

2023
**ANNUAL
REVIEW**

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

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 12th 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. The publication includes events that occurred between January and December 2022. It provides a snapshot of what happened during the year, at national, regional and international levels, and it documents progress and trends regarding the human rights situation of LGBTI people.

While the entire Annual Review is available online, information on each country and institution can be accessed separately via ILGA-Europe's website and our updated Rainbow Europe web module. In the Rainbow Europe module, you will also find information on each theme separately. We must warn that some parts may be potentially triggering for some readers.

Once again, we must stress that this document is not an exercise in apportioning blame. ILGA-Europe's goal is not to point fingers at specific countries. Instead, this publication intends to serve as a tool for the exchange of best practices and policies, and as an open invitation for enhanced cooperation between governments and LGBTI civil society.

ILGA-Europe want this publication to meet our readers' expectations and needs, and welcome any suggestions for improvement. We hope that you will find this edition of the Annual Review informative and useful.

ILGA-EUROPE'S ANNUAL REVIEW TEAM
FEBRUARY 2023

A NOTE ON DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

This is our 12th Annual Review and we always strive to develop our rigorous data collection system.

However, a number of limitations remain. The use of terminology around LGBTI issues is often not harmonised across Europe and Central Asia. Nonetheless, all information within the Annual Review has been verified using original documents and the best available local knowledge. Where possible, information was checked against institutional and national reports, and reliable news sources.

For comparative reasons, the language within the Annual Review has been kept in line with ILGA-Europe's standards, and moves away from country-specific legal terms that may have a different meaning elsewhere. At the same time, we respected the variety of terms used by LGBTI communities to self-identify in different countries. For example, this is why the Annual Review does not exclusively refer to LGBTI, but also to 'LGBT', 'LGBTQ' and other formulations.

Of course, the Annual Review cannot cover every development in all 54 countries in intricate detail. When the development was not adequately reported, or the reports were confusing or contradictory, ILGA-Europe verified them with national experts' inputs. They are independent human rights defenders or legal experts in each country. We have also collaborated with regional LGBTI NGO's for their expertise on particular sub-regions or specific work areas, such as trans rights, intersex rights, lesbian rights or rainbow families.

[DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS? REACH OUT TO US AT INFO@ILGA-EUROPE.ORG](mailto:INFO@ILGA-EUROPE.ORG)

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HIGHLIGHTS AND TRENDS

ACCESS TO FOOD, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, GOODS AND SERVICES

We are acutely aware that across Europe and Central Asia, LGBTI people and communities experience socio-economic inequity, so it is striking that in this report there is scant information coming from the movement in this respect. It is illustrative, not only of a **widespread lack of awareness and lack of political will** to address socio-economic inequalities for LGBTIs, but also of a **lack of resources for and within organisations** to advocate and campaign on these issues.

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

There was **mass migration across the entire region** during the year, not only because of the war in Ukraine and its impact on LGBTI people in the country and in Russia, but because of a rise of repressive regimes, particularly in Belarus and across Central Asia, and right-wing governments. LGBTI people are on the move from many countries, where attacks on their rights and hate speech are rife, but not necessarily to countries where they are safer.

While many **LGBTI organisations have stepped in to bridge gaps in governmental responses** to migration of LGBTI people, there has also been **more restrictions on migration coming into place** as a result of a rise of right-wing governments being elected, with the status of LGBTI asylum seekers becoming relatively vulnerable as a result. Several LGBTI migrants and asylum seekers went on hunger strike in Lithuania, restrictive measures are planned in Sweden, the deportation of LGBTI refugees increased in Turkey, and the UK planned reception centres in Rwanda are a detrimental move for LGBT asylum seekers.

LGBTI Ukrainian asylum seekers received CSOs support in several countries, including Hungary, Ireland, Germany, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden. Russian asylum seekers have had different experiences in the region. While in Bulgaria they received assistance, Russian asylum seekers faced a number of abuses or were rejected from asylum centres in Moldova and Montenegro, for example.

BIAS MOTIVATED SPEECH

There is a continuing trend of rising hate speech, much of it related to trans people. Hate speech was reported as a **serious issue online** in Armenia, Austria, Latvia, Montenegro, and Romania; **by politicians and state representatives** in Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium (Flemish right-wing), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, and Ukraine; and **by religious leaders** in Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova, Russia, and Slovakia.

There was a **further rise in transphobic speech** in Ireland, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the UK, with much hostile media reporting.

Hate speech peaked around Prides in Austria and France and by politicians and religious leaders in Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia.

On the other hand, there have been **more court cases** in which officials, individuals, and media and other organisations have been **successfully prosecuted for hate crime and hate speech**. MP's were prosecuted for hate speech in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in a first court victory since the introduction of the country's

anti-discrimination legislation, 2009) and Lithuania; against TV channels in Hungary and Poland; against individuals in Italy, Lithuania, and Norway, and against an anti-democratic organisation for defamation in North Macedonia. Courts in Poland further challenged local anti-LGBT resolutions.

BIAS MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In the past 12 months there has not only been **a stark rise in violence** against LGBTI people, but in the **severity** of that violence. In particular, an activist was tortured and murdered by relatives in Azerbaijan. In Oslo, two were killed and 20 wounded after an attack outside an LGBTI bar. In Bratislava, two people were murdered and one injured outside an LGBTI bar in what has been described as a white supremacist terrorist attack. Two gay men were killed in separate attacks by the same person in Ireland.

Greater numbers of trans people are being attacked and murdered, including the killing of a trans migrant woman of colour in Estonia, the murder of a cis woman because she was perceived as trans in Georgia, and a fatal attack on a trans man who defended two women at Pride in Germany.

There has also been **more reported suicides**, including of a young couple in Armenia after suffering harassment when a photo of them kissing went viral, three trans women in Italy and one in Moldova. Two of the three were teenagers, just 16 and 19.

Anti-LGBTI **hate crime is on the rise** in France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland (where anti-LGBTI barking is increasingly common), Ireland, Montenegro, the Netherlands' Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. In many of these countries the rise in violence was unprecedented.

This said, there is a **rise in positive court responses** to both bias motivated speech and crime. Convictions of hate crime perpetrators have increased, including in Azerbaijan (although a homophobic motif was ignored), Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, North Macedonia, Spain, and Ukraine. A number of court cases on anti-LGBTI attacks or murders are pending or have been further postponed in Turkey.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Intersex bodily integrity is a rising trend. While Greece adopted a ban on non-vital medical interventions on children, including banning intersex genital mutilation, there has been **positive movement towards recognition of the issue on an institutional level in Europe.** The European Commission conducted surveys and interviews for EU study on the lives of intersex people and their parents. The Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Bioethics held a seminar on promoting the rights of intersex children in the context of early medical interventions. The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) adopted a report on ending discrimination against women in sports that specifically recommends allowing intersex and trans athletes to participate in competitions consistent with their gender identity. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Chair of ECRI and PACE General Rapporteur for the rights of LGBTI all shared statements and messages in support of ending unnecessary medical interventions on intersex children without their informed consent.

So-called conversion practices, which seek to change people's sexual orientation or gender identities, were banned in France and Greece (on minors), while different stages of draft bills to ban the practice are in progress in the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and parts of Switzerland.

Conversion practice cases were documented in Azerbaijan, Spain and Sweden. In Turkey, over the past two years, the number of anti-LGBTI+ psychiatric centres offering so-called ‘conversion therapies’ has increased.

While this report finds that it is difficult to measure the impact of such legislations, i.e. document an actual decrease in countries with bans, the importance of such bans and **the attention conversion therapies are receiving from governments is a positive trend**, given that such attempts are rife and an affront to the dignity, freedom and right to privacy of LGBTI people.

CENTRAL ASIA

Reporting from countries in Central Asia is a stark reminder of the **pervasive lack of protection for LGBTI people in the region**. The **criminalisation** of LGBTI people remains in place, basic **anti-discrimination legislation is lacking** in most countries, corrective rape is used against lesbians and there is a lack of safe-spaces for LGBTI people to gather, with raids on bars and social spaces ongoing, and police brutality rife.

EDUCATION

Education is a growing battleground in the resistance to LGBTI people and rights, and to the building of acceptance at a core level in societies. **Progression on sexual education is being challenged at a fundamental level**. Teachers reported a fear of mentioning SOGIESC in Hungarian classrooms, 36 orthodox schools require anti-LGBTI declarations from pupils and parents in the Netherlands, ‘attainment targets’ were struck down in Belgium, leaving SOGI out of secondary education curricula. In Serbia there are plans to amend biology books discussing diversity. The new right-wing Italian Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni has publicly advocated for a ban on sex education in schools and the exclusion of LGBT people in children’s books, while the UK government pressured schools to withdraw guides supporting trans students.

Russia expanded its ‘propaganda law’ to prohibit positive and neutral information about LGBT people and “gender reassignment” to minors and adults. There was an alarming number of ‘propaganda’ charges or threats in educational establishments in the country. A deputy principal was found guilty of ‘LGBT propaganda’ and fired, although several parents stood in support of her. Students of the Perm state university were threatened with expulsion for posting an LGBT themed video on a student media platform. Five students in grades eight and nine in a school were accused of ‘LGBT propaganda’ for playing truth or dare.

FAMILY

After a number of years when **partnership recognition** had either stagnated or was on a downward trend, **the issue is on the rise once more**, with several countries either adopting legislation or moving toward adopting laws recognising same-sex partnerships. Andorra adopted legislation to make no distinction between married heterosexual couples and same-sex civil partnerships. In Latvia, following a Supreme court decision that same-sex couples should be given civil status, same-sex couples were recognised in court cases. Slovenia legislated for marriage equality, including adoption rights, Switzerland legislated for marriage equality and the abolition of a waiting period for second-parent adoption. Hungary shortened residency application delays for same-sex partners. There were advances in parenthood rights in Finland, Denmark, France, Sweden, and other steps forward in Czechia, Lithuania, and Spain.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Pride continues to be central to the LGBTI movement and to identity and self-expression in all countries across Europe. There has been wide reorganisation of in-person Prides across the region, and every European country reports on either Pride marches, parades, events and other initiatives. The first ever Pride was held in Azerbaijan, in the form of a press briefing organised by three activists.

At the same time, while Pride remains core to communities and individuals, **there has been a rise in parallel anti-Pride demonstrations**, which is directly related to an increase in instrumentalisation of Pride as a political target in several countries.

In Serbia, during the EuroPride march, the police pushed back groups of counter-demonstrators who waved crosses and religious insignia. Thousands marched against EuroPride in Serbia in the days before the march. At Bratislava Pride there were no violent incidents recorded, but a March for Family was held at the same time.

In Turkey, the anti-LGBTI Great Family March was held in Istanbul with the slogan “Save your family and your generation, say no to perversion”. The march was publicised on national TV with a video calling LGBTQ+ people a virus, and was attended by thousands. Some participants called for the killing and violence against LGBTI people, criminalisation, and the banning of LGBTI organisations and events. Other marches followed, including in Ankara, Izmir, Urfa, and Konya and continued in November in Trabzon, Gaziantep, Batman, Mardin, Van, Kayseri, Diyarbakir, and Bitlis. In comparison, a total of 11 Pride events were banned in Turkey. Participants who defied the bans were met with police brutality and a record number of arrests was recorded.

HEALTH

The **outbreak of monkeypox** this year, although it affected wider demographics, was also instrumentalised in several countries as an **opportunity to scapegoat LGBTI people**. Media misinformed about the virus and reported in a stigmatising way in Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain.

As part of a more positive trend, **nine more countries lifted bans or lowered deferral periods on blood donations** from men who have sex with men (MSM), and there was no regression in this trend. Deferral periods were lowered in Austria, Belgium, and Estonia, while bans were lifted in Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, and Slovenia.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The work of activists, human rights defenders and other actors to protect LGBTI people and advance freedom and rights has been **increasingly beleaguered by attacks and restrictions on civil society space**, with LGBTI organisations being prime targets of among other things, anti-NGO legislation and proposed limitations.

Thousands continue to be detained and tortured in Belarus. LGBTI activists were targeted in Montenegro with death threats, vandalism of personal property and homes attacked. An LGBTI activist was attacked three times in North Macedonia, while activists receive regular death threats in Turkey. At least three LGBTI organisation's offices were attacked in Ukraine, while in Serbia the Belgrade Pride Info Centre was attacked twice, at the beginning and the end of the year, bringing the number of attacks on the centre to 14 in the past few years, with none of the perpetrators prosecuted. In the UK the trans youth organisation, Mermaids was targeted by an unprecedented smear campaign.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Despite an enormous reported backlash on trans people, and a number of governments trying to stop or hinder legal gender recognition, in some countries there has been progress and a **growing political will to legislate using a self-determination model** that is crucial to trans people's lives and identities, showing a clear way forward for other governments.

Both Scotland and Spain have voted on legal gender recognition (LGR) laws that include self-determination. In Spain the Lower House voted for a new law that sets out self-determination for those 16 or over, parental consent for those 14-15, and court authorisation for those aged 12-13. Eventually, LGR will be accessible for asylum seekers and residents who come from countries where LGR is not available. The Senate will vote on this law in 2023.

In December, Scotland adopted gender recognition by self-declaration, and to reduce the minimum age from 18 to 16. Soon after the adoption, news was leaked that the UK government might block the law.

The trend of **instrumentalising children in arguments against LGR** continued to grow. In Croatia, there were demands for protection of children from 'gender ideology' and that gender-affirming healthcare should only be available for people over 21. There were heated media debates and transphobic media pieces instrumentalising children in Germany, Iceland, Spain and the UK.

Meanwhile, as access to healthcare has become an issue for wider populations, this has resulted in an **increase in barriers for healthcare for trans people** in several countries, including Ireland, Montenegro, Northern Ireland, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and the UK.

PUBLIC OPINION

Instrumentalisation of symbols, events, groups and other developments to scapegoat and foster regression for LGBTI people and communities for political ends continues to be a core trend this year. The **instrumentalisation of Prides** echoes a reported trend from last year, which was the use of the rainbow flag as a symbol of division between those supposedly for and against LGBTI rights. The **instrumentalisation of children** is emerging further as a major element of this, particularly in the arenas of legal gender recognition and in education.

In parallel, this report also finds **growing support among societies** for LGBTI people. Social acceptance is slowly increasing in Georgia; in Hungary, despite efforts to instrumentalise anti-LGBTI feeling by Viktor Orbán's government, most Hungarians don't consider 'homosexual propaganda' an important issue; public acceptance has increased in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, and Norway. Two thirds of Polish people support marriage equality and 60% support the abolition of anti-LGBT resolutions in the country. The rate of those who know LGBT in their environment doubled from eight to 15% in Russia over the past seven years, three in four people support trans healthcare for minors in Sweden, and positive attitudes towards LGBT people have increased in Ukraine.



EUROPEAN UNION

ASYLUM

The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which was adopted following the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, was triggered for the first time by the Council in response to the unprecedented Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, to offer quick and effective assistance to people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

On 4 March 2022, the Council unanimously adopted the Decision giving those fleeing war in Ukraine the right to temporary protection. Given that the EU temporary protection scheme under TPD has never been used, there are many legal uncertainties as to its interaction with both national laws and the EU asylum legislation. There are some concerns about the implementation of the TPD being inclusive of all LGBTI people, and member states have different implementing rules, for example regarding the inclusion of not-recognised same-sex couples.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In 2022, the seventh evaluation on the Code of Conduct was published. Platforms Rakuten Viber and Twitch joined the Code of Conduct. In this monitoring cycle, anti-gypsyism, xenophobia (including anti-migrant hatred) and sexual orientation are the most commonly reported grounds of hate speech.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, the European Commission (EC) launched a consultation to gather the views of the public on possible policy options within the context of the impact assessment for the revision of the Victims' Rights Directive. In particular, the consultation is aimed at identifying possible ways in which the existing rights of victims, including those already specified in the Directive, could be further strengthened.

In addition to this, Victims' Rights Platform had a meeting with its members on the review of the Victims' Rights Directive and to assess whether the rights and policy measures proposed in Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, for victims of violence against women, could and should be extended to the wider group of all victims of crime.

In March, the EC adopted a proposal for a directive combating violence against women and domestic violence. The EC's draft includes sexual orientation and gender identity and is overall inclusive of violence against LGBTI people. The EP issued its draft report on the file in December, and further work is needed to ensure the full inclusion of LGBTI people throughout the text.

In May, to implement its commitments under the Gender Equality Strategy and the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, the Commission launched the Call for Evidence on Prevention of harmful practices against women and girls. This initiative aims to tackle harmful practices by addressing prevention, support, training of professionals and victim-centred access to justice. The EC is expected to issue guidelines on harmful practices to member states early in 2023.

In June, the High-Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime adopted Key guiding principles on cooperation between law enforcement authorities and civil society organisations. This comprehensive set of guidance has been coordinated by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) with the input of experts working on hate crime data collection and reporting, hate crime training and hate crime victim support.



In light of the recent homophobic murder in Slovakia, in October the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Growing hate crimes against LGBTIQ people across Europe, calling on the European Commission and member states to be more proactive and effective in the fight against LGBTIQ-phobic hate and violence.

BODILY INTEGRITY

From October to December, an EC study on the lives of intersex people and the parents of intersex people in the EU conducted a survey and interviews. Results are expected in 2023.

DATA COLLECTION

The EC initiated a Working Group to develop guidance on data collection regarding LGBTIQ communities, which in December started consultation on a draft guidelines document focusing on how best to formulate survey questions and how to interpret existing data in LGBTIQ-inclusive ways with European LGBTIQ organisations. The guidelines are expected to be published in early 2023.

FRA started consultations with EU LGBTIQ organisations on their third EU LGBTIQ survey, which will be launched in 2023. Results are expected to be published in 2024.

EMPLOYMENT

On 8 September, the Advocate General of the CJEU delivered an Opinion in the Polish employment discrimination case (Case C-356/21), stating that Directive 2000/78/EC covers self-employed and sexual orientation cannot be a reason to terminate a contract with a self-employed worker.

In November, the LGBTIQ Subgroup of the EU High-level group of non-discrimination held a meeting to discuss legal gender recognition frameworks in the EU and best practices in employment for trans and intersex people.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July the European Commission referred Hungary to the CJEU. This was the next step of the infringement procedure launched in July 2021 due to amendments to Hungary's Child Protection Law which, directly discriminate against LGBTIQ people and breach a number of EU laws.

In September, the European Parliament adopted its resolution on LGBTIQ rights in the EU, strongly condemning the rise in hate and violence against LGBTIQ people across the EU, as well as the attacks through legislation by some EU member states. The resolution welcomes the infringement procedures the EC launched against Hungary and Poland based on the violation of LGBTIQ rights and calls on member states to respect the bodily integrity of all people, including banning intersex genital mutilation, forced sterilisation and so-called 'conversion therapies'.

In November, EC's Directorate-General for Justice organised a meeting with selected stakeholders to evaluate the mid-term of implementation of the EU LGBTIQ Strategy.

Following the adoption of the Commons Provisions Regulation (CPR) for the cohesion policy funds for the spending cycle 2021-2027 in June 2021, the EU began to become more rigorous in its oversight of the use of its funds, to ensure the distribution abides by EU law and the rules of their implementation. The CPR includes rules



that aim at ensuring respect for fundamental rights in the implementation of the funds, including LGBTI rights.

In October, the EC [announced](#) it will freeze Cohesion Funding to Poland (in terms of reimbursement of expenditures made by Poland under the programme), due to threats to judicial independence.

In December the EC adopted the Partnership Agreement with Hungary. In it, the EC states that the provisions of Hungary's so-called child-protection law, and serious risks to academic freedom and the right to asylum, have a concrete and direct impact on the compliance with the Charter in the implementation of certain specific objectives of three cohesion programmes, and of the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund respectively. For these parts of those programmes, Hungary is therefore currently not fulfilling the horizontal enabling condition on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and further dialogue with Hungary is needed to unblock these programmes.

In December, the European Parliament Committee on Petitions (PETI), together with the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament, organised a public hearing on 'Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation'.

FAMILY

On June 24, CJEU issued a [reasoned order](#) establishing that when an EU country has recognised two persons of the same sex as parents of a child, then the EU country of which that child is a national, should issue identity documents to that child with both parents on them, and that all EU countries should protect the right to freedom of movement of the child and their family. This is a confirmation of a previous landmark judgement in the case of *V.M.A. v Stolichna obshtina*, the so-called [Baby Sara](#) case.

In December the European Commission [published](#) its legislative proposal on mutual recognition of parenthood across the EU. ILGA-Europe were a member of the European Commission's Expert Group ahead of the drafting of this proposal.

FOREIGN POLICY

On 31 January 2022, the European Parliament delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee dedicated its meeting to LGBTI rights in Turkey, with LGBTI activists providing expert input during the meeting.

The EU decided to grant candidate status to [Ukraine and Moldova](#) in June 2022, and to [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) in December 2022. In June, [Georgia](#) was given a list of 12 recommendations to accomplish in order to achieve candidate status.

On 17 May, the EU External Action Service for the second time organised a meeting for its staff to discuss the situation of LGBTI rights in Europe and globally to mark IDAHOBIT day, this year focusing on disinformation. The Secretary General of the EEAS opened and chaired the meeting.

During the year, the European Parliament adopted reports on [Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,](#)



North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (see more in country chapters).

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In April the European Commission published its legislative proposal to tackle Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

In July the European Commission published its annual Rule of Law report, which contained a much higher number of references to LGBTI-related rule of law breaches in the EU – a result of our advocacy and awareness raising around the link between rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights of LGBTI people.

In September, the EP adopted its resolution on the EC's rule of law report, also highlighting the systemic violation of LGBTI rights, and calling on the EC to address LGBTI rights violations in Rule 7 and infringement procedures. The resolution also specifically calls on the EC to open infringement procedures against Romania for non-implementation of the CJEU judgement in the Coman case.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT, on the 16 May, a cross-party event 'National Action Plans on LGBTIQ equality: How do they contribute to equality in the EU?' was organised by EPP, Renew and the Left. At the event, the EC presented its Guidelines for Strategies and Action Plans to Enhance LGBTIQ Equality.

On 17th May, DG Justice organised a staff breakfast meeting, with a focus on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the LGBTI community.

INTERSECTIONALITY

In April, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine, stressing the specific vulnerability of LGBTI children and children in rainbow families, the need to provide safe and appropriate reception or care arrangements, and ensuring that there is no discrimination at border crossing points, as well as taking account of de facto partnerships and families in the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive;

In May, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the impact of the war against Ukraine on women, including paragraphs on the specific difficulties rainbow families as well as trans and intersex people face in the war and fleeing the war. It called on the EU to ask Ukraine to simplify the procedures to allow these women to flee Ukraine, as well as on EU Member States to provide financial assistance and coordination to support LGBTI women, to ensure the provision of hormones and appropriate medicines and medication for those who crossed the border, and to include hormones and other specific medication in humanitarian aid packages. The resolution also invites Member States to take account of de facto partnerships and families in the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive.

In December, the European Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on a new EU directive on Pay transparency. The directive explicitly mentions the need to also consider non-binary people when tackling gender pay gaps and ensures that intersectional discrimination must be considered when deciding about compensation.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion (CDADI) held the [first](#) and [second](#) meetings of its Working Group on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. This group is responsible for overseeing and implementing the work of the Steering Committee related to SOGI issues, including implementation of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2010)5 on the rights of LGBT people and the drafting of a forthcoming Recommendation on the rights of intersex people.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) [launched the Parliamentary Platform for the rights of LGBTI people in Europe](#) in June. The Platform provides a space for exchange and debate on SOGIESC-related issues without requiring a link specifically to a report in preparation within the Assembly.

Christophe Lacroix was elected as PACE General Rapporteur for the rights of LGBTI people in January. In April, he [released a statement](#) on the situation of LGBTI people in Ukraine.

In May, the government of Cyprus hosted the IDAHOT+ Forum, with the support of the SOGI Unit of the Council of Europe. On IDAHOT+, the Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović [released a video and statement](#) and the [Secretary General released a statement](#) calling for protection of LGBTI people in the context of the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine; the [Head of the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade published a statement](#) calling for equality across the region; the [PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination released a statement](#) calling for an end to LGBTI-phobia

In September, Mijatović gave the [closing remarks at EuroPride](#) in Belgrade, Serbia, calling for more commitment to the rights of LGBTI people and increased efforts to fight rollbacks of rights. She also gave [opening remarks at the Transgender Europe Council](#) later in September.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The PACE General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI people 2020-2022, Fourat Ben Chikha, capped off his two-year term by presenting a report on the rise of LGBTI-phobic hate in the region; [the report and recommendation](#) were adopted in January.

In May, the [Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation on combatting hate speech](#), which includes the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In June, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) released its [annual report](#), noting ongoing problems in the region with anti-LGBTI hate speech and scapegoating. ECRI also called on [Bulgaria](#) to take urgent action to address anti-LGBTI hate speech in its monitoring of the country.

In November, the [Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women \(EDVAW\) released a thematic paper](#) on the digital dimension of violence against women, noting the need to ensure protection on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as well.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, ECRI noted that [Romania](#) had not taken sufficient action to address gaps in bias-motivation reporting and investigations for hate crimes, as previously recommended to the country by ECRI.

Dunja Mijatović [tweeted](#) her sympathy for the victims of a violent attack in Oslo in June, Norway, and their loved ones. In July, she [called on the Montenegrin government](#) to condemn hate speech and violence following an attack on the LGBTI drop-in centre in Podgorica.

As part of the thematic review of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2010)5 on the rights of LGBT persons, in 2022 focused on hate crime, a series of national roundtables were held in [Albania](#), [France](#), and [Romania](#) in September and October, followed by a [regional European roundtable](#).

For Trans Day of Remembrance in November, the Parliamentary Assembly's General rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI people, Christophe Lacroix [released a statement](#) calling for an end to transphobic violence and hate speech.

In June and November, the SOGI Unit conducted a training for police officers on hate crime reporting and investigation in [Moldova](#) and [Catalonia, Spain](#) respectively.

Throughout the year, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) published baseline evaluation reports on [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Estonia](#), [Georgia](#), [Germany](#), [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Romania](#), and [Switzerland](#), calling for states to implement measures to combat and document violence against LGBTI women, among other groups. A similar recommendation was issued for [Kosovo](#) in its alignment assessment. In March, GREVIO [released a paper](#) which compiles efforts of Member States to ensure non-discrimination in actions to combat violence against women, including specific LGBTI examples as well as recommendations. In October, [GREVIO released its first thematic questionnaire](#), which will form the basis of its first round of monitoring activities and has several explicit inclusions of LGBTI women's issues, including forced sterilisation of intersex women.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, the [Steering Committee on Bioethics held a seminar](#) on promoting the rights of the child in the context of early medical interventions on intersex children. In June, [the Chair of ECRI, Michael Farrell, published an op-ed](#) on the human rights of intersex people.

Dunja Mijatović [lauded](#) the law banning intersex genital mutilation in Greece in July. Later, in October, she [released a statement](#) calling attention to her earlier issue paper on the rights of intersex persons (2015).

In October, [PACE adopted a report on ending discrimination against women in the world of sport](#), which included thorough discussion and recommendations related to the barriers faced by LGBTI women in sport, and specifically recommended that Member States should “allow transgender and intersex athletes to train and compete in sports competitions consistent with their gender identity”.

For Intersex Awareness Day in October, Christophe [Lacroix released a statement](#) about the issues faced by older intersex people.

EDUCATION

ECRI called on [Greece](#) and [France](#) to provide teachers with appropriate training to address LGBTI-phobic intolerance and discrimination in schools.



EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Dunja Mijatović released the [report for her country visit to Georgia](#) in July, in which she called for effective implementation of non-discrimination measures, including for LGBTI people. Also in July, she met with a group of trans youth during a country visit to the UK, and [called for an end to scapegoating and stigmatisation](#). In November, marking Trans Day of Remembrance, she [called on states](#) to act to improve the lived experiences of trans people across the region. In the lead-up to the vote in the Scottish Parliament on its gender recognition reform, Mijatović [reiterated her position](#).

ECRI called on [Denmark](#) to further legislative efforts to ensure equality for LGBTI people.

FAMILY

ECRI called on [Monaco](#) to eliminate unjustified differences in rights and protections between same- and opposite-sex couples.

Dunja Mijatović [welcomed the adoption of a same-sex marriage law](#) in the Slovenian parliament.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

PACE [adopted a report and resolution](#) on the situation of LGBTI people in the South Caucasus in January. Among other things, the resolution urged governments in the region to support local Pride events and freedom of assembly. Christophe Lacroix [made a follow-up tweet](#) to this report following the joint suicide of two Armenian gay men. (See Armenia country chapter.)

In June, Dunja Mijatović [released a statement calling for Turkish authorities](#) to protect the right to freedom of assembly in the context of Pride and to work to stop LGBTI-phobic hate speech.

In August, Christophe Lacroix [released a statement calling for EuroPride to go ahead](#), in the context of the Serbian government signaling that it might be cancelled or postponed. Dunja Mijatović [released a similar statement](#) in September. In October, the PACE Parliamentary Platform on the rights of LGBTI held [an exchange of views on threats to Pride events](#), and a [current affairs debate was held in the Assembly Plenary](#). The current affairs debate resulted in a motion for a resolution, which is now under preparation.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January, Dunja Mijatović [criticised the Hungarian government](#) for a referendum on the so-called “child protection law”, which limits access to information on SOGI issues for children, and linking it to a general election; she reiterated this point in March.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The [Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) released the [report](#) of the first thematic review of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2010)5 on the rights of LGBT persons, focused on legal gender recognition. The report sets out human rights standards and calls on member states to make reforms to legal gender recognition processes.



ECRI called on Estonia to reform its legal gender recognition framework to bring it in line with Council of Europe Standards.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The SOGI Unit intervened on bioethical issues related to LGBTI children during the 12th edition of the European Forum on Bioethics in February.

In October, the PACE Monitoring Committee encouraged Hungary to implement the suggestions of the Venice Commission regarding their anti-LGBTI so-called “anti-propaganda” law, and moved Hungary into a higher phase of ongoing monitoring related to repeated violations.



UNITED NATIONS

ASYLUM

In March, the [UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity \(IE SOGI\)](#) released a statement regarding the issues faced by LGBTI and gender diverse people in the context of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

On IDAHOT+, the [UN Special Procedures](#) released a [joint statement](#) noting the difficulties faced by LGBTI persons experiencing forced displacement.

In May, the Protection Cluster led by UNHCR [published](#) an “Advocacy Note on Protection of LGBTIQ+ people in the Context of the Response in Ukraine”, which reflects the specific protection risks identified in the context of Ukraine, as well as the recommendations to ensure inclusive programming, advocacy and responses.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

During their UPR reviews [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#) received recommendations to develop a comprehensive strategies for preventing and combating hate speech towards LGBTI+ individuals, including through the establishment of monitoring mechanisms, improvement of sanctioning mechanisms, and greater cooperation between law enforcement bodies to facilitate prosecution of hate speech

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several UN Special Procedures mandate holders wrote a [Communication to the European Union](#) concerning the draft proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence, with specific commentary on intersex women, non-binary people, and inclusion of LGBTIQ women.

In June, the [Special Rapporteur on the right to health](#) presented a [report to the Human Rights Council](#), calling for an inclusive, non-binary approach to combatting gender-based violence.

The [end of mission statement by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls visit to Kyrgyzstan](#), released in April, notes that LGBT women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and a wide range of human rights violations.

During its UPR review, [Iceland](#), [Lithuania](#) and [Moldova](#) received recommendations to extend explicit protections in hate crime laws to include crimes against LGBTIQ+ persons on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

[Turkey](#) and [Uzbekistan](#) received recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), calling to effectively protect lesbian, bisexual and trans women from gender-based violence.

[Georgia](#) received Concluding Observations from the Human Rights Committee, encouraging the protection of LGBT people against hate crime and hate speech, including that by public representatives, among other recommendations. The Human Rights Committee also encouraged [Ukraine](#) to explicitly prohibit hate crime against LGBTI people.



BODILY INTEGRITY

Luxembourg, Belgium, Finland, North Macedonia, Greece, Cyprus, Croatia, Switzerland, Czechia, and the Netherlands, received Concluding Observations from different committees – the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), CEDAW, Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – encouraging them to end unnecessary medical interventions, particularly irreversible surgeries, on intersex children, without their informed consent.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

During their UPR reviews Lithuania and Moldova received recommendations to strengthen measures aimed at fighting discrimination against LGBTQI persons and at preventing, investigating and punishing acts of discrimination.

Armenia, Tajikistan, Germany, Iceland, Serbia and others received Concluding Observations from CEDAW, CESCR, and CRC, calling to combat discrimination against LGBTI people. The Human Rights Committee called on Russia to repeal the 2013 ‘propaganda’ law and all discriminatory legislation against LGBT people, among other recommendations. CESCR called Uzbekistan to repeal article 120 of the Criminal Code and decriminalise same-sex relationships.

EMPLOYMENT

Ukraine received Concluding Observations from CEDAW, recommending measures to reduce unemployment among women, with an emphasis on lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex women among others.

FAMILY

During its UPR review, Lithuania received recommendation to continue building a more LGBTQI+ inclusive society and ensure legal protection of family life of same-sex couples, including by adopting legislation that would provide for legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, and by developing a national strategy on LGBTQI+ equality.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In October, Armenia received Concluding Observations from CEDAW, calling to ensure LGBTI women’s freedom of assembly.

HEALTH

In June, the IE SOGI presented a report to the Human Rights Council on the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of LGBTI persons, highlighting discrimination, stigma, and medical violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In March, the UN Special Procedures released a joint statement on the challenges faced by LGBTI human rights defenders.

On IDAHOT+, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, released a statement bringing attention to the work done by and risks faced by LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders.



A group of UN Special Procedures Mandate holders wrote a Communication to Russia concerning the alleged designation of Legal and Social Support Charitable Foundation “Sphere” as a “foreign agent non-governmental organisation” and the recent administrative and judicial decisions leading to its liquidation. In a separate Communication, a group of Special Procedures mandate holders wrote to Belarus concerning the alleged arbitrary arrest and detention of Olga Gorbunova, publicly known for her work as a women’s human rights defender and LGBT activist.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In October, the IE SOGI presented a report to the UN General Assembly calling for meaningful inclusion of LGBT people in the peace and security agenda.

INTERSECTIONALITY

To mark International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, a group of UN Special Procedures mandate holders released a statement which noted that “gender-blind” drug policies have also had a negative impact on LGBTI people and sex workers, among others.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

During its UPR review, Lithuania received a recommendation to adopt legislation that protects, respects and recognises transgender people, and facilitates the change of name and identity on personal documents and change of marital status, without the need to undergo a gender reassignment surgery.

In November, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (SR VAW) wrote a letter to the Scottish government criticising the legal gender recognition reform process in the country. In December, the IE SOGI wrote an evidentiary letter to the Scottish government describing how the letter from the SR VAW included misrepresentations of international human rights law and standards. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke to the press supporting the position described by the IE SOGI. On December 22, Scotland adopted a legal gender recognition reform based on self-determination.

Belgium received Concluding Observations from CEDAW, encouraging the amendment of related laws so trans women can be recognised in civil status documents. The CEDAW also called on Armenia to ensure trans women’s access to legal gender recognition.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

A group of Special Procedures mandate holders wrote a Communication to Poland concerning multiple legal cases brought against Atlas of Hate for defending the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

In March, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights spoke in an interactive dialogue of the Human Rights Council on the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, mentioning the discrimination frequently faced by artists in exile, and specifically LGBTI artists.

In October, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, called on Russian legislators to repeal the so-called “anti-propaganda” law, rather than expand it.

This is a selection of mentions, reports and recommendations relevant to Europe and Central Asia. For more information, check out the work of ILGA World with the United Nations:
<https://ilga.org/united-nations>

OSCE

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Civil society organisations and other non governmental groups reported 979 anti-LGBT hate crimes in 38 states in 2021. These include 603 violent attacks against people, a decrease from the previous report, and 295 threats and 81 attacks against property.

According to the report, LGBTI people continue to experience stigmatisation and lack of legal protection. Trans people are particularly at risk of physical violence. Physical assaults also tend to take place around Pride parades.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) developed a training course for criminal justice professionals treating hate crime victims. The course provides a step-by-step learning of how to conduct training for police, prosecutors and judges on the sensitive and respectful treatment of hate crime victims in order to empower victims, prevent re-victimisation and build a sense of trust in the criminal justice process.

ALBANIA

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Aleanca provided food packages to at least 120 community members this year, including transgender sex workers and people living with HIV.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Media and journalists have increasingly been positive towards the LGBTI community. Although the community was under continuous attack from religious groups, media, and public figures, some media provided space for debate and to question negative perceptions towards LGBTI persons.

Commissioner Against Discrimination, Robert Gajda presented his annual report to parliament in May and highlighted that his office received several anti-LGBTI hate speech reports.

In May, the National Platform ISIGURT.AL and PINK launched a national platform where hate speech incidents can be reported. The Council of Europe's report previously found that 97% of hate speech cases go unreported in Albania.

In July, Ombudsman candidate Altin Goxhaj said, "If it were me, LGBT people would not set foot in Albania's schools until the age of 18. This is Soros' agenda. They want to replace us in 20 years". A new Ombudsman has yet to be appointed.

In November, Bislim Ahmetaj, the Secretary for Human Rights in the Democratic Party, called LGBTIQ people "Soros propaganda", said that his party would always protect traditional family values, made hostile statements about rainbow families, called the children's movie 'Strange World', "poison", and "propaganda".

Evangelical pastor and leader of the Coalition for the Traditional Family, Akil Pano, organised a protest outside a cinema in Tirana, which had to cancel the screening of 'Strange World'. The Coalition also launched a poster campaign against the film.

In December, Fatmir Merkoçi, one of the founders of the Democratic Party and party candidate in the primaries for the Municipality of Tirana, said that if

elected, he would not support LGBT people or the rainbow flag on government buildings.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Vodafone, UN Women, and CSOs launched an initiative in April to enable victims of violence to report cases, providing cell phones and an app for women with disabilities, Roma women, and LBTQI+ women in five municipalities. The app BrightSky was launched last year by Vodafone and is available for download nationally.

On 17 September, seven Albanian activists were physically attacked while walking back to their hotel after participating in the EuroPride march in Belgrade. After the police refused to escort the activists back to the hotel, the group was attacked by 10 people. Two of the activists ran to the police asking for help – yet the officers did not react. Only when a traffic police officer intervened minutes later, did the riot police eventually intervene. Two of the seven victims had to be hospitalised.

EMPLOYMENT

UNDP and Aleanca organised training for 25 business representatives to encourage them to implement the UN Standards of Conduct for Businesses.

Aleanca organised a career counselling session where 25 young LGBTI community members learned how to write and improve their resumes with the assistance of an expert. Aleanca also provided four small grants for young community members as a subsidy to their small businesses.

Aleanca's study found that two-thirds of the 237 LGBTI respondents were not out at work due to fear of discrimination, less pay, or losing their job.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

After being adopted in late 2021, the National LGBTI Action Plan (2021-2027) was formally launched in September. PINK had previously called for a coordination and monitoring body to oversee the implementation and also for the establishment of a Transgender Support Fund. The implementation of the previous National LGBTI Action Plan remained



flawed, with only the Ministry of Health and Social Protection fulfilling its responsibilities and cooperating with CSOs.

Aleanca's survey on discrimination and hate crimes found that 46% of the 237 respondents had experienced discrimination and violence, and 80% of them thought this was due to their SOGI. Discrimination and violence were most common in public places (64%), online (49%), and at school/university (42%). In 66% of the cases the perpetrator was unknown, 31% were friends and 15% were family members. Just 19% reported the incident to the police and only five victims had a satisfactory response.

FAMILY

In the spring, the government backtracked on its commitment to amend the Family Code and the Adoption Law after backlash from religious leaders and some of civil society. The Ministry of Justice had launched a consultation on the proposed changes in 2021. The legal reform would have granted rights to rainbow families, including through legal recognition for cohabiting same-gender couples and allowing unmarried couples to adopt.

In May, Commissioner Against Discrimination, Robert Gajda called for legal recognition for same-gender couples, including in the form of cohabitation.

In June, the authorities refused to register two women, who are a same-sex couple, as parents of their two children. The Administrative Court of Appeal upheld the decision.

FOREIGN POLICY

In May the European Parliament adopted its report on Albania which called for proper resolution of hate crime and hate speech cases against LGBTI people, full implementation and budgeting of the LGBTI action plan, and collection of LGBTI disaggregated data, among others.

Marking a historic step, Albania opened accession negotiations with the EU in July.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Aleanca LGBTI, Pro LGBTI, Streha, PINK and Open Mind Spectrum Albania (OMSA) were able to hold the annual Tirana Pride on 21 May. The 13th Festival of Diversity was opened on 16 May under the slogan 'We are Family', but events were held throughout the entire month. Events included lectures, the third edition of the film festival 'Queer Film Marathon Tirana', installations of the 'Being Transgender in Albania' exhibition, and other events. No incidents were recorded.

HEALTH

PrEP and PEP continue to be unavailable to LGBTI people. Viral load tests are unavailable at public hospitals and private clinics remain unaffordable for most. Lastly, civil society organisations are calling for the proper implementation of the National Strategy for People Living with HIV 2020-2025, adopted in 2019.

Aleanca provided rapid HIV testing to 1,485 people this year, reimbursed costs for health check-ups and medication for 35 community members, and offered 392 individual psychological sessions with Aleanca's therapist. In 2022 there was an increased need for mental health care as a result of living in severely oppressing and stigmatising environments.

Streha provided medical care for 58 LGBTI people this year.

HOUSING

Aleanca LGBTI has supported through rent reimbursement ten LGBTI community members.

Streha supported 30 LGBTI people with housing this year, 15 of them with rent support and 15 with accommodation.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders remained targets of hate.

Long-time LGBTI activist Xheni Karaj received the Civil Rights Defender of the Year 2022 award in April and was named one of the world's most courageous LGBTI+ human rights defenders.

INTERSECTIONALITY

In July, the Albanian Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Aleanca, and the Roma Women's Rights Centre held a training on media and social inclusion of excluded groups.

Aleanca organised a photo exhibition with portraits of Roma and LGBTI young people and the theatre performance, 'Who am I?', which shares the stories of four young people who were bullied on the basis of their race, ethnicity, SOGIESC or disability.

Aleanca and The Women Network (Awen) organised the monodrama, 'Nothing', on the impact of patriarchal oppression, which premiered in June.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In the spring, the government backtracked on its commitment to codify legal gender recognition.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The exhibition, 'Construction', on solidarity among vulnerable groups, opened in April in Tirana.

To mark IDAHOT, PINK held a mobile exhibition in six major cities.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

NGOs Aleanca, OMSA, PINK, PRO LGBT and Streha held training for the police across the country.

PUBLIC OPINION

Euronews Albania's Barometer found that the vast majority of people in Albania continue to be hostile towards LGBT+ people, including among younger generations.

[ALBANIA WEB PAGE](#)

[MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG)



ANDORRA

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

DiversAnd received accounts of microaggressions this year, but none of these were reported to the authorities. Both civil society and the government suspect that low reporting is due to fear.

Andorra's anti-discrimination body, the Equality Observatory, which was set up in 2020, is still not operational despite the government's continued pledges. The Observatory will collect data on hate crimes and will also have a specific committee on LGBTIQ+ issues. Civil society also continued to lobby for a specific LGBTIQ+ law.

The National Plan for Childhood and Adolescence was adopted, but LGBTI children and adolescents are excluded.

This year's Pride march was attended by the Minister of Social Affairs, Youth, and Equality.

FAMILY

On 21 July, the Parliament unanimously adopted the new Law of the Person and Family, which eliminates any distinction between married heterosexual couples or same-sex civil partnerships and establishes church and civil marriage, the former only being available to heterosexual couples. The social democrat parliamentary group considers this distinction discriminatory and will appeal to the Constitutional Court.

HEALTH

The Ministry of Health changed regulations in March to include gender-affirming care, including hormones and surgeries as part of the public health scheme, which means full cost coverage for these interventions. Nevertheless, no protocols have been published, a psychiatric diagnosis is still required to access care, training is lacking, and civil society has not been consulted since March in a meaningful way.

In April, DiversAnd trained mental health professionals at the Nostra Senyora de Meritxell hospital, on working with trans people.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth, and Equality joined civil society in advocating for equality for LGBTIQ+ people on IDAHOBIT (17 May), and the Minister joined the Pride march in July.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

On 21 July, the parliament unanimously adopted the new Law of the Person and Family, which introduces a legal gender recognition procedure for the first time. The law allows trans people to change their name and gender marker on official documents, but not on the basis of self-determination. The law sets out a court procedure for both name and gender marker change, mandating that the person had lived according to their gender identity over the past two years, shown by evidence and testimonials. Children over the age of 12 can only access name change, with parental consent, and through a court procedure.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

DiversAnd reported that LGBTIQ+ people continue to be discriminated against in sports and dedicated this year's Pride to this theme.

[ANDORRA WEB PAGE](#)

[MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG)

ARMENIA

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In March, the Administrative Court again refused to recognise Pink's 2017 campaign as a social advertisement. Activists in the room protested the judgement by wearing T-shirts saying, "Your biased decision is killing me".

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Following the opening of the first Trans LGBTIQ Community Safe Space in August (see under *Security and Social Protection*), trans activist Lilit Martirosyan and RightSide NGO were targeted by hate speech and death threats online.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue this year, with several attacks being documented. Several incidents targeted trans people. In August, for instance, a trans woman was physically attacked by a far-right extremist - the perpetrator recorded and live-streamed the assault. Throughout the year, cases of family violence were reported to Pink. On IDAHOBIT, Pink held a roundtable event to address impunity in hate crime cases and launched a video on the topic. The event brought together state representatives, embassies, civil society, and the Ombudsperson's Office.

In February, the First Instance Court of Ararat and Vayots Dzor regions delivered a landmark judgment, finding the perpetrator in a homophobic hate crime, involving extortion, blackmail, physical, and sexual violence, guilty and sentencing him to seven and a half years in prison. This is the first case in years that ended with a guilty verdict and civil society hopes it will serve as an important precedent.

In May, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its first judgement on LGBTI people's rights in Armenia. In the Oganezova v. Armenia case, the court established the authorities' failure to conduct an effective investigation into a 2012 arson attack without considering the homophobic motive, and secondly, their failure to protect the applicant from the threats and harassment against her in the aftermath.

In October, two young gay men committed suicide after a photo of them kissing went viral and received endless hate messages. The suicide shook the community. A discussion was broadcast on TV afterwards, featuring anti-LGBT statements.

Pink has filed an application to the European Court in the case of a trans woman who was brutally assaulted in 2018. In that case, the authorities dropped the charges against the perpetrator, who tried to kill the woman and also set her apartment on fire.

Pink documented 27 cases of physical and sexual violence, and threats of violence and threats towards LGBT people during 2022, ten of which were committed by family members. These included beatings, stabbings, and other serious attacks. The ten recorded cases of domestic violence on grounds of SOGI were of physical, psychological and economic nature. In most cases, the parents learned about the LGBT identity of the victims, and then beat, harassed, threatened, or locked them up. One case was partner violence. Of the 27 cases of violence, seven were lesbian or bisexual women, 11 were gay or bisexual men, and 12 were trans or non-binary.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a resolution on alleged violations of the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus, including Armenia. The resolution calls on Armenia to adopt legislation and policies that safeguard against discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC, to sanction hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI people, to introduce legal gender recognition procedures on the basis of self-determination, to provide comprehensive sex education in schools, and depathologise 'homosexuality'.

Pink documented 44 cases of discrimination based on SOGI this year, of which 16 were reported to law enforcement bodies. Some of these were rejected, and others have not been processed in a meaningful way.



Pink's report on 2021 cases was published in May.

The Ombudsman's 2021 annual report was once again weak on violations against LGBTI people, which was strongly criticised by civil society. Civil society hopes that the new Ombudsperson will remedy this gap.

Civil society has supported LGBTIQ people who have had to flee Ukraine this year.

In October, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) called on Armenia to tackle discrimination and violence against LGBTI women.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The CEDAW called on Armenia to ensure LGBTI women's freedom of assembly.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In May, the EU Ambassador to Armenia expressed concern about hate speech against LGBT people in Armenia and increased hatred and criticism against human rights defenders.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The CEDAW called on Armenia to ensure trans women's access to legal gender recognition.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

'Let Me Be Me' was published this year, reflecting on discrimination, stigma, and violence against trans and sex worker communities in the country. The book was launched at a roundtable event held by RightSide NGO on how to improve the situation of trans people in Armenia.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

RightSide NGO held a series of meetings focusing on "Problems of sex workers living in the Republic of Armenia, sex work and sexual violence".

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In August, RightSide NGO opened its new office and the first Trans LGBTIQ Community Safe Space, in Yerevan.

Pink published a guide for psychologists, social workers, peer counsellors, and other professionals who work with parents of LGBT children. In January, RightSide NGO held an event for parents of LGBTIQ persons.

[ARMENIA WEB PAGE](#)

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AUSTRIA

ASYLUM

The Supreme Court overturned two court rulings from the same judge this year, who denied refugee status on the basis of sexual orientation to a Bangladeshi gay man. The cases affirmed that some judges routinely reject claims of LGBTI applicants for international protection and that civil society can predict a ruling depending on who the sitting judge is. Civil society called for training for the judiciary and highlighted that not every applicant can afford to appeal a negative decision.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Online hate speech against LGBTQIA+ people has gained even more ground than in previous years, with a sharp increase following Pride month in June. The implementation of the 2021 legislative package against online hate speech remained flawed. For instance, the number of prosecutions has not increased, few people used the option of complaints against anonymous offenders, and victim protection support was used less often than expected.

Hostile speech by FPÖ MPs was common during the parliamentary discussions on alternative gender markers (see under *Legal Gender Recognition*), and targeted trans, intersex, and non-binary people. Two individuals, who burnt a rainbow flag at a 2020 protest against COVID-19 restriction measures, were acquitted in March. The ruling is not final.

A trans member of the local parliament in Alsergrund spoke about receiving death threats.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue, with over two hundred incidents just in the first three months of the year. The Ministry of Interior's annual hate crime report documented 376 hate crimes against LGBTIQ people in 2021 although over 80% of the cases may not be reported. SPÖ (Social Democratic Party) also published a report and called for a national strategy against hate, exclusion and discrimination. As intersex or sex characteristics are not explicitly mentioned in the law, violations against intersex people are not included in the numbers of the Ministry of Interior's annual hate crime report. Civil society has also flagged that very few intersex

people report attacks, which sometimes happen on a daily basis.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The process of banning so-called 'conversion therapies' continued to be stalled this year, despite the National Council calling for legal reform twice over the past three years.

The proposed ban on non-consensual and medically unnecessary treatments performed on intersex children was also stalled. The working group convened by the Ministry of Justice finished its work in late 2021, but no draft law was shared since then.

EDUCATION

A survey among 3,500 students found that two-thirds identified outside the heterosexual, cisgender, and monogamous norm.

Regarding education on the diversity of sex characteristics and gender identity, VIMÖ held more than 60 training events, consultations and speeches, commissioned by private universities, companies and public institutions.

EMPLOYMENT

VIMÖ, the ERSTE Group and IBM published guidelines for companies on working with inter*, trans* and non-binary employees, colleagues and customers.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The parliament's Equal Treatment Committee addressed the need to better protect the rights of LGBTI people and particularly youth. The Committee later announced a roundtable would be organised convening key ministries and civil society.

Some political parties continued to lobby for a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that would extend to all areas of life and cover SOGIESC as protected grounds. In June, MPs announced the first parliamentary intergroup on LGBTI issues, with representatives from all parties, except for the far-right FPÖ (Freedom Party). Minister of Justice Alma Zadić also affirmed she was committed to tackling discrimination against LGBT people.



The Supreme Court ruled in July that the same retirement age must be applied to trans men as to cisgender men. The case concerned a trans man who legally transitioned a few years before reaching retirement age, which is lower for women than men.

In June, the Minister of Justice Alma Zadić said she would continue pushing for financial compensation to victims of criminal prosecution in the Second Republic.

A statue will be installed in Vienna in 2023 to commemorate LGBT victims of nazi persecution.

FAMILY

Minister of Justice Alma Zadic (Green Party) affirmed her commitment to marriage equality.

The Constitutional Court passed several important rulings this year. In January, it ruled that unmarried couples can jointly adopt children. In May, it established that the current regulations for parenthood recognition discriminate against lesbian couples and must be amended before 2024. According to the law, the non-gestational mother would only be automatically recognised as a parent if the couple went through official channels of insemination, and not if they used home insemination. This distinction does not exist in the case of cisgender heterosexual couples. In July, it ruled that foreign same-sex couples, in the respective case, a Czech-Slovakian gay couple, can adopt children in Austria.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The 26th Vienna Pride, held in June, was dedicated to the theme 'Pride against hate: make love, not war', in support of the Ukrainian LGBTQ+ community. The Pride march was attended by 250,000 people.

HEALTH

The discriminatory restrictions on LGBT people donating blood were abolished in May. In 2021, the government announced a blood shortage, and civil society again called for the revision of the rules, which completely excluded trans and non-binary persons, and set a 12-month deferral period for men who have sex with men. The new rule, which entered

into force on 1 September, establishes a deferral period of three months for everyone, regardless of their SOGI.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

VIMÖ received the Meritus Special Prize from PrideBiz Austria for its Var.Ges - Counseling Centre for Variations of Sex Characteristics, which provides peer counselling for intersex people and their families, and training.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The city of Vienna provided 50,000 euro in funding for Pride month and also announced 100,000 euro in financial support that will be distributed among nine projects, with a focus on education.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In October, the National Council amended the registration law that takes into account alternative gender markers.

VIMÖ continued to demand that legal gender recognition procedures be based solely on self-determination and provide access to alternative gender marker options to anyone, without a diagnosis. The current system only provides alternative gender markers for intersex people with a medical diagnosis. Those who have been using alternative gender markers have been facing hurdles in bureaucracy, whereby systems do not recognise their gender or address them through binary options.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Following the first roundtable on sex and gender diversity in sports, VIMÖ and 100% Sport started developing educational resources and recommendations to ensure safety and inclusion for intersex people in sports.

*Inter*Pride - perspectives from a worldwide human rights movement* was published and sold out in its first three months.

VIMÖ's theatre play *INTER*Story - A Piece of Activism*, centring the stories of intersex people, premiered in November.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In March, 20 activists held a demonstration outside the Ministry of Interior after the federal police published a victim-blaming information sheet on gender-based violence. The activists warned that a ‘Flinta’ (“female, lesbian, inter, non-binary, transgender, agender”) person’s appearance or behaviour can never legitimise violence.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

A centre for LGBTIQ youth will open in Vienna, to be founded and run by the Regenbogenfamilienzentrum Wien.

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AZERBAIJAN

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech remained a serious issue, in the media, and by political and religious figures. QueerRadar's 2021 hate speech monitoring report found that of the 501 media pieces analysed, almost two-thirds were hateful or biased against LGBTIQ+ people. One cleric called trans people "cursed by God" and said killing those in same-sex relations is justified. MP Javid Osmanov said in an interview that "LGBT people and feminists should be isolated" as they only bring "bad habits" to society. Osmanov also stated that the goal of feminists was to disrupt Azerbaijani society and that LGBT activists were backed by "Western circles". MP Eldar Guliyev from the ruling party stated that LGBT people should be expelled from the country. He added "a man is a man, a woman is a woman, that is it - if they [LGBTI+s] are sick, let them get treatment."

In May, MP Tahir Karimli, who had previously called LGBTI+s "waste", stated his opposition to the Istanbul Convention arguing that "our traditions deny faggots" and that they should be "persecuted and isolated".

On 28 October, MP Tahir Karimli said to local media that 'LGBT propaganda' should also be banned in Azerbaijan.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes against the LGBTIQ+ community continued to be a serious issue. One of the most prominent LGBTIQ+ activists in the country, Avaz Hafizli, was brutally mutilated and murdered by his cousin in February. The police, who previously ignored Hafizli's requests for protection, wrapped the body in a rug and transported him in a garbage truck.

"LGBTQ people are of no importance to Azerbaijani law. They are not considered human beings, and neither the prosecutor's office, nor the State Security Service, nor any other body wants to move a finger to prevent mass killings". - Activist Gulnara Mehdiyeva quoted on the Advocate

Avaz's murder came in the wake of Instagram posts last year by Azerbaijani social media influencer, Sevinj Huseynova, who called for the physical "removal" of sexual minorities and trans people in a video that was watched by thousands.

In August, the court sentenced the perpetrator to nine and a half years in prison but ignored the homophobic motif and the brutality of the murder. LGBTIQ+ activists and journalists were barred from entering the courtroom. Civil society has firmly criticised the meagre judgment, which could have given twice as many years to the killer.

Another human rights activist, Bakhtiyar Hajiyeu was kidnapped by masked men and tortured. A man on the metro in Baku threatened to kill LGBT people with a hammer. On 2 September, two gay men were attacked in Ganja. The perpetrators brutally beat the men and wanted to throw them off a bridge, saying "we don't want people like you here".

On 13 April, a gay man jumped out of his apartment window in Baku and was hospitalised in a serious condition.

A 15-year-old was subjected to violence by her family and locked up at home. The teenager was also molested by a cousin. The father bribed the police to cover up the violence.

A trans woman was beaten by her boyfriend in Sumgait and on a different occasion by another man. The police refused to investigate either case. On 7 September, a trans woman Emily Hajizade was attacked in Baku Boulevard by the park's security guards. Emily was also abused by her family, who threatened to kill her. Also in September, a trans woman was stabbed several times in Baku's Narimanov park. She was previously detained and her head was forcibly shaved by the police. The police denied the murder and said they merely detained her. Activists and her family have been unable to find her since.

A 16-year-old teenager suffered police violence and verbal abuse in September after sharing a TikTok video showing him dyeing his hair blue.

BODILY INTEGRITY

A 17-year-old was repeatedly subjected to physical and sexual abuse and was locked up at home by his family. In 2019, he was forced to undergo so-called 'conversion therapy' for seven months in a hospital,



where he also suffered sexual violence. The ‘therapy’ was paid for by the family.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the PACE adopted a resolution on ‘Alleged violations of the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus’, including Azerbaijan. The resolution calls on Azerbaijan to adopt legislation and policies that safeguard against discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC, to sanction hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI people, to introduce legal gender recognition procedures on the basis of self-determination, to provide comprehensive sex education in schools, to address the wrongful arrest of LGBTI people and prevent and combat police violence, among others.

FOREIGN POLICY

On 4 November, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed the protocol on the ‘Action Plan on Cooperation in the field of policy on family, women and children’, which sets out joint activities to strengthen ‘family values’.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In August, two trans women were detained by the police in Baku and held for ten days. The police forcibly shaved the hair of one of the women.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 8 March, feminist and queer activists held a Women’s Day rally, demanding that the government ensure equal rights for all without discrimination on grounds of SOGI, investigate femicides, bring perpetrators to justice, take effective measures to prevent violence and femicides, and ratify the Istanbul Convention. The police ordered a participant to remove his rainbow face mask and confiscated a rainbow and a trans flag.

On 14 May, activists, journalists and civil society representatives held a march condemning the increase in violence against journalists, political and human rights activists, and impunity. Pro-government media reporting focused on LGBTI+ flags at the protest, distracting the public from the rally’s message.

Three LGBTQ+ and feminist activists held the country’s first Pride event on 9 June, in the form of a press briefing. This is the second time in the past ten years that LGBTQ+ activists have directly engaging with the media in this way. The three activists said they would try to organise similar events in the future, to commemorate Pride month every year.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

On 6 November, activists launched the Queerdian initiative to challenge the current socio-political underrepresentation of LGBTIQ+ citizens and address all forms of oppression.

HEALTH

The rate of HIV infections increased among men who have sex with men and trans people over the past year.

HOUSING

Civil society reported that trans people faced evictions again this year.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In May, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) initiated a resolution on threats to journalists and human rights defenders in Azerbaijan.

On 8 October, Minority Azerbaijan was targeted by an unsuccessful hacking attempt.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May, Minority Azerbaijan screened the movie *The Sun on My Body*, directed by an Azeri trans woman.

Nafas LGBTI Azerbaijan held filmmaking workshops as part of its Queer Art Festival. The short films were screened by the Festival in October.

A and 24 others, narrating the 2017 mass arrests against LGBTI+ people, was featured at the Sevil International Women’s Documentary Film Festival.

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BELARUS

It should be noted that access to information about developments in the country has been increasingly difficult, as a result of the increasing repression against civil society. There is no public information available on LGBTI issues. Activists and organisations working for equality are facing significant risks in their safety and freedom, and there are few currently in the country, which contributes to making access to information more difficult.

ASYLUM

Thousands continued leaving the country this year to seek asylum. Some resources were published to support LGBT people fleeing with information on how to avoid harassment and detention at the border.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In October, the Secretary General of the local Red Cross Dmytro Shevtsov, said on TV that LGBT people are sick and need to be treated, that same-sex relationships are a mental illness, and that non-traditional values are promoted through cartoons and teen films.

In May, Journalists for Tolerance (J4T) published its periodic report monitoring hate speech in 2021 in Belarus. J4T found that every fourth piece of media coverage on LGBTQ+ people amounted to hate speech.

Pro-government propagandists regularly called for the persecution of LGBT activists and the closure of LGBT organisations.

The Secretary General of the Belarusian Red Cross Society, Dmitry Shevtsov made several homophobic statements during a program on the STV channel.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

At least ten trans people left the country due to discrimination and repression.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

Police officers detained stylist Igor Korolik appearing in a video in support of Ukraine. Then, the security forces showed a video of Korolik, in which he forcibly

asked for forgiveness from the “Slav brothers” and admitted to have “supported the fascist ideology.” In the 17-second clip, Korolik self-deprecated and came out as homosexual, using in criminal jargon.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, ASSOCIATION, AND EXPRESSION

Since the historic protests against the government in 2020, the government has continued its brutal crackdown on protesters, journalists, and civil society, through unlawful arrest, detention, violence, and ill-treatment. (see more under *Human Rights Defenders*)

Freedom of expression, assembly and association continued to be extremely restricted. Following the 2021 laws, which made it even easier for the authorities to control and prosecute journalists and civil society, a new death penalty law was adopted in May to punish “attempts to carry out acts of terrorism”.

Hundreds of civil society organisations have been dissolved since 2020, or are currently being dissolved, including several that work on LGBT issues. In February, MAKEOUT was notified that it would also be dissolved. Several websites were blocked this year, including CSOs.

The Communist Party of Belarus wants to liquidate the nightclub “Burlesque” because “its values are not compatible with the traditional values of the Belarusian people”.

On 29 December, the Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic of Belarus announced that Belarus might introduce an LGBT ‘propaganda’ legislation similar to that in Russia.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

(see more under *Freedom of Assembly, Association, and Expression*)

Belarus continued making headlines due to the brutal government crackdown waged against civil society and the opposition. Several journalists, political activists, and others stood trial and received harsh prison sentences this year (see here, here, here, and here). Thousands continue to be detained and



subjected to torture and ill-treatment. Over the past year, numerous reports* were made on the fact that if the detained activists were found out to be LGBTI (or perceived as such) they were subjected to additional or sexualised violence.

Civil society organisations working on LGBT issues continued being harassed by the authorities. Some initiatives had to close down and several activists fled the country.

Ales Bialiatski, detained political activist, was one of the awardees of the Nobel Peace Prize this year but was not allowed to issue his acceptance speech.

PUBLIC OPINION

Olga Bondareva, a pro-government supporter from Grodno, succeeded in replacing a billboard advertising headphones in the centre of Minsk. Bondareva perceived the model as trans and that there was 'LGBT propaganda' on the ad. A day after the complaint, the billboard was replaced by social advertising.

**Some of the information about Belarus was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous. These accounts were not publicly shared online or otherwise.*

[BELARUS WEB PAGE](#)

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BELGIUM

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, non-binary model and make-up artist Haron Zaanan was denied service in a restaurant in Brussels, allegedly due to their outfit. The incident was widely condemned.

ASYLUM

The Prisme Federation, focusing on the Wallonia region, launched a new website to inform and support LGBTQIA migrants and facilitate cooperation among CSOs.

Civil society provided emergency shelter to some asylum seekers due to a lack of available shelters provided by the government. CSOs reported that some of the most vulnerable asylum seekers have had to sleep on the streets.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Flemish right-wing politicians continue to use hateful speech towards LGBTI+ people, for including by alleging that so-called 'gender ideology' is forced upon "normal people", that trans women threaten cisgender women in safe spaces, sports, and prisons, that LGBTI+ organisations indoctrinate children in schools.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Following the 2021 parliamentary resolution on violence and discrimination against LGBTI+ people, the government commissioned a study on violence towards the LGBTI+ community. Wel Jong and çavaria were tasked with creating tools to work towards safe(r) spaces and making policy recommendations to the government. Civil society continued to advocate for a interfederal action plan to make Belgium a safe place for the community.

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue. Two men were physically assaulted and robbed outside a gay bar in Liège in March. In May, a boy and his family were assaulted in Brussels after leaving the city's Pride event. The attackers burnt the rainbow flag the boy was carrying, causing burn injuries. A rainbow flag hung on the Aubange City Hall was burnt in May. These are just a handful of examples.

The Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Unia) shared that the number of homophobic hate crimes had been on the rise and continued to grow between 2020-2021.

A study based on 42 testimonies from LGBTQIA+ people was published in May, revealing that underreporting is extremely common in the Brussels region, that the anti-LGBTQIA+ motif of attacks is often unregistered by the police, and investigations rarely yield results. The study was jointly prepared by civil society and local monitoring bodies.

In August, a study in Flanders found, on the basis of over 400 responses from LGBTQ+ people, that one in four have been subject to threats or physical assault.

The Belgian hate crime legislation was amended to include gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics as protected grounds. Additionally, anti-SOGIESC motives are from now on recognised as aggravating factors for all crimes, not just for a selection of crimes.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The parliament is yet to ban non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children, in line with the 2021 parliamentary resolution on intersex people's rights. Civil society continued to lobby for a ban, and also for sanctions, better access to healthcare for intersex people throughout their lives, and access to their own medical history. In October, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) called on Belgium to ban intersex surgeries.

Belgium changed its criminal sexual law, which is now consent-based. The law also recognises that consent can be revoked during a sexual act.

DATA COLLECTION

On behalf of the city of Ghent, the Transgender Infopunt developed a model for inclusive gender registration that all official surveys will have to use. The model will be continuously evaluated.



EDUCATION

In June, the Constitutional Court struck down the so-called 'attainment targets' for second and third-grade secondary education, which might jeopardise the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the curriculum. The targets set out what students need to know by the end of each academic year. Civil society found the ruling alarming and a step back.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The federal government presented its new Action Plan for LGBTQ Equality 2021-2024 on IDAHOBIT, which sets out over 130 targeted actions. LGBTI+ civil society was consulted in the process, but not in a coordinated way. Civil society has highlighted that many actions lack budget allocation and timelines, and called the state secretary for Equal Opportunities to monitor implementation.

The Wallonia government adopted an LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Plan (2022-2024), containing anti-discrimination measures, plans for research, and improvements in healthcare access, among others. The Plan tripled the budget available to address LGBTQIA+ issues.

The Brussels-Capital Region adopted a Plan for the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons (2022-2025), with 35 concrete actions, including measures to tackle prejudice, support young LGBTQIA+ people, and make public spaces safe.

Municipalities continued to raise the rainbow flag on the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May.

FAMILY

In September, Roman Catholic bishops from Flanders issued a statement endorsing that should be able to marry same-sex couples.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

After two years of a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Belgium Pride was held in Brussels in May and attended by over 120,000 people.

HEALTH

Despite the emergence of new gender teams in several regions, for instance, Limburg, West Flanders, and Antwerp, waiting times for gender-affirming care remained between 12-18 months. On a positive note, up to 40 consultations with a psychologist at UZ Gent or CHU Liege are covered by the public healthcare system - civil society is advocating for cost coverage to be extended across the country. Civil society also reported that more and more trans people make use of the Transgender Infopunt's interactive care map to create their own care path, instead of waiting for intake at the gender teams.

In April, the High Council of Health (CSS) announced that the 12-month abstinence period for men who have sex with men who want to donate blood is no longer justifiable. The Ministry of Health introduced a four-month deferral period in May. Civil society has advocated for the complete removal of the discriminatory restriction for years.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The federal government made available the largest sum to date, 450,000 euro to support organisations working on LGBTQI+ rights.

The city of Brussels supported the opening of an LGBTQIA+ health centre and cultural hub, Grand Carmes, established by Rainbow House Brussels, Ex Aequo, Genres Pluriels and Tels Quels.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Non-binary persons continue to find no gender marker options that would match their identity. The number of LGR procedures increased slightly.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

RainbowHouse Brussels supported the football federation and courts to tackle discrimination in football competitions.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The General Directorate of Penitentiary Institutions developed internal guidelines for the treatment of trans prisoners and organised trainings for prison



staff on LGBTQIA+ issues in October. The trainings were delivered by Transgender Infopunt and Face à Toi-Même.

Transgender Infopunt is developing a self-help toolkit for trans detainees and training materials for prison staff, on the basis of a study on the experiences of trans prisoners in Belgium.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In March, Belgium became the first country in Europe to decriminalise sex work. Civil society has called for additional measures against stigma and for social inclusion.

In February, free access to contraceptives for people under the age of 25 was extended to include trans men. Civil society continued advocating for reimbursement for all sexual and reproductive health services for trans people.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The NGO Rainbow Ambassadors called for measures to protect LGBTQIA+ seniors through legal provisions.

[BELGIUM WEB PAGE](#)

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ASYLUM

The Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC) supported one gay asylum seeker this year, whose request was denied by the authorities in both the first and second instance.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The rise of hate speech in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in general, was highlighted as a key concern by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in January. Anti-LGBT hate speech has also continued to be a serious issue and increased during the month of Pride, in June. For instance, the Minister of Economy on the cantonal level shared his personal and hostile views on Pride on the Ministry's social media page. Activists filed a criminal complaint against him. Hate speech was also widely used by candidates running in the general elections in October. Throughout the year, SOC documented 13 hate speech cases and reported ten to the authorities.

On a positive note, the first court victory was celebrated on 4 April this year, when the Municipal Court of Sarajevo ruled that former MP Samra Čosović Hajdarević's 2019 social media post constituted hate speech on grounds of SOGIESC. Responding to the Pride march event, Hajdarević then wrote that "people like this" should be isolated and that events like Pride are a threat to the state. Hajdarević was banned from making similar statements.

"This verdict is very important because it has been proven that spreading hate speech and calling for violence against LGBTQ+ persons in the online sphere [can] affect the quality of life of LGBTQ+ persons, or lead to physical violence. This is a confirmation that hate speech and incitement to violence on social networks, especially of public figures and politicians, is not permissible and can be sanctioned." - Lejla Huremović, member of the Organising Committee of the BiH Pride March

This was the first such ruling since the country's anti-discrimination law was adopted 13 years ago. Hajdarević filed an appeal later.

An anti-LGBT banner was hung in the town of Trebinje in July. The case was reported to the Prosecutor's Office.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Following Tuzla (2021) and Sarajevo Cantons (2018), Trebinje, Herzegovina-Neretva, Una-Sana also appointed a staff person in the Prosecutor's Office in charge of overseeing anti-LGBTI hate crimes. Trebinje was the first canton in Republika Srpska to take this important step. By November, all ten cantonal Prosecutor's Offices had put the relevant personnel in place. These prosecutors were trained by SOC on anti-LGBTI hate speech and hate crimes.

SOC documented 11 anti-LGBTI hate crimes this year - six were reported to the authorities.

DATA COLLECTION

Civil society remained concerned that the state does not gather data on hate crimes and hate speech against LGBTI people.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

After a year of being stalled, the national LGBTI Action Plan was adopted in late July - an important step welcomed by civil society, the Council of Europe, and the EU. The Action Plan was formally presented in the parliament in October. The Action Plan was prepared by state and civil society representatives and covers protection from discrimination and violence, the right to private and family life of same-sex partners, asylum, and other key areas.

In May, Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC) published its 2021 Annual Report on the State of Human Rights of LGBTI Persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

FAMILY

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May, SOC held a symbolic protest and filed a formal request with the authorities to legally recognise same-sex relationships. The process of legislating the issue started in 2018 and got stalled in 2021. In November, the federal government approved the opinion of the Working Group on the need for a law that



provides legal recognition to same-sex partners. The federal Ministry of Interior launched a public consultation, which was held on 9 December. Government representatives and public servants jointly expressed their commitment to regulating same-sex partnerships in the Federation of BiH, and unanimously supported the official conclusion. This sets out that the government should start drafting the law on same-sex partnerships and that the law should cover the widest possible range of rights for same-sex partners.

FOREIGN POLICY

In July the European Parliament adopted its report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, which included calling on the government to draft a law on same-sex partnership, calling for the adoption of the stalled LGBTI Action Plan, and calling for SOGISC to be added as protected grounds to the criminal code.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The third Sarajevo Pride was held in June, under the slogan 'Family Gathering'. The event addressed the importance of support and acceptance from family members, rainbow families, and chosen families. The march was joined by hundreds of people and went safely, despite a counter-demonstration again this year. Civil society however recorded a number of irregularities at the hands of the police, who guided some participants to entrances that did not exist, blocked entrances with tape, or asked for an entry pass. The organisers were also met with hostile attitudes from the authorities in the months leading up to the event and had to fulfil burdensome administrative requirements. On a positive note, the city of Sarajevo and Canton of Sarajevo covered the costs of additional security for the second year in a row. The financial support was provided thanks to the goodwill of local politicians. Civil society does not consider this a sustainable solution and continues to advocate for clear legislation on this issue.

HEALTH

Sarajevo Open Centre continued to advocate for access to gender-affirming healthcare and for insurance coverage, as part of meetings with health authorities. In September, a trans man filed a lawsuit against the Health Insurance Fund in Republika Srpska

with the support of SOC, for refusing to cover the cost of his phalloplasty surgery abroad. In October, SOC held a conference on trans-specific healthcare and legal gender recognition in BiH.

SOC held a series of training events on the importance of mental healthcare, both to LGBTQI people and mental healthcare professionals. As a result, a network of trained mental health professionals was set up.

SOC held several meetings with public health institutions on the monkeypox virus and is preparing informational material to reduce the stigma against men who have sex with men.

There was a temporary crisis in the distribution of antiretroviral medication this year.

HPV immunisation started in November in the Canton of Sarajevo.

HOUSING

SOC reported being contacted by several LGBT persons this year whose families threw them out due to their SOGI - the lack of shelters for LGBT people remains an issue.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

SOC celebrated its 15th birthday in August.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The federal Ministry of Interior sent urgent appeals to the federal government to adopt a law on same-sex partnerships as soon as possible.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

SOC published a handbook for public administration officers on relevant legal solutions and best practices concerning legal gender recognition. The current procedure in BiH lacks clarity and is difficult to access. In October, SOC held a conference on trans-specific healthcare and legal gender recognition in BiH. SOC and trans activists continued to lobby for legal gender recognition that is based on self-determination.



The Ministry of Health in Tuzla formally asked the federal Ministry of Health to clarify the process of legal gender recognition and adopt a federal regulation on the matter.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In June, the activist-art collective Odron organised the exhibition 'Who are the queer icons of Bosnia and Herzegovina?' In the capital.

The new summer festival Kvirhana was held in June in Sarajevo and in July in Tuzla.

As part of the #svepocinjeizborom [Eng: Everything starts with a choice] campaign, civil society encouraged LGBTI people to participate in this year's parliamentary elections in October and provided them with important information on party politics regarding LGBTI rights.

PUBLIC OPINION

The Ombudsman highlighted in a statement in June that the public acceptance of LGBT people has positively increased.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA WEB PAGE

MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG

BULGARIA

ASYLUM

Bilitis supported several LGBT asylum seekers this year, including some fleeing Ukraine, by providing humanitarian aid, support with housing, legal aid and medication. GLAS helped several gay couples flee Russia after the call for military mobilisation there. Deystvie is currently litigating 10 cases of Russian asylum seekers.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech by politicians continued to be a serious issue. In July, outgoing Prime Minister, Kiril Petkov used homophobic language in a social media post, which he later deleted due to criticism. The Prosecutor's Office presented a proposal for legislation that would sanction hate speech, including by MPs. The proposal does not include SOGIESC as protected grounds.

In March, Bilitis, GLAS, the Association of European Journalists - Bulgaria and the Organisation of Jews in Bulgaria 'Shalom' organised the 'Not Just Words' forum on combating hate speech. The opening speeches were held by the Minister of Justice, Nadezhda Yordanova and the mayor of Sofia, Yordanka Fandakova.

A hateful petition was circulated in the leadup to the second Bourgas Pride in July.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In June, the European Court of Human Rights issued its judgement in the Stoyanova v. Bulgaria case, ordering the state to pay compensation to the mother of a gay man who was murdered by a group in Sofia in 2008. Bulgarian law did not and still does not include anti-LGBT motives as an aggravating factor, which meant that the homophobic motif of the murder bore no legal consequence. Civil society has long advocated for the criminalisation of anti-LGBT hate crimes, which is yet to be put into law.

On 24 June, the Sofia City Court fined former presidential candidate and neo-fascist party leader, Boyan Rasate, 3,000 leva (about 1,533 euro) for last year's anti-LGBT attack. Rasate was acquitted with regard to causing bodily harm. Last October,

he stormed into the Rainbow Hub with ten others, punched staff member Gloriya Filipova in the face, and destroyed the furniture and electronics. Local civil society, politicians in Bulgaria and Bulgarian MEPs, and the EU LGBTI Intergroup firmly condemned the attack back then. The weak judgement drove activists to the streets to call for justice for the victim and the whole LGBTI community. A few days before the ruling, the EU Commissioner for Equality shared a video message condemning the attack and expressed support for the LGBTIQ+ community, civil society organisations, and Sofia Pride.

ECRI's country report, published in October, called on Bulgaria to include sexual orientation and gender identity in legislation that criminalises hate crimes and hate speech, and to monitor anti-LGBTI hate crimes.

DATA COLLECTION

The website stophate.bg was updated to host an online platform for reporting hate speech, hate crimes and discrimination. Bilitis collected data on GBV in sports. Wearetolerant.com continues to collect data on LGBT-phobic hate incidents.

EDUCATION

Bilitis trained 51 teachers, school psychologists and principals on creating an inclusive school environment for LGBTI students and addressing anti-LGBTI bullying.

EMPLOYMENT

Through its business network Work It OUT, Glas Foundation continued to partner with companies on inclusive workplace environments for LGBTI employees in Bulgaria. The foundation hosted 20 Diversity and Inclusion workshops during the year.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Four ministers, deputies, MPs, the mayor of Sofia and state officials attended this year's IDAHOT celebration in May, organised by GLAS, under the patronage of the US and UK Ambassadors.

ECRI's country report called on Bulgaria to set up an LGBTI working group, with the participation of LGBTI



NGOs, and to develop a national strategy to address discrimination against LGBTI persons.

The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee's 2021 annual report highlighted that the deterioration of LGBTI rights continued to deteriorate over the past year.

FAMILY

On 16 May, a local court ordered the authorities to issue a birth certificate to baby Sara, the child of a Bulgarian-British married same-sex female couple. The ruling comes after the December 2021 judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), which requested Bulgaria to grant documents to the baby. The child's Spanish birth certificate featured two mothers, which Bulgaria refused to recognise, rendering the child stateless. Baby Sara's case has been litigated by Deystvie.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Sofia Pride was held in June and attended by a record number of 12,000 people. No hostile incidents were recorded.

ILGA-Europe's 2022 annual conference was held in Sofia in October.

The 17th edition of Sofia LGBTI Community Fest took place in December with 14 events.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In October, a group of MPs from the Vazrazhdane (Revival) party tabled the draft Foreign Agents Registration Act.

HEALTH

Bulgaria recorded over 200 new HIV infections in the first eight months of the year.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Following last year's violent attack, the Rainbow Hub relocated and reopened in May.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The latest ECRI report on Bulgaria points to the good cooperation between the Organisation of Jews in Bulgaria 'Shalom', GLAS, Bilitis and the Association of

European Journalists-Bulgaria and urges authorities to support similar partnerships.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

ECRI's country report called on Bulgaria to introduce legal gender recognition procedures, which are in line with international human rights standards.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Sofia Pride launched a pre-elections pledge which was signed by 27 MP candidates in the 2022 Parliamentary elections. Six of them were elected.

LOL with GLAS, the first ever political queer stand-up comedy show took place in Sofia to a sold-out venue of 500 people.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Deystvie trained 60 police officers on responding to anti-LGBT hate crimes.

A bisexual police officer facd exclusion and isolation after he gave an interview in May about the LGBT police union he registered in 2022.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Bilitis's community group QueerFemme created the first-ever Bulgarian brochure on the sexual health of lesbian and bisexual women, launched alongside an informational video.

BULGARIA WEB PAGE

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CROATIA

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech continued to be on the rise this year. Two public figures, an actor and a psychiatrist said in interviews in June that they would organise a 'straight pride march' and spoke harshly about LGBT people, particularly trans people. The organisers demanded that children be protected from so-called 'gender ideology' and that gender-affirming healthcare only be available for those aged 21 and up. The event was eventually cancelled.

A priest made hateful remarks after realising that some events of the queer film festival took place at Kinoteka cinema, which is rented by the municipality of Zagreb but owned by the Church. The court refused to grant a temporary injunction and the event went on as planned.

Online hate speech against LGBT people continued to be on the rise. Zagreb Pride filed three criminal complaints for hate speech and recorded many more.

In October, the Supreme Court overturned the ruling of the Zagreb County Court, which dismissed kolektIRV's claim against the right-wing NGO GROZD concerning discrimination and harassment. KolektIRV's appeal to the Supreme Court was first left unanswered within six months and was referred to the Constitutional Court, which in April requested the Supreme Court to issue a verdict within six months. The October judgment means that the original case will be sent back for a retrial.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The Ombudswoman's annual report found that 2021 marked a sharp increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes. The Ombudswoman affirmed that hate speech by politicians can contribute to such a trend.

In July, for instance, three gay men were verbally and physically assaulted in a club.

EDUCATION

The study 'Experiences and needs of young LGBTIQ persons' found that over half of the respondents heard negative comments in high school classes at least once; 20% were verbally abused by teachers or staff; 77% did not know where they could report

violence. The majority said that a curriculum, including sex education, that covers LGBTIQ topics, would be the best support. This was the first study in Croatia that focuses on young LGBTIQ people.

Another study found that over half of high school graduates thought 'homosexuality' was an illness, which some described as the failure of the education system.

In June, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended Croatia introduce comprehensive sex education.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The city of Zagreb placed a rainbow-coloured bench in the Zrinjevac park for the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May. A few hours later a man painted it with black paint, and the city had to repair the bench. It was then reinstalled for 24 hours but later removed by the authorities who said it was only a temporary installation.

The conservative centre-right party Croatian Democratic Union announced in June that it would redefine its previous stance on rainbow families and that its new program will "respect all communities of family life that are based on mutual love and care and the principles of solidarity and social responsibility". LGBT organisations welcomed the move.

The Supreme Court in Croatia ruled against an ultra-conservative NGO "Vigilare" anti-LGBT petition, sustaining the appeal made by Rainbow Families Croatia against a lower court ruling, and found that "Vigilare" had "incited discrimination and harassment of LGBTIQ persons and their families".

FAMILY

On 26 May, the High Administrative Court issued its landmark ruling establishing that same-sex couples have the right to adopt children. The ruling ends the six-year legal battle of a gay couple. The Court upheld the 2021 ruling of the Zagreb Administrative Court and struck down the appeal filed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, and Social Policy. The High Court dismissed the Ministry's argument that allowing same-sex couples to adopt would in any way violate the best interest of the child.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Zagreb Pride was held successfully this year, with the motto 'Give us our four walls', referring to the need in the community for a permanent LGBTQI community space. The mayor joined the march for the second time this year, and other politicians were also present. Mayor Tomašević said Zagreb is ready to discuss options for a community space.

This year, the third Pride Ride was held in Zagreb, attended by representatives of the city administration.

HEALTH

Trans healthcare access remained difficult this year. There was a five-year break in the coverage of costs at the expense of mandatory health insurance. Starting this year, mastectomies are covered again. Genital surgeries remain unavailable and those available abroad should be covered by mandatory health insurance, however, this is not happening. While mastectomies are covered by health insurance, hormonal therapy is not. Trained and trans-friendly medical professionals are still few, and personal bias still plays into the quality of care provided.

The Croatian Medical Chamber and the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality found that a doctor discriminated against a trans person when denying them an ultrasound exam, which is a routine part of medical transitioning. The doctor spoke negatively about the person's trans identity, saying he was ruining his life.

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality also established that the lack of trans healthcare regulations constitutes discrimination against trans people and that the Ministry of Health and the Croatian Health Insurance Institute must remedy the situation.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Trans Network Balkan, kolekTIRV, Spektra and Talas's regional feminist group, formed in 2021, is now in the process of developing strategies against anti-trans movements, particularly those originating in women's rights spaces, in the region.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

KolekTIRV lobbied firmly against the board of psychiatrists, which was set up in 2018 to decide on trans people's access to transition-related healthcare and legal gender recognition. In Croatia, there were three psychiatrists designated by the Ministry of Health as responsible for the LGR procedure. One of those three psychiatrists introduced an additional step in the LGR procedure: approval by the mentioned board of psychiatrists.

Civil society objected, and rather than withdrawing the need for involvement of the board, the psychiatrist withdrew himself (in 2022) from the list of psychiatrists responsible for the LGR procedure, leaving only two psychiatrists on the list.

The National Health Council, which grants final approval in LGR cases, continued placing additional administrative requirements on applicants and failing to meet the 30-day deadline it should abide by.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The first gay bar opened in Dubrovnik in the spring.

In July, a court established discrimination in the case of two men who expelled two gay members of their choir because of their sexual orientation. Both were fined HRK 15,000 (2,000 euro) each.

[CROATIA WEB PAGE](#)

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CYPRUS

ASYLUM

Civil society continued to advocate for the acceptance of asylum seekers who are fleeing criminalisation for being LGBTI in their home countries. Accept - LGBTI Cyprus held meetings with the Ombudswoman, who has remained silent on the issue.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

A man disrupted an event celebrating rainbow families in September and distributed pamphlets saying “Yes to the Traditional Family” and “No to the Abnormal New Order”.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In April, the Ombudswoman highlighted that police officers should undergo training on LGBTI+ topics so that the police can better respond to hate crimes.

In September, a gay couple was thrown out of a bar in Limassol for kissing each other.

In September, Accept - LGBTI Cyprus’ board members were attacked while setting up for a Pride event at a dog park in Nicosia. The perpetrator pushed one activist, knocked down their banner and called LGBTI people “abnormal” and a “threat” to children playing in the park.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Deutsche Welle reported about the more than 100 anonymous testimonies that LGBTQ+ persons shared with Accept - LGBTI Cyprus about having been forced to undergo so-called ‘conversion therapies’, including in the form of exorcism by priests. Civil society, the media, and MPs responded by advocating for a ban on the harmful practice. In March, the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs held a hearing where testimonies were shared about the intrusive practices and the trauma they have caused. The Cyprus Psychiatric Association also condemned so-called ‘conversion therapies’.

EDUCATION

The government made no tangible progress on creating programmes to tackle anti-LGBTI bullying, despite the 2021 death of a student. Bullying cases

were reported again this year to NGOs.

Accept - LGBTI Cyprus met with the Minister of Education, the Ombudswoman, the Commissioner for Children’s Rights, and members of the board of the Pancyprian Greek Teachers Organisation (P.O.E.D.), to demand the nationwide implementation of the ‘Code of Conduct Against Prejudice in Schools’ and the ‘Guide to Handling and Recording of Incidents of Prejudice’. Accept also called for the inclusion of SOGI issues in the curriculum and training for teachers and school staff.

In July, the Education Minister issued a written response to a query from MP George Koukoumas, saying that while the implementation of the Ministry’s anti-prejudice policy is mandatory, only 31 of 480 schools in the Republic of Cyprus have done so.

EMPLOYMENT

Events continued to be held this year to address LGBTIQI+ rights in the workplace.

FAMILY

Family rights remained a paramount concern for civil society this year, but no developments took place despite civil society’s continued advocacy.

A priest baptised the twin children of an American-Greek gay couple in Athens in July. The Holy Synod of Greece’s Orthodox Church sent a letter of protest to the priest, arguing that the move went against the Church’s values.

In July, Accept - LGBTI Cyprus met with rainbow families to discuss their problems. Later in September, Cyprus Pride was focused on rainbow families.

FOREIGN POLICY

In February, Cyprus and the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Protection and Promotion of the rights of LGBTI+ people in Europe and the Commonwealth.

In March, during a meeting in Rome, Cyprus was voted vice-chair in the Council of Europe’s newly formed Working Group on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics (GT-ADI-SOGI) of the Steering Committee on Anti-



Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). Cyprus continued its role as co-chair of the European Governmental LGBTI+ Focal Points Network (EFPN) with the UK and, later, also with Iceland. The 29th EFPN Roundtable was held in Limassol on 12 May and was attended by several state and civil society representatives from across Europe.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 18 June, two Pride marches were held in Nicosia under the motto ‘United by Pride’, bringing together people from across the island.

Cyprus Pride 2022 was held in September in Nicosia and attended by 4,000 people. For the first time, the event was financially supported by several companies.

Accept - LGBTI Cyprus, Queer Collective Cy, and Queer Cyprus Association participated in the first rainbow festival of the University of Cyprus on 21 September.

HEALTH

The Parliamentary Legal Committee discussed a proposal tabled by the AKEL party in March, June and November, to ban so-called LGBTQI+ ‘conversion therapies’. The proposal, welcomed by all parties apart from extreme-right ELAM, criminalised the procedure by anyone, including health professionals and priests. It is now expected to be voted in early 2023.

A Pancyprian report on the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTI+ people found that 55% of the respondents felt their life quality got worse, and 67% said their mental and emotional state deteriorated. One in ten was targeted by verbal abuse at home.

Monkeypox was labelled as a ‘gay disease’ in the media, which the Ministry of Health and civil society condemned as highly stigmatising and factually wrong. Following this, in August, the Ministry of Health met with all LGBTQI+ and HIV support groups to discuss the previously issued protocol and correct communication procedures.

The blood bank published its new eligibility criteria in April, changing the 12-month abstinence period and

allowing gay men to donate if they had a “controlled” sex life the past six months. The restriction caused a public uproar, particularly as the Ministry of Health published an urgent plea for donations shortly before. The discriminatory restriction was removed a few days later.

Accept LGBTI Cyprus continued lobbying for safe and quality healthcare access for LGBTI+ people.

Trans people continued facing difficulties in their access to hormonal therapy. Some also shared that their endocrinologists were unwilling to help adjust their dosage, and they were struggling with depression as a consequence.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

As part of Cyprus’s engagement in the voluntary reporting on the implementation of the Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5, a national report on legal gender recognition was published in January (see Council of Europe chapter for more details on the regional process of which this was a part).

In September, the Minister of Justice announced that the legal gender recognition bill was approved by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the House of Representatives for discussion and voting. The bill establishes a model based on self-determination for those over 18. Those aged 16-17 would have to undergo a more complex process, which involves parental consent, a court decision and the approval of a committee to confirm that the child understands the consequences of their request. LGR would remain inaccessible to those under 16. The Parliamentary Legal Committee held the first reading of the bill in November and was presented by the Minister of Justice.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Civil society held several public and cultural events this year, including exhibitions, discussions, and seminars for LGBTI people to strengthen the community. June and September Pride marches in Nicosia, as well as other events and seminars.

The third Queer Wave film festival took place between 25 November and 4 December.



POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, a two-day LGBTQI+ training session took place at the Cyprus Central Prison for newly recruited prison guards.

Following complaints about anti-LGBTI harassment by police, the Ombudswoman called for mandatory training for all police officers.

In October, two LGBTQI+ training sessions took place at the Cyprus Police Academy, for new recruits and existing police officers.

NORTHERN CYPRUS

**Areas not under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus.*

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A trans woman experienced transphobic harassment at a hair salon.

ASYLUM

Queer Cyprus Association (QCA) and the Refugee Rights Association successfully challenged the deportation of an LGBTQI+ asylum seeker living with HIV.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Online hate speech towards LGBTQI+ people continued to be an issue and was particularly common on social media platforms in May and June when Pride events were held. Other instances took place at the Family Workshop organised by the Presidency in February. The police have failed to take any meaningful action. QCA sued the police department for lack of effective investigation.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several people reported harassment and violence to QCA, including a gay man who was subjected to psychological violence by a family member and victims who were blackmailed over sexually explicit videos. The latter case was referred to the police and the suspect is under investigation.

DATA COLLECTION

The Human Rights Platform, launched by QCA in 2021, continued monitoring the situation of LGBTQI+ people in the northern part of Cyprus.

EDUCATION

QCA launched a project to monitor human rights violations in education, map the attitudes of teachers and school staff, analyse the curriculum, and organise events.

EMPLOYMENT

In May, QCA held an event on the situation of LGBTQI+ people in the workplace.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In May, QCA held a Pride march on the occasion of IDAHOBIT, focusing on the theme of diverse family forms this year.

On 18 June, two Pride marches were held in Nicosia under the motto 'United by Pride', bringing together people from all across the island.

HEALTH

QCA reported that several LGBTQI+ migrants reached out for information about living with HIV in the northern part of Cyprus, but others were deported before they were able to get support.

INTERSECTIONALITY

On 10 October, QCA organised a thematic discussion on intersectionality.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

QCA continued advocating for legal gender recognition based on self-determination.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

QCA visited organisations and local bodies working in the field of education and health and held meetings. A short film about homophobia and patriarchy on the island, 'The Hunt' premiered in IDAHOBIT in Nicosia.



POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

QCA and the Human Rights Platform monitored the situation of trans women in prisons this year, finding that trans women who have not undergone LGR are routinely held in solitary confinement and lack access to gender-affirming healthcare. The monitors also highlighted that detainees had very little access to quality food, fresh air, and hygienic conditions in their cells. In an important ruling in December, the Nicosia High Court affirmed that keeping trans detainees in solitary for their own protection was unacceptable.

A number of trans people who asked to be exempted from military service received a report stating they were suitable to join the army and had to leave the country as a consequence.

[CYPRUS WEB PAGE](#)

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CZECHIA

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Brno's oldest confectionery and cafe, Zeman's has made its support for the LGBT* public and began organising events on LGBT* issues.

Czech Railways launched a new ad featuring a lesbian romance, set it on a train heading to Hungary from Czechia, which some interpreted as a criticism of the Hungarian regime. The ad was widely praised.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In November, the Municipal Court in Prague sentenced one man to pay a 20,000 crowns (836 euro) fine and another man to do community service for their homophobic attack against a student in 2021.

DATA COLLECTION

In cooperation with NGOs, the National Institute of Mental Health launched a survey on 'Being LGBTQ+ in Czechia'.

EDUCATION

Some schools have noted an increase in the number of LGBTQ+ and some psychologists have shared positive examples of how to best support children and their families, or how to for instance accommodate trans and non-binary children's wishes to be called by a different name.

Transparent became an educational institution, accredited by the Ministry of Education to hold training sessions for teachers and educators on trans and non-binary issues in schools.

EMPLOYMENT

More and more companies adopted inclusion policies and granted the same rights to registered same-sex couples as married heterosexual couples.

A symposium for the finance sector was held by Pride Business Forum and ČSOB on the inclusion of transgender and non-binary persons at the work place.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Czech Evangelical Alliance (ČEA) published a book on how to support sexual minorities in the congregation.

The Ombudsman's Office retained his unsupportive stance towards LGBTIQ+ people. Jakub Kříž, known for his stance against marriage equality and abortion, is set to be appointed as deputy Ombudsman.

FAMILY

The legal process to introduce marriage equality continued this year. By the end of the year, over 165,000 individuals signed petitions calling for equal rights. The marriage equality bill, first introduced in 2018, moved to its second reading in 2021, but was stalled due to the elections. This year, two legislative proposals, one on marriage equality and another on defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, have made it made it once more to parliament and are being discussed.

In June, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs invited Jsme Fér to be part of the advisory group working on a new Family Policy Concept, which the organisation accepted but expressed concern that some members are openly against rainbow families.

More rainbow families shared their stories with the public this year, about their love, becoming parents, fighting prejudice, and having to deal with hostile authorities. A campaign song, 'Marriage for All' was launched in the spring.

A report published in August found that the number of couples entering same-sex registered partnerships has stagnated over the past five years. Same-sex couples who want to enter a registered partnership face a number of obstacles; for example some have to travel as the process is not available in all registry offices.

In March, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended Czechia to ensure that same-sex couples have the same rights as married couples.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Prague Pride was held in person this year, and no incidents were recorded.



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In July, the anti-LGBT+ organisation Alliance for Family filed another complaint against the TV station claiming that its reporting on equal marriage is biased. Jsme fér answered the complaint in a public letter.

HEALTH

Trans*parent held two-day courses for professionals working in psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, social work, and other areas, focusing on working with trans and non-binary clients.

PrEP continued to be available in Czechia, but reports suggest few people know about it, and for some it is unaffordable. While counselling and testing are covered, PrEP needs to be paid for out of pocket.

INTERSECTIONALITY

A number of articles and events this year addressed issue of senior homes and social care services not taking one's SOGIESC into account, following the release of a study on the topic.

An interview was shared this year with a non-binary person on the autistic spectrum, their daily life, and difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In a regressive judgement, the Constitutional Court ruled on 31 March that the sterility requirement of legal gender recognition is not unconstitutional. Civil society in Czechia and beyond are deeply disappointed with the ruling, but an application may be filed to the European Court of Human Rights. Some MPs affirmed that they would try to change the relevant legislation, remedying the situation, as Czechia is one the last countries in Europe to require sterilisation. Newly elected Commissioner for Human Rights Klára Laurenčíková and Transparent began to actively coordinate attempts to propose legislation abolishing the current sterilisation requirement. To date, legal gender recognition remains burdensome, invasive, time-consuming, making everyday life very difficult for many trans people.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Civil society continued to support voters with information about politicians' stances on marriage equality.

Podcaster and writer Filip Titlbach's book 'Byli jsme tu vždycky' (Eng:'We were always here'), covering queer life in Czechia, was released this year.

Several pieces were shared with Daniela Špínar, the (now former) head of Drama at the National Theater, who came out as a trans woman in 2021.

PUBLIC OPINION

Public opinion has continued to be positive on marriage equality.

CZECHIA WEB PAGE

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DENMARK

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Some trans people, QTIBIPOCs and/or migrants continued to struggle financially. Queer and trans communities provided sporadic and informal aid.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Trans people continued reporting to TransAktion having been denied access to spaces and services and threatened or assaulted.

ASYLUM

In March, ECRI expressed concern about Denmark's planned changes in asylum and urged the government to ensure the safety of those seeking asylum on grounds of SOGIESC.

The new LGBT+ Action Plan aims to strengthen the competencies of asylum centre personnel but does not abolish detention or increase the number of asylum seekers who can be granted status.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The government's proposal to lower the age limit for legal gender recognition sparked countless anti-trans statements online, in the media, and in parliament.

The anti-trans and anti-gender discourse intensified. The organisation *Normstormerne* was particularly targeted and threatened with funding cuts. Media and political attacks on scholars in gender, critical race, and migration studies continued.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

TransAktion continued receiving reports of police attacks on BIPOC queer and trans people.

The provision in the Criminal Act on aggravating factors, amended to include gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics, entered into force on 1 January.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Non-consensual and unnecessary surgeries and treatments on intersex infants and children continued to be carried out. Statutes of limitations continued to bar intersex people from complaining about the treatment they received as children, or

seeking redress.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to considering a ban on so-called 'conversion therapies'. The 2021 survey, part of the parliament's preparatory work, denied intersex people from participating.

EDUCATION

The city of Aarhus plans to cut funding for LGBTQ+ education in the municipality, which could jeopardise programs altogether and leave LGBTQ+ children and youth vulnerable.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The new law extending equal treatment legislation to gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics grounds in all areas of life and sexual orientation beyond employment, entered into force on 1 January.

The government published its new LGBT+ Action Plan (2022-2025) in August. The Action Plan fails to include intersex people in its scope, which intersex activists critiqued as the parliament's failure to see intersex people belonging to the LGBT+ umbrella. Intersex Denmark addressed the Minister of Equality on this issue but received no meaningful response. Intersex Denmark reported that the exclusion is primarily due to the continued pathologisation of intersex people and the reluctance of intersex people to come forward in a hostile environment.

In August, the National Research and Analysis Centre for Welfare (VIVE) published a comprehensive report on the living conditions among LGBT+ people, finding that LGBT+ people report lower life satisfaction, worse physical and mental health, more loneliness, and fewer relationships than others. They are also more likely to have lower education levels, earn less and experience discrimination and violence. Confirming previous study findings, trans people and bisexual women fare the worst compared to the general population. On average, trans people earn half of what cis people do. Six out of ten trans people have experienced discrimination and four out of ten have faced violence. Bisexual women reported much higher levels of psychological and sexual violence than heterosexual women. Activists reported the lack of intersectional analysis.



VIVE also published '[A qualitative study of experiences with variations in gender characteristics](#)', finding high rates of social isolation, shame, stigmatisation and bullying against intersex people.

Copenhagen municipality [shared](#) a language guide with its employees, highlighting that they should not assume anyone's gender or sexual orientation. The guide was ridiculed in the media and by some politicians.

Seven Nordic ministers from Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Greenland, [issued](#) a statement of concern over anti-LGBTI discrimination and violence.

FAMILY

In February, the parliament [adopted](#) the newest amendments to family laws, which makes the provisions of the Children's Act regarding recognition of parenthood upon medically assisted reproduction applicable also in the case of home insemination. The amendments also ensure that trans parents are recognised in their legal gender, i.e. a gestational trans man will be correctly [recognised](#) as a father, as long as he had changed his legal gender before giving birth. In August, the government [announced](#) that the law might contradict EU legislation and that implementation would be delayed.

Two legal parents will be able to [share](#) parental leave with two other social parents, in legislation to be implemented from 2024 onwards. Terminology in the law is now also gender-neutral and [refers](#) for instance to 'person who gave birth'.

In June, the [motion](#) for a resolution of co-father recognition [passed](#) with an overwhelming majority.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

Court cases of trans and intersex people, subjected to violence and discrimination by prison guards and other incarcerated people, are ongoing. In February, a district court [ruled](#) that a trans woman was lawfully placed in a men's prison and could be searched by male guards, as they noting that she "should be treated as a biological male, but be referred to as a woman". The woman's lawyer will [appeal](#).

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The Nordic LGBTI Fund of 2022 was [granted](#) to a coalition of QTIBIPOC-led groups working to strengthen QTIBIPOC community-building across the Nordics, including Normstormerne and LGBT Asylum in Denmark.

The Red Van, a project providing a safe space to bring clients for street-based sex workers in Copenhagen, received funding for 2023-2024.

HEALTH

The state monopoly of trans healthcare continued, split between three clinics. Trans people continue to report rigid gatekeeping, medicalisation, pathologisation, racism, binary gender regimes, anti-migrant, anti-sex worker, anti-poverty, anti-fat and ableist structures and approaches that prevent access to trans healthcare.

LGBT+ Denmark [released](#) a report about access to lower surgeries, highlighting long waiting lists, a lack of treatment protocols, and problematic attitudes from healthcare staff.

Intersex adults, who do not identify with the sex that was assigned to them at birth, continued to only be able to access hormones and surgeries if they acquired a diagnosis of being trans. This also means that their care is provided by trans healthcare teams, and not those specialised in intersex healthcare.

Due to the Satspulje state funding ending and the change in government, AIDS-Fondet lost most of its funding for checkpoints that provide free testing, particularly for LGBTIAQ+ people.

HOUSING

Projekt Udenfor published a [report](#) on LGBT+ homelessness, concluding the detrimental impact of homelessness on one's self-image and mental health, and LGBT+ people's obstacles in accessing support and services.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The movement lost [Fernanda Milán](#), the [first](#) trans asylum seeker to obtain refugee status in the



country, whose long-time activist work led to changes in Danish and international asylum policies.

“She truly loved the work she did, and found a deep joy in being able to connect with you all. She fought everyday to show up for our community, and was a truly dedicated activist who was passionate about creating spaces and support among, by and for the most marginalised within our trans communities. She was a proud feminist, who saw the beauty and great power in all things feminine.”

- TransAktion’s obituary

In September, most of the board and staff walked out of the trans-led, TransAktion thus suspending all activities.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, the Names Act was amended to ensure that name change is also accessible on the basis of a simple self-declaration, just like legal gender recognition is, and that LGR is not necessary for a name change. Civil society continued to lobby for the abolishment of the two binary name lists and the gendered social security numbers.

The ‘X’ gender marker in passports was made available to trans, non-binary, and intersex persons, on the basis of self-determination.

The previous government’s list of intended law proposals, published in October, included abolishing the LGR age limit and removing the six-month ‘reflection period’, thereby making it easier for trans people to change their (gendered) social security number. A corresponding bill was subject to a public hearing in early summer. The incoming government’s agenda, however, as of December 31, does not explicitly mention this law reform but vows to follow up on the previous government’s action plan.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The first domestic violence and crisis shelter for LGBT+ people opened.

Several parties in Copenhagen municipality provided funding for an LGBT+ community centre in the capital

- Aarhus and Odense already have one. Some activists expressed concern that the centre will be run by LGBT+ Denmark and not a coalition of groups.

**Some of the information about Denmark was gathered through counselling work and is reported here anonymously.*

[DENMARK WEB PAGE](#)

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ESTONIA

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The process to introduce legislation criminalising hate speech continued to be stalled this year. In 2020, the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Estonia for its failure to have hate speech legislation in place.

ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia, published in March, called on the government to better address hate speech.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

On 9 July, a migrant black trans woman from Jamaica was murdered in her accommodation in downtown Tallinn. Two men were arrested and the investigation is ongoing. Several media reports misgendered the victim in their reporting.

BODILY INTEGRITY

ECRI's report called for the prohibition of non-consensual medical interventions against intersex children and for more research on the situation and needs of intersex persons.

EDUCATION

ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia called for targeted action against anti-LGBTI bullying as part of the implementation of the 2017 'Bullying-free Education' concept and several ongoing programs to prevent bullying.

EMPLOYMENT

A record number of employers signed the Diversity Charter this year, making the total number of signatories, companies, public institutions and NGOs, 178. As of this year, 49 employers have earned Diverse Workspace label 'Respecting Differences'.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Estonian LGBT Association opened an exhibition about the experiences of LGBT+ students and youth, featuring a 300-square-meter rainbow flag in downtown Tallinn. The Association's campaign shared stories from LGBT+ youth in school, with shocking accounts of bullying.

ECRI's report called for the adoption of an LGBTI action plan.

The Estonian LGBT Association organised support for LGBT+ people in Ukraine this year.

In December, the Estonian Human Rights Centre published a critical overview of the previous governing period, highlighting that none of the governing parties fulfilled their promises on human rights.

FAMILY

Civil society remained alarmed that the current legislation differentiates between same-gender registered partners and different-gender married couples and that the implementation of the Registered Partnership Act remains flawed. The Act was adopted back in 2014, but still lacks the necessary bylaws that would make its smooth implementation possible. ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia called on the government to adopt the necessary implementation provisions of the 2014 Registered Partnership Act.

Registered partners for instance are not allowed to take each other's name. In September, the parliament adopted new regulations restricting the entry of Russian citizens, which discriminate against cohabiting same-gender partners. The regulations make an exception for 'close family' but exclude unmarried cohabiting partners.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Around 1,000 people participated in Tartu Pride on 11 June. Pride's motto was 'How long can we wait?', referring to the lack of significant progress in achieving LGBT+ rights equality over the past years. The event also marked the 30th anniversary of the decriminalisation of same-sex relations in Estonia. Some participants were targeted with verbal abuse before and after the march.

HEALTH

In May, the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men was lowered from 12 to four months. The Chancellor of Justice published an opinion in July to say that any such blanket restriction is unreasonable and discriminatory. In June, the new trans expert panel had its first meeting with the purpose of supporting the Estonian

LGBT Association and Mõttekoda Praxis in the development of a trans healthcare protocol. The Ministry of Social Affairs is one of the partners in this project.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The Medical Examination Committee, an integral part of the legal gender recognition procedure, disbanded itself at the beginning of the year. The new Committee was set up in July and started its work. The law and the LGR process remain the same but are now accessible to residents with health insurance.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Estonian LGBT Association published its recommendations to political parties ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections.

The LGBT Association presented the book, 'Out of Kalev', which features stories of LGBT+ people from 19th and 20th century Estonia.

[ESTONIA WEB PAGE](#)

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FINLAND

ASYLUM

LGBT asylum seekers continued to face difficulties in getting status, due to the application procedure requiring a narrative centred around identity, stigma, and shame. Trans asylum seekers and refugees also continued to be denied access to gender-affirming healthcare, unless they become residents, which can take several years.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Several hate speech incidents took place again this year, including during the trans law debates in parliament. These specifically targeted trans people and trans women by MPs of The Finns and the Christian Democrats.

In March, former Minister of Interior and Chairperson of the Christian Democrat Parliamentary Group, Päivi Räsänen was acquitted in her hate speech trial. The court found that Räsänen's anti-LGBTI statements were offensive, but did not amount to incitement. The Prosecutor expressed concern that the politician's statement could contribute to an increase in anti-LGBT stances in Finland, and has appealed the judgment. The Prosecutor also requested that the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) remove a 2019 interview with Räsänen from its platform. Civil society criticised the judgement.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Pride organisers across Finland said in a survey that vandalism and hate speech were far too common. A rainbow-coloured bench was set on fire in Pirkanmaa on a beach where a Pride event for young people was to be held. Police had to remove far-right protesters outside the Oodi Central Library, which that hosted a drag story time event during Pride month. In the town of Lapua four youngsters detonated a homemade bomb at the other end of a building where a Lapua Pride event was taking place. Lapua Pride also received violent threats in social media. Also in the town of Mikkeli, a homemade bomb was detonated by two young persons close to where the Pride march was taking place.

The case of high school students in Savonlinna made headlines in August. Several students spoke about suffering anti-LGBT harassment, including death

threats, intimidation, being followed home, and being almost run over by cars. The students have been targeted by these attacks for years and had not received support from the school or the police.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Seta published a report on so-called 'conversion therapies' and called for an absolute ban on the harmful practice, including its advertising. The citizens initiative calling for ban on conversion practices has been pending in the Finnish parliament since 2021.

The government made no concrete steps this year to ban non-consensual and medically unnecessary surgeries on intersex children, as set out in the Gender Equality Programme (2020-2023). In October, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Finland prohibit these medical interventions. In November, over 60 organisations demanded action.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Finland's fourth UPR review took place in November. States recommended Finland to introduce legal gender recognition for minors, ensure the bodily integrity of intersex children, and establish a comprehensive national LGBTIQ+ action plan.

FAMILY

The Parliament adopted a new Parental Law. The law unites former laws on parental recognition (separate laws on motherhood and fatherhood) into one law. The law reinstated the possibility for the recognition of a father to a child born to a female couple through insemination. This possibility is important for some rainbow families with more than two parents. The new law has been met with firm criticism by civil society as it fails children in rainbow families entirely. LGBTIQ+ civil society had advocated for the recognition of more than two legal parents and for gender-neutral parenthood recognition, instead of naming parents as mothers and/or fathers.

FOREIGN POLICY

In June, President Niinistö and Prime Minister Marin expressed shock and solidarity over the mass shooting at an LGBTQ+ bar in Oslo.



FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

Civil society continued to advocate for financial compensation for trans people who have had to undergo sterilisation as a requirement of legal gender recognition. It is hoped that compensation will be legislated upon when the new trans law is adopted.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Pride events were held in a record number of over 30 different cities and small towns this year.

On 2 July, Helsinki Pride was held for the first time since 2019 and brought together over 70,000 people. No incidents were recorded. The march took place a week after the Oslo attacks, but Pride organisers felt it was important it go ahead.

Jenni Haukio, wife of President Sauli Niinistö acted as the matron of Helsinki Pride Week this year. Pride events were broadcast on public TV, featuring interviews with the Prime Minister.

The indigenous Sápmi Pride was held for the eighth time this year and took place in three different locations, Oimmáivággi, Gállogieddi and Jiellevárri, in July and August.

HEALTH

Seta's trans healthcare survey found that over 40% of trans respondents were unable to access the care they wanted. The most common reasons were mistrust of medical staff, life circumstances, lack of knowledge about services, and financial obstacles. The majority of respondents also faced extensive waiting times.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The legal gender recognition reform process continued to be delayed this year. Much of the holdup was due to disagreements over the age limit in the law. Prime Minister Sanna Marin repeatedly expressed her commitment to the adoption of the law this year. The draft law was eventually up for discussion in parliament in the autumn. In November, over 60 organisations signed a joint letter demanding that parliament adopt a law on the basis of self-determination and that trans minors have the

right to access LGR. The current draft proposal no longer imposes sterility and mandatory diagnosis requirements. Nevertheless, it includes a reflection period and sets the age limit at 18, excluding minors completely.

The process to reform the personal identity code system is still ongoing. The government previously proposed that the gendered part of the codes would be removed from 2027 onwards, but civil society expressed concern that in the original plans, trans people who changed their gender marker before 2027 would still be outed. In September, the government submitted a bill to parliament, which would introduce gender-neutral personal identity codes and also allow trans people who have changed their legal gender, to apply for a new code.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The government made no progress on regulating surrogacy, despite civil society advocacy.

[FINLAND WEB PAGE](#)

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FRANCE

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A life insurance company hiked up their rate for a trans person this year but later withdrew the discriminatory move. Loan insurance has also become harder for trans people to secure, which can lower their chances of getting a mortgage.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-trans speech was on the rise this year. TV channel M6 streamed a documentary on trans issues, which included an anti-trans activist, a psychiatrist, and a trans person's hostile parent. Civil society [expressed](#) deep concern about the content and complained to M6.

In May, Smaïn Laacher, president of DILCRAH's scientific committee, the interministerial anti-discrimination body, was [reported](#) to be a board member of Observatoire de la Petite Sirene (Little Mermaid Observatory), a group well-known for its anti-trans views and actions. The group had for instance [claimed](#) that trans children accessing medical care amounts to "mutilation". One member of DILCRAH's committee resigned after the news broke. Laacher later [resigned](#) from Observatoire de la Petite Sirene.

Over the summer, four newly appointed ministers were at the [centre](#) of public attention due to their homophobic [positions](#) and CSOs [demanded](#) their resignations.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue this year.

The Ministry of Interior [shared](#) that the number of anti-LGBTI hate crimes rose by 28% between 2020-2021. Between 2016-2021, the number of incidents doubled. 2021 saw a temporary decrease presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry also highlighted that these numbers are in no way total, as a mere 20% of victims report threats and attacks to the police.

SOS Homophobie [found](#) a similar increase this year, noting the high rates of anti-trans insults and violence.

Several public spaces were vandalised this year (see [here](#) and [here](#)). A women's centre was [covered](#) in transphobic graffiti in Montreuil in June.

In January, two men were [convicted](#) in the murder case of Vanessa Campos, a migrant trans worker who was brutally killed in 2018. The men received 20 years in prison, but the transphobic motif of the murder was left unaddressed. Several other perpetrators of anti-LGBTI hate crimes were convicted this year (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

BODILY INTEGRITY

In January, the parliament [banned](#) so-called 'conversion therapies' that aim to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, making the administration of these harmful interventions punishable by up to 30,000 euro or a prison sentence.

CIA - OII France welcomed the National Human Rights Institution's (CNCDH) [report](#) on LGBTI rights that features firm recommendations to ban non-consensual surgeries, develop healthcare protocols on the basis of human rights, and train medical professionals.

In March, the health authority issued its opinion on the draft decree on healthcare provision for intersex children, which is a bylaw of the [2021](#) bioethics law. The law was adopted without any consultation with intersex activists and organisations. The opinion takes issue with the fact that care decisions would be made by doctors, without the consent of the child. The authority reminded of the clear stance of international and regional human rights bodies, i.e. that non-consensual surgeries and medical interventions must be banned. CIA - OII France welcomed the opinion.

In May, the European Court of Human Rights [dismissed](#) the case of [M. v. France](#) on procedural grounds. The applicant is an intersex person, M., who underwent surgical interventions against their consent as a child.

ECRI [recommended](#) that France bans all non-consensual and medically unjustified interventions on intersex children; that health professionals receive training on intersex rights; and that counselling and support services are available to intersex people and their parents.



EDUCATION

In April, President Macron said that it was too early to teach students about SOGI issues in primary school. A few weeks later, he backtracked and declared support for educational programs and CSOs.

EMPLOYMENT

The first study of its kind found that more than half of lesbian and bisexual women have experienced discrimination in the workplace, and half hide their sexual orientation.

Another survey found that more than a third of LGBTI+ employees have experienced workplace discrimination.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

On IDAHOBIT in May, the National Human Rights Institution (CNCDH) published a thematic report on the human rights situation of LGBTI people in the country.

This year marked the 40th anniversary of the decriminalisation of same-sex relations in France. Senator Bourgi (Socialist Party) proposed that financial compensation be paid to the thousands convicted on the basis of their sexual orientation. CSOs remain disappointed with the Ministry of Equality's pace of implementing the National LGBT+ Action Plan (2020-2023) and the lack of cooperation with CSOs. ECRI echoed these concerns and called for a monitoring body to oversee implementation and adequate human and financial resources.

Since November, people living with HIV can join national police ranks, as the government lifted the discriminatory ban. This development does not include firefighters, military and gendarmerie ranks, which continue to not be accessible for people living with HIV.

FAMILY

Following last year's announcement, official civil status forms were adjusted to be inclusive of rainbow families.

In February, the Toulouse Court of Appeal upheld a 2021 ruling in favour of a trans woman, who changed

her gender marker after her child was born, and is now correctly featured identified as 'mother'. The civil registry office had refused the mother's claim, who then would have had to adopt her own child.

Also in February, a Paris court recognised the parental responsibility of two non-legal parents - the first ruling of its kind.

The parliament adopted the new adoption law, making it accessible to unmarried couples.

Several same-gender female couples have faced difficulty accessing early parenthood recognition in line with the 2021 PMA law. Many are unaware that they need to go through the registration process prior to undergoing fertility treatment, either in France or abroad, and risk not being automatically recognised as parents.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, Bordeaux Pride was disturbed by far-right extremists who chanted anti-LGBT slogans.

In October, the town of Pau held its first Pride. Small town of Chenevelles also held a Pride march.

HEALTH

The report of two trans healthcare experts was launched in January, commissioned by the Ministry of Health. The report finds gaps in care provision, including a lack of self-determination, extended waiting times, and inequitable access in terms of location. The authors recommend healthcare provision based on self-determination, and informed consent, that recognises the diversity of transition pathways.

The new blood donation regulations lifting restrictions on men who have sex with men entered into force in March.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Prime Minister Borne announced pro-LGBTQ rights measures in August, including the promotion of decriminalisation abroad and funding for ten additional LGBT+ centres. The announcement came days after CSOs demanded the resignation of four ministers after their anti-LGBT stance was revealed.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The French Football League published an awareness-raising video on IDAHOBIT in May.

The first openly trans contestant of Miss France finished as runner-up.

PUBLIC OPINION

A number of studies were published this year, finding that two-thirds of citizens believe the government should do more for LGBT equality, that children should be taught about SOGI issues, and that LGBT children who are rejected at home should have state support.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In July, the Constitutional Council ruled that excluding trans and intersex people, whose legal gender is not 'female', from cost coverage for in vitro fertilisation is not unconstitutional. Civil society firmly criticised the ruling.

Fertility treatment remained inaccessible to many same-gender female couples, due to waiting times, age restrictions, and a confusing bureaucratic process. Civil society called for change.

Sex worker organisations continued to lobby for decriminalisation this year.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Paris municipality will open a shelter for those most marginalised within the LGBT+ community, including trans people and migrants.

[FRANCE WEB PAGE](#)

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GEORGIA

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, the Public Defender found that a printing company discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation by association when denying services to LGBT activists in 2021.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Preceding Tbilisi Pride Week, held in July, government representatives, religious leaders, and far-right extremists of the Alt-Info made countless anti-LGBT statements. Alt-Info spread hateful messages for days prior to the event and called on people to join efforts to attack and disrupt Pride. In June, the Union of Orthodox Parents demanded that Mziuri Cafe in Tbilisi remove its rainbow flag and said the “propaganda of sodomites is a genocide”. Another far-right group held an anti-LGBT protest in June, calling queer people “filth” - several of them were arrested.

In June, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili called Pride “anti-national, anti-state provocation” and accused Tbilisi Pride of causing the 2021 riots, where thousands of extremists attacked activists and journalists during Pride Week. The Pride organisers called for police protection, and the Ministry of Interior answered by saying they would protect the Pride event.

In July, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and in August, the UN Human Rights Committee called on Georgia to prevent anti-LGBT hate crimes, and hate speech from politicians.

In October, the Public Defender’s report highlighted that the anti-LGBT statements of political leaders incited the 2021 events.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A trans woman was sexually harassed in March. Trans women were verbally abused and their home was attacked in May - the police made no arrests. A 17-year-old was verbally and physically assaulted on a bus in a homophobic incident in November. In November, a cisgender woman was killed in Tbilisi. The perpetrator was under the impression that the woman was trans. Rainbow and EU flags were burnt outside the Lithuanian embassy on 9 June - four people were arrested.

On 4 April, 20 far-right extremists were convicted by the Tbilisi City Court and sentenced to six months to five years in prison due to their involvement in the 2021 attacks against Tbilisi Pride. Far-right groups and human rights activists were both waiting for the verdict outside of the court and were kept apart by the police.

In June, the European Court of Human Rights communicated the Tbilisi Pride and others v. Georgia case, concerning the state’s failure to protect activists and journalists during the 2021 riots.

TV Pirveli broadcast a report in June claiming that the state security service encouraged the 2021 brutal attack against activists and journalists.

In July, three people were fined for the 2021 attack against the Tbilisi Pride office. The court failed to establish that the incident was a hate crime or an organised attack. Civil society also questioned why only three people were charged.

In November, the procedure for issuing compensation for victims of violence against women and domestic violence was adopted. In the lack of legal gender recognition procedures, trans women are excluded from this measure.

EDUCATION

Research conducted by the Equality Movement affirmed that LGBT students face discrimination and bullying in school. WISG’s study on societal attitudes towards LGBTQI persons highlighted the lack of a linear connection between levels of education and anti-LGBTQI attitudes.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted Resolution 2418 (2022) on ‘Alleged violations of the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus’, and called on Georgia to adopt legislation and policies that safeguard against discrimination on the basis of gender expression and sex characteristics and to set up a body to establish a dialogue with the Orthodox Church regarding their stance towards LGBT people.

In September, the UN Human Rights Committee recommended Georgia tackle discrimination towards



LGBT persons, including by training law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary.

19 candidates competed to fulfil the Public Defender's role. Civil society organisations firmly supported three of the candidates. The parliament failed to elect a new Ombudsperson at the special parliamentary session in December.

The Ombudsperson's annual report highlighted the responsibility of high-level political leaders in encouraging violence during the 2021 anti-LGBT riots. The report also found that the legal situation of LGBTI people did not improve over the past year.

FOREIGN POLICY

In March, Georgia applied for EU membership. The European Commission responded that Georgia could become a candidate if it fulfils a list of 12 criteria.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

To implement the 2020 ECtHR judgement in *Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia*, an investigation was ongoing this year under Article 333 of the Criminal Code on the abuse of official powers. The victim's representatives launched a request with the Prosecutor's Office that the investigation cover Article 151 (threats), Article 156 (persecution) and Article 144 (torture). In October, WISG, the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC), and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) submitted a report to the Committee of Ministers showing the lack of follow-up action by the government.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Tbilisi Pride week was held between 28 June - 2 July. The organisers of Tbilisi Pride decided not to hold a Pride march, due to security concerns. Instead, the festival featured parties, a film screening, a conference, and a festival. Civil society called on the Ministry of Interior to protect the participants.

The far-right extremist group Alt-Info raised funds to organise anti-Pride actions and brought people from the countryside to the capital. On the morning of 2 July, Alt-Info tried to occupy the Pride Fest location,

but police arrested 26 people and secured the venue, and over 40 throughout the weekend. About 4,000 extremists roamed the streets of Tbilisi during the day, burnt NATO and EU flags and tried to disrupt Pride in the later hours too. The police protected the Pride participants throughout the day and no attacks happened.

The General Prosecutor's Office reopened investigations this year, following the December 2021 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *WISG and others v. Georgia* case, establishing a violation of Articles 3 and 11 in conjunction with Article 14.

HEALTH

Implementing the Ombudsperson's 2020 recommendations, the Ministry of Health, together with community-based and donor organisations, started setting up a working group to develop medical protocols and guidelines for trans-specific healthcare. WISG released its policy document.

HOUSING

The housing situation of LGBTQI and particularly trans people was further worsened by the war in Ukraine, and state support is still not available.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee called on Georgia to introduce quick, accessible, and transparent legal gender recognition on the basis of self-determination. In December, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in three LGR cases against Georgia, establishing that the lack of a clear legal framework for LGR is a violation of Article 8.

WISG released its LGR policy document in June.

The appeal of an intersex woman, who was denied LGR without proof of surgery in 2021, is ongoing.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Young green politicians spoke about launching a feminist and queer party.



POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

WISG held training for the police, the Prosecutor's Office, the State Care Agency and legal service providers on anti-LGBT hate crimes, discrimination, and victim support.

PUBLIC OPINION

WISG's study on societal attitudes towards LGBTQI persons highlighted that social acceptance is slowly increasing, especially among youth.

Another study found a similar trend.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Equality Movement's research showed that access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services is limited and not covered by private insurance.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Equality Movement's study showed that LGBT people are unaware of state support and when they do seek services, they often encounter discrimination.

[GEORGIA WEB PAGE](#)

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GERMANY

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In August, the Frankfurt am Main Higher Regional Court ruled that Deutsche Bahn must change its registration system, which currently only offers male or female gender options to customers. It must now offer a non-binary option.

ASYLUM

In January government shared that it has granted international protection to close to 80 LGBTI human rights defenders who had fled Afghanistan. Civil society urged the state to bring these individuals to Germany as soon as possible.

Civil society firmly criticised the government's deportation practices after it deported a gay asylum seeker back to his home country, where he could face the death penalty. Asylum procedures have been criticised as seriously flawed, risking the well-being and safety of LGBTI asylum seekers and limiting family unification to married couples. In September, the Ministry of Interior announced that the assumption of 'discretion', that an LGBTI person will hide their identity, would no longer be applied in asylum procedures.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The media continued to publish anti-trans articles - trans organisations launched a petition in response. For example, an article in the WELT argued that ARD and ZDF 'indoctrinate' children with "transgender ideology". A guest lecture from one of the authors was cancelled at Humboldt University in July after students announced they would hold a protest. In the following weeks, anti-trans mobs posted countless hate comments, hate mail, and personal threats. Sociologist Dana Mahr, for instance, had to flee her home. On a positive note, many media outlets published sensible and nuanced stories, including a kids show on public television.

Trans MP Tessa Ganserer was dead-named and criticised by a women's magazine, and was targeted by numerous transphobic articles and posts throughout the year. Other politicians expressed their solidarity with Ganserer. The court found a man guilty of hate speech and insult against Ganserer, for hateful posts in 2020, fining him 20,000 euro. The ruling is not final.

Two books were classified as harmful to youth for their anti-LGBT content.

In February, the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt am Main acquitted a university professor who said that "homosexuals" are prone to child sexual abuse and that children of same-sex couples are victims of "mental rape". A court in Bremen also acquitted a pastor, who called same-sex relationships "degenerative" and the idea that there are genders beyond male and female, "satanic".

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue this year, but about 90% of cases continue to go unreported. In Berlin, for instance, anti-LGBTI hate crimes rose by 17% in the past year. Lower Saxony also recorded an increase in homophobic crimes. In January and July, the grave of trans migrant activist Ella Nik Bayan was vandalised. Other examples from across the country include attacks against trans women (see here, here, and here) and homophobic violence (see here, here, here, here, and here). The fatal attack against a trans man, who tried to stop a man from harassing two women at a Pride march, shook the community. The police expressed concern about these attacks.

Following years of civil society pressure, the Interior Ministers' Conference established a federal independent working group focusing on anti-LGBTIQ+ hate crimes. The Committee met in September for the first time and is in charge of collecting data on hate crimes, and providing training for the police, among others. In July, the Ministry of Justice announced a draft amendment to the hate crime law, which would explicitly list 'sexual orientation' and 'gender-specific' motives as aggravating factors. Civil society welcomed the announcement and called for the same inclusion with regard to hate speech.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In October, the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child called on Germany to enforce the Law for the protection of children with variants of gender development, aimed to protect intersex children from non-vital, non-emergency medical interventions, as well as to establish procedural safeguards and accountability mechanisms for medical doctors. The law was adopted in 2021.



EDUCATION

The Society for Freedom Rights (GFF) filed a class action lawsuit against Humboldt University for discriminating against trans and intersex students. HU has failed to allow that ID cards feature used names in the case of students who have not gone through legal gender recognition or name change yet.

Student councils highlighted that little was done this year to ensure the safety of LGBTQI students, and called for more training for teachers, educational campaigns, and SOGIESC-inclusive sex education.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the government appointed its first-ever Federal Government Commissioner for the Acceptance of Sexual and Gender Diversity, a step much welcomed by civil society. Lehmann will examine how government policies impact LGBTQ people and will also lead the process of adopting a National Action Plan for Sexual and Gender Diversity, which was part of the new government's 2021 coalition treaty. The draft Action Plan was presented in August, and CSOs made recommendations for improvement. In November the federal government started its implementation.

The draft bill of the Democracy Promotion Act was criticised by civil society (see here and here) for not being explicit enough about its future funding, failing to apply an intersectional approach, and risking overlooking hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.

125 employees of the German Catholic Church came out publicly as LGBTQI+. A Berlin mosque raised the rainbow flag for the occasion of Pride month.

The parliament agreed that Germany would commemorate victims who were persecuted by the Nazis due to their sexual orientation on Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), from 2023 onwards. A commemoration of lesbian victims was held at the Ravensbrück Memorial on 1 May.

FAMILY

In February, Münster Fiscal Court ruled that a gay couple cannot deduct the costs of their surrogacy process - 13,000 worth of travel, medical, and other costs, as surrogacy is prohibited in Germany.

In March, a church musician was fired because he wanted to start a surrogacy process.

Lesbian couples continued challenging the mandatory stepchild adoption process.

HEALTH

Civil society and the Green party criticised the government's slow response to the monkeypox virus, with not enough vaccines having been made available.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In a historic first, the Bundestag raised a rainbow flag in July. Berlin's Interior Ministry announced that state buildings are allowed to fly the flag on days of importance to the LGBTQI+ community.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued campaigning for a new law that would establish legal gender recognition on the basis of self-determination. On 30 June, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and the Ministry of Justice presented a new draft legal gender recognition law, centering self-determination, which has been in the works for many years. The draft also addresses the topic of intersex, trans, and non-binary parenthood. It includes financial compensation to trans and intersex people who have suffered harm under previous laws. Oll Germany highlighted that this must apply to all intersex people, regardless of whether they have changed their legal gender or not.

In May, the 40th German Psychotherapists' Conference passed a resolution in support of trans people's self-determination and the Women's Council expressed the same stance in June.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Former MEP (Pirate Party) Felix Reda came out as trans in February. Reda is no longer in politics.

PUBLIC OPINION

A representative survey found that the majority is accepting towards LGB people. For instance, 81% agree with marriage equality and even among AfD supporters, 57% support LGBTI people. 75% would have little or no problem with their child being LGB, but this rate is much lower, in the case of having a trans child, 66%.

GERMANY [WEB PAGE](#)

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GREECE

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The municipality of Athens renewed its financial support in September, to support 60 vulnerable LGBTQI+ persons and continue its cooperation with the Greek Transgender Support Association (GTSA) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Trans people continued to face discrimination in banks, with one person being requested to present the court order of her gender marker change. The law does not set out any such requirement and presenting the court documents would be a serious privacy breach.

ASYLUM

Civil society has remained concerned over asylum procedures in Lesbos for those seeking protection on grounds of SOGIESC. A report by Fenix highlighted difficulties based on 17 cases from 2021. In June, six NGOs submitted a report to the European Parliament, highlighting the issue of unlawful deportations and poor treatment. Some positive decisions were also documented this year, granting refugee status on grounds of sexual orientation.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech by political and religious leaders continued to be a serious issue. For instance, a group of Orthodox priests published a joint statement against marriage equality, calling same-sex relations a “deviation” and “perversion”. (see more under *Family*)

The lawyer of the former director of the National Theater, who is facing trial on charges of raping a 14-year-old child, went on a homophobic and transphobic rant on TV in February. GTSA filed a complaint with the Athens Bar Association, and the lawyer is currently being investigated.

In September, Intersex Greece presented the results of the first intersex-led research on hate speech against intersex people, showing that most incidents are perpetrated by the medical community.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In May, two men were sentenced to the maximum

punishment of 10 years of prison for the murder of LGBT+ activist Zacharias Kostopoulos in 2018. Four police officers, who were also on trial for causing fatal bodily harm, were acquitted. A demonstration was held outside the court and public outcry followed the acquittal. LGBTQI+ civil society organisations published a joint statement. In July, one of the two men convicted earlier was released on parole. In October, the Disciplinary Body of the Hellenic Police cleared the police officers, triggering anger in the LGBTQ+ community.

The national hate crime monitoring body’s annual report, published in May, found that crimes against LGBTQI+ people continued to be very common in 2021.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, Greece banned so-called ‘conversion practices’ on minors and other ‘vulnerable persons’ that try to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. Civil society had been campaigning for the ban for years but expressed concern that adults could still undergo these practices if they consent to them. Psychologists and others who practise these so-called therapies can now face hefty fines or prison sentences, but only if they accepted money to perform them. The law does not cover cases where conversion practices are performed by priests or other religious/spiritual leaders, as well as “specialists” without official qualifications.

Intersex Greece’s report, published in May, documents abuses against intersex women in healthcare settings, including degrading medical examinations, medical staff photographing intimate body parts for the hospital’s use, examinations attended by big groups of doctors and medical students, painful exams, and derogatory comments from medical staff.

In July, the government banned non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children, becoming the fifth European country to do so and the second to prosecute doctors. A month earlier, ECRI’s country report on Greece highlighted this as a priority issue and in the same month, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child did the same. Doctors administering non-consensual medical interventions

can now be fined or sentenced to prison. Intersex children over the age of 15 will be able to consent to hormones or surgeries if that is the care path they want to take. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis apologised for the abuses carried out to date.

EDUCATION

A gender non-conforming high school student was harassed by their teacher in February for wearing a skirt, and was called “a shame on society”. The school has not taken action to date. A trans woman also faced harassment at a college this year, where staff refused to address her by her female name and verbally assaulted her.

GTSA reported that a private school’s graduate program on psychosexual therapies was running a course on ‘Gender Identity Disorders’, condoning the pathologisation of trans people.

ECRI’s recommended that Greece better address anti-LGBTI bullying and train teachers on how to prevent and respond to hostility.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Prime Minister Mitsotakis continued to support legal reform to advance LGBTQI+ rights, following the adoption of the National Strategy for Equality of LGBTQI+ people (2021-2023) last year and in the leadup to the 2023 elections.

The government is yet to set up a body in charge of addressing LGBTQ issues. Some programmes were introduced to raise awareness on LGBTQI issues, including the training programme ‘Diversity Awareness’ for those working in the private and public sectors, as mentioned by Alexis Patelis, the Chief economic adviser to the Prime Minister of Greece, during an interview for LGBTQI+ Voice Up: Project Greece. These trainings for civil servants are run by the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government, but are not mandatory to take.

In March, civil society welcomed the amendments to the Charter of Ethics of the Judiciary that now includes SOGIESC in its non-discrimination clause.

FAMILY

The government has been considering introducing marriage equality, following the 2021 consultation on adopting a more progressive family law. The national campaign ‘Say Yes’ for marriage equality was launched in May, followed by a backlash from the Orthodox church.

The European Parliament’s Petitions Committee (PETI) examined the petition of a rainbow family, who are recognised as a family unit in Germany but would lose this recognition and relevant rights upon their move to Greece. The PETI affirmed that all families in the EU must be recognised across borders.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The first Pride march in Rodos was held on 25 June. Young people wearing neo-nazi symbols were reported to threaten, spit on and throw eggs at the participants while the police stood by.

The first self-organised Pride march in Ioannina took place on 28 June.

HEALTH

In January, the Ministry of Health lifted the ban on men who have sex with men to donate blood. Civil society had been advocating for this step for years. Previously, men were completely barred from donating if they had same-sex relations.

The emergency measures regulation was changed in January, allowing trans people to self-declare their gender identity, irrespective of whether they have changed their legal gender. The previous regulation allowed both the police and also any citizen, to check ID documents.

Media coverage of monkeypox included misinformation and stigmatising content against LGBTQI people.

PrEP became available in September for HIV-negative persons at high risk of exposure. The details regarding provision and beneficiaries will be announced by Joint Ministerial Decision.



INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In November, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) signed with the LGBTQI organisations Rainbow Families, Rainbow Seniors and Intersex Greece and granted them several office spaces.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued to lobby for better legal gender recognition procedures, as LGR remains a very time-consuming, expensive, and bureaucratic judicial procedure. ECRI's report on Greece echoed these concerns.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Civil society held several training events for police officers on LGBTQI issues.

The police issued a guide on the prevention and response to hate crimes against LGBTQI people.

The new Correctional Code, adopted in October, protects trans people in prison from discrimination and allows them to be accommodated and receive uniforms in line with their gender identity. The clause for special treatment includes gender identity as one of the bases on which such special treatment might be justified.

PUBLIC OPINION

Polls this year showed that the majority of young Greeks support law reforms to advance LGBTQI+ people's rights.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Ministry of Health continued working on legal reform on medically assisted reproduction. Civil society has been advocating for the law to use gender-neutral language to avoid discrimination on grounds of SOGIESC.

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HUNGARY

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A trans person was denied accommodation in a hotel this year.

ASYLUM

Civil society organised support for LGBTQI people fleeing Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The Media Council imposed a 400,000 huf (950 euro) fine on Pesti TV for its transphobic broadcast in 2021.

Minister of Justice, Judit Varga said in an interview that Hungary would fight “gender madness”.

Upon the request of Háttér Society, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights (CFR) launched proceedings against a deputy mayor of Győr, who said on social media that an LGBTQI-themed film should be “thrown in the trash”. The CFR rejected Háttér’s petition, and the decision was upheld on judicial review.

A bus stop was tagged with a text calling for the “killing of gays” - a criminal investigation is ongoing.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2417(2022) on ‘Combating rising hate against LGBTI people in Europe’, highlighting the alarming developments in Hungary.

Several hate crimes were committed this year, with the perpetrators in some cases referring to the 2021 ‘propaganda’ law as being “on their side”.

The perpetrator of a 2021 lesbophobic hate crime was sentenced to one year and eight months in prison.

Háttér successfully challenged the police’s decision to not investigate far-right protestors who gave a nazi salute at the 2021 Pride march. The case is pending.

Áron Molnár, founder of the pro-democracy and human rights movement noÁr was sexually harassed by a well-known far-right activist at Pride. An investigation is pending.

In March, the Prosecutor General launched an investigation into a hate crime based on sexual orientation because a trans man and a woman were attacked on public transportation in Budapest.

EDUCATION

Since the adoption of the 2021 ‘propaganda law’, teachers reported being scared even to mention SOGIESC topics in the classroom. One parent reported that their child was not allowed to have a rainbow as their kindergarten sign.

A far-right website published a list of LGBTQI and -friendly teachers. The National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information launched an investigation.

EMPLOYMENT

Transvanilla marked Trans Day of Visibility with a campaign “Elfogadod?” [Eng: Will you accept them?] featuring seven trans employees. Transvanilla published ‘Trans-inclusive Workplaces Guidelines for Employers’ in Hungarian.

Since the 2021 ‘propaganda law’, at least two trans people were fired due to their trans identity this year.

Háttér Society provided training and capacity-building for HR professionals, and trans, intersex and non-binary persons.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

2022 marked the 60th anniversary of Hungary decriminalising ‘homosexuality’.

Háttér had an advocacy meeting with President Katalin Novák in November, following her statement in the summer that she wished to be everyone’s President, “including, of course, Hungarian homosexuals”.

The GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) downgraded Hungary’s NHRI to B status.

FAMILY

Following civil society’s calls, the Budapest Metropolitan Government Office updated its



information materials on citizenship requirements, setting out that a Hungarian citizen's same-gender registered partner can apply for citizenship after three years of residence, instead of eight.

In June, civil society filed a complaint to the European Commission for Hungary having failed to implement the 2018 Coman judgement and recognise a marriage formed abroad between people of the same gender.

The National Child Protection Service amended its online forms to better accommodate persons who wish to adopt individually.

In at least two cases, the court quashed decisions of the authorities who denied men, who were open about being gay, the ability to adopt (see here and here). In both cases, the authorities had to start a new adoption process.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Budapest Metropolitan Court ruled that the police failed to secure a 2020 Wonderland is for Everyone storytime event, which was disturbed by far-right activists. The appeal is ongoing.

The annual Budapest Pride march brought together tens of thousands again this year. The route was again altered this year, as far-right Mi Hazánk booked Andrásy avenue first.

The second Pécs Pride took place on 17 September.

The EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community (EL*C) conference was held in Budapest in the autumn and included a Dyke March. No incidents were recorded.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Budapest Metropolitan Court ruled that the Government Office failed to sufficiently justify censoring Wonderland is for Everyone.

Thanks to the relentless work of CSOs, the government's anti-LGBTQI referendum failed in April, with over 1.5 million invalid votes cast. The referendum was a response to the European Commission's infringement procedures against Hungary (see here and here). The civil society campaign drew

attention to the discriminatory referendum, featured testimonies of LGBTQI people and allies, and was supported by over 400 volunteers nationwide.

On 20 December, the European Commission referred the 'propaganda law' to the European Court of Justice.

In July, the Metropolitan Court and the Court of Appeal both reaffirmed that the TV channel RTL Klub did not in any way violate the law when streaming a PSA about rainbow families. The Media Council had previously found a violation by RTL Klub.

In August, The Metropolitan Court obliged the Office of the Prime Minister to share the answers to their survey, which was sent out to municipalities in 2021 and which mapped how "LGBTQI propaganda" was being monitored. The Court of Appeal upheld the ruling.

In August, the Media Council sought legal aid from its foreign counterparts regarding the flawed rating of LGBTQI content regarding a same-gender kiss on Netflix's Jurassic World.

HEALTH

The Hungarian Psychiatric Association, the Hungarian Psychological Association, and the Hungarian Society for Sexual Medicine issued a statement criticising the 'propaganda law'.

Blood plasma donation screening questions were changed for the better by a plasmapheresis centre, which used to discriminate against men who have sex with men.

In March, the Government Information Center (KTK) sent out an email to those subscribed to COVID-19 news that they should vote 'no' during the April anti-LGBTQI referendum. In response, Háltér and Amnesty requested that KTK share the civil society call to vote 'invalid'.

Háltér trained 116 medical professionals and students on work with LGBTQI persons and released educational videos for health professionals.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

A few days after the elections and referendum, the National Election Committee (NEC) imposed fines of 176,400 huf (approx. 430 euro) on 16 NGOs and an additional three million huf (approx. 8,000 euro) each on the campaign's two main organisers, Amnesty International Hungary and Háttér Society. Some of the 16 organisations did not even partake in the campaign. The NEC alleged that the civil society campaign “defeated [...] the constitutional purpose of the exercise of power.” The NGOs challenged the NEC decision in court. The Supreme Court annulled the fines on 12 NGOs, but not on Amnesty and Háttér, who turned to the Constitutional Court, which rejected their constitutional complaints. The case is pending before the European Court of Human Rights.

The 14 NGOs were finalists for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Václav Havel Human Rights Prize.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

After years of legal battle and the call of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, the Budapest Metropolitan Government Office started to notify the local registrar to amend the name and gender marker of trans people who applied for legal gender recognition prior to its ban in May 2020. In 2021, the Constitutional Court ruled that the retroactive application of the ban was unconstitutional, and dozens of rejections were later overturned. Several trans people received their new documents this year.

PUBLIC OPINION

A study found that most Hungarians do not consider 'homosexual propaganda' an important issue.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Budapest Local Government's new homelessness strategy mentions LGBT people in several instances.

HUNGARY [WEB PAGE](#)

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ICELAND

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBTQ and particularly anti-trans hate speech in the media was common this year. Some articles targeted trans children in particular. Dr Björn Hjálmarsson at the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Landspítali, which provides care for trans minors, made controversial statements in May and later issued a formal apology. In June, a Canadian psychologist, visiting Iceland for a lecture, said that trans children are being “surgically mutilated”. The psychologist also gave an interview that was broadcast nationally.

In July, Deputy State Prosecutor Helgi Magnús Gunnarsson made hostile statements about “gays” and said that “of course” asylum seekers lie about their sexuality to save their lives. Local NGO Samtökin ‘78 reported the cases. In August, Gunnarsson was officially reprimanded for his comments by the State Prosecutor.

In May, Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir submitted a memorandum to the government to appoint a working group to address the growing trend of hate speech in Iceland. NGOs were convened for a meeting on the issue, and the group’s agenda is still being formulated.

Homophobic stickers made by neo-nazis were put up this summer.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several hate crimes took place this year and were reported to the police.

The story of a group of queer teenagers in the capital made headlines in May. The group has been harassed for several months, sometimes on a daily basis. Parents are alarmed that the extent of bullying, which now includes barking at LGBTQI+ young people, has a severe impact on their children’s mental health. The victims have reported depression, self-harm, and a friend of theirs committed suicide last year.

Anti-LGBTQI+ ‘barking’ grew increasingly common this year.

In August, the rainbow-coloured steps of a church were repeatedly vandalised repeatedly. In August, nine rainbow flags were ripped down in Hellu, another

flag in Kópavogur was vandalised, and posters were tagged with nazi symbols.

Samtökin ‘78 received ten reports of anti-LGBTQ harassment following Pride week.

The new LGBTI Action Programme (see under *Equality and Non-discrimination*) pledges to impose higher penalties for anti-LGBTI hate crimes.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Iceland provide reparations for intersex children who had been subjected to unnecessary medical treatment, and provide social, medical and psychological services, counselling and support to children and their families.

EDUCATION

Samtökin 78’ signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education to provide more training in schools to tackle prejudice, and to support LGBTQ youth. Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir said hate speech against LGBTQ youth cannot be tolerated.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Iceland provide comprehensive sex education in schools.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The parliament adopted Iceland’s first-ever comprehensive LGBTI Action Programme for the period of 2022-2025, which consists of 21 actions and serious budget commitments. All ministries have actions assigned to them and some have started implementation already. The government announced a dashboard would soon be available where the public can follow the process implementation under each action.

Iceland underwent its UPR review in January.

In cooperation with the Church, Samtökin ‘78 launched the new website One Story One Step, which features testimonies of stigma, prejudice, and exclusion that queer people have faced in the church. The project was launched at a special ceremony in



the Skálholt church in June. 30 testimonies have been collected over the past two years.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Western region of Iceland held its second Pride march this year, in the town of Ólafsvík.

Reykjavik Pride was held in person and without any restrictions this year. Pride events were held in several towns.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Rainbow flags and trans flags were raised across the capital on the occasion of IDAHOBIT on 17 May and during trans visibility week.

HEALTH

Access to gender-affirming surgeries remained difficult - some trans people have been waiting since 2020. Landspítali hospital said waiting times were now much longer than usual, due to the backlog since the COVID-19 pandemic. Trans minors also continued to experience long waiting times.

In November, the National Court ruled that a trans man who underwent a mastectomy was not entitled to paid sick leave.

The new LGBTI Action Programme (see under *Equality and Non-discrimination*) commits to improving trans healthcare provision and lifting the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Iceland provide more mental health support to LGBTI children.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The new LGBTI Action Programme (see under *Equality and Non-discrimination*) pledges 40 million Króna (over 280,000 euro) to targeted actions. Samtökin '78 is now formally included on the state budget, with an increase from 15 to 40 million Króna. The parliament's budget committee allocated an additional 15 million Króna so Samtökin '78 can tackle backlash.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Four new signs were adopted into Icelandic Sign Language related to SOGIESC, following an open call hosted by Samtökin '78.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

A new bill was tabled in parliament in October, which would allow people to choose -dóttir, -son or the gender-neutral -bur as endings to their family name, regardless of legal gender, and on the basis of self-determination.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Icelandic Swimming Association voted in favour of the International Swimming Federation banning trans women from competing in the female category at the World Championships, which was firmly condemned by local civil society.

The Reykjavík Sports Association took a stance for trans inclusion again this year and committed to holding awareness-raising training on LGBTQ people's participation in all sports clubs in the capital.

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IRELAND

ASYLUM

A new scheme was adopted in January enabling undocumented migrants to apply for residence, which will positively impact many LGBTQ+ migrants.

LGBT Ireland called for more visa waivers for LGBT Afghan refugees.

Civil society provided support for LGBTI+ people fleeing Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

A study identified a dozen far-right groups that target people due to their SOGI.

Transphobic speech remained a serious issue. In May, an education conference featured a speaker known for her anti-trans views, on the topic of “managing gender issues” in school. In June, the national broadcaster, streamed transphobic content, prompting Dublin Pride to cancel its partnership with the media platform. Following Trans Writers Union, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) also cut ties with the Irish Times over its transphobic articles.

LGBTQI+ young people continued to face toxic comments, abuse, and online harassment. The new National Anti-bullying Action Plan, published in December, envisions protecting trans students in particular.

A priest called LGBT people “sinners” and later apologised. A prominent Sheikh stated that Muslims would not be affected by monkeypox as they do not engage in same-sex relations, spoke out against those who do, and linked the spread of the virus to the ‘wisdom of Allah’.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people continued to be a serious issue (see here, here, here, here, and here), also affirmed by the government, the police’s annual hate crime statistics, and Dublin City where bias-motivated violence has become a particular concern.

In April, two men were murdered in separate homophobic attacks in the town of Sligo - a 22-year-old man awaits trial. Vigils were held in over 25 cities

and towns. Civil society continued working with the police to address the violence.

The Dublin City Council adopted an emergency motion to provide training to the police on anti-LGBTQI+ hate crimes and Dublin’s Pearse Street police station set up a diversity officer position.

The new hate crime bill, which recognises anti-LGBTI violence as aggravated offences, passed two readings.

LGBT Ireland and the National Traveller and Roma Action Group’s report highlighted that 42% of LGBTI+ Travellers had experienced physical assault.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The ban on so-called ‘conversion therapies’ continued to be stalled, but the Taoiseach and the Minister for Children and Equality expressed clear commitment. In April, solidarity protests were held after the UK’s ban excluded trans people from its scope. In July, the Irish Association of Catholic Priests called for a complete ban. The UN Human Rights Committee echoed this call. The government commissioned a study to hear from survivors.

Intersex Ireland continued demanding a ban on medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children. In July, the UN Human Rights Committee echoed this call.

DATA COLLECTION

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) announced that census respondents would have to mark male or female as ‘biological sex’, and if they tick both, the Census would automatically assign them one of the two available options. The CSO later launched a consultation on this and other issues.

EDUCATION

This year 57 schools stepped up to work with Belong To, to create a safe space for LGBTQI+ students in Ireland’s first whole-school community safe and supportive schools project, the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

In April, the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) urged the Department of Education to protect



teachers from harassment and assault due to their SOGI, ethnicity, and disability.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment called for the inclusion of LGBTQI+ issues in relationship and sex education (RSE), also demanding by civil society.

After refusing to use a student's correct they/them pronouns, a secondary school teacher, who shouted at the school principal, was put on administrative leave in August. He was sentenced for refusing to stay away from the school and, since he would not agree to being put on leave, was put in custody.

EMPLOYMENT

Ibec and TENI launched a new guidance note on gender identity and expression in the workplace.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission published its report with over 60 recommendations on how Ireland's Equality Laws need to be reformed, including by protecting individuals on GIESC grounds, and ensuring that non-binary people are included in laws and policies.

In May, the Department of Justice published a 'disregard scheme' plan to exonerate gay and bisexual men who were prosecuted when 'homosexuality' was still illegal. The Department launched a public consultation on the scheme. Civil society continued to demand an official apology from law enforcement.

Several civil society organisations formed the Trans Equality Together coalition, led by TENI, Belong To and LGBT Ireland.

Dublin declared itself an LGBTQ+ Freedom Zone and Cork installed two rainbow crossings.

FAMILY

In July, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on International Surrogacy published its report with 32 recommendations, which should facilitate family recognition in the new Assisted Human Reproduction Bill. Civil society, including parents, had been advocating for parenthood recognition

and rights protections and held a protest on the day of the publication. The bill would also extend paid leave rights to LGBTQ+ families. In December, the government approved the recommendations and agreed to legislate for domestic and international surrogacy.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Dublin Pride was attended by over 50,000 people. Three people were attacked after the march in what was assumed to be a transphobic hate crime and were hospitalised. Many other Pride events were held across the country.

Over 2,000 people participated in the Trans and Intersex Pride in Dublin in July.

A large crowd turned out to support the first pride parade in the small town of Inishowen in County Donegal.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A Drag Storytime event in Mayo in July was targeted by far-right activists who gathered outside the bookstore and threatened participants.

HEALTH

The report on Traveller and Roma LGBTI+ people found that a third have attempted and two-thirds have considered suicide.

A new study found that mental health services are not fully inclusive of LGBTQI+ people.

New resources were launched about LBQ sexual health.

The number of new HIV infections doubled compared to the previous year. Civil society highlighted the negative impact of COVID-19 restrictions on gay and bisexual men's health.

Monkeypox vaccination centres opened across the country in October.

Free STI home tests are now available nationwide.

The crisis in gender-affirming healthcare provision



continued, with youth being the worst impacted. There remains no clinic to which young trans people can be referred - the Child and Adolescent service is closed and waiting times are indefinite. In October, Ireland ranked last among EU countries on trans-specific healthcare provision.

The new blood donation rules focus on risky behaviour, removing the discriminatory deferral period that had excluded men who have sex with men.

HOUSING

LGBT Ireland and the National Traveller and Roma Action Group's report highlighted that 40% of LGBTI+ Travellers have experienced homelessness.

The new Youth Homelessness strategy calls for emergency accommodation for LGBTI+ youth; training for service providers; and privacy and safety strategies for young LGBTI+ people using emergency accommodation.

INTERSECTIONALITY

The Gay Project's 'Crossroads Report' affirmed thatGBTQ+ people of colour face multiple and intersectional discrimination and violence in all areas of life.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Cork's City Council Library launched a phone line to ensure that trans and gender-diverse people's names and gender markers are correctly recorded on their library IDs, regardless of LGR.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Rugby player Nick McCarthy, supported by his team, came out as gay.

The Irish Rugby Football Union announced that trans women could no longer compete in women's contact rugby.

PUBLIC OPINION

The National LGBT Federation's public opinion study found high rates of acceptance towards LGBTQI people, with cisgender gay men being the most (89%) and non-binary people being the least (65%) accepted.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Amnesty International's report, based on 30 interviews, affirmed criminalisation's detrimental impact on sex workers.

State funding will be available for IVF treatments by 2023.

[IRELAND WEB PAGE](#)

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ITALY

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech remained common this year, including from politicians (see [here](#)) and particularly since the September elections (see more under *Equality and Non-discrimination*). Federico Mollicone, Brothers of Italy culture spokesman [said](#) in September that “in Italy homosexual couples are not legal, are not allowed” and that same-sex parenting was not “normal”. Lucio Malan of Brothers of Italy said in November that the Bible [considered](#) same-sex relations an “abomination”.

Two trucks with messages against “LGBT propaganda” [appeared](#) outside the Sanremo Festival in February.

The court [found](#) doctor Silvana de Mari guilty of hate speech for her repeated anti-LGBT statements.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In the follow-up of the Zan law having [failed](#) in 2021, anti-LGBT hate crimes continued (see a list of attacks [here](#) and [here](#)). Three migrant sex workers, including a trans woman, were murdered in Rome in November. Arcigay’s office in Pavia was [vandalised](#) several times this year. A rainbow bench was [vandalised](#) in June in San Donato. Two volunteers were harassed and [threatened](#) at an Arcigay HIV testing site in Napoli in October. Several of these attacks were condemned by political parties, MPs, and local mayors.

In June, a trans woman who was suspended from her teaching job after socially transitioning [committed](#) suicide.

The national observatory on lesbophobia published its report [documenting](#) one lesbophobic hate crime per month between 2011 and 2021. Non Una Di Meno’s monitoring work [identified](#) 112 lesbophobic and transphobic murders nationwide in 2022.

Domestic violence, particularly against young people, continued to [increase](#) this year. A 19-year-old trans girl, Chiara [committed](#) suicide in October. Another trans woman, also called Chiara, took her own life in June.

EDUCATION

In March, the Congregation for Catholic Education

released new guidance for Catholic educational institutions, [setting out](#) that teachers could be expelled if they are LGBT.

EMPLOYMENT

UNAR’s study [found](#) that one in four LGBT people have experienced discrimination at work.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May, President Sergio Mattarella [spoke up](#) for LGBT rights. The city of Milan [declared](#) itself an ‘LGBTQ+ freedom zone’, also in May. UNAR [launched](#) the #questionediritti campaign with a TV and radio commercial.

The September 2022 parliamentary elections [brought](#) victory to the far-right Brothers of Italy and Giorgia Meloni, who has since formed Italy’s first far-right government since World War II. Meloni is [known](#) for her openly anti-LGBT views, routinely [uses](#) the phrases “LGBT lobby” and “gender ideology”, and has advocated for a ban on sex education in schools and the inclusion of LGBT people in children’s books. Meloni’s Brothers of Italy also opposed the Zan law, which would have protected LGBT people from hate crimes. The community [fears](#) the consequences of the detrimental election.

In early October, the outgoing government [adopted](#) a National LGBT+ Strategy for the period of 2022-2025. The Strategy features six key areas, work, safety, health, education and sport, culture and media, monitoring and evaluation, but some have [highlighted](#) gaps in terms of indicators, deadlines, and resources. The new government [condemned](#) the adoption.

FAMILY

In March, Senator Maiorino [tabled](#) a proposal on marriage equality. Civil society noted that the bill is unrealistic in the present moment, but welcomed that the issues are staying on the agenda.

Following a number of successful court decisions over the past few years, the [Torino](#) court [denied](#) a lesbian couple birth registration that would feature both of them as their child’s parents. Torino was the [first](#) city to issue birth certificates to children of gay and lesbian couples, back in 2018. The ruling is due



to a letter sent by the Prefect Raffaele Ruberto of the Ministry of the Interior, who warned the mayor that the birth certificates go against Italian law. The Court of Appeal of Torino also denied the request of a lesbian couple that their son could have both their last names. Another lesbian couple was also denied birth registration for their child, in Rome in April. At the same, the Bari Civil Court ruled in September that the child had the right to two mothers, after one of the mothers tried to have the other mother removed from the registry when they separated.

Incoming Prime Minister Meloni (see under *Equality and Non-discrimination*) had previously talked about her stance on family rights, saying LGBT people should not be allowed to have children, and that surrogacy should be criminalised. (see also under *Bias-motivated Speech*).

A Rome court ruled in November that same-gender parents have the right to be named as 'parent', instead of 'mother' and 'father', on their child's birth certificate.

In December, the Supreme Court ruled that only the biological father, the one who donated sperm in a surrogacy procedure, can be registered in the civil registry as a parent. The other parent must go through step-child adoption.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

48 Pride marches were held across Italy between April and September. Following the Pride marches, participants were harassed and assaulted in Bari, Torino, and Naples.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In December, the group ProVita issued a warning notice to all schools that grant alias careers to their students. An "alias career" entails a different identity connected to the registered one, valid only within the school or university, that enables trans students to be featured in class registers and participate in their education according to their gender identity.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

A recruitment note from the police in July stated that those with a trans diagnosis are excluded from applying.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The first safe house for trans and intersex victims of violence opened in Rome in November.

The first LGBT centre, *Protego*, opened in Sicily's Trapani-Palermo area.

ITALY WEB PAGE

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KAZAKHSTAN

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The anti-gender movement continued gaining more ground this year (see [here](#) and [here](#)). For instance, a petition to ban “LGBT propaganda” was widely circulated in September.

Politicians, journalists, and other public figures made several anti-LGBT statements concerning the films ‘Lightyear’ and ‘Thor’ (see more under *Freedom of Expression*) (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), which feature scenes with same-sex relationship.

In November, Feminita [filed](#) a petition to the Central Election Commission to demand the withdrawal of Karakat Abden’s presidential candidacy, due to her hostile views towards women’s and LGBT people’s rights.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, the European Parliament [adopted](#) a resolution on the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, highlighting discrimination against LGBTI people and the regressive 2020 order that limits trans persons’ right to legal gender recognition and access to trans healthcare.

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May, over 20 embassies [released](#) a support message urging the government to respect the rights of the LGBTI+ community.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Anti-government [protests broke out](#) across the country in early January, triggered by a sharp increase in gas prices. The police [detained](#) hundreds of people and killed dozens, perhaps [hundreds](#).

Activists [held](#) several protests throughout the year condemning the war in Ukraine.

Feminita and other activists held a Women’s Day march again this year - several made [speeches](#). This year’s theme was ‘[Women in Politics](#)’.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, the parliament amended the [Law on the protection of the rights of children](#), establishing that

foreign social media and messaging companies must register and open an office in Kazakhstan. The law will affect companies with more than 100,000 monthly users. Civil society [fears](#) that it will be used further to curb freedom of expression and civil society voices.

In July, Culture and Sports Minister Dauren Abayev [announced](#) that the new Pixar movie ‘Lightyear’ would not be released in the country, following a [petition](#) with 34,000 signatures calling for the ban. Almost 30,000 people supported another [petition](#) demanding that the Minister reverse the decision and [resign](#), and several celebrities [spoke out against](#) the [censorship](#). A number of conservative activists also [demanded](#) that the film ‘Thor’ be banned. Both films feature scenes with same-gender couples, one with their child.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

After five years of work, the Kok.team [ended](#) its operations in March.

None of the perpetrators in the 2021 [attacks](#) against LGBTI [activists](#) Zhanar Sekerbayeva and Gulzada Serzhan have been held accountable and brought to justice.

Feminita [held](#) two feminist camps this summer.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Trans people [continued](#) to be subject to abusive legal gender recognition requirements. In particular, the surgery requirement puts trans people in an impossible situation where they must choose between access to correct documents or their bodily integrity.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Following the January protests, Feminita [launched](#) ‘Purple House’ to increase women and girls’ knowledge about political participation.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The General of the Armed Forces [stated](#) in February that people with so-called ‘non-traditional sexual orientation’ could serve in the army, free from discrimination.



**Some of the information about Kazakhstan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous. These accounts were not publicly shared online or otherwise.*

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KOSOVO

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A gay couple was forced to leave the Hotel Garden in the capital. Civil society called for a boycott.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

During the vote on the draft Civil Code (see under *Family*) MP Labinote Demi-Murtezi (Vetëvendosje) said that marriage is to be between a man and a woman, otherwise, the union is “moral degeneration”. The President of the Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Victims of Sexual Violence During the War, Missing Persons and Petitions, Duda Balje, wrote on her Facebook regarding the Civil Code: “As a member of parliament, I cannot go against the religion I belong to, the principles I live by, nor against the family values I grew up with. Therefore, my vote will be AGAINST.”

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In June a girl was physically assaulted by her brother for being a part of the LGBTI community.

A mural depicting a trans woman in Prishtina was vandalised in July.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Civil society continued its cooperation with the Office of Good Governance and the President, and held several meetings on the rights of LGBTI individuals.

The implementation of the National Action Plan (2019-2022) continued to be flawed, and expired at the end of the year. A new Action Plan is expected to be drafted at the beginning of 2023.

FAMILY

On 16 March, the parliament voted against amendments to the Civil Code that would have opened the path to provide legal recognition to same-gender couples. Civil society has been advocating for an inclusive law for years and Kosovo has also been urged by the EU to pass the amendments. Both local and international civil society organisations condemned the outcome of the vote; activists held a demonstration in Prishtina. Three academic faculties published a statement in support of LGBTIQ+ persons. CEL and CSGD highlighted that

the amendment was too weak to be celebrated and said they would continue pushing for a more equal Civil Code.

In May, the Ombudsman’s Office published a report in favour of family recognition.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Civil society marked IDAHOBIT in May. The Government Building was lit up with rainbow lights again, and several state institutions, embassies, and the EU Office in Kosovo raised a rainbow flag. Prime Minister Kurti tweeted in support of the community.

CSGD, CEL, and other human rights groups jointly organised Kosovo Pride Week again this year, between 6 and 9 June. This year’s motto was “We are in the state, we are in the family!”. Pride Week featured various events, including movie nights, parties, exhibitions, discussions, and a conference. The Pride march was celebrated by hundreds on 9 June and no incidents were recorded.

HEALTH

The Ministry of Health set up a Working Group to draft a PrEP protocol, which civil society has been advocating for years and welcomed.

The government launched a public consultation on the Concept Document for Mental Health. Civil society is advocating for the inclusion of LGBTI people and a suicide prevention plan.

CEL and CSGD continued to offer psychological support to LGBTI people and their families. Requests for support have significantly increased since the COVID-19 pandemic.

HOUSING

CEL continued to provide housing to some LGBTI people in need, mostly in private apartments, as the planned shelter continues to be delayed.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Following the 2021 adoption of the formal Working Group’s concept note on legal gender recognition law reform, civil society continued to advocate for name



and gender marker change to be solely based on self-determination.

Civil society reported that the Ministry of Justice's current draft LGR law was in line with Resolution 2048 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. CSGD for instance was part of the working group.

CSGD held a three-day workshop for the Civil Registry Agency in the summer.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The exhibition 'Pink Revolution' was installed in July, celebrating the LGBTQI+ movement in Kosovo.

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT, CSGD held a conference on politics and LGBTI issues.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Civil society continued to engage with law enforcement on tackling anti-LGBTI hate crimes (see here, here and here).

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The construction of the shelter for LGBTI people was delayed again this year.

** Included in this Review as a separate jurisdiction following UNSCR 1244/1999*

KOSOVO WEB PAGE

MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG



KYRGYZSTAN

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Due to the border conflict with Tajikistan and the war in Ukraine, a lot of Kyrgyz internal and external migrants returned home and Russians fled to Kyrgyzstan. The political situation hiked up inflation rates, unemployment, and rent prices.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Fake news, misinformation, anti-LGBT trolling, and calls for violence remained widespread (see for instance here and here). Anti-LGBT hate speech was also common among politicians and religious figures.

A number of articles linked the spread of monkeypox to gay and bisexual men.

In October, the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that Kyrgyzstan sanction hate speech and hate crimes targeting LGBT people.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Kyrgyz Indigo's (KI) Urgent Response Group provided legal consultation in 105 cases this year, which included outings and threats (18%), fake dates and blackmail (13%), physical violence (10%), family violence (16%), theft and extortion (10%), and police violence (20%). More than a third of the fake date cases were perpetrated by the police.

EDUCATION

The new draft law on education was released for public consultation in April. The draft mentions "moral education", without a clear definition, and says students have the right to be protected from "propaganda".

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Civil society continued advocating for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. In October, the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that Kyrgyzstan effectively protect LGBT people from discrimination by adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Civil society has long advocated for this. The state delegation of Kyrgyzstan said an anti-discrimination law would be adopted if and when society expresses the need for it. In November, the draft law on equality and non-

discrimination was submitted for public discussion, but it does not include SOGI.

FAMILY

KI's study about the socio-economic situation of LBQT women found that 13% of the respondents had been subjected to so-called 'corrective rape', and only a third of the victims contacted the police. KI also reported that police routinely refer to domestic violence as a 'family matter' and it rarely takes action against perpetrators.

KI provided safe shelter to a victim of domestic violence, who was assaulted and locked up by her parents, who also took her money and documents away.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Women's Day March was held on 8 March. The march was to call for equality and protest against war. MP Nadira Narmatova condemned the event, saying it cannot represent the voice of the entire country. During the march, several posters and marcher's banners of the marchers were forcibly torn down.

On 3 December, the group 'Karshylyk' held a march against gender-based violence and reported that the police had previously threatened them and requested they cancel the event.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In February, MP Nadira Narmatova asked that the parliament adopt a law on foreign agents. Kyrgyzstan already has a law in place, which was adopted in 2021 and subjects NGOs to additional scrutiny on financial reporting, similar to Russia's 'foreign agent law'. Amendments to the Law on non-profit non-governmental organisations and the Criminal Code were later tabled. These would allow CSOs to be under the control of the General Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Justice with regard to internal and financial matters.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A group of mountain climbers continued raising the rainbow flag on peaks this year.



HEALTH

HIV tests can now be ordered online.

KI provided psychological assistance to 53 LGBT+ people this year.

KI also launched a pilot project providing PrEP for men who have sex with men.

HOUSING

The political situation (see under *Access to adequate food*) led to an increase in rent prices, which forced many trans women to leave their homes. Due to the border conflict with Tajikistan, KI opened a shelter for LGBT+ people and provided housing to 36 people.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

KI's plea to the Constitutional Court to challenge the legality of the amended Law on acts of civil status that deleted provision for legal gender recognition was rejected. In late November, the Administrative Court rejected a trans person's request for legal gender recognition.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Activist and artist Altyn Kapalova started the first queer feminist art collection in the country, collecting pieces from all over Central Asia.

Kloop published a photo project of the suppression of LGBT people in the country. Kloop's social media page received a lot of hateful comments.

LGBT+ activists launched a new monthly queer party called Oturush.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

KI continued its outreach and training work on sexual and reproductive rights, shared information about HIV-related resources, and held gatherings for people living with HIV, including people from across Central Asia and trans women. KI held 98 sessions in four regions and reached over 1.000 people from key populations.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

KI started raising funds to open a rainbow house, a safe house for LGBT people in Central Asia.

**Some of the information about Kyrgyzstan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists and so far had not been public.*

MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG

LATVIA

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Civil society reports that over 300 anti-LGBT posts were removed from social media platforms in 2021. Eight of these were reported to the police and seven criminal proceedings have begun.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Mozaika documented nine anti-LGBT hate crimes this year. None of the victims reported the cases to the police.

EMPLOYMENT

The first Diversity and Inclusion Forum took place in November in Riga, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, with a focus on employment.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

On the occasion of Coming Out Day in October, Mozaika launched a program to support LGBTQ youth and their families.

In cooperation with KPMG Latvia, Mozaika launched the report, 'The True Cost of Intolerance in Latvia', with findings that anti-LGBTQ attitudes in 2020 impacted between 0.85% and 2% of the national GDP.

FAMILY

In February, 26 same-gender couples turned to administrative courts across Latvia requesting to be recognised as a families and many more couples have filed their claims since. The action followed the 2021 Supreme Court decision that same-sex partners should be given civil status, and also are entitled to be recognised as a family. The first positive ruling was issued in May, whereby the court recognised the couple as a family under Article 110 of the Constitution. By end of 2022, 31 families had been recognised before the Court.

In early March, the Ministry of Justice submitted the draft Civil Union Law to the parliament. The draft recognised the registration of cohabiting couples, same-sex couples, and others living in the same household for economic reasons. Civil society held demonstrations outside the parliament in May, June, and December, calling for the law to be adopted. The vote were held on 2 and 16 June, but both votes

failed, due to the lack of quorum, as the number of MPs present did not reach the mandatory threshold of 50. Civil society reminded that the parliament two previous readings were successful. After the elections, in December, the parliament decided not to review the Civil Unions Bill. The failed vote violates and fails to respect the 2020 and 2021 Constitutional Court, ruling as the parliament did not manage to meet the Court's deadline. Civil society resumed to advocacy for new draft legislation to protect all families and vowed to take the issue to international fora.

Another attempt to adopt legislation concerning the recognition of same-sex couples' relationships was made by 23,000 individuals who submitted a draft collective legislative proposal to the newly elected parliament. On 8 December, the parliament rejected the proposal, with 32 in favour, 50 against, and one abstention.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

This year's Riga Pride was held jointly with Kyiv Pride under the motto 'Until We Are All Free'. The festival ran between 13 and 19 June and the Parade took place on 18 June, gathering over 5,000 participants. No incidents were recorded.

On 29 October, LGBT House Riga hosted the first Queer Day, featuring community event, and information about LGBT and trans activism in Latvia.

HEALTH

In March, the Saeima adopted amendments to the Law on the Rights of Patients, setting out that in cases where the patient is unable to make a decision on their treatment due to their health condition or age, priority decision-making rights on the patient's treatment are given to a person authorised by the patient. The amendments came into force on 13 April.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In June, Riga Pride gave human rights awards to the former President of the Constitutional Court, Sanita Osipova, representative of Dzīvesbiedri movement and lawyer Jūlija Jerņeva, the youth organisation Active Rainbow, and MPs Anda Čakša and Juris Pūce for their contributions to LGBTQ people's equal rights in Latvia.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Ahead of the autumn elections, Mozaika analysed party politics on LGBTQ rights and encouraged LGBTQ people to vote.

Matīš Kaža's film, 'Neona pavasaris', which is the first Latvian film to feature a kiss between two women, premiered in the autumn.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In January, the Saeima adopted amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance, establishing that military personnel who have returned from missions abroad and require rehabilitation can receive it with their spouse or cohabiting partner. The amendments came into force on 4 February.

PUBLIC OPINION

In November, the social opinion polling agency SKDS and Mozaika's poll found that 49% had a neutral stance towards 'homosexual' people, 25% were accepting, and 23% condemned 'homosexuality'. A third of the respondents said they did not know an LGBT person.

[LATVIA WEB PAGE](#)

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LIECHTENSTEIN

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In March, Bishop Haas called efforts to introduce marriage equality a “diabolical attack”. The Bishop later refused to attend the annual confirmation mass in Schaan, where the country’s first Pride event took place in June. In December, the Bishop cancelled a traditional mass for parliamentarians because the majority are in favour of marriage equality. He also described the steps forward for marriage equality as “LGBT propaganda”.

FAMILY

As Switzerland introduced marriage equality in 2021, debates on the topic continued in Liechtenstein this year. The government clarified its position that it would require broad public discussion on the topic before enacting any legislation. Marriage equality was again discussed in interviews in print and on the radio several times this year. In his annual interview on the occasion of Liechtenstein’s national holiday in August, Hereditary Prince Alois said marriage equality “should not be an issue”. Civil society has interpreted his statement as giving green light to parliament to legislate on the matter.

In September, 15 parliamentarians submitted a motion to adopt marriage equality under civil law. In November, 23 out of 25 parliamentarians voted in favour of drafting a proposal.

The parliament amended the Partnership Act and the General Civil Code in July to ensure that joint adoption, stepchild adoption, and medically assisted reproduction are open to same-sex couples in a civil partnership, on an equal footing with married heterosexual couples. The amendments come as a follow-up to the 2021 State Court of Justice ruling on the issue. Prior to the ruling, Liechtenstein’s head of State, Prince Hans-Adam II stated his opposition to equal adoption rights.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Liechtenstein held its first Pride event on 11 June in Schaan. The event featured a panel discussion, speeches, and concerts, and was joined by Schaan’s municipal official, Daniel Hilti. Flay also presented civil society’s demands for LGBTQIA+ equality. The event also symbolised a kick-off of civil society’s campaign for marriage equality.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

FLAY’s main annual event, held on the national holiday in August, took place in person for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[LIECHTENSTEIN WEB PAGE](#)

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LITHUANIA

ASYLUM

The situation of LGBTIQ migrants and/or asylum seekers remained difficult. In February, several LGBTIQ asylum seekers went on a hunger strike against long-term uncertainty, poor housing conditions, lack of medical care, and anti-LGBTQI bias. Several applicants were denied refugee status again this year. Dozens remained in reception centres, and later left Lithuania for other EU countries.

In April, the police started investigating a series of sexual abuse cases perpetrated in a reception centre by an official of the Border Guard Service.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBT speech by political and religious leaders remained a serious issue. A guest speaker spoke about the “homosexualization of Lithuania” in parliament in March. The Prime Minister and the majority of MPs left the room in protest. In May, an investigation was launched against MP Petras Gražulis after he called LGBT people “degenerate” and “spreading diseases” following the parliamentary debate on civil unions (see under Family).

In February, the Vilnius Regional Court dismissed the appeal of Pranciškus Valickas, former MP candidate of the People’s Party, who will have to pay a 5,000 euro fine for anti-LGBT incitement.

In April, a man was sentenced to one year and three months in prison for incitement, for producing posters against migrants and LGBT people in 2021.

In September, a woman was sentenced for inciting hatred against the LGBT community and some LGBT individuals specifically, on seven different occasions, including at the 2021 Kaunas Pride events and online.

A rally organised by the Movement of Families was held “in defence of the Constitution” in late October and was attended by several hundred. Some of the messages were explicitly against LGBT people.

The Human Rights Monitoring Institute published the national report ‘Hate speech and Euroscepticism’, conducted among young people (16-25) between 2010-2021, finding that hate speech is widespread and routinely perpetrated by political leaders.

Threats against LGL continued to be treated inadequately by law enforcement. One investigation concerning death threats that LGL received in 2021 was indefinitely suspended. In another similar case, the police refused to initiate a pre-trial investigation despite having identified the perpetrator. Civil society reported that the police said the following to one of the victims: “Why are you even coming here? We will terminate this investigation anyway”.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The court awarded non-pecuniary damages to a person who was lured on a fake date on a dating app, robbed and physically assaulted. The Prosecutor initially failed to establish this was a hate crime.

EDUCATION

Anti-trans rhetoric continued in academia. In October, the Lithuanian Scientific Society held a discussion on how “genderism and globalism” threaten society.

EMPLOYMENT

LGL wrapped up three cycles of IT courses for young LGBT people to help those with long-term unemployment find a job.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Two amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities were adopted to cover the ground of ‘family status’ and to prohibit sexual harassment beyond the sphere of employment. Parliament will hold a vote in 2023.

On 9 December, LGL organised a discussion on the EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, where Commissioner Dalli called on Lithuania to adopt a national LGBTIQ action plan. Vice-minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Justina Jakštienė participated at the event and assured that follow-up steps will be taken.

FAMILY

Several smaller protests were held this year in support of legal recognition for same-gender couples and their families (see here and here).

Following the rejection of the Partnership Bill in 2021, the parliament dropped the wording ‘same-sex partnership’ in a new approach. The new Civil Union



Bill uses the gender-neutral terms 'partners' and 'civil unions', and passed its first parliamentary reading in May. While a step forward, it is much weaker than the previous version and seen by many as too much of a compromise and as a 'minimum standard'. Civil unions would be registered by a notary, not the civil registry office, and partners could not take each other's last names. The law would be a positive development in terms of inheritance rights and accessing a partner's health information. It, however, does not mention children at all, and like the previous Partnership Bill, does not allow for adoption. Some called the law humiliating for same-gender couples as it still excludes them from the concept of family. Nevertheless, conservative voices have called for a referendum even on this weaker version of the law. In September, the parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs in parliament approved the Civil Union Bill, but its reading is delayed.

Another, competing bill also passed its first reading in May, but was later rejected. This would have amended the Civil Code, and used the wording 'close relationship', further distancing same-gender couples from the definition of family.

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT, 20 embassies expressed support for the LGBTIQ+ community, including the right to be recognised as a family.

Civil society launched a strategic litigation case concerning article 3,229 of the Civil Code, which defines cohabitation as between a man and a woman.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 15 May, parents of LGBTIQ children held the 'All Families Matter' rally in Vilnius to support the Civil Union Bill. The event was attended by the PM, the Speaker of the Parliament, members of the cabinet, and both government and opposition MPs.

On 4 June, the Baltic Pride March was hosted by Vilnius for the fifth time and was attended by roughly 20,000 people. This year's slogan was 'For Equality and Peace'. The ombudsperson, alongside Nordic equality bodies, called for protection for the participants. A small crowd of anti-Pride protesters were present, but no incidents were recorded. The

Baltic Pride Festival spanned between 31 May and 5 June and featured a conference, workshops, talks, exhibitions and parties. In January, Mayor of Vilnius Remigijus Šimašius shared a welcome message to all prospective participants. A magazine and a phone app were launched. LGL secured the largest support to date from private donors, embassies, and the municipality. Some ministers joined the march, along with some MPs, mostly from the Freedom Party. Many diplomatic and corporate allies cooperated for the organisation of Pride.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In July, the Vilnius District Administrative Court dismissed a case that the police filed against a rainbow crossing in the capital. The Court ruled that the issue is a difference of opinions and that the police had not been able to prove that the crossing was dangerous to traffic.

HEALTH

The law lifting the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men entered into force in May.

Media incorrectly described monkeypox as a "mostly sexually transmitted disease" spread by men who have sex with men (MSM). The Ministry of Health committed to providing MSM vaccines, but the timeline is yet unclear.

In August, the long-pending and first-ever trans healthcare protocol was released, setting out guidelines and steps for care provision. The protocol maintains pathologisation and does not cover surgeries.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

LGL developed a partnership with the Vilnius municipality within the context of Baltic Pride 2022.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

As of February, trans people can change their first names without a gender marker change. The new regulation mandates a psychiatric diagnosis and is only accessible to those over 18 and unmarried.



Trans people continued to be able to access LGR through a judicial procedure, without surgery or sterilisation.

The case *L. v Lithuania* remains under the supervision of the Council of Europe. In June, the Committee of Ministers concluded that implementation continues to be lacking.

PUBLIC OPINION

The Human Rights Monitoring Institute's Hate speech and Euroscepticism report found that the social acceptance of LGBT people among young people remains around 50%, having barely improved in the past ten years.

Another survey found this year that about 50% of the population supports same-sex civil unions.

LITHUANIA WEB PAGE

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LUXEMBOURG

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In September, the right-wing conservative party Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei (ADR) submitted a question to the government, asking for its position on the suspension of an Irish teacher who refused to respect a student's pronouns. In the question, ADR also misgendered the student.

BODILY INTEGRITY

There was no progress made on the ban on so-called 'conversion therapies' this year. Civil society continued to lobby for a ban on these harmful practices.

CSOs also continued to lobby for a ban on non-consensual medical interventions performed on intersex children. In September, the UN Human Rights Committee echoed this call.

EDUCATION

No progress was made to include education on sex, gender and sexual diversity in school programmes.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich joined other religious leaders in German-speaking countries in disagreeing with the Pope's hostile statements about LGBT people and the overall stance of the Catholic Church. Luxembourg's clergy did not join these efforts in 2021, but the Cardinal met LGBTIQ+ civil society late last year. On July 1, the first ecumenical rainbow worship service was held as part of the Luxembourg Pride Week.

For IDAHOT 2022, 15 youth centres declared themselves as LGBTIQ+ Freedom Zones, after the educators attended specific training.

FAMILY

The reform of the Law on Parenting continued this year. Civil society continued to call for gender-neutral parental titles, such as person giving birth, and also for automatic parenthood recognition for lesbian couples.

FOREIGN POLICY

Following Prime Minister Xavier Bettel's firm criticism

of Hungary's 2021 propaganda law, Bettel's husband Gauthier Destenay was seated next to Hungary's PM Viktor Orbán at a Nato dinner in Spain. The move was assumed to be intentional by many.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean Asselborn condemned Serbia's ban on EuroPride.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Luxembourg Pride Week took place as part of the European Capital of Culture events in Esch-sur-Alzette, featuring many more programs than usual. Pride Week opened with the Queer Arts Festival, also included an international conference, movie screenings, and other events.

In July, the Equality March was held on its longest route to date, four kilometers. Roughly 4,500 people participated over the two days. The street party was again held on two days. About 7,500 participants could choose for the first time between the events on two parallel stages.

HEALTH

Civil society continued to lobby for a complete lifting of the blood donation restrictions on men who have sex with men.

HOUSING

Some LGBTIQ+ people continued to face housing insecurity as a consequence of family rejection and unemployment.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in LGBTIQ+ groups losing sponsors and partners, which has jeopardised their financial stability.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued to lobby for non-binary gender markers to be available.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Safer Night project was launched this year, focusing on providing a safe space to all and



combating intersectional oppression, including through trained awareness teams working at events.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Civil society raised concerns over the lack of safe spaces for the community after a number of venues had to close during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[LUXEMBOURG WEB PAGE](#)

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MALTA

ASYLUM

Civil society continued to lobby for the government to remove all countries that criminalise LGBTIQ+ persons, such as Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco, from the list of safe countries.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Catholic priest David Muscat was acquitted in September of online hate speech charges, for two social media posts from January. In one of the posts, Muscat wrote that being gay was worse than 'being possessed'. Muscat received a formal warning from the Archbishop, requesting that he stop posting hateful content.

A study on cyberbullying found that one in four teens are victims, almost a third are bullies, and that half of those bullying had been victims themselves. The study also found that sexual orientation and physical appearance are common 'causes'.

EDUCATION

The University of Malta's student council launched a sex education campaign in February, which included information on LGBTQIA issues.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The SOGIGESC Unit of the Maltese government published its annual report in September during its annual conference.

LGBTI Gozo shared its new study, finding that most LGBTI people in Gozo find it hard to be open about their identity and that migrants have faced additional xenophobia. The organisation also released a comprehensive action plan on LGBTI equality, consisting of over 30 points.

Work has started on the drafting of the next LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2027).

FAMILY

275 same-sex couples have gotten married since Malta introduced marriage equality in 2017.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Gozo, a more conservative area in the Maltese

Islands, held its first Pride march this year. The event was attended by hundreds, including a number of politicians. LGBTI Gozo announced it would hold a one-week Pride event in Gozo next year.

Following the events in January (see under *Bias-motivated Speech*), LGBTIQ+ organisations met with the Archbishop of Malta. In May, Archbishop Scicluna spoke about LGBT equality on the occasion of IDAHOBIT, during mass.

HEALTH

Prime Minister Abela announced in September that Malta would also provide genital surgeries that were previously not available, for free. The announcement was met with some criticism from conservative politicians.

The Ministry of Health announced in September, that men who have sex with men (MSM) will finally be able to donate blood, on an equal basis with others. The discriminatory regulation that set a lifetime deferral for MSM was lifted back in 2019 and replaced with a one-year deferral. Under the new rules, anyone can donate blood, regardless of their sexual orientation, if they only had a maximum of one partner in the last four months.

Malta's Gender Wellbeing Clinic, which has welcomed over 340 trans people since its opening in 2018, moved to a new location in Paola in June with an official launch in October. The new building is much bigger and more accessible and will be better able to cater to the needs of the community.

The media reported in July that Malta's sexual health clinic has a six-month waiting list for routine check-ups.

Access to HIV medications continued to be difficult. In May, the pharmacy of a large public hospital stopped selling PEP. Since the change, PEP has only been available in three pharmacies in the country, sparking worry as the drug needs to be taken within 72 hours after possible exposure. Malta has one of the highest HIV transmission rates in Europe. An activist also made note of the difficulty of access to HIV medication by LGBTIQ migrants during their speech at the Malta Pride Concert.



In October, MGRM in collaboration with the Health Promotion Directorate organised a [symposium](#) on HIV and STIs in Malta aimed at health professionals and other stakeholders.

HOUSING

MGRM's [Dar il-Qawsalla](#) (Rainbow House) is being [restored](#) and hopes to welcome its first guests in 2024.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Several parties pledged their support for LGBTIQ+ equality in the leadup to Malta's Pride events in September (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

Government funding for EuroPride 2023 was increased by 2,200,000 euro.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Care for LGBTIQ people with dementia was [discussed](#) during Pride week, alongside long-term care for community members.

The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability [collaborated](#) with the Faculty of Social Wellbeing on a [qualitative study](#) on Intersectionality and Disability that [looked](#) into the experiences of LGBTIQ persons with disability. The findings were [presented](#) through a roundtable discussion during Pride Week. The CRPD also collaborated with LGBTIQ NGOs in the production of three podcasts featuring LGBTIQ persons with disability and activists.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

A roundtable discussion and online consultation were held with persons identifying as non-binary to gather their views on the introduction of a third gender marker. They were supportive of such an initiative.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

LGBTIQ NGOs presented a joint manifesto in the lead-up to the 2022 General Elections.

MGRM compiled profiles on the stance of democratic parties, which ran in the March elections, on LGBTIQ issues. The Green Party, for instance, decided to

mainstream LGBTIQ issues throughout its thematic focus areas.

MGRM organised an exhibition celebrating the life of Katya Saunders, one of the first openly trans women in Malta. In addition to being a fashion icon and performer, Saunders was also a community organiser, who supported many LGBT people in need.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In February, the Malta Police Force adopted internal Standard Operating Procedures on the Wellbeing of Detainees and Police Bail that mainstreamed provisions relating to the treatment of trans detainees.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Leading regional NGOs continued to express support for Malta's plans to decriminalise sex work, including the European Sex Workers' Rights Association and Transgender Europe. The government however continued to face criticism from a number of stakeholders who support the so-called Nordic model instead. The Labour Party which is in government pledged continued support for exit programmes for sex workers and decriminalisation in its 2022 electoral manifesto but mentioned nothing on regularisation. It is feared that it will backtrack on its promise.

The government is proposing an amendment to Malta's abortion law to allow for the termination of pregnancy to safeguard the mother's life from grievous danger. Abortion would still be illegal and prosecuted. There is opposition to this amendment by the parliamentary opposition, the Catholic Church and some NGOs.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

(See under *Housing and Intersectionality*)

[MALTA WEB PAGE](#)

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MOLDOVA

ASYLUM

Civil society organised help for people fleeing Ukraine, including those who are LGBT+.

In October, border guards denied the request of a non-binary person fleeing Russia, saying there was “no more space” in Moldova. Thanks to civil society’s intervention, the person’s asylum procedure is now in progress. Several other LGBT people from Russia are awaiting a decision in their asylum cases.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech by politicians and religious leaders remained a serious issue this year. In June, for instance, Chisinau’s mayor, Ion Ceban said LGBT people should hold their Pride march at home. In October, a member of the Bloc of Communists and Socialists, Diana Caraman made homophobic statements during a parliamentary debate on sanctioning sexual violence. Metropolitan Vladimir called for a ban on the march in Chisinau. Balti’s Bishop demanding the same in Balti, even though no Pride event was planned in the town. In November, the same Bishop called LGBT people ‘perverts’.

GENDERDOC-M revealed this year’s anti-LGBT awards in June, featuring Petru Corciun of the Ministry of Defense, Ion Groza of the Socialist Party, PSRM, OceanFish (see under *Employment*), and the General assembly of UTA Gagauzia.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several hate crimes took place this year and several LGBT people reported domestic violence cases to civil society.

Amendments to the Criminal Code, which will cover SOGI as protected grounds, passed its second parliamentary reading in April and entered into force in June.

EDUCATION

A 16-year-old trans girl committed suicide in April after being repeatedly and brutally bullied by students, and the school administration failing to intervene on numerous occasions. Civil society held a protest outside the Ministry of Education calling on the government to protect trans and LGBT+ children

and young people. A new trans advocacy group was set up as part of GENDERDOC-M and named after Felis. GENDERDOC-M held a training of trainers for 38 individuals working in the education sector.

EMPLOYMENT

In May, the Equality Council found that OceanFish discriminated against Marin Pavlescu (see under *Police and law enforcement*), on the basis of his sexual orientation and possible desertion status, when denying him employment.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, civil society expressed its disappointment that Moldova voted against Resolution 2417 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which condemns attacks on LGBTI people.

Amendments to the anti-discrimination law, which will cover SOGI as protected grounds, passed the first parliamentary reading.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 25 May, the National Assembly of Gagauzia adopted a law banning ‘LGBT propaganda’. Civil society firmly condemned the move, reminding that such a ban violates Moldova’s Constitution. The Ombudsman issued a statement reminding of the obligation to uphold freedom of expression and assembly without discrimination.

This year marked Moldova’s 21st Pride Festival, featuring its largest and longest Pride march to date. 500 people attended the Pride march, including six MPs. The Pride march was held on 19 June and no attacks were recorded. Nevertheless, several participants were verbally harassed by police officers.

A week prior to the event, Chisinau’s mayor Ion Ceban said he would not allow it to go ahead. Nevertheless, the mayor had no mandate to ban Pride.

The European Court of Human Rights communicated two cases to the government, both concerning the ban on Pride marches, in 2013 and 2014.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBT activist Angela Frolov gave interviews reflecting on the vote on banning 'LGBT propaganda' in Gaugazia and received several death threats afterwards.

GENDERDOC-M awarded [Arjos Vendrig](#) and [Olena Shevchenko](#) this year for their work as human rights defenders, and [Doina Ipatii](#) for her journalism work.

Most civil society activities were held in person this year, after two years of a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The civil society Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination continued its work this year.

GENDERDOC-M filed a civil complaint against the Public Services Agency on behalf of trans people who are unable to change their legal gender without litigation, and in response to the government's failure to legislate on the matter. In February, the Equality Council [established](#) that the lack of a legal framework constitutes discrimination against trans people. The PSA has appealed against the decision.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The second edition of the [LGBT Film Festival](#) was held in Chisinau in October.

[Podcasts, interviews, and positive stories](#) about LGBT+ people in Moldova were published again this year.

The first LGBTQ+ media platform, called [Bang Bang](#) was launched in August.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In February, the Equality Council [established](#) that 19-year-old soldier Marin Pavlescu, who had [suffered](#) homophobic abuse and mocking at his army base in 2021, was a victim of harassment on the basis of sexual orientation. The Council called on the Ministry of Defense to apologise to Pavlescu and initiate disciplinary proceedings against all those who failed to protect him. The Ministry of Defense asked

GENDERDOC-M to [hold](#) training on LGBT+ issues for 23 of the army's psychologists, which took place in May.

In April, the Ombudsman also [published](#) a report about the case, calling on the military to ensure non-discrimination and investigation of harassment and abuse.

The Prosecutor's Office [refused](#) to start a desertion investigation against Pavlescu, denying the request of the Ministry of Defense. The Prosecutor affirmed that Pavlescu's reason to stay away from the base was the bullying he had to suffer and the military's failure to protect him.

Moldova's President, Maia Sandu [said](#) in regard to the case: "We respect all citizens and must not allow abuses, especially in public institutions." Sandu said she would discuss a reform plan with the Ministry.

PUBLIC OPINION

A poll commissioned by GENDERDOC-M [found](#) that 55% of Chisinau residents have a positive or neutral attitude towards LGBTQ+ people, compared to 33% just three years earlier. The rate of those being strongly against LGBTQ+ people also significantly decreased.

[MOLDOVA WEB PAGE](#)

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MONACO

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

CSOs and businesses held a cocktail party during Pride month on 2 June - the first event of its kind.

HEALTH

In July, Princess Stephanie attended the Fight AIDS Gala with her three daughters.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

On 4 July, the Monaco Court granted a gender marker change to a trans woman, who medically transitioned in France. This is the first such court case. Monaco has no legislation in place on LGR.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The AS Monaco football club again stood up against homophobic discrimination in football, on the occasion of IDAHOT in May.

[MONACO WEB PAGE](#)

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MONTENEGRO

ASYLUM

A lesbian couple from Russia reported that they were experiencing psychological abuse on a daily basis and had also been physically assaulted while waiting for a decision in their case at the asylum centre in Spuz.

Spectra supported two trans asylum seekers this year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBT and misogynistic political rhetoric continued to be a serious issue. In January, civil society called on the President of the Parliament to remove the President of the Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, Jovan Vučurović, for violating the Code of Ethics and speaking about LGBTIQ people in a hateful manner.

The outgoing Vice Prime Minister, Vladimir Joković made hostile statements against those who do not have children.

Religious leaders also made hateful statements this year. Before Pride, the Head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro called for a salvation prayer and called the event “immorality and debauchery”.

LGBT Forum Progress reported 220 online hate speech cases to the police.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The LGBTI Drop-in Centre in Podgorica was vandalised with fascist and anti-LGBTI messages in July. President Đukanović, then Prime Minister Abrazović, the Ombudsman’s Office, the Council of Europe, and others condemned the violence and called for investigations. The Prosecutor’s Office launched an investigation and the police have identified the perpetrators. On 21 December, Juventas’ LGBTIQ Centre in Podgorica was attacked. Police responded quickly in identifying the attackers. Civil society called for a proper investigation and prompt prosecution.

After Pride, the apartment of two trans activists was attacked and vandalised. The perpetrators were identified. One of them took full responsibility, and

was sentenced to one-month prison.

Spectra supported four trans people who experienced violence and reported the cases only to Spectra, not to institutions.

BODILY INTEGRITY

LGBT Forum Progress co-published a documentary on so-called ‘conversion therapies’ in Montenegro.

EDUCATION

No positive changes were implemented in the education sector this year. Civil society called on the government to ensure that LGBTIQ+ topics are covered in schools and that LGBTIQ+ young people are protected from bullying and harassment. There were several reports from high-school students that some schools are not open anymore to informal education about LGBTI human rights, after the change of directors, which occurred after elections in 2020.

The LGBTQ Social Centre published a study on the attitudes of teachers and staff on LGBTI topics in high schools in Northern Montenegro, trained teachers, and released a manual for schools.

EMPLOYMENT

Spectra reported continued high unemployment rates among trans women, in part due to a mismatch between their gender expression and legal documents, and violence and discrimination at work. Spectra highlighted the high numbers of trans women engaging in the informal labour market or in sex work, which further increases their vulnerability. Trans people in general, have been gravely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, which further exacerbated their social and economic exclusion.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Civil society reports that due to political tensions, human rights issues remained difficult to put on the government’s agenda and progress on LGBTIQ+ equality remains extremely slow. The implementation of Montenegro’s 2019-2023 LGBTI Strategy was discussed at a conference, co-organised by CSOs. The anti-discrimination law was open for



public discussion this year and an analysis of its compatibility with EU law is ongoing. CSOs advocated for SOGI inclusion.

Lawyer Velibor Marković, known for homophobic and misogynist hate speech, was appointed to the Commission examining the compliance of the Basic Agreement between the State and the Serbian Orthodox Church with Montenegrin legislation. Coalition “Equaly”, gathering more than 40 CSOs, including the coordinating Queer Montenegro, and also Spectra, Stana and Juventas, requested his removal. The Centre for Women’s Rights filed complaints to the Bar Association. At least two members of the Commission announced they would step down if Marković stays. Then Prime Minister Abazović said he would not remove Marković. Marković resumed his hateful rhetoric later.

Juventas, Queer Montenegro and Spectra continued supporting local municipalities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. There are no signs that the municipality of Mojkovac will adopt a local LGBTI action plan soon. Pljevlja incorporated LGBTI-related activities within their local plan on social and child protection, and Cetinje and Bar are expected to adopt action plans soon.

FAMILY

Due to the fall of the government in August and a cyber attack on government institutions, many legislative processes remained stalled, including the amendment process of roughly 20 by-laws that are necessary for the implementation of the 2020 same-sex partnership law. Civil society continued to lobby for the necessary legal changes. LGBT Forum Progres launched a lawsuit against the state for the ongoing discrimination against same-gender couples.

Two couples formed a civil union in 2021 and four in 2022.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The 10th Montenegro Pride was successfully held on 8 October, attended by almost 3,000 people and several government representatives. The Pride motto was ‘Nema više ali/No more butts’, a reference to the government’s often passive stance on LGBTIQ+ equality. Pride Week featured a range of events and

was joined by several politicians.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

A study found decreased reporting about trans people in the media, which civil society has interpreted as a negative trend. No articles were published about intersex issues.

HEALTH

CSOs continued responding to the growing need for mental health support in the community. Their resources are stretched too thin and many remain without support. CSOs have called for targeted funding.

Spectra provided over 400 individual peer consultations and organised 35 self-support groups for 25 people.

The LGBTQ Social Centre provided psychological support to 58 people, psychiatric support to 61, and social support to 162. The Centre also held workshops on mental health and safety.

Hormone shortages remained a serious issue, with a detrimental impact on trans people’s well-being. Many have turned to self-medicating, jeopardising their own health. Spectra and others have repeatedly called on the authorities, including the Ministry of Health, the Public Health Centre, the Health Insurance Fund, and others, to remedy the shortages, but no tangible change has followed.

HOUSING

Spectra provided support to two trans people at risk of homelessness.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBTI activists were again targeted by hate speech throughout the year. Following the attack on the Drop-in Centre, LGBTI activist Danijel Kalezić received death threats. Kalezić’s car was also vandalised in September in Belgrade, during EuroPride. Activists Nikola Ilić and Hana Konatar’s home was attacked in September.

LGBTI civil society faced huge issues with the

continuation of their work due to lack of funding, particularly since the end of 2021. Several donors shifted their priorities. Queer Montenegro for instance, had to reduce its staff from nine to four. Litigation and legal gender recognition advocacy have been worst impacted.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The government launched an open call for membership in the Working Group for drafting a legal gender recognition law. The Working Group was set up in July and Spectra and Juventas are members. The new law was planned to be adopted in 2023, but it is feared that the fall of the government in August will further stall the process. In December, the Working Group wrote the Law and now it is in process of finalisation.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Muslim and out artist, Dante Buu presented his art at the Venice Biennale this year.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The LGBTQ Social Centre and Youth Initiative for Human Rights trained 40 prison staff and published a manual.

PUBLIC OPINION

A study on public opinions highlighted this year that while the public acceptance of LGBT people is improving, due to radicalisation, progress is extremely slow.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A debate on the Public Broadcaster centred on abortion rights featured a priest from the Serbian Orthodox Church as a speaker.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Due to a lack of funding, the LGBTI shelter was closed in January.

[MONTENEGRO WEB PAGE](#)

[MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG)

NETHERLANDS

ASYLUM

A new [report showed](#) that LGBTI asylum seekers continue to be unlawfully denied status on the basis of stereotypical criteria. Civil society [organised](#) support for LGBTI people fleeing Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Transgender Netwerk Nederland's (TNN) annual media monitoring report [found](#) that representation of trans people increased and diversified in 2021, but anti-trans rhetoric still remains a serious issue. In September for instance, posters [appeared](#) with false fear-mongering messages about the impact of the new trans law. TNN filed a complaint to the Advertising Code Committee and [called](#) for tougher sanctions for anti-trans speech. In October, anti-trans speech was common during the parliamentary [debate](#) on a new legal gender recognition bill. Nevertheless, many political parties supported trans and intersex rights.

A petition targeted Bunq bank this year for cancelling the account of an anti-trans group and enacting "ideological discrimination".

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue, and included vandalism (see [here](#) and [here](#)), [death threats](#) and [physical assault](#).

The government [reported](#) 2,471 anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination cases in 2021, up from 2,336 in 2020 and 2,072 in 2019. CSOs continued to [urge](#) the new government to take action. In June, a bill was [tabled](#) in parliament to impose higher sanctions in cases where bias was one of the aspects of the attack. The Social and Cultural Planning Office's (SCP) study, published in July, [found](#) that LGBT people face disproportionate rates of violence, one in three bisexual women has experienced sexual violence in the past five years and 44% have been [targeted](#) by online or offline sexual harassment in the past year. Civil society continued [advocating](#) for tougher [sanctions](#) and more capacity for the police.

A new report, '[Invisible in Two Worlds](#)' [found](#) that trans people face domestic violence in great numbers, and that state assistance is inadequate.

Civil society [sent](#) a joint letter to parliament calling for the ongoing reform of the Sexual Offences Bill to protect LGBTQIA+ victims of sexual violence, including through prevention.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Trans and intersex people have been [receiving compensation](#) for unnecessary medical procedures they were forced to undergo under the old 'transgender law' (1985-2014) and which affected their fertility and bodily integrity.

Four parties [tabled](#) the draft law on banning so-called 'conversion therapies' in February, which envisions a 22,500 euro fine or one to two years in prison for those administering the harmful practice. The law is part of the 2021 [Rainbow Ballot Box Agreement](#), which was adopted as part of the coalition agreement.

The government's study [confirmed](#) that medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries on intersex children continue to take place. In March, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [recommended](#) that the Netherlands prohibit intersex surgeries.

EDUCATION

At least [36](#) orthodox Protestant schools still require parents and/or pupils to sign anti-LGBTI+ declarations. Civil society [demanded](#) an end to these as part of the [Rainbow Ballot Box Agreement](#).

In December, about half a million students in 3,000 primary and high schools participated in the 13th [Purple Friday](#), organised by COC's [GSA Network](#). The Network also campaigned on Coming Out Day for [safe toilets](#) in schools.

EMPLOYMENT

Following other municipalities, Nijmegen and its library [signed](#) an action plan for safe and trans-inclusive workplaces.

SCP's study [highlighted](#) that over half of trans people are low-income, double the rate among cisgender people. TNN [called](#) for legal protections, and concrete action plans, and [held](#) a conference in October.



EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

90 municipalities have signed local Rainbow Ballot Box Agreements. Minister of Education, Culture, and Science, Robbert Dijkgraaf announced he would continue to fund LGBTI+ initiatives by 'rainbow municipalities'.

TNN's annual monitoring report found that for the first time in five years, the number of anti-trans discrimination cases decreased.

After almost 20 years of campaigning by COC, the House of Representatives adopted the draft Constitutional amendments in March, to cover LGBTI people in the prohibition of discrimination. The Senate is expected to vote on the amendments in January 2023.

A large survey commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security found that 11% of residents over the age of 15, some 1.6 million people felt discriminated against in 2021.

Three NGOs launched a survey to learn about the experiences of over 50 BIPOC LGBTI+ people.

FAMILY

Civil society continued calling for legal recognition for families with more than two parents, - included in the new Rainbow Ballot Box Agreement. A motion was successfully passed in parliament in June on the issue.

A new regulation was adopted that will give gestational trans men the option to be featured as 'parent who gave birth' on their child's birth certificate. The regulation will enter into force in March 2023 and will have a retroactive effect from 1 July 2014.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

After two years of a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Amsterdam Canal Pride was held in August and celebrated by hundreds of thousands.

HEALTH

TNN's non-representative survey found that 60% of trans respondents have experienced discrimination in

healthcare. The Quartermaster for Trans Healthcare's report about experiences in trans healthcare, published in November, found that the extensive waiting times cause serious suffering to trans people. Both the government and TNN responded.

Protests were held in the cities of Nijmegen, Amsterdam and Utrecht to demand better access to trans healthcare. The city of Utrecht put in place funding for a trans health clinic for trans sex workers and undocumented trans migrants, similar to the one in Amsterdam.

The Dutch Institute for Human Rights established that a hospital in Amsterdam discriminated against a trans man when denying him gynaecological care.

Trans and intersex people can now register to be regularly called for regular cervical and breast cancer screenings. Previously, only those with an 'F' gender marker were called in.

Access to PrEP remained difficult this year, with waiting lists in place.

In the summer months, many men who have sex with men were affected by MPOX. The vaccination campaign was off to a slow start and civil society demanding that more people qualify for access. The policy was changed in October.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The process of legal recognition law reform continued. The current legal gender recognition bill provides for LGR on the basis of self-determination, but gaps remain. First, those under 16 must go through a court procedure. Second, trans refugees need to present a birth certificate from their home countries. Third, married trans mothers are not granted automatic and presumed parenthood, contrary to how a cisgender father would be recognised. Under the new bill, expert statements would no longer be required.

In September, NGOs TNN, NNID, and COC attended the parliamentary debate on the bill. The debate was characterised by considerable anti-trans rhetoric, but many parties stood in support of trans rights. It is expected to resume in February 2023.



Civil society continued to lobby this year to make it easier for anyone to access alternative gender markers. Legislating on non-binary gender markers is included in the Rainbow Ballot Box Agreement. The online petition calling for alternative gender markers launched in 2021, has gathered over 7,200 by the end of this year.

PUBLIC OPINION

An SCP monitoring study published in May found that, for the first time in many years, there was stagnation instead of an increase in the number of Dutch people who have a positive opinion of LGB people.

It also found that one in six people think there is “something wrong” with people who do not identify as either a man or a woman.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Civil society urged the government to ensure that IVF reimbursement extends to everyone, not just people who have eggs.

[NETHERLANDS WEB PAGE](#)

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NORTH MACEDONIA

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Civil society groups continued to support those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis and who were left without state support - mostly trans people, and particularly trans sex workers.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech remained a serious issue, with little response from the authorities. Nevertheless, the Commission for the Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination established that the anti-gender Coalition for the Protection of Children's statements amounted to online hate speech on two occasions. The cases were sent to the Commission by LGBTI organisations.

The basic civil court ruled: the organisation "Od nas za nas", member of the anti-democratic coalition, is responsible for defamation committed against HERA

The anti-gender movement continued to gain ground, and their backlash has in part contributed to the stalling of the legal gender recognition law reform (see under *Legal Gender Recognition*). Coalitions Margins published 'Who is afraid of gender?', an analytical study of anti-gender posts and content online, highlighting that misinformation is the key tactic applied.

The Helsinki Committee recorded 36 cases of anti-LGBT hate speech, 22% of all documented hate speech incidents in 2022.

Coalition Margins documented and reported six anti-LGBT hate speech cases this year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The implementation of the hate crime law continued to be seriously flawed, with ineffective responses from the police and judiciary.

Coalition Margins documented four gender based/ domestic anti-LGBT hate crimes.

On 28 November, the Primary Court of Strumica sentenced a man to six months in prison for physically assaulting an LGBTI activist. The court

found that the attack was motivated by hatred for the activist's sexual orientation, and is a positive step in tackling hate crimes against the LGBTI community in the country.

On 1 December, after a preliminary procedure was carried out, the Public Prosecution in Skopje filed an indictment against the person who attacked a group of LGBTI activists in 2019 after Skopje Pride. The person is charged with the crime of "violence" with the motivation of hatred based on sexual orientation and belonging to the LGBTI community.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The results of a survey on so-called 'conversion therapies' were published in September, finding that LGBTI people have undergone this harmful practice in medical settings and also at the hands of religious practitioners and family members.

EDUCATION

Bullying and violence against LGBTI students remained a serious issue this year.

A rainbow-coloured bench in a primary school sparked hate speech against a podcaster who often covers queer topics. Following questioning, the school said the bench had nothing to do with LGBTI rights.

No progress was made on the implementation of the 2021 Law on Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which envisioned sex education in schools and violence prevention. In September, CSOs and 15 professional associations signed the Declaration 'With Sex Education in Schools to a Healthier and Safer Youth' and urged the government to make progress.

HERA's evaluation of the pilot program for sex education in public primary schools was presented. HERA started working on a strategy for the implementation of sex education in schools.

In October, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended North Macedonia conduct research on peer violence against LGBT children and introduce comprehensive sex education.



Coalition Margins started providing teachers training on preventing and reporting anti-LGBTI violence in primary schools, in partnership with the Bureau for Development of Education.

The Ministry of Education and Science formed a Commission with the mandate to make a proposal to withdraw the use of a sociology textbook for the second year of high school education, which the activists and the Ombudsman claimed contained numerous discriminatory contents.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The new Gender Equality Strategy was adopted in July, which includes addressing gender stereotypes and non-discrimination based on sex, gender, and gender identity, as a general objective. SOGI are not mentioned in any of the specific objectives.

The new Equality and Anti-discrimination Strategy was adopted in May. The Strategy mentions LGBTI people once, in the section on preventing hate speech, violence and other forms of discrimination.

Coalition Margins registered one case of discrimination against a trans male person in the area of labour rights.

FOREIGN POLICY

In May the European Parliament adopted its report on North Macedonia which called for the adoption of LGR based on self-determination, adoption of inclusive education laws and proper investigation of hate crime and death threats against LGBTI people which have starkly increased.

The EU voted to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia this year, but with conditions to be met before the talks can begin.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Skopje Pride Weekend was celebrated for the tenth time this year and featured discussions, exhibitions, performances, and parties. The event had two parts, one between 2-11 June and another between 15-17 September.

The third Skopje Pride march was held on 25 June and was attended by thousands, including several ministers, and politicians. President Pendarovski attended a pre-Pride community event and issued a statement in support of Pride. No incidents were recorded. This year's motto was 'Come Out for Love! Dignity. Equality. Justice'.

HEALTH

The Ministry for Health cut the National Program against HIV budget by 40%, which civil society firmly criticised.

HERA held a public debate on LGBTI youth's trust in healthcare professionals.

HOUSING

Housing remained challenging for LGBTI people during the prolonged COVID-19 and economic crises. Many LGBTI people had to move back to unsafe families and/or faced a heightened risk of homelessness. In 2022, the Safe House shelter provided housing to ten LGBTI persons: five gay men, one lesbian and four trans people.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBTI and SRHR organisations continue to be targeted by hate speech and misinformation spread by anti-gender groups and the far-right political party Levica. The Coalition for the Protection of Children, an anti-gender group coalition, publicly named and mocked LGBTI activists on their website, spreading misinformation (see more under *Bias-motivated Speech*).

Bekim Asani, President of LGBT United Tetovo, was attacked three times this year, in Tetovo, Strumica and Skopje. The assaults in Skopje and Strumica have been investigated, with the assailant in Strumica receiving a six-year prison sentence (see under *Bias-motivated Violence*). So far there has been no investigation regarding the attack in Tetovo. LGBT United Tetovo decided to move its offices to Skopje in September after the activists received various death threats and vandalism. When they requested police support to move their office items with protection, the police did not respond.



INTERSECTIONALITY

In June, the interparty group on LGBTI rights held an event on LGBTI people's access to social and health services, where the situation of Roma LGBTI people was discussed in detail.

Coalition Margins and the Parliament's Intergroup on Roma and Intergroup on LGBTI people's rights held an event on the situation of Roma LGBTI people in October.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In March, the government abruptly withdrew the draft Civil Registry Law, which would have made legal gender recognition significantly easier for trans people. The law would have provided LGR to citizens; over 18, with full legal capacity; and those unmarried. Civil society and the EU LGBTI Intergroup firmly criticised the regressive move, which also signals North Macedonia's failure to implement the 2019 European Court of Human Rights judgement in X v. FYROM. In September, the new working group held its first meeting. The Ministry of Justice plans to start the entire drafting process from scratch. Coalition Margins and the Helsinki Committee are advocating within the working group for the LGR chapter to remain unchanged and to be adopted sooner.

Ten trans people changed their gender markers, five of them on the basis of self-determination. Other cases are pending.

[NORTH MACEDONIA WEB PAGE](#)

[MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG)



NORWAY

ASYLUM

Civil society organised support for LGBT people in Ukraine and/or fleeing. Civil society also put pressure on the government as trans refugees and asylum seekers continue to have no right to gender-affirming care. FRI and Queer World published a guide on trans healthcare in several languages.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Trans people continued to be targeted by the rapidly growing anti-gender movement. Much of the hostile rhetoric was about access to trans-specific healthcare, legal gender recognition and generally against the trans movement. Some were a response to non-binary people and the introduction of 'hen' into Norwegian (see under Equality and non-discrimination).

Trans-inclusive women's organisations continued to be targeted by anti-gender forces and accused of being influenced by the "LGBT-lobby".

In March, the Press Professional Committee stated that Norge IDAG had violated the ethical norms for the press regarding fact-checking and countering information about Queer Youth, the Restart project and LGBT+ civil society.

In September, the Supreme Court reaffirmed a 2021 lower court ruling and found a man guilty of online transphobic hate speech and sentenced him to 15 days on probation and a 15.000 NOK (1500 euro) fine. In May, another lower court ruling found a man guilty of transphobic hate speech.

An adviser from FRI filed a report against the leader of Women's Declaration International (WDI) for anti-trans harassment and hate speech. This case received international attention and led to demonstrations in several countries. The case is pending.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

On June 25, a gunman killed two people and wounded more than 20 people outside Oslo's queer haven and oldest queer bar, the London Pub. The terrorist attack, which was carried out during Pride week and on the night before the Oslo Pride march, shook the community and the country and was widely

condemned. Alongside LGBTQIA civil society, the Prime Minister and members of the royal family attended the memorial service for the victims. The gunman was arrested and over the following months, three more suspects were taken into custody for complicity.

The 2021 hate crimes report of the police found a drastic increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes, from 97 in 2020 to 240 in 2021.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In June, Minister of Culture and Equality, Anette Trettebergstuen presented the modified draft ban on so-called 'conversion therapies', which was one of the government's commitments in the 2021 LGBTQI Action Plan. The new text suggests an absolute ban on the harmful practice, and also sanctions advertisements and anti-trans actions. Civil society however remained concerned that the law should be more clear and comprehensive, include gender expression, and impose higher penalties. The anti-gender movement lobbied for the removal of gender identity from the draft.

DATA COLLECTION

Due to data protection concerns, the Norwegian Data Protection Agency banned "Shinigami eyes", a browser extension that highlights trans-friendly and transphobic pages and profiles with different colours.

EMPLOYMENT

Esben Esther Pirelli Benestad, a prominent figure within trans healthcare and professor of sexology, is under threat of having their doctor's licence revoked for providing trans healthcare outside the monopolised system.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Marking the 50th anniversary of Norway decriminalising 'homosexuality', Prime Minister Støre issued a formal apology to the victims of persecution. The Church of Norway Bishop's conference also issued an apology. To mark the anniversary, the government declared 2022 to be Queer culture year. Queer Archive, the National Museum, the National Library, and many others organised art and cultural events across Norway throughout the year.



There was considerable public discussion about non-binary identities and gender-neutral pronouns this year. This was due both to a committee investigation into the possibility of implementing a third legal gender, as well as the Language Council of Norway confirmed introducing the pronoun 'hen' as an official Norwegian word. A 19-year-old non-binary activist became the face of the discussions and received both hostile reactions and positive encouragement.

The new LGBT+ action plan is underway and scheduled for publishing in 2023.

FAMILY

Professional handball player, Anja Hammerseng-Edin shared her experiences about the discriminatory regulations that require non-gestational female parents to adopt their own child.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Following the terrorist attack on the eve of Pride, all further Pride events were cancelled across the country and the national threat level was increased by the Police Security Service. Defying the recommendation, several thousand marched on Saturday on the original Pride route to show the strength of the community and find comfort, in large part organised by queer minority organisations. Civil society was to hold a protest a few days after the attack but had to cancel that as well, upon the recommendations of the police. FRI published the planned speeches to support the community. Other cities and towns were able to celebrate Pride as planned, and a solidarity march was arranged in Oslo later in the autumn.

A 16-year-old activist organised the first Pride march in the town of Bodø on 20 June. Other smaller Pride events were also held.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The commission reviewing the state of freedom of expression in Norway published its report. The Norwegian Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence criticised the report for being more focused on the chilling effects of the hate speech legislation than protecting minorities from hate speech.

HEALTH

Despite calls from civil society, the Minister of Health did not organise targeted and proactive support for those affected by the Oslo shooting in June - an estimated 200 people.

The Minister of Health announced revising the blood donation regulations, which still impose a 12-month deferral period on men who have sex with men.

Despite the 2020 guidelines on trans healthcare, which centre user participation and an individualised approach to care, care provision remained centralised again this year.

The Health Center for Gender and Sexuality (HKS) shared in April that six out of ten of their trans patients had previously been rejected at Rikshospitalet, where rigid rules and pathologisation remain standard. Civil society is alarmed that the Health Directorate has not shared its stance on the Rikshospitalet's approach, which is very different from HKS's. In April, HKS was ordered to suspend all gender-affirming hormone treatment and puberty blockers, which was later overturned after a massive outcry by patients, civil society organisations, and politicians. The Municipality of Oslo sent a request for HKS to become a national competency centre.

Despite clear signals from the County governor that a GP referral is sufficient to have access to trans-specific healthcare, the National Treatment Centre has not implemented this in practice.

Only one hospital, in Vestfold, provides services to non-binary people, such as wigs and prosthetics, but not hormones or surgeries. The Minister of Health set out deadlines for regional centres to be set up, but this has not happened to date.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

FRI hosted the first Nordic LGBT+ conference in June, bringing together over 100 people from the region.

INTERSECTIONALITY

FRI issued a formal apology saying it had not been accessible enough for people with disabilities and LGBTI people of colour, vowing it would do better.



POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Police Directorate published an action plan about diversity, dialogue and trust, mandating that the police must have knowledge about hate crimes, and sexual and gender diversity.

PUBLIC OPINION

The fourth survey of its kind, commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Equality, highlighted that public attitudes towards LGBT people continued to improve, but less so for trans and bisexual people. For instance, 51% support trans people (2013: 36%), 66% support lesbians (2008: 47%), and 85% support cohabiting same-gender couples (2008: 70%).

NORWAY WEB PAGE

MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG

POLAND

ASYLUM

Civil society organised support for people fleeing Ukraine, including those who are LGBT+ (see here, here, here, and here), with Lambda Warsaw becoming - over time - the main organisation offering direct aid for LGBT+ refugees in Poland.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

On 30 June, the European Commission finished months-long negotiations with the government and amended its Partnership Agreement with Poland to ensure that municipalities that have anti-LGBT resolutions in place do not receive financial support. In 2021, the European Commission (EC) launched an infringement procedure against Poland and suspended EU funding talks with several Polish regions, including five 'LGBT-free zones'.

As a result of local and international pressure, local municipalities continued to withdraw anti-LGBT resolutions or Family Rights Charters this year. On 28 June, the Supreme Administrative Court reaffirmed in the case of four anti-LGBT resolutions that they must be withdrawn.

Local courts also challenged some of the resolutions this year (see here and here), the last two of the nine cases that the Human Rights Commissioner, Adam Bodnar had previously challenged. In July civil society met with the Ombudsman to discuss the next steps to ensure that all anti-LGBT resolutions and charters are promptly withdrawn across the country and that municipalities actually abide by the principle of non-discrimination. On 1 December, the new Human Rights Commissioner, Marcin Wiącek, issued letters to the remaining local municipalities with anti-LGBT resolutions demanding their repeal.

After three years of legal battle, the Warsaw District Court ordered the Polish National Television to pay a fine and issue an apology for slandering the LGBT community in a prime time reporting in 2019. The Court affirmed that anti-LGBT content is incompatible with media ethics and reminded of the media's role to build social awareness.

Hate speech by the central government remained a serious issue. Chairman of PiS, Jarosław Kaczyński

continued making anti-LGBT statements this year, including transphobic remarks and calling trans people "abnormal". This coincided with a petition by the fundamentalist association Ordo Iuris, protesting the alleged suffering of underage trans people from the use of puberty blockers. Trans people and organisations fear that they will be the next target of political hate speech, particularly in the lead-up to the 2023 parliamentary elections. On 12 November Kaczyński described LGBT teenagers declaring their identities as "madness". The Minister of Education, Przemysław Czarnek, also continued his hate campaign against "rainbow youth", comparing them to "normal youth" at a protest.

EDUCATION

In March, the Court of Appeal in Warsaw dismissed the claim of the Association of Large Families of Warsaw and Mazovia that anti-discrimination education in schools would change children's sexual orientation. The ruling affirmed that anti-discrimination education in schools is beneficial for children and condemned hate campaigns against civil society running these programs. The ruling marks the end of a six-year legal battle.

In March, President Duda vetoed the controversial 'Lex Czarnek', which would have taken discretionary power away from schools and meant dismissal or even criminal sanctions for teachers or school management who openly support LGBT+ students or discuss LGBT issues in school. Civil society warned in 2021, when the law was first tabled, that it would practically ban sex education and launched the campaign #WolnaSzkoła [Eng: Free School], providing information on the proposed limitations and uniting those against the law. In October, the lower parliament chamber (Sejm) adopted 'Lex Czarnek 2.0' (tabled as an MP motion this time) with the higher chamber (Senat) rejecting it. On 2 December, the Sejm rejected the Senate's veto and adopted the bill. Civil society called on President Duda to veto the second version of the law, which he did on 15 December, thanks to the pressure from civil society and the educational sector.

This year's Rainbow Friday, held on 28 October in support of LGBT+ students and youth, featured a standalone website, billboards, posters, and videos

with the slogans “You’re okay” and “It’s gonna be fine!”. The campaign video on social media reached 657,250 people in 24 hours and the hashtag #TęczowyPiątek was among the ten most popular hashtags in Poland. Almost 3,000 posts discussed the event on TV, radio, online news platforms, and social media, with over 17 million hits.

On 29 October, Minister of Education Czarnek called principals allowing Rainbow Friday to take place “irresponsible”. The Ombudsman for Children, Mikołaj Pawlak, called for penalties against LGBTI+ and women’s rights organisations that did not register on the Sex Offender Register, suggesting that they can be paedophiles.

This year’s LGBTQ+ school ranking identified the most inclusive and accepting schools in Poznań, Warsaw, Lublin, Gdańsk, Olsztyn, and Toruń. The schools all received Equality Diplomas.

EMPLOYMENT

In September, the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued an opinion finding that the ban on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation applies to self-employed persons too. The case concerned the Polish National Television’s refusal to extend a contract due to the person’s sexual orientation.

On December 9, the Supreme Court dismissed the extraordinary appeal brought by Attorney General Zbigniew Ziobro, ending the legal case of transgender woman Joanna Żelek who sued her employer for discrimination. After Żelek won the case in lower courts, Ziobro brought the appeal in July 2021. The dismissal makes the ruling final, assuring legal protection for transgender people from discrimination in employment.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Civil society launched videos on the occasion of Trans Day of Visibility in March again this year.

On 24 May, Poland adopted its new National Action Plan for Equal Treatment (2022-2030) - six years after the previous Action Plan had expired in 2016. Civil society called the new Action Plan “a sad joke” and

warned that this development is a mere response to the European Commission’s infringement procedure and the threat of losing EU funds.

Poland signed on to the European Commission’s Guidelines for Strategies and Action Plans to Enhance LGBTIQ Equality. Civil society called for tangible changes and the speedy implementation of the guidelines and addressed public letters to the President, the Council of Ministers, the government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, and 16 Ministries, identifying priority areas. These are anti-LGBT zones, the backlash against LGBT+ activists, the lack of LGBT+ equality, and suicide among LGBT+ teenagers. The letters set out tangible actions that Poland should take in these areas.

KPH gave out its fourth annual Equality Crowns awards to several LGBT+ people and allies, including politicians, journalists, and organisations.

FAMILY

In February, the Supreme Administration Court recognised the child of a gay couple, who was born out of surrogacy in Canada. One of the fathers is a Polish citizen, and the child also received citizenship.

In June, the CJEU ruled that Poland has the obligation to legally recognise both parents in a same-gender couple in travel documents, to ensure the family’s freedom of movement. The government proposed to issue a special certificate for same-gender parents, which would have outed rainbow families and their children, but at least would have facilitated their travel or movement. In November, during the amendment process of the Family Code, the government withdrew the proposal, leaving rainbow families without legal recognition and papers that would ensure their freedom of movement.

The Supreme Administrative Court dismissed the appeal of a Polish-Portuguese married gay couple who had been fighting for legal recognition for over five years. The Court affirmed in its ruling however that same-sex marriages conducted abroad and involving a Polish citizen are not forbidden under the Constitution.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Civil society space continued to be increasingly repressed.

In March, the District Attorney's Office dropped investigations against 41 of 48 people who were arrested on Rainbow Night in 2020. The courts found the detentions to be illegal, unjustified or irregular. One case is pending, and six people will face trial for "taking part in a riot"

Warsaw Pride took place in June without incidents and brought together thousands again this year. The event was co-organised by Kyiv Pride and joined by Warsaw Mayor, Rafał Trzaskowski and EU Equality Commissioner, Helena Dalli. Pride marches were held in about 30 other towns, including Katowice and Lublin. Katowice Pride was held together with the city of Odessa. A religious march was organised in parallel, which the city's mayor tried to ban, but no incidents were recorded. On 25 June, civil society also held 'Impossible Parades', i.e. Pride marches in 32 towns where anti-LGBT resolutions are still in place.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In April, a draft amendment to the Penal Code was tabled in parliament that would introduce criminal sanctions for 'malicious interference' with the Church. A few weeks prior, the Court of Appeal in Płock affirmed the 2021 acquittal of Joanna Gzyra-Iskandar, Anna Prus, and Elżbieta Podleśna who created stickers of the Virgin Mary with a rainbow halo. In 2021, Prosecutor Ziobro appealed the ruling. Civil society warned that the draft amendment was a clear attack on LGBT+ people's freedom of expression.

The trials against the creators of Atlas of Hate continued this year. The group, which developed an online map tracking anti-LGBT resolutions, was sued by several local municipalities for defamation. In 2022, some municipalities withdrew their lawsuits (Gromadka), and some were dismissed by courts (Opoczynski, Tarnów). Other cases are ongoing (Przysucha, Tatra, Łowicki) and up to three appeals are expected in 2023 (Przasnysz and possibly others).

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The newly chosen Human Rights Commissioner,

Marcin Wiącek, showed his support for the LGBT community on several occasions, for instance by advocating for smoother legal gender recognition procedures and anti-LGBT hate crimes to be prosecuted ex officio.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In September, Prosecutor General and Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro requested the Supreme Court to consider that in addition to their parents, trans people should also sue their children and spouse when they want to access LGR. Civil society considers this as yet another attack on trans rights.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

'7 - My Sierpnia' [Eng: '7 - My August'], a film documenting the police crackdown on a 2020 demonstration in support of LGBTI activist Margot, was released online and in the cinema in August.

Warsaw is set to open Poland's first Queer Museum in 2023.

PUBLIC OPINION

Ipsos polls showed, firstly, that two-thirds of the population support marriage equality or civil partnership and secondly that 60% believe Poland should abolish so-called 'LGBT-free zones' in order to meet EU requirements to receive funding.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The 'Stop Abortion' bill, which would have equated abortion with murder, was rejected by parliament in June.

POLAND WEB PAGE

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PORTUGAL

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In June, an artist performing at the Lisbon Festivities made homophobic remarks. He was immediately warned, and later issued a public apology, donating his payment to ILGA Portugal.

A professor at the University of Aveiro posted on his social media page in July that the LGBTQ+ community consists of “terrorist organisations” and called for an “inquisition to clean up this human garbage”. The university launched a disciplinary process against the professor and suspended him. He later stated, “I am certainly homophobic”.

A video of homophobic harassment on a train made news this year after several celebrities condemned the incident.

Numerous anti-gender and anti-trans articles were published in response to the TV channel Fox Life’s nationwide awareness-raising campaign ‘abclgbtqia+’.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Between January and early December this year, ILGA Portugal received a total of 830 requests for contact or immediate support in cases of violence at home, loss of income, and evictions. Of these, 268 came from people who reached out for the first time. 220 cases of domestic violence and assault were reported this year, of which 71 were cases of gender-based violence.

In June, the window of the LGBTI+ Community Centre, run by ILGA Portugal, was vandalised.

A young lesbian couple, aged 19 and 16, was abducted for over six hours and raped in Lisboa. The perpetrator was arrested and awaits trial.

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies published a booklet featuring life stories from LGBTI victims of domestic violence.

NGO Plano i published a collection of good practices on supporting LGBTI victims of domestic violence.

NGO Quebrar o Silêncio launched a guide to support MSM victims of abuse.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The Left Bloc (BE) party presented a draft amendment to the Penal Code that would ban ‘conversion therapies’ and punish their solicitation or management with three to ten years in prison.

Civil society called for a monitoring mechanism to ensure non-consensual surgeries on intersex children are effectively banned; training for health professionals; and intersex healthcare guidelines.

EDUCATION

A study by the University of Porto affirmed that school continues to be unsafe for many LGBTQ students, who experience disproportionate rates of bullying offline and online. Over a third of anti-LGBTQ bullying took place in classrooms and almost half of the victims thought that school interventions were ineffective. Almost half of trans and non-binary students reported feeling unsafe using changing rooms and bathrooms and almost half said teachers refused to respect their chosen name.

In December, The National Council of Ethics for Life Sciences (CNECV) presented its opinion regarding the PS and BE draft proposals to regulate self-determination issues in schools. The Council encouraged parliament to adopt a wider education anti-discrimination and anti-bullying law, advocate for mandatory gender-neutral toilets and locking rooms, increase training and awareness-raising, and inclusive policies.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The LGBTI+ plan expired in 2021 and despite a public consultation, no new action plan was proposed or adopted.

2022 marked the 40th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Portugal, which was celebrated with numerous public events.

Civil society continued to lobby for the inclusion of gender identity in the Constitution, and for the government to ensure that trans and gender-diverse people are effectively protected under the Labour Code and the Penal Code.



In November, after a legislative process initiated by the extreme-right wing party, proposals for a Constitutional revision were submitted, with political parties amending the equality principle to, namely, include gender (BE, PAN), gender identity (LIVRE, PS), gender expression and sex characteristics (LIVRE).

Funchal, the capital of Madeira, raised the rainbow flag at the city council on the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May.

FAMILY

In September, AMPLOS - Parents of LGBTI+ persons held an international conference about challenges faced by trans and gender-diverse youth. AMPLOS launched a campaign about diversity and family support.

FOREIGN POLICY

The LIVRE, BE and PAN condemned Portugal's representation at the Qatar World Cup.

ILGA Portugal co-launched the "Pride Stands" campaign enabling Pride visuals for online users.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Madeira branches of Opus Gay and rede ex-aequo opened the second LGBTI+ community centre of the country, in Funchal.

Arraial Lisbon Pride was held in person this year, with an estimated 100.000 participants.

First LGBTI+ marches were held in Covilhã, Sintra, Caldas da Rainha, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Esposende and Vizela. After a ten year gap, Azores also held a march.

Lisbon will host EuroPride in 2025.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

A group for LGBT+ Catholics, Sopro, was established this year.

Anémoma, initially a project aiming to promote and protect the health of trans and non-binary persons, was officially recognised as an association in March.

Opus Diversidades celebrated its 25th anniversary.

ILGA-Portugal celebrated the 25th anniversary of the LGBTI+ Community Centre.

HEALTH

The Institute of Blood and Transplantation held online training courses on the implementation of the new donor criteria, for healthcare workers and the public.

In May, the Secretary of State for Health announced that two new specific health units for trans people would be established, in Lisboa and in the Algarve region.

Plano i published the toolkit 'Interdisciplinary approaches to the health and well-being of LGBTI+ people'.

Civil society warned of the harmfulness of statements linking the monkeypox virus to LGBTI people and called for more vaccines, more information, and more transparency.

GAT launched the, 'I'm HIV+ and Visible' campaign, where for the first time, ten people living with HIV, including LGBTI+ persons, shared their stories.

INTERSECTIONALITY

In December, the first-ever conference of LGBTI+ deaf persons was held in Lisboa.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society celebrated the fourth anniversary of the 2018 legal gender recognition law, which introduced self-determination. Civil society continued to lobby for the law to extend to minors, on the basis of self-determination, residents without citizenship, and non-binary persons.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Guide "Open to Everyone" directed at public libraries, received an honorary mention of the Maria José Moura Award for best practices in municipal libraries.

The Porto City Council decided to name a street after



Gisberta Salce Junior.

For the first time, the Portuguese-French cross-cultural programme included specific LGBTI+ activities, including exhibitions and screenings.

The Municipality of Porto gave a gold merit medal to LGBTI+ activist, João Paulo.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

ILGA Portugal continued participating in trainings on diversity and inclusion for the Criminal Police and the National Republican Guard.

An investigative journalism piece on extremism within the police identified closed online social groups where almost 600 members of the Police and the National Republican Guard expressed misogynist, xenophobic and homophobic views. Parliamentary hearings were held and a formal investigation was launched.

The Directorate-General for Reintegration and Prison Services adopted a regulation to protect trans inmates and end discrimination. The guidelines are not public and in October there was a news report that the prison guards of Tires (female facility) had refused to do the mandatory initial search of a trans detainee upon her arrival at the prison.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security and other key stakeholders agreed to open a temporary emergency shelter for LGBTI+ persons.

[PORTUGAL WEB PAGE](#)

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ROMANIA

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

An increasing number of people have turned to LGBTQ+ associations seeking help with basic needs regarding shelter, repatriation, and employment.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The memorandum to the child protection bill (see under *Freedom of Expression*) tabled in April stated that “in the societies of Western Europe we are witnessing today an assault on new ideologies, such as gender theory, which endanger traditional values, based on Christianity, and the very core of society – the Christian family”.

Hate speech was on the rise in the summer, with several instances being reported to MozaiQ. Religious leaders for instance spoke in a hostile way in the leadup to Iași Pride in June.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Four hate crimes were perpetrated over the span of three weeks in the summer - all were reported to the police. Leaflets showing a gay man in a gas chamber and a nazi soldier pressing the gas button were left in MozaiQ’s courtyard in August. Civil society attributed the rise in violence to the tabling of the ‘propaganda’ bill (see under *Bias-motivated Speech* and *Freedom of Expression*) and Hungarian PM Viktor Orban’s racist, xenophobic, anti-European and anti-LGBT speech at Băile Tușnad in August.

The police was notified by ACCEPT of death threats against participants a day before the Bucharest Pride march and a bomb threat on the day of the event. An unidentified attacker threw gas bombs into the crowd during the closing concert of the Pride Festival - seven people needed first aid. ACCEPT filed criminal complaints in all three cases.

There was a clear rise in hate crimes during Bucharest Pride - over 20 victims asked ACCEPT for legal advice.

In November, a few days before Trans Day of Remembrance, Vasilica Narcisa, a trans woman was found dead in her dorm room.

DATA COLLECTION

As part of the National Strategy for Preventing and

Combating Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia, Radicalisation and Hate Speech (2021-2023), the police were tasked to draft a methodology for collecting data on hate crimes. ACCEPT learned that the methodology excludes sexual orientation and gender identity and requested the draft to be shared. After the police refused to do that, ACCEPT filed a freedom of information request at the Bucharest Court.

EDUCATION

In October, MozaiQ presented its 'National Campus Pride Report', which analysed the inclusion of LGBTQ+ students in four major universities. Only half of the 350 respondents said they felt safe at university, one in three had heard anti-LGBT hate speech from a professor, and more than half had never seen leaflets or posters about LGBT issues or events on campus. Four out of every five trans respondents said that the teachers and staff did not respect their gender identity.

MozaiQ shared that nearly 250 university students visited the three centres for LGBT students in Bucharest, Timișoara and Cluj, that opened in 2021.

EMPLOYMENT

A teacher was banned from teaching by a high school in October after parents found a post on his social media, where he spoke out against anti-LGBT policies.

MozaiQ held Unicorns@Work - a conference for inclusive workplaces in December.

FAMILY

There continues to be no implementation of the Coman judgement, despite the pre-infringement procedure launched by the European Commission in 2020.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

More than 15,000 people joined this year’s Bucharest Pride in July. The Pride Festival featured 20 events and spanned over nine days.

The Timisoara City Hall requested that local LGBTIQ+ organisation Equivox obtain a permit from the Banat Metropolitanate Orthodox Church before



organising a community dinner. Following civil society advocacy, the City Hall approved the event without the Church's approval.

The Bucharest Court of Appeal annulled the government's 2021 restriction limiting the number of participants at public gatherings, allegedly as a COVID-19 precaution. The limit was set at 500, but Pride marches went ahead regardless, both in Bucharest and in Cluj. The Cluj Court of Appeal annulled the government restriction regarding other assemblies, but not in the case of Cluj Pride. Appeals will proceed in both cases.

The second Iași Pride was organised by Rise Out in May-June. Hundreds attended the Pride march on 5 June but were attacked by a group of far-right protesters, who threw eggs at them.

Timișoara Pride was held on 5 July without any incidents.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In December, several MPs belonging to the ruling coalition PSD-PNL tabled an amendment to Government Ordinance 26/2000 on associations and foundations, which could significantly impact the ability of NGOs to engage in strategic litigation and challenge local and state-level administrative acts. The amendments set out that NGOs challenging such acts must be registered for two years, could only challenge acts that were introduced after their registration, and must deposit a bond of up to 50,000 lei (10,000 euro).

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

On 27 April, the Senate adopted an amendment to Law no. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child to "protect the child against the dissemination by any means of content regarding the deviation from the sex established at birth or the popularisation of sex change or homosexuality". The bill is a replica of Hungary's 2021 propaganda law and was tabled by the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (RMDSZ). Local civil society and the European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup called on MPs to reject the bill. The legislative proposal is in the Chamber of Deputies and can move forward anytime.

In October, civil society held a march with the motto 'Our tradition is love', demanding that MPs stand firmly against the bill.

HEALTH

Access to hormone replacement therapy remained severely limited and unsafe this year, with pharmacies only providing a limited number of options for testosterone and oestrogen treatment.

Since August 2021, a severe lack of ART medication hit Romania, posing a serious threat to people living with HIV. After many months of civil society pressure calling for a National HIV Strategy, ACCEPT and activist Alexandru Tantu sued the government and the Ministry of Health for their lack of action. ACCEPT also published a comprehensive study on 'The HIV/AIDS situation in Romania'. In November, the Constitutional Court ruled that the dismantling of the National HIV/AIDS Commission in 2021 was constitutional.

Nevertheless, in November the government adopted the National Strategy for the Surveillance, Control and Prevention of HIV/AIDS (2022–2030).

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

ACCEPT, the Public Ministry (General Prosecutor's Office), and the Ombudsperson set up a working group focusing on the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights X and Y v Romania judgment, which set out that the lack of a clear and foreseeable legal framework for legal gender recognition is a violation of the Convention.

The 'Our Tradition is Love' march in October (see under *Freedom of Expression*) also called for access to legal gender recognition for all trans people.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In October, ACCEPT, the Public Ministry (Romanian General Prosecutor's Office) and Stonewall organised a training of trainers who will hold sessions on hate crimes to 280 prosecutors and 160 police officers by the end of 2023.

[ROMANIA WEB PAGE](#)

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RUSSIA

As a result of more restrictive anti-LGBTI and anti-NGO laws adopted in the past year, it should be noted that access to information about developments in the country has been increasingly difficult. There is no public information available on LGBTI issues. Activists and organisations working for equality are facing increased risks in their safety and freedom, especially since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which contributes to making access to information more difficult.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In September, a St. Petersburg court sided with a taxi company whose driver harassed a queer person in 2021.

ASYLUM

Many LGBTI people, including activists and those working in LGBT* organisations, have left Russia since the war against Ukraine broke out (see under *Foreign Policy*) and the new ‘propaganda’ law was adopted (see under *Freedom of Expression*). Several LGBTI organisations provided country-specific information on what resources are available in neighbouring countries and shared stories of those who had already left.

LGBTI people leaving Russia faced difficulties with getting a visa and crossing borders because of visa and entry restrictions for Russian citizens in several countries.

In September, four sisters from Dagestan tried to flee from Russia to Georgia because of domestic violence; one of them was an LGBTI person. Russian border guards held and interrogated them for several hours, but, after wide media coverage, let them go.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBT hate speech was a severe issue throughout the year, including in the context of the new ‘propaganda’ law (see also under *Freedom of expression and Participation in public, cultural and political life*). For instance, in March, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church endorsed Ukraine’s invasion and identified one of its causes the struggle of the “people of Donbas” against Pride marches. MP Vitaly Milonov co-launched a homophobic reality TV show

‘I’m Not Gay’ where contestants have to guess who among them is gay. In July, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov mocked trans representatives of NATO. These are just a handful of examples of many.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes against LGBTI people, including murder, physical violence and extortion were committed again this year. The authorities failed to classify them as anti-LGBTI hate crimes.

In January, a young gay man was severely beaten by a group of men in a Kuban village.

In February, the St. Petersburg court found a man who killed and dismembered a trans woman guilty of murder committed in excess of the limits of necessary self-defense. He was released in the courtroom - his time spent in custody credited to him as punishment.

Coming Out published its 2021 annual report finding unprecedented crackdowns on civil society and human rights. The Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial echoed similar findings in its report in May.

Several people became victims of fake dates again this year. Coming Out launched a webcomic and webinars to share information about the issue. In January, two men were sentenced to two years in prison and a fine for luring a trans woman on a fake date in 2021. In March, two men received two years and two months probation and a fine for extortion against a gay man in 2019. In July, a man was detained during a fake date in Chechnya. There has been no information about his whereabouts since. Human rights activist Igor Kochetkov filed an application with the Investigative Committee, the prosecutor’s office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a demand to investigate the situation. This was ignored.

Implementing a decision by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Ministry of Internal Affairs was ordered by the court in January to pay damages to a lesbian couple, who were victims of a physical assault that the police refused to investigate. An appeal is in progress to demand higher compensation.

Coming Out filed a case at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concerning the failure of



the authorities to investigate the death of Yelena Grigoryeva, a well-known LGBT activist, who was murdered in St. Petersburg in 2019.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Coming Out launched a campaign and petition calling for a ban on so-called 'conversion therapies' and collected over 4,000 signatures. In one case, a victim of forced treatment turned to the Prosecutor's Office but has not received a response.

DATA COLLECTION

Coming Out published several important reports this year, including their annual report on discrimination, a study on the situation of LGBT* teenagers, and a report on the situation of LGBTI migrants who left the country after the Russian invasion of Ukraine began.

The Yesli byt' tochnym ('To be Precise') project published an overview of studies about LGBTI people in Russia and beyond, affirming that anti-LGBTI stigma does not in any way help "demographics". The November propaganda law (see under *Freedom of Expression*) was justified, inter alia, by suggesting that LGBTI people are a threat to traditional values and demographics.

EDUCATION

The deputy principal of Yekaterinburg Lyceum No. 12, Lilia Ardasheva was found guilty of 'LGBT propaganda'. She received a hefty fine for allowing a dance competition to be held in the school in May, which some politicians condemned. Several parents stood in support of Ardasheva, who was fired.

In June, students of the Perm state university were threatened with expulsion for posting an LGBT-themed video on a student media platform.

Five students in grades eight and nine were accused of 'LGBT propaganda' for playing truth or dare.

EMPLOYMENT

Coming Out's report found that 20% of the respondents faced discrimination in employment because they were LGBT*.

In February, a trans woman working at the Moscow police was forced to file a letter of resignation after

changing her legal gender.

In July, a photographer in Moscow was fired because of his sexual orientation.

Coming Out restarted its career counselling program. In 2022, specialists conducted more than 180 consultations and over 60 people found work. The organisation also launched a job search stream for LGBT* migrants in Georgia and Kazakhstan.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July, Coming Out published the findings of its study on the lives of LGBTQ+ teenagers in the St. Petersburg and Leningrad regions, finding that 87% felt unsafe.

FAMILY

Several trans parents shared their stories this year.

Coming out restarted its programme for LGBT parents and organised several events, including a meeting on the new 'propaganda' law and its impact on rainbow families.

FOREIGN POLICY

On 24 February, Russian troops invaded Ukraine - the war continues to date. Anti-war protests broke out across the country and thousands were detained. In early March, the UN established an Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, which concluded in October that Russia had committed an array of war crimes. On 16 March, the Council of Europe ceased Russia's membership. The war has impacted LGBTI people in Russia in numerous ways. Many LGBTI activists fled the country after the authorities held police raids to monitor anti-war activities. Trans women have been subject to the draft if they had not changed their legal gender; many were barred from leaving the country. Civil society provided information to those participating in protests or objecting to the war and conscription.

In February, high-profile basketball player Brittney Griner was detained at the Moscow airport after the authorities found a vape with cannabis oil on her possession. Griner is a black lesbian and a US citizen. In August, Griner was sentenced to nine years in



prison for 'drug trafficking' and was [transferred](#) to a penal colony in November. In December, Griner was [released](#) in a prisoner exchange between Russia and the US, and travelled home safely to reunite with her wife.

In June, the parliament [adopted](#) a law establishing that Russian court rulings will take precedence over rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and that the government will not execute the Court's rulings.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In [April](#) and [October](#), the courts upheld the prison sentences for Chechen brothers Ismail Isaev (17) and Salekh Magamadov (20) who had been arbitrarily [arrested](#) in 2021 and subjected to psychological torture and physical abuse and held without access to a lawyer. The brothers are members of the LGBTI community. [UN human rights mandates](#) and the European Court had [previously called](#) for the brothers' release.

LGBT people in Chechnya continued to be targeted and [subjected](#) to enforced disappearances.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Organisers and participants of public events on LGBTI rights continued to face harassment and violence (see under *Freedom of Expression*).

The queer art festival, Open Art was [held](#) successfully in January, despite difficulties to find a venue willing to host the festival and extremists showing up at some of its events.

QueerFest was [held](#) online this year.

COVID-19 [restrictions](#) on holding mass events, including protests and even single [pickets](#), [remained](#) in force, despite all other pandemic rules having been lifted. In December, rallies near public state buildings, churches, schools, and train stations were [banned](#).

Between February and the end of the year, a record number of 19,443 people were [detained](#). Several people protesting against the new 'propaganda'

law were also detained (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). Demonstrations have become more dangerous.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The authorities [continued](#) adding NGOs, media outlets, activists, and journalists to their [foreign agent](#) registry (see also under *Freedom of Expression*) (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

In February, the Ministry of Justice [filed](#) a lawsuit against the Sphere foundation claiming its work counters traditional family values. Sphere's appeals were [unsuccessful](#) and although it was legally dissolved, it continues operations.

On 14 June, the European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that the foreign agent law violates human rights law and ordered Russia to pay the applicants over one million euro. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov [said](#) they would not bother with implementation.

Russian LGBT initiatives cooperated with anti-war groups throughout the year. For example, Coming out and Helpdesk media issued a joint [publication](#).

In December, the [new](#) 'foreign agents' law was adopted, expanding the definition of foreign agents to individuals and organisations who are "under foreign influence", not just those that receive funding. 'Foreign agents' are now also banned from teaching minors, joining the civil service, organising assemblies, or participating in electoral commissions.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

(see also under *Bias-motivated Speech and Education*)

In April, a Moscow court [fined](#) Meta and [TikTok](#) tens of thousands of euro for refusing to take down what the authorities considered 'LGBT propaganda'. TikTok was [fined](#) in October as well. Several other 'propaganda' rulings were passed down this year (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) and books were also [targeted](#).

Two men were [put](#) in pre-trial detention for engaging in sex that was [witnessed](#) by a 14-year-old neighbour through a window. The men could face more than ten years in prison. The outcome of the case is



not known, as the victims turned down LGBT+ organisations' assistance over fears of reprisals.

In July, Coming Out's [study](#) found alarming rates among LGBTQ+ teenagers who were unable to access information about SOGIESC. The report showed the detrimental impact of the 2013 propaganda law on young people's lives and well-being.

In July, MP Alexander Khinshtein [suggested](#) introducing a stricter propaganda law that would also extend to adults. Khinshtein [called](#) shows like 'Peppa Pig' and Southpark "a tool of war" and LGBT 'propaganda'.

In October, the [new](#) 'propaganda law' was [tabled](#) in parliament. The law, which prohibits positive and also neutral information about LGBT people to minors and adults, was [unanimously adopted](#) in late November. The ban also [covers](#) "gender reassignment" and the "promotion of paedophilia". Individuals can be fined roughly 6,000 euro and organisations 75,000 euro. In December, the UN Human Rights Committee [called](#) on Russia to [revoke](#) the 2013 propaganda law and to protect LGBT people from discrimination and violence. Despite civil society [advocacy](#) and international outcry, on 5 December, President Putin [signed](#) the law.

A day after the parliament adopted the law, bookstores across the country [added](#) age-limit labels on books that might fall under the ban. Publishers [feared](#) that 50% of books would need to have the label, including books like Tchaikovsky's biography. The children's play 'The Princess and the Ogre' was [cancelled](#) in Novosibirsk. In early December, the academic journal Logos [retracted](#) a translated article on lesbian images in lifestyle magazines. Later in the month, Russian online streaming services censored scenes in '[The White Lotus](#)', '[Gossip Girl](#)', and '[The Sex Lives of College Girls](#)'.

LGBT+ organisations and [activists vowed](#) to [continue](#) their work, but face an unprecedented crackdown. The Kazan Kazan Center for LGBTQ+ Support 'Acceptance', the online VKontakte support group, and other support groups for queer people [suspended](#) their activities. In September, two VK groups were [blocked](#) by a St. Petersburg court. VK

introduced notifications in LGBT groups that warn of "controversial content" that "may be considered inappropriate under Russian law".

Coming Out [published](#) a resource for LGBTI people on how to avoid prosecution and information, specifically for [trans people](#), on the foreseeable [impact](#) of the law.

There were several attempts again this year to block LGBTI-themed websites (see [here](#) and [here](#)). On 27 December, Russia's media regulator was [granted](#) blanket powers to ban all websites that feature 'LGBT propaganda'.

In July, a St. Petersburg court [found](#) a photographer guilty and fined him 15,000 rubles (200 euro) for insulting the feelings of believers after a video showing two men kissing in front of a church.

In November, the appeal court in Komsomolsk-on-Amur [upheld](#) the acquittal of Yulia [Tsvetkova](#), artist and activist who has stood trial for 'distribution of pornography', for her drawings of rainbow families and the feminist blog and social media group she ran. Yulia could have faced up to six years in prison. Earlier in June, the Ministry of Justice [listed](#) Tsvetkova as a 'foreign agent'. She [left](#) Russia a few days after the ruling.

The Side by Side LGBT Film Festival [turned](#) into the Q space project and is run in Estonia.

HEALTH

Coming Out's report [found](#) that 27% of the respondents who disclosed their SOGI in clinics faced discrimination in healthcare and 18% faced threats from medical professionals.

The St. Petersburg mobile HIV prevention program for trans people had to [close](#) down in February, due to [threats](#) and intimidation. Civil society [fears](#) that the new 'propaganda law' will make HIV prevention much harder.

Since the outbreak of the war, trans people have [faced](#) a shortage of hormones and a significant increase in prices.



The Orthodox Church proposed banning gender-affirming surgeries in November.

HOUSING

Coming Out's annual report highlighted that LGBT* people regularly face difficulty finding housing and report conflicts with neighbours.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

With the outbreak of the war, many human rights activists were forced to leave Russia and have faced problems with getting visas, crossing borders (see here and here), banking and money transactions. Those who left in the spring were also impacted by high exchange rates. Human rights defenders continued to be harassed and prosecuted. Following the adoption of the new 'propaganda law', intersex activists asked LGBT groups to avoid using the term 'LGBTI' as it places them at additional risk.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Trans people continued to experience difficulties accessing legal gender recognition. The government has not responded to Coming Out and T-Action's 2020 plea for the simplification of the LGR process. In February, online applications for a name change or a new passport became available again, making access smoother.

The new 'propaganda law', adopted in November, poses new barriers for trans people as one of its centrepieces is a ban on promoting information that could encourage minors to change their gender. The law does not directly ban LGR, but will possibly make access harder.

In November, Vitaly Milonov, deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee on Family, Women and Children known for his anti-LGBT views, said LGR should only be available based on medical reasons and otherwise be banned.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In June, St. Petersburg's municipal deputy Sergey Troshin came out as gay.

Olympic tennis player Daria Kasatkina came out as a lesbian in July and encouraged other Russian celebrities to come out. Several MPs spoke out against Kasatkina and suggested she should get another citizenship. In September, she received a national sports award regardless.

Political activist and member of the youth branch of the Yabloko party, Vadim Vaganov, came out as gay, in response to the adoption of the 'propaganda' law.

Trans politician Yulia Alyoshina quit in response to the new propaganda law's adoption.

The head of the National Cross-country Ski Association called trans people "disgusting" and stated that LGBT people should be banned from the Olympics.

PUBLIC OPINION

In August, the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre's study found that over 50% of Russians think sexual orientation is biologically coded. 86% of the respondents indicated that they had never encountered 'propaganda of non-traditional values.' Between 2015 and 2022, the rate of those who know LGBT people in their environment doubled from 8 to 15%.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In December, Putin signed a law prohibiting surrogacy arrangements between foreign citizens and Russian men, which makes surrogacy inaccessible to gay men.

A St. Petersburg clinic denied a trans woman the service of freezing her sperm, as she is legally female.

[RUSSIA WEB PAGE](#)

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SAN MARINO

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Parliament approved that IDAHOBIT on 17 May will be marked every year from now on.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In April, long-time LGBT activist and openly gay politician, Paolo Rondelli was appointed as one of two captains regent, San Marino's heads of state.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Following the successful referendum in 2021, the parliament passed the necessary legislation to legalise abortion. The law, adopted in September, allows abortion in the first 12 weeks and ensures that the public healthcare system covers the procedure. Beyond 12 weeks, abortion is possible in case of foetal abnormalities.

[SAN MARINO WEB PAGE](#)

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SERBIA

ASYLUM

Crisis Response and Policy Centre and UNHCR published a leaflet listing all services available for LGBTI+ asylum seekers and refugees in Serbia.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBT hate speech remained a serious issue this year, most commonly in the context of EuroPride in Belgrade (see more under *Freedom of Assembly*).

In August, a large demonstration was held in Belgrade against EuroPride, with many slogans conflating LGBT people with child molestation. The Bishop of Banat said that the Pride event would 'desecrate' Belgrade and went further by stating he would curse and use force against Pride organisers and participants. Both the President and the Prime Minister condemned the statement. NGO Da se zna! filed a complaint to the Prosecutor's Office, which has initiated an investigation into the case.

The newly appointed Patriarch Porfirije made several hostile statements about LGBT people this year and praised traditional families.

After 'banning' EuroPride in August, President Aleksander Vučić said that the event was "imposed on the Serbian people with evil intentions."

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality found that the statement of Sulejman Ugljanin, head of the Sandžak Democratic Action Party, in which he compared LGBT people to "cattle", amounted to hate speech. Ugljanin has to remove the hateful statement from his social media platforms, issue a public apology, and arrange a meeting with an LGBT organisation.

Throughout the year, several other politicians made anti-LGBTI statements (see here, here, and here) on TV, during parliamentary debates, or on social media.

A doctor stated during a TV appearance in September that 'homosexuality' is a disease and that it can be cured.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to take place on a regular basis and largely with impunity.

In its annual hate crime report, Da se zna! documented the highest number of anti-LGBT incidents since 2017: 83 cases of anti-LGBT hate crimes, hate speech, and discrimination in 2021, marking a 38% increase compared to 2020 (52). The number of hate crime cases sharply increased in August and September following a series of hateful statements by political and religious leaders. EuroPride billboards were vandalised.

The Belgrade Pride Info Centre was again attacked in February and October. For the first time, a politician, Belgrade's deputy mayor Goran Vesić condemned the violence. None of the perpetrators in the 14 attacks have been prosecuted.

In April, the home of a same-gender couple was attacked in Grocka.

Five men were arrested in August after they lured several men on dates, took them to a forest, raped, beat, or robbed them.

Several people were attacked during, directly after and in the weeks after EuroPride.

EDUCATION

In September, the Dveri movement targeted several biology textbooks, used in eighth grade, that discuss diversity in terms of SOGI and the importance of acceptance. The movement's leader, Boško Obradović called the books "scandalous propaganda of homosexuality and transgenderism to minors". The Ministry of Education set up a working group, several members of which had previously shown bias towards LGBT people, to assess the textbooks. In October, the group requested the publishers to amend the books.

EMPLOYMENT

Labris started forming the 'Proud at Work' network and launched an online campaign to map LGBTI-friendly businesses. Labris will train the companies in 2023.

Rainbow Ignite joined the UN Global Compact's initiative to implement the UN Standards of Conduct among businesses and ensure a safe work environment for LGBTIQ+ employees.

LGBTI+ asylum seekers continued to struggle with unemployment, as they have to wait around nine months to receive a work permit. Civil society lobbied the government to change the policy.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Four years after the expiration of the previous strategy in 2018, the parliament adopted its new Strategy of Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in January.

In April, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended Serbia combat discrimination against LGBTI people.

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT, Serbia's Ombudsman Zoran Pašalić reminded the government that additional legal reforms were necessary, such as sanctioning anti-LGBTI hate crimes and providing free legal aid to victims of discrimination and violence. The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Brankica Janković echoed these points.

During EuroPride, intersex activists from several European countries, including Austria, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and Serbia shared their experiences and the legal situation in their countries at the panel 'Legal protection of intersex persons across Europe'.

FAMILY

The draft Law on Same-Sex Partnerships continued to be stalled.

Labris formed a Rainbow Family group with over 20 participants, held three meetings, and a Colorful Picnic for children whose parents are LGBTIQ.

FOREIGN POLICY

In May the European Parliament adopted its report on Serbia which called for the adoption of the draft law on same-sex partnerships and action to combat harassment, propaganda and hatred against LGBTI people, including proper investigation and conviction of hate crimes.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

EuroPride was held in Belgrade this year, marking the first time that a Balkans country hosted the event.

On 28 August, President Aleksander Vučić announced that EuroPride would not go ahead, citing several reasons, including tensions with Kosovo, threats from far-right extremists, and others.

On 13 September, the police announced a ban on the Pride route, which was previously agreed upon between the organisers of Pride and the Serbian authorities. Local and international civil society, the EU and Council of Europe criticised the authorities' stance. Serbia was added to CIVICUS Monitor's International Human Rights Watch List and received the rating of 'obstructed'.

The organisers repeatedly affirmed that they would go ahead with EuroPride. In the end, the event took place on 17 September, on a shorter route than planned, and was attended by over 10,000 participants. Prime Minister Ana Brnabic only gave green light to the event hours before it started and her previous inaction was firmly criticised by civil society. There was heavy police presence at all EuroPride venues. During the march, the police pushed back small groups of counter-demonstrators who waved crosses and religious insignia. Minister of Interior Aleksandar, Vulin later stated that the ban was enforced and what some saw as a march was just the police escorting people to a concert.

Civil society documented 16 attacks against EuroPride participants, including on activists from Albania. These included physical assault, verbal harassment, and the destruction of property. In several cases, the participants were attacked in front of the police, who refused to intervene. Over 80 far-right counter-protesters were arrested and ten police officers were injured. Civil society expressed disappointment that most arrests concerned extremists who assaulted the police. NGOs called for a similarly firm response in the case of attacks against participants.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Rainbow Ignite was established this year.

Under the auspices of Labris, two new groups were established this year: one for rainbow families and one for LBTQ Women over 45.

LGBTI+ civil society organisations faced serious

financial difficulties this year, with funding cuts and a lack of targeted funding opportunities.

HOUSING

Due to a drastic increase in rental prices, LGBTI+ asylum seekers had a particularly difficult time finding accommodation, and many stayed in reception centres for prolonged periods.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued calling for a legal gender recognition law that provides for a model based on self-determination. The new Strategy of Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and its related Action Plan specifically mentions the drafting and adoption of an LGR law.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Labris and Rainbow Ignite held the first WLW (Women Loving Women) art festival in Belgrade in September, during Pride Week.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

President Aleksandar Vučić announced that medically assisted reproduction will be available from December onwards, but it is unclear who will be able to access services.

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SLOVAKIA

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Following a homophobic terrorist attack that shook the community (see under *Bias-motivated Violence*), venues posted rainbow stickers on their doors to signal safe spaces for LGBTI people.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, the assistant bishop of the Bratislava diocese, Jozef Halcko, made lesbophobic statements after the Slovak Radio and TV (RTVS) broadcast a TV show episode featuring a kiss between two women. RTSV defended the broadcast.

In the wake of the homophobic murders that shook the country (see under *Bias-motivated Violence*), Archbishop Ján Orosch of Trnava sent a letter to priests questioning the media portrayal of the victims, saying “they might have been drug addicts, and wondering whether police ever raided the bar for drugs”. The President and PM condemned the statement and over 2,000 signed a letter of concern, prompting the Archbishop to later apologise.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

On 12 October, two young men Matúš Horváth and Juraj Vankulič were murdered by a gunman outside one of Bratislava’s two queer bars, Tepláreň. The gunman wounded a woman as well and claimed responsibility for the unprecedented white supremacist terrorist attack before killing himself. This was the first terrorist attack in modern Slovak history. Prime Minister Eduard Heger called the perpetrator, whose father is a member of the far-right party Vlasť (Homeland), “radicalised”. He first stated that no one should be attacked due to their “lifestyle”, but apologised and rephrased his statement later. President Zuzana Caputova expressed her solidarity:

“I want to say to the LGBT community, it is not you who don’t belong here, it is not you who should be afraid to walk in the streets. It is hate that does not belong in Slovakia” - Reported on euronews

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed her solidarity. Almost 20,000 people held a march and vigil two days later, including the President

and the Prime Minister. On 20 October, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning hate speech and hate crimes on grounds of SOGIESC in Slovakia and across the EU. The EP expressed serious concern about politicians engaging in hate speech and asked for a clear stance against anti-LGBTI violence and against cooperation with far-right groups.

Civil society had warned about the consequences of the growing anti-LGBT political rhetoric and the inadequate response to hate crimes by law enforcement before - many have interpreted the murder as the culmination of the past years.

In late October, LGBTI NGOs launched the ‘Ideám o život’ / ‘It’s About Our Life’ initiative and a petition to call for sanctions against hate speech by politicians, prevention and prosecution in hate crimes, support for safe spaces and support services, and other key actions. Over 32,000 people signed on in the first month and over 50 civil society organisations have joined the platform.

DATA COLLECTION

NGO Inakost’ launched its second nationwide survey to learn about the situation of LGBTI+ people in the country.

EMPLOYMENT

The LGBTI+ Business Forum 2022 took place in July, bringing together companies, organisations, representatives of the European Labor Agency (ELA) and the European Commission.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Extremist rhetoric across the political spectrum continued to be an issue this year. In August, over 50 organisations and initiatives called on the Prime Minister to reject the government’s cooperation with far-right politicians who ran for the extremist L’SNS in 2020.

FAMILY

Jozef Mikloško was appointed as the the new commissioner for children. Mikloško is an open opponent of adoption rights for same-sex couples,

who participated in the anti-LGBT March for the Family in July. During his speech at the event, he said: “The ideal environment for a child is a harmonious family with a father and a mother. This is an important sentence that I want to work on, that I want to help fulfill in Slovakia.”

Despite the new government’s 2020 promise to adopt legislation on inheritance and property rights for couples cohabiting and same-sex couples, little progress took place this year. Civil society continued to lobby for the adoption of the Life Partnership Act and equal adoption rights for same-sex couples, as included in the It’s about our life petition (see under *Bias-motivated Violence*). Inakost’ published a comprehensive legal analysis of the rights of same-sex couples and rainbow families. In October, SaS presented a proposal to amend the Civil Code, which civil society considered weak. The proposal does not allow for second-parent adoption and for civil unions to be formed at the registry office - instead, couples need to go to a notary. The proposal failed in early October, despite receiving the highest votes in parliament to date.

In October, the first-instance Žilina Regional Court established in the case of a married Slovak-Argentinian gay couple that denying permanent residence to same-sex spouses of Slovak citizens is discriminatory. In 2023, the Constitutional Court will also hear a case concerning the recognition of same-sex marriages formed abroad.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Pride month kicked off on 30 June, and the festival featured discussions, workshops, film screenings, exhibitions, and performances. The Bratislava Pride march was held on 23 July, for the first time in three years without any COVID-19 restrictions in place. The patrons of Pride included Bratislava’s mayor Matúš Vallo, vice-chairman of the European Parliament Michal Šimečka (Progressive Slovakia), and Governor of Bratislava Self-Governing Region, Juraj Droba (SaS). No violent incidents were recorded, but the March for Family was held at the same time as Pride.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, two opposition MPs proposed a law that

would restrict the display of LGBTI-related symbols. As a response, several ministries raised the rainbow flag. Prime Minister Eduard Heger called on the MPs to withdraw the proposal and stop “polarising society”. In the end, parliament voted against the motion.

HEALTH

Following years of advocacy by civil society groups, the Ministry of Health signed the *Professional guidelines to unify medical procedures for issuing medical opinions on gender reassignment* in March. The guidelines were suspended in May and despite the Ministry’s promise to civil society, have not been renewed. As a result, trans healthcare procedures remain inaccessible.

Inakost’ organised mental health support for LGBTI youth following the October murders.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Roman Samotný, long-time LGBTI+ activist and the owner of the queer bar, Tepláreň received this year’s White Crow award. Tepláreň has been a safe space for the community for many years, and continues to be so, despite the autumn murders.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The *Professional guidelines to unify medical procedures for issuing medical opinions on gender reassignment* (see under *Health*) abolished the sterility requirement of legal gender recognition, but set out that a minimum of one year of hormone therapy and a self-declaration as necessary. A number of politicians, including MP Anna Záborská attacked the guidelines and called for the reinstatement of the sterility requirement in law. The guidelines have been suspended since May, and as medical professionals are left without guidance, LGR remains inaccessible. Civil society continued to lobby for quick, easy, and accessible legal gender recognition, which is part of the It’s about our life petition.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Slovak Queer Film Festival took place in November under the auspices of the Slovak Vice-Chairman of

the European Parliament, Michal Šimečka.

As a reaction to the homophobic terrorist attack at Tepláreň, the largest cultural event in the history of Slovakia took place in November. The project „Concerts for Matúš and Juraj – Slovenská tepláreň“ unites 355 art projects, 166 cultural and other venues, 45 festivals and supporting events and 47 entities which expressed their support, for a total of 613 participating performers and 199 events.

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SLOVENIA

ASYLUM

Civil society organised support for LGBT people fleeing Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Legebitra documented five cases of bias-motivated speech in 2022.

MP Boštjan Koražija from the Left called NSi's political poster "gay", but given that he is also gay, was excused by his party.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A number of Pride posters were vandalised in the weeks leading to the festival in June.

Legebitra documented four hate crimes and two cases of vandalism.

In November, the government presented an amendment to the Penal Code which would increase sanctions on hate crimes based on the victim's sexual orientation and a number of other non-GIGESC grounds.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The ruling party SDS, led by far-right Janez Janša, which had waged a crackdown on civil society, was defeated in the April parliamentary elections. The new government is led by the Freedom Movement and has significantly increased communication with civil society.

FAMILY

Seven years after the failed referendum, the Constitutional Court legalised same-sex marriage on 8 July. In a second judgement, the Court also ruled that married couples, regardless of their gender, can adopt. The first marriages were concluded in August, some administered by Ljubljana's mayor.

"This does not diminish the importance of traditional marriage as a union of a man and a woman, nor does it change conditions under which persons of the opposite sex can marry. All it means is that same-sex partners can now marry just like heterosexual partners can".

- Constitutional Court

The Slovenian Bishops Conference criticised the judgement.

On 4 October, parliament adopted the necessary legal changes, making Slovenia the first country in the former socialist bloc to have marriage equality in place.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Ljubljana Pride was held on 11 June without any incidents and was joined by the capital's mayor. Simon Maljevac

HEALTH

The interdisciplinary group on trans healthcare, set up by the Ministry of Health and the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana in 2020, only met once this year and continued to fail to communicate with civil society or the National Institute of Public Health.

Civil society continued advocating for the depathologisation of trans identities, training for healthcare professionals, and guidelines on trans healthcare. In October, the National Institute of Public Health stated that they support the implementation of ICD-11.

In November, TransAkcija published a public statement which is a call for depathologization addressed to the Ministry of Health alongside organising the central annual trans event in Slovenia, TransMisija, under the same theme. The event consisted of a trans artist action and round table with trans community members and a representative of the Ombudsman for Equality as speakers. The action was widely covered by the media.

TransAkcija published an online handbook on medical and social transitioning in Slovenia. TransAkcija also launched a binder exchange program in January, where trans people can more easily access and also donate binders.

Accessing medications became more difficult this year and this has impacted Nebido access as well - the hormones need to be picked up at GPs, instead of simply at pharmacies.

The blood donation deferral period was lifted this year and as of 1 July, men who have sex with men will be assessed in terms of risky behaviours, on an equal basis with others.

PrEP is now freely available for men who have sex with men and trans people.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued to advocate for a smoother legal gender recognition process, but no major developments took place in this area this year. The working group on LGR finalised its analysis of the legal situation and it is now the Ministry of Interior's task to continue the process.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The children's book, 'My Rainbow Family' was published in Slovenian and an LGBTQ+ colouring book was released.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Legebitra concluded its cooperation with the police on hate crime training this year and the establishment of LGBTI liaison officers. Legebitra reported that the training was successful and hopes that leadership within the police will maintain and strengthen its commitment to the program.

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SPAIN

ASYLUM

The new LGBTI law, adopted by the Lower House in December, is set to bring developments for trans migrants.

Civil society organised support for LGBTI people fleeing Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-trans rhetoric continued to gain more ground in Spain as the negotiations about the legal gender recognition law resumed this year (*see below*). Civil society launched a website to tackle misinformation about the law.

In February, civil society organisations launched a joint initiative to tackle hate speech against vulnerable groups.

For the first time ever, the Women's Day March was divided and went on two separate routes. Groups against sex work and the self-determination law marched on alternative routes in roughly 20 cities.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes continued to be a serious issue in Spain this year. The annual report of the Ministry of Interior documented a record number of 466 anti-LGBT hate crimes in 2021 (2020: 277), with one in every four hate crimes targeting LGBT people. This is a 68% increase in one year. NGOs continued calling for comprehensive hate crime legislation that protects LGBTI people and launched an awareness-raising campaign to 'stop the hate'.

Coruña's Observatory against LGBTI-phobia published its fourth annual report, finding a 71% increase in cases compared to 2021.

Several hate crimes took place again this year in Madrid, Girona, Barcelona, and near Barcelona.

In Bilbao, a man turned himself in for murdering at least four gay men after luring them on dates and extorting money from them.

Two perpetrators in the 2021 brutal murder of Samuel Luiz were sentenced to three and a half years in juvenile detention.

Anti-LGBTI murals and graffiti were also common this year. Several rainbow-coloured benches were vandalised in small towns again this year (see here and here).

One of four perpetrators in a 2019 homophobic attack in Barcelona was sentenced to three and a half years in prison after the court considered the homophobic motif as an aggravating circumstance. The perpetrator in a 2020 murder of a migrant trans woman was found guilty by a jury in Tenerife and faces over 12 years in prison. The perpetrator in a cyberhate case from seven years ago was sentenced to nine months in prison and a mandatory seminar on equality issues.

BODILY INTEGRITY

So-called 'conversion therapies' continued to be reported this year. In April, Madrid decided not to press charges against the Bishop of Alcala for the administration of so-called 'conversion therapies' uncovered back in 2019.

The LGBTI law, which includes a ban on so-called 'conversion therapies' and non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children under the age of 12, was passed by the Lower House on 22 December, it is now at the Senate.

EDUCATION

The tension between two groups of students escalated in Valencia in February. The group with an anti-LGBTI stance physically attacked their teacher due to his sexual orientation - more than ten students were expelled.

After the outcome of the regional election in Castilla y León in February, the president of the region stated that they would implement the parental veto regarding relationship and sex education.

The Valencia Supreme Court struck down the appeal of an ultra-conservative association that challenged a 2021 court decision refusing to remove 32 LGBTI-themed books from libraries and educational centres. The association said they would take the case to the European Court of Human Rights.



In September, FELGTBI+ launched a campaign encouraging LGBTI teachers to set an example to young people and be open about their SOGI.

EMPLOYMENT

In July, the Constitutional Court passed a landmark judgement establishing for the first time that gender identity is a protected ground under the Constitution.

Over 30 businesses have joined FELGTBI+'s nationwide trans-focused job inclusion program 'YesWeTrans', launched in 2020. 15% of trans participants have increased their employability through the program.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

One in three discrimination complaints in Barcelona concerned SOGIESC grounds in 2021 - the rate doubled since 2018.

Castilla-La Mancha adopted a regional LGBTI law in May, which provides access to LGR for minors on the basis of self-determination, bans so-called 'conversion therapies', and depathologises trans identities.

A village with 700 inhabitants in Extremadura lit up the church tower in rainbow colours during Pride month. The action was not welcomed by the regional Church.

FAMILY

In January, a lesbian couple was denied birth registration for their child by a hospital, whose staff said they only do that "for normal couples". The hospital issued an apology.

The number of different-gender marriages per year has decreased and same-gender marriages have increased since 2007.

The LGBTI law which allows same-gender female couples to both be automatically recognised as parents, without having to be married and go through adoption, was passed by the Lower House on 22 December, and is now at the Senate.

FOREIGN POLICY

Late last year, the Spanish government released its 2021-2024 Foreign Action Strategy, which states the promotion and defence of LGBTI diversity as a key asset of Spanish foreign policy.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Over 20,000 people joined Madrid's Critical Pride in late June under the motto 'no Pride without papers', demanding papers for undocumented migrants, social rights for sex workers, and self-determination for trans people.

Over 600,000 participated in Madrid Pride, held on 9 July under the motto 'Facing hate: Visibility, Pride and Resilience'. The event was joined by the EU Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Legal rows over the display of rainbow flags continued this year. Sevilla raised the flag this year after court proceedings in 2021. A regional court also overturned the ban on the flag in Zaragoza. Madrid refused to fly the flag again this year.

HEALTH

Several regions decided that specialised STI clinics would close and services would move to general healthcare facilities - a move firmly criticised by civil society.

KifKif's study documented systemic discrimination against asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in their access to antiretroviral treatment and PrEP.

FELGTBI+ helpline supported 1,995 people with health information and legal counselling. The number of requests has decreased since it peaked during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Spain recorded the largest number of monkeypox cases in Europe, but the government failed to acquire enough vaccines. FELGTBI+ strongly criticised WHO for its messaging stigmatising LGBTI+ people.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

FELGTBI+ celebrated its 30th anniversary this year.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

After years of delays and obstacles, the legislation process of the federal legal gender recognition law started in June. In the following months, the law was stalled and in October, far-right parties tabled an amendment which would have practically annulled the law. Parliament rejected the move. PSOE later proposed to amend the law and impose a court procedure on all minors aged 14-15, which civil society condemned. The June draft already barred children under 12, migrants residing in Spain and non-binary people from accessing LGR. These limitations were previously highlighted by civil society as a failure of the government. EU Commissioner for Human Rights Helena Dalli stood in support of self-determination during her June visit.

On 22 December, the Lower House passed the law with a vote of 188-150, and it is now up to the Senate to adopt it. The law sets out self-determination for those 16 or over, parental consent for those 14-15, and court authorisation for those aged 12-13. All applicants will however have to register their application, wait for up to three months, and then re-affirm their desire for LGR. Eventually, LGR will be accessible for asylum seekers and residents who come from countries where LGR is not available. Non-binary recognition is not included.

In February, La Rioja introduced a self-determination model.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The draft Sports Law, which sets out that discrimination against LGBTI people in sports is prohibited, was passed by the Lower House and is currently at the Senate.

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SWEDEN

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Several Uber drivers refused to drive participants at Stockholm Pride in August.

ASYLUM

In October, civil society reacted with grave concern about the incoming government's plans for changing asylum and migration policies. The governing coalition's agreement, which includes the right-wing populist and anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, sets out a number of restrictive measures. These include stricter family reunification rules, the abolishment of permanent residence permits, the drastic reduction of the number of quota refugees, and the establishment of transit centres for asylum applicants. Nevertheless, LGBTQI refugees remain a priority group in the agreement, which also sets out a review of the asylum process to improve procedures for LGBTQI applicants.

The story of a Nigerian gay activist made headlines after the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket) refused to believe him and threatened to deport him. Abel's partner was murdered in his home country, and he has been an active member of the LGBTQ activist community in Sweden.

West Pride launched a billboard campaign on the risks LGBTQ+ refugees face in Sweden.

Civil society organised support for LGBTQI+ people fleeing Ukraine. Part of the support was localised inside Ukraine, in cooperation with Ukrainian partner organisations, and in some neighbouring countries of Ukraine.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Anti-LGBTQI statements were common this year. For instance, local Sweden Democrat politician Simon O. Petterson said that the "homosexual lifestyle" is "characterised by promiscuity".

The concept Drag Queen Story Hour, during which drag artists read fairy tales to children in libraries, came under serious attack this year. The staff of the Malmö library received threats after an event. In Kalmar, Sweden Democrat politician Jonathan Sager called the event "perverted" and unsuitable for children and demanded the event to be cancelled, alongside removing all "inappropriate and sexualising

materials" from libraries and preschools. Minister of Culture Parisa Liljestrand expressed deep concern about the hateful speech and threats and called them "extremely serious".

BODILY INTEGRITY

The report of the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs, released in March, found that LGBTQI young people in Sweden are subjected to pressure, coercion, and so-called 'conversion therapy' to change or hide their sexual orientation or gender identity. The report highlights the particular vulnerability of trans youth. In July, the government called for an investigation to see if the current legal framework provides enough protection against these harmful practices. A survey showed that nine out of ten in Sweden would support a ban. Incoming Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson mentioned the possibility of a ban when outlining the newly elected government's program in October.

EMPLOYMENT

A survey with over 1,400 employers found that 16% did not have an LGBTQ+ inclusion policy and 27% did not know if they had one in place.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the government presented its LGBTQI Action Plan for 2020-2023, which includes measures to address discrimination against intersex people and to respond to suicide rates. Civil society expressed concern about the lack of clear prioritisation of the legal gender recognition law reform and improvements on asylum. The new government kept the Action Plan unchanged.

FAMILY

A new law, which makes the presumption of parenthood automatic for all couples who are married and have a child in Sweden, regardless of gender, entered into force on 1 January. The law includes two unfortunate exceptions, however where parenthood can be later invalidated - in the case of home insemination or assisted reproduction that was conducted abroad and with an unknown donor. Previously Sweden differentiated between same-sex and different-sex couples when it came to parenthood recognition for a child born and



registered abroad. A new law, putting an end to that differentiation, entered into force on [1 August](#).

In June a [public inquiry](#) presented a wide range of proposals to the government about how Swedish family law could become more modern and inclusive, including laws using gender-neutral language and recognition of more than two parents.

HEALTH

In June, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) published its report '[I'm not alone, there are others like me](#)' on the living conditions of young LGBTQI people. The report [found](#) that almost one in five young (ages 16-25) LGBTQI people in Sweden have considered taking their own life; that it is common for them to be bullied, threatened, and assaulted; that they have worse health and particularly mental health than other young people; that many feel unsafe at school and refrain from leisure activities out of fear of bullying.

The waiting times for trans-specific healthcare [continued](#) to increase, currently between 1 and 3 years for a first appointment for both minors and adults. Gender clinics lack resources and are understaffed, and often lack staff with specific medical expertise. The 2021 decision of the National Board for Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) to classify gender-affirming care as so-called "national specialised health care" has further worsened the situation. The decision aimed to make care more equal and connected to research but will reduce the number of gender clinics from seven to three. The process of choosing the three clinics continues to be stalled.

In February, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare published new [guidelines](#) on hormone treatment for those under 18, calling for "restraint" when it comes to the provision of hormone blockers and cross-hormones to trans children. The recommendations are to only give minors access to hormone blockers and cross-hormones within clinical studies or, in the absence of such studies, only in exceptional cases. There are no such ongoing studies in Sweden. Civil society firmly [condemned](#) the regressive move and the lack of clarity and transparency of the regulations.

The Public Health Agency (Folkhälsomyndigheten) [announced](#) it might introduce individual risk assessment for men who have sex with men (MSM) who want to donate blood, focusing on risky behaviour instead of 'risk groups'. In 2021, the mandatory deferral period was [reduced](#) from one year to six months.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

At the beginning of the year, civil society and government agencies shared their input on [the first draft](#) of a new legal gender recognition law. This draft would have introduced self-determination, lowered the current age limit, and allowed non-binary people to access LGR but only with binary gender options. LGBTQI+ civil society [welcomed](#) that the draft abolished medical requirements.

In July, the government announced submitting an [amended draft law](#) to the Legislative Council, which steps away from the self-determination model. This draft was firmly [criticised](#) by civil society in Sweden and [abroad](#).

It is unclear if and how the process will continue under the new government.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Eleven openly LGBTQ politicians were [elected](#) as MPs during the September parliament elections, in which four centre-right parties, including the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats, gained the parliamentary majority. One of the new parliamentarians is the former president of RFSL Ulrika Westerlund (Greens).

PUBLIC OPINION AND ATTITUDES

Despite anti-trans rhetoric and attempts to bar trans minors from accessing gender-affirming care, public opinion remained supportive. A survey highlighted that three out of four [support](#) trans minors in getting the care they need.

[SWEDEN WEB PAGE](#)

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SWITZERLAND

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A third of Zurich's school bathrooms will be gender-neutral in the future and will welcome all students. Zurich is the first city to introduce such a measure. Bern is also putting in place 'universal' bathrooms.

ASYLUM

The observatoire romand on the right to asylum published a report on the situation of LGBTIQ+ persons in the asylum system.

The city of Bern organised training for the staff of all their asylum camps on women and LGBT asylum seekers, and the asylum organisation Zurich continued to offer such training twice a year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

A number of anti-trans pieces appeared in the media again this year. In some cases, civil society turned to the Ombudsperson. In September, Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer made transphobic statements.

A new study among German-speaking high school students found that 40% made homophobic jokes and two-thirds have called a friend "faggot".

The perpetrator in a fatphobic and lesbophobic hate speech case was sentenced to three months in prison and a fine. It was the first conviction since homophobic hate speech was criminalised in 2020. The sentence was overruled by the police tribunal, which did not classify the act as discrimination and incitement to hatred but only as defamation.

A right-wing politician was sentenced for a racist and homophobic social media post.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Anti-LGBT attacks continued to be an issue, with the number of hate crimes increasing. The joint report by TGNS, LOS, and Pink Cross documented 96 anti-LGBTQ hate crimes in 2021 - 50% more than the previous year. The majority of the incidents took place close to the 2021 referendum and parliamentary action on marriage equality. There was a sharp increase in transphobic hate crimes reported. Civil society continued to advocate for prevention and awareness-raising measures across the country.

A study on LGBTQ youth's experiences of violence in the canton of Vaud was published.

The Federal Council's report, published in June, suggested that data on anti-LGBTI hate crimes be collected nationwide. Also in June, the National Council voted in favour of a national action plan to combat anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. The Federal Council now needs to draft an action plan.

A Federal Council's report on sexual harassment, published in April, showed that LGBTI persons are also affected. It is one of the first state reports explicitly mentioning non-binary persons.

The guild of Bassersdorf, in its annual event, decided to burn a trans effigy this year, sparking an outcry.

In October, the neo-nazi group, 'Junge Tat' physically attacked a Drag Story Time event for children in Zürich.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In March, a member of the Council of States tabled the demand to ban irreversible medical interventions on intersex children. In October, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women called on Switzerland to ban intersex surgeries.

Vaud and Neuchâtel tabled proposals to ban so-called 'conversion therapies'. The National Council supported the demand for a federal ban, a motion that the Council of States will have to vote on as well. The Federal Council will examine the extent of these practices upon the proposal of a conservative MP, which was supported by the National Council. The harmful practice continues to affect many in the country.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Constitutional Council of the canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden presented its draft constitution, which would make it the first canton to explicitly prohibit discrimination on grounds of GIESC (SO is also covered).

The Basel-Stadt government suggested the parliament revise the cantons equality act to



explicitly include SOGIGESC.

In August, the Luzern government adopted its planning report 2022-2025 to promote gender equality and LGBTI rights, the first of its kind.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommended that cantons are given adequate resources to implement LGBTI rights. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that cantons include LGBTI people with disabilities in consultations.

In December, the Council of States rejected the demand for a ban of non-binary inclusive forms in French language. The demand was primarily rejected because the respective rules by the Federal Chancellery do not allow inclusive language anyways. In June, the National Council supported the ban. The city of Zurich adopted new language regulations which will make non-binary people more visible in the administration's official texts.

The Swiss Catholic Bishops Conference adopted a report in August with exclusionary language about LGBTQ people.

FAMILY

The first same-gender couples got married in July after Switzerland became the 17th European country in 2021 to introduce marriage equality. All Protestant churches in the French-speaking areas welcome couples.

Civil society continued to advocate for more legal protections for rainbow families, including the legalisation of surrogacy and regulations, recognition of more than two parents, easier stepchild adoption procedures, and others. In June, two important motions were passed in the National Council, one providing automatic parenthood recognition for non-gestational parents in a marriage, and another abolishing the one-year waiting period for second-parent adoption. While in December the first one was rejected by the Council of States, the latter was supported.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The first night Pride was held in Lausanne and no incidents were reported. Several other Prides were held throughout the country, including in smaller towns such as Chur or Bulle, and with Zürich Pride highlighting trans rights as the theme for the first time.

HEALTH

In December, the Federal Council published a report based on a study on the health of LGBT persons showing a worse (mental) health status compared to cisgender heterosexual persons. Among LGBT people, trans people reported the worst health status.

In February, a commission of the National Council started a public consultation suggesting an explicit ban of discrimination based on sexual orientation in blood donation; the Federal Council expressed its support. In December, the Swiss Red Cross suggested either abolishing the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men or reducing it to four months.

Civil society urged the government to speed up the monkeypox vaccination process.

INTERSECTIONALITY

A new report highlighted that lesbian farmers face multiple discrimination in agriculture.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The new legal gender recognition procedure, consisting of a simple declaration based on self-determination, became available on 1 January. As of August, 350 people used the procedure. However, in practice it proves to be an inaccessible procedure for many asylum seekers and refugees.

In December, the Federal Council published a report on the question of recognising non-binary identities, rejecting it. TGNS reacted with a strong statement. The report was requested by the National Council in 2018.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Swiss national team decided not to wear the 'One Love' armbands during the FIFA football World Cup held in Qatar in November. Several NGOs called for the overall boycott of the World Cup.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In March, National Council tasked the government to research and recognise the harm that has been done to 'homosexuals' and other minorities in the army and to suggest ways for reparation.

Several prisons sensitised their staff on the handling and care of LGBTIQ+ persons in detention through training provided by the Swiss centre of competence on the execution of penal sanctions. The major TV news show 'Rundschau' produced and aired a report on trans women in (women's) prisons, based on a positive example.

PUBLIC OPINION

A new study among German-speaking high school students found that almost half of boys felt uncomfortable about having a gay friend - this rate was half among girls.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Waiting lines are already in place as medically assisted reproduction and sperm donation became available to same-sex female couples from July onwards, but without cost coverage.

The anti-abortion movement continued to grow stronger this year.

[SWITZERLAND WEB PAGE](#)

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TAJIKISTAN

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The war in Ukraine had a serious impact on the country and on LGBT people in particular. Due to the unfolding economic crisis, many LGBT people had to leave the country, most heading for Russia or Turkey.

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Living costs, including goods such as food, medication, or transport have increased significantly, making life difficult for members of the LGBT community. Flight tickets were also raised, which made it difficult for many LGBT people to leave.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

'Homosexuality' is used by both the government and unofficial political parties to shame and degrade each other. For instance, unofficial opposition parties routinely use their social media to "out" people who work for the government, calling their sexuality a disgrace. They often accuse the current government of allowing and promoting 'homosexuality' in Tajikistan.

Government representatives also spread misinformation that 'homosexuals' leave the country to speak negatively about Tajikistan, and equate 'homosexuality' with terrorism.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Civil society reports that violence against LGBTQI+ people continues to be carried out on a daily basis.

Life for Tajik LGBTQI+ people remained unsafe, even in cases where they had left the country.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Tajikistan's UPR recommendations were released in January. The government was urged to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, which adequately and effectively protects LGBTI+ persons from discrimination and violence; to protect LGBTI+ people who report abuse and extortion by the police; and to tackle hate speech against LGBTI+ people. On 28 June, the Lower Chamber passed the Equality and Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination bill, but the adopted text has not been made public to date. The early drafts included sexual orientation and

gender identity as protected grounds, but the final version omits these.

In October, the UN Committee on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights highlighted with concern in its country review of Tajikistan that LGBT people face severe discrimination.

In October, a trans woman was humiliated and threatened at the border when travelling back home from Russia.

FOREIGN POLICY

Due to the continued military conflict at the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, nationals of both countries are restricted from travelling to each other. Many students from Tajikistan, some of whom are LGBT, were forced to leave their university in Kyrgyzstan.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

LGBT bloggers living abroad were targeted by intimidation and threats online. Their families back home were also harassed by police.

HEALTH

Local activists will publish a manual in 2022 to support medical professionals in providing quality care and services when it comes to trans-specific healthcare and also to legal gender recognition.

Migrants living with HIV, including LGBT migrants, can now register remotely at the Republican AIDS Centre in Dushanbe and receive free ARV drugs.

HOUSING

Due to the large influx of migrants from Russia, rental prices also increased. Many LGBT people were left homeless or were evicted because they could not pay rent.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Activists continued to report being pressured, harassed, and detained by the authorities, often under false charges.

In December, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human



Rights Defenders visited Tajikistan and spoke out against the repressive political system, condemning convictions and lengthy prison terms for journalists, lawyers, and activists.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

At least two trans men and one trans woman were able to change their documents this year, through a court procedure. Civil society highlighted that there is no transparent procedure for LGR.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Activists reported again this year that the police continue to threaten, blackmail, harass, and detain LGBT people.

**Some of the information about Tajikistan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous.*

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TURKEY

ASYLUM

Administrative sanctions and deportations of LGBTI+ refugees increased this year. LGBTI+ refugees applying for international protection were sent by the Provincial Migration Administration to cities where LGBTI+ phobia is more prevalent. In Isparta, an Iranian trans woman organised a one-person protest to draw attention to these struggles - she was sent to a removal centre and then deported.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Political and religious leaders, including President Erdogan (see under *Family*), and pro-government media outlets continued speaking about LGBTI people with hate. Minister of Internal Affairs Süleyman Soylu made several hateful statements this year, saying LGBTI people were “propaganda of a terrorist organisation”, and a Western import (see here, here, and here).

LGBTI+ people were included on the list of targets of an alleged ISIS leader in February. The Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office filed a case against him.

In May, civil society filed a criminal complaint against anonymous leaflets calling for the murder of LGBTI+ people, which activists claim were spread by jihadist gangs. The leaflets quote early Islamist scholars and detail that LGBTI+ people should be murdered by stoning or burning.

In September, the anti-LGBTI Great Family March was held in Istanbul with the slogan “Save your family and your generation, say no to perversion”. The march was publicised on national TV with a video calling LGBTQ+ people a virus, sparking widespread hate speech, and was attended by thousands. Some participants called for the killing and violence against LGBTI people, criminalisation, and the banning of LGBTI organisations and events. Other marches followed, including in Ankara, Izmir, Urfa, and Konya and continued in November in Trabzon, Gaziantep, Batman, Mardin, Van, Kayseri, Diyarbakır, and Bitlis. Many public figures condemned the hateful marches. In November, Kaos GL filed a lawsuit against the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) for broadcasting the hate rally as a public spot.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Kaos GL’s annual monitoring report found that 2021 was one of the most violent years against the community to date, with eight recorded murders but suspects the actual number of murders is higher. The report also highlights the issue of widespread police violence, torture and ill-treatment, and unlawful detention, particularly at demonstrations. It was also reported that 30 per cent of all violations against LGBTI+s were about freedom of assembly and expression.

A number of court cases, focusing on anti-LGBTI attacks or murder, continued to be pending or stalled this year - some for over ten years. The trial of Ahmet Yıldız, who was killed by his father in 2008 for being gay, continued but then was postponed to 2023.

In July, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women called on Turkey to tackle gender-based violence against LGBTI women.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In some hospitals in big cities, doctors have gradually reduced or stopped performing non-consensual surgical interventions, but civil society reports that in provincial hospitals, surgeries continue at the same pace.

Over the past two years, the number of anti-LGBTI+ psychiatric centres offering so-called ‘conversion therapies’ has increased.

In November, KAOS GL flagged two books, available online, which promote so-called so-called ‘conversion therapy’ and incite discrimination and violence.

EDUCATION

The harassment of those taking part in the Boğaziçi Resistance continued this year, with many being prosecuted, harassed on and off campus, or their scholarships revoked.

A report by ÜniKuir and SPoD found that LGBTI+ people have no access to mechanisms to complain about harassment and violence in universities.

EMPLOYMENT

Kaos GL's research on the situation of LGBTI+ people working in the public and private sectors found that unemployment is widespread among LGBTI+ people and there is increased fear of discrimination and being fired.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Six opposition parties signed and Memorandum of Understanding on the Reinforced Parliamentary System in February, which does not include any references to the rights of LGBTI people.

FAMILY

In October, President Erdogan again spoke about plans for a new "civil" and "democratic" constitution, which would strengthen the institution of 'family' by introducing protections from "perverse trends". On 9 December, the draft bill of constitutional amendments was submitted to parliament with the signatures of 336 MPs. It needs 64 more signatures to pass directly. Failing that, it needs 24 more signatures to proceed to a referendum. The constitutional changes include restricting marriage to between men and women: "Marriage shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman" when the article it amends originally only used the gender-neutral term "spouses".

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In June, civil society held a protest against torture and ill-treatment by the police that targets trans women in Izmir. Other instances of police abuse were reported in October in Istanbul.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Turkey continued to severely violate the right to freedom of assembly in the country this year, with systemic bans, violent attacks on demonstrations, mass detention, and violence. A total of 11 Pride events were unlawfully banned, including at Boğaziçi University, METU, in Eskişehir, Ankara, and Istanbul. In all these instances participants defied the ban and held a gathering, but were met with police brutality, including the use of teargas and rubber bullets, and hundreds of people were detained. At Istanbul Pride,

the police attacked participants and detained 373 people, 34 of whom were minors - marking the most violent crackdown to date. The police also detained journalists and harassed and detained people at random in the city if they had rainbow symbols with them. On numerous occasions, the police prevented lawyers from speaking to the detainees. At one police station, police officers assaulted a female lawyer. In total, 530 people were detained during Pride season, over the span of 37 days.

As a new trend, several of the Pride marches were targeted by extremist religious and nationalist groups and were left without adequate police protection.

LGBTI+ people joined Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, İstanbul and İzmir with rainbow and trans flags, many of which were confiscated and several people were assaulted.

Several Women's Day events were held on 8 March in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Mersin, Eskişehir, Antalya, Gaziantep, Aydın, and Balıkesir. In some cities, police tried to prevent the march. 78 people including LGBTI+ activists were detained in Antalya and İstanbul.

Over 200 people were arrested in Istanbul on 25 November at the demonstration to mark the Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Many were detained and assaulted by the police.

In December, nationalist groups threatened and appeared at an event of the Nilüfer City Council Youth Assembly. The Ministry of Interior launched an investigation against the municipality.

The court case against eight activists who participated in the 2021 Istanbul Pride continued this year and ended with an acquittal in February.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Court proceedings were initiated against Tarlaşaşı Community Centre, a women's and children's rights organisation, for planning an event on LGBTI+ topics. The case is ongoing.



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

President Erdogan announced new measures to curb Turkey's media content, saying reprisals are needed to protect Turkish culture and children. Civil society warned this might further restrict freedom of expression on LGBTIQ issues.

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) fined Netflix over an animated series Jurassic World Camp Cretaceous because of its LGBT+ characters. Disney's new animated movie 'Strange World' was banned in Turkey.

HEALTH

Over the past two years, the costs of hormones increased, making access difficult for most trans people.

A person living with HIV turned to the Ombudsman after a doctor disclosed their HIV status without their consent. The Ombudsman found in favour of the hospital and the doctor.

HOUSING

LGBTI+ people continued to be unlawfully evicted from their homes. The economic crisis has increased poverty in Turkey and among LGBTI+ people and LGBTI+ refugees. The 17 May Association published 'From Discrimination to Poverty: LGBTI+ People in Turkey'. The Association also found that ageing and elderly LGBTI+ people experience multiple discrimination in finding and renting accommodation.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders continued to be targets of police violence (see under *Freedom of Assembly*) and hate campaigns by the media and lawsuits for 'immoral activity'. Some activists received death threats. The 17 May Association's research highlighted that human rights defenders working on LGBTI+ rights are under intense stress and exhausted, mostly due to the current political climate. The Association provided wellbeing support to 60 LGBTI+ rights defenders in 2022.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Singer Mabel Matiz was targeted by hate speech after releasing a song about same-gender love. RTÜK banned the video. Singer Gülşen is under investigation for mocking religious schools. She has frequently been targeted by pro-government media for her support of LGBTI+ people and for using the rainbow flag at concerts.

For the first time, an LGBTI organisation, SPoD, was elected to the İstanbul City Council Steering Committee, in January.

Lawyer and long-time advocate for LGBTIQ+ rights Öykü Didem Aydın, was listed as a nominee to sit on the Constitutional Court.

The chairperson of the Workers' Party (TİP) said in January that they would nominate a gay MP in the future.

Representatives from Kaos GL and the 17 May Association were elected to the Çankaya City Council Executive Board.

LGBTI+ activist Remzi Altunpolat was elected to the party council of the Green Left Party.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TİHEK) issued an opinion that solitary confinement of LGBTI+ prisoners is not a rights violation.

TURKEY WEB PAGE

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TURKMENISTAN

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The COVID-19 pandemic continued exacerbating the complex and difficult social and economic situation in Turkmenistan, having a dire impact, including on LGBT people. The country is in a serious crisis - people are struggling with food shortages and hunger. As of October for instance, the cost of bread has quadrupled in Ashgabat. Activists reported that the government purposely makes people starve. In some areas, residents have had no access to food rations for three months. Unemployment also remained critical. Poverty, theft, hunger, and deaths occur in large numbers.

ASYLUM

The government's control over people trying to leave the country continued to grow and visa restrictions have worsened. In September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially asked Turkey to "temporarily" require visas from Turkmen nationals, which Turkey introduced in the same month. The restriction has impacted LGBT people and activists. Human rights defender Nurberdy Bazarov was detained in Turkey in October and might face deportation to Ashgabat.

Civil society also reported that visas in general have been close to impossible to get and that even visa holders risk being stopped at the border.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

LGBT people continued to be targeted by hate crimes and disappearances, and the situation further worsened after the rigged elections in March.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Conversion therapies, abuse, and torture widely continue to be carried out both by officials and others.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Discriminatory restrictions, specifically targeting women, have also increased since Serdar Berdimukhammedov was sworn in as the new President, following in his father's footsteps.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In April, the parliament adopted the new Criminal Code, which moves Article 135 criminalising

consensual same-sex relations between men, to Article 133. The provision sets out a maximum of two years in prison for consensual same-sex relations and increases the sentence from six to eight years for non-consensual acts.

The law in the past has allowed for arrest, intimidation, extortion, blackmail, violence and torture against LGBT people and particularly against gay men. Most cases remain undocumented, but mass raids on gay people are routinely carried out in the country. Officials continue to fabricate cases to "catch" and detain LGBT and human rights activists, extort money, abuse and imprison gay men. Police routinely go through the phones of gay men and interrogate people on their contact lists.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Most social media sites continue to be blocked and TV channels are censored. The government increased control over online information following the political unrest in Kazakhstan at the beginning of the year.

HEALTH

HIV transmission remains criminalised, and there continues to be no data about people living with HIV/AIDS in the country. Activists report that medical staff have negative attitudes and little knowledge of people living with HIV. The government maintains that HIV, STIs, and COVID-19 do not exist in the country, which causes suffering among those affected.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The authorities continue to detain critics of the government, who express or even hint at its flaws. Several activists were detained again this year, or disappeared, due to their political opinion or LGBT identity.

**Some of the information about Turkmenistan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous.*

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UKRAINE

The developments reported in this chapter are to be understood in the context of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. We acknowledge that war disrupts the regular functioning of governments, public authorities and broader society. It therefore impacts how advances in terms of new legislation, public policies and other equality measures can be made. This said, it does not negate the obligation from Ukrainian authorities to ensure that the human rights of LGBTI people are fully respected and protected, which is what ILGA-Europe continues to monitor.

ASYLUM

Almost eight million people have fled Ukraine since the start of the war, most to neighbouring countries. LGBTIQ organisations across Europe organised humanitarian aid, housing, and financial support for LGBTIQ asylum seekers.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Anti-LGBT hate speech and hate crimes continued to be a severe issue this year, despite the war and LGBT people's active participation in the country's defence (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)). Hate crimes were common in the occupied territories as well, where LGBTQ people reported cases of extortion, torture, kidnapping, harassment, imprisonment, and violence, including sexual violence at the hands of Russian soldiers.

In January, the last of four perpetrators in a 2021 homophobic attack was sentenced to four years in prison.

In May, Commissioner for Human Rights, Lyudmila Denisova filed a criminal complaint against Frankivsk mayor, Ruslan Martsinkiv for homophobic hate speech after he reaffirmed his position in an interview that "gays cannot be patriots".

In June, adviser to the President, Aleksey Arestovich said he considered LGBT people to be "deviant", and while he is against violence, he does oppose "LGBT propaganda". Civil society called for his removal from office.

The hate crime bill no. 5488, which would criminalise

hate crimes committed on the grounds of inter alia, sexual orientation and gender identity, was stalled this year. The bill was introduced in 2021 and was one of the measures in Ukraine's Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2023). Civil society continued to advocate for its speedy adoption (see also under Public opinion).

On 22 June, Ukraine ratified the Istanbul Convention.

In October, LGBT organisations submitted a public letter to the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations asking for an open dialogue to discuss how Churches communicate about LGBT people. The Council is an opponent of the hate crime bill. no. 5488.

Nash Mir's annual report documented 55 hate crimes against LGBT people in 2021. Nash Mir documented more than 75 hate crimes in 2022, the majority of which were in some way connected to military operations. Nash Mir noted that the numbers might be much higher as it was difficult to document cases in occupied territories.

In December, the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's Parliament, adopted a law on media with 299 out of 331 votes in favour. The law prohibits bias-motivated speech inciting discrimination on the grounds of SOGI. Such statements will be classified as significant violations.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Nash Mir's annual report documented 141 cases of discrimination and violence against LGBT people in 2021, a decrease compared to the previous two years.

In March, Ombudsperson Lyudmila Denisova's annual report highlighted that her Office received 18 reports on anti-LGBT+ discrimination in 2021. The Ombudsperson Office identified 15 additional human rights violations in their monitoring of traditional media and social media platforms.

In November, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights established an Advisory Council. A representative of the LGBTIQ community was included in the council.



FAMILY

Between June and August, almost 30,000 people signed the petition on the legalisation of same-sex marriages - passing the necessary 25,000 threshold. In August, President Zelensky appealed to PM Denys Shmygal to consider providing legal recognition to same-gender couples. Same-gender couples have no access to information about each other's health status or to hospital visits, which is even more serious in wartimes. In November, the story of a straight woman made headlines after she announced to marry a gay friend, who had been in the military throughout the war, but whose partner of 15 years would have no recognition from the state.

Fulcrum UA launched a web platform and information campaign promoting civil unions and published a booklet on marriage equality. The main national media, StarLight Media, made a statement supporting civil unions for same-sex couples.

FOREIGN POLICY

On 24 February, Russian troops invaded Ukraine - the war continues to date. In early March, the UN established an Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, which concluded in October that Russia had committed an array of war crimes. The war has impacted LGBTI people in Ukraine in numerous ways. A few days after the invasion started, the news was leaked that Russia might have a list of LGBT activists to target.

Insight published a detailed analysis of the 'The Situation of LGBT+ People in Ukraine during the War'.

Ukraine applied for EU candidate status in February, which it received in June. Several questions in Ukraine's candidacy questionnaire focused on LGBTQ rights.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 25 September, activists held a 'Metro Pride march' in the Kharkiv metro as the city was undergoing constant shelling. At least one participant was attacked after the Pride event. Kyiv Pride was held in Warsaw in June, in cooperation with Warsaw Pride, and the Pride organisers joined several Pride events in other European countries.

HEALTH

The adoption of a new healthcare protocol as part of the implementation of ICD-11 was to be stalled due to the war.

Due to the war, trans and intersex people experienced serious difficulties accessing trans and intersex-specific health care. The availability of hormones got worse and some friendly healthcare professionals left the country.

A draft law on HIV prevention and protection of people living with HIV, developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and following WHO guidelines, is expected to be adopted by the Verkhovna Rada in early 2023.

HOUSING

As many lost their livelihood, homes and work, activists organised shelters (see also here) and humanitarian aid for LGBT people, their families, and allies, since the onset of the war, for instance for those fleeing the eastern and southern parts of the country.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBTQ activists have reported ongoing harassment and intimidation campaigns against them, as well as violence. ZMINA's report documented 108 cases of harassment and violence against activists in 2021.

In January, Kharkiv's Pride Hub was vandalised. In January and a few days after the start of the war, Nash Mir's office in Kyiv was attacked and vandalised