real prospect of a different outcome" had a reasonable and timely response been made.

In November, the gender critical campaign group For Women Scotland initiated legal proceedings challenging Scottish Prison Service guidance providing that trans prisoners may be accommodated in establishments matching their affirmed gender where this can be done safely, arguing that the policy is incompatible with the Equality Act as interpreted by the Supreme Court.



# Uzbekistan

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In February, Uzbekistan enacted the [Law](#) "On the Provision of Psychological Assistance to the Population", which undermines confidentiality protections by requiring psychologists to disclose client information at the request of a court or investigative authority. In a context where homosexuality remains criminalised, this provision makes it dangerous for LGBTI persons to seek psychological support, as their personal information may be shared with law enforcement.

In April, the legal representative of a 24-year-old man detained under Article 120 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises consensual same-sex relations between men, declined to continue representing him, stating that association with such cases could damage his professional reputation. The lawyer reportedly encouraged the family to resolve the matter discreetly and advised that a confession would be "the best way out." A state-appointed defence lawyer was subsequently assigned but failed to attend interrogations, did not submit procedural motions, and similarly advised the defendant to confess. The lawyer also reportedly pressured him to disclose the identities of his partners, suggesting that doing so could lead to a reduced sentence.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan indicated that, even when cases of violence are formally registered, investigations and court proceedings are frequently affected by bias. Documented cases from 2025 showed that perpetrators of violence against LGBTI people were often subjected to minimal penalties, while the victim's sexual orientation was reportedly treated as a mitigating factor for offenders. In one recorded incident, a young gay man was assaulted by a group of men who used homophobic insults; when police arrived, officers reportedly declined to register the attack and instead blamed the man for his appearance. In another case, during court proceedings relating to an assault against an LGBTI person, the judge reportedly attributed responsibility for the violence to the victim's visible expression of difference. The research further highlighted that

domestic violence against LGBTI people remains widespread, with numerous cases occurring within the family. These included severe physical abuse, forced expulsion from the home, and instances of so-called "corrective" sexual violence against lesbian women by male relatives.

In May, a group of anonymous Telegram users published photographs of alleged gay men, inciting followers to carry out "public punishment." Two days later, the list was updated to include a local beauty specialist, who was physically attacked and injured soon after.

In August, a 19-year-old woman was compelled to marry after her neighbors spread rumors about her supposed romantic friendship with another girl. Once married, she endured repeated physical and sexual abuse from her husband and his relatives, who claimed they were "correcting" her behavior. After several months, she escaped to Tashkent and sought legal help, but officials refused to investigate, dismissing the violence as a private domestic issue.

## EDUCATION

In February, a secondary school teacher organised an extracurricular lesson titled "Human Rights and Everyone's Dignity," aimed at promoting respect, discussing women's rights, and addressing bullying, including of pupils perceived as different. Shortly afterwards, the parents of two students submitted complaints to the local Department of Public Education, alleging that the lesson promoted LGBTI "ideas" and "Western values." Following an order to investigate the complaints, the teacher was summoned to the district education office, where officials reportedly warned that such discussions could harm the moral development of young people.

## EMPLOYMENT

In June, a doctor at a municipal clinic was forced to resign after a colleague accidentally saw private messages on his phone revealing communication with a male partner. The following day, rumors about his sexual orientation circulated among the staff. The chief physician called him in for a meeting, stating that his "behavior does not align with the moral values of the medical team" and "could erode

patients' trust," before demanding that he submit a voluntary resignation.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In March, Uzbekistan adopted [Law No. ZRU-1051](#), amending Article 244 of the Criminal Code to [criminalise](#) the "training or financing of the organisation of mass disturbances," carrying prison sentences of five to seven years. While officially presented as a measure to combat extremism, the amendment broadens the scope for arbitrary prosecution of civil society [gatherings](#), human rights trainings, and peaceful assemblies.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In 2025, an independent journalist who had published an article critical of a controversial investment project was summoned for questioning by the State Security Service (SSS). During the meeting, officers shifted the discussion to his private life, presenting printed copies of his private correspondence with other men, which they used to imply same-sex relations. They then threatened to prosecute him under Article 120 of the Criminal Code – criminalising same-sex conduct – unless he ceased publishing critical reports.

In June, ahead of the EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue, the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA) released a [joint briefing paper](#) drawing attention to severe restrictions on civic freedoms in Uzbekistan. The document underscores that human rights defenders, independent journalists, bloggers, and other critical voices remain at constant risk of imprisonment and reprisals. Authorities have intensified suppression of media freedom, including by shutting down independent information platforms and broadening the list of banned materials.

## HEALTH

Throughout the year, human rights defenders recorded 15 cases in which LGBTI people faced violations of their rights in AIDS treatment centres. The incidents revealed a recurring pattern in which medical staff breached confidentiality by passing patients' sexual orientation and HIV status to

colleagues and even to the police. In some instances, doctors intimidated patients into disclosing personal details about their partners, warning them that care would differ for "people like them," and later used those statements to inform law enforcement. For instance, in January, a man who discovered he was HIV-positive following a routine pre-employment screening was later called to the AIDS centre for a follow-up consultation. During the meeting, a psychologist coerced him into revealing the name of his sexual partner. Soon after, the named partner was detained by the authorities and ultimately convicted on two separate charges.

In July, a gay man visited a public clinic due to abdominal inflammation. After examining his tests, the attending urologist questioned his sexuality in invasive terms and, upon learning he had a male partner, berated him, claiming his illness was the result of his orientation and that he needed "spiritual healing" rather than medical care.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In October, a trans woman was forcibly committed to a psychiatric institution after neighbors filed complaints about her "behavior" and way of life. She was held in a locked ward for three days, denied access to her phone and prevented from contacting anyone during her detention.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

According to the same independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan, 12 cases of persecution against trans people were documented in 2025, including two prosecutions under Article 120 of the Criminal Code. The research highlighted ongoing concerns regarding detention practices, noting that trans women were routinely detained in facilities designated for men, based on sex assigned at birth. This practice reportedly exposed detainees to heightened risks of humiliation, physical abuse, and sexual violence by both other detainees and prison staff.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In June, [reports](#) spread on social media claiming that Uzbekistan had legalised legal gender recognition. However, these claims stemmed from amendments adopted to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 550 regulating the procedure for changing personal data in passports, but only in strictly defined medical cases. Specifically, they apply to individuals with rare congenital conditions, including intersex variations. In such circumstances, following a full medical examination, diagnosis, and surgery, a change in official records may be authorized.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In March, an LGBTI woman sought access to in vitro fertilisation at a private clinic. Despite providing the required medical documentation and hormone test results, the attending physician refused to proceed, stating that IVF services were available only to women married to men and advising her to marry before reapplying. The incident reflects the broader legal framework in Uzbekistan, where access to assisted reproductive technologies is restricted to heterosexual married couples, effectively excluding LGBTI women from such services. No remedies or policy changes addressing this exclusion were reported by the end of the year.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In January, a virtual [exhibition](#) of Uzbek queer artists titled *Queer Square* opened on the metaverse platform Spatial. The online setting offers safety and anonymity, enabling LGBTI artists to present their work free from censorship and allowing audiences to view it without fear.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

According to independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan, authorities in 2025 carried out unwarranted searches of locations frequented by LGBTI people, including saunas, clubs, country houses, and rented apartments, without judicial authorisation. The research further documented the routine use of undercover informants posing as

clients or community members at LGBTI gatherings. In addition, law enforcement officers reportedly accessed private messages and photographs on detainees' mobile phones during detention, raising serious concerns regarding violations of the right to privacy and the misuse of investigative powers.

According to independent civil society monitoring, Uzbek authorities conducted a nationwide campaign referred to locally as "Oriyat," involving coordinated operations by the State Security Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs at entertainment and hospitality venues. Monitoring reports described interrogations of hundreds of individuals, the initiation of criminal cases under Article 120, and allegations of arbitrary detention, seizure of personal devices, coerced HIV testing, and mistreatment during questioning.

In February, two young men were detained in Tashkent on charges of "indecent behaviour" and were reportedly subjected to non-consensual forensic anal examinations despite their objections. In March, two other young men were detained for kissing in a park; police forced them to unlock their phones, found intimate photos, and threatened prosecution unless they paid a bribe.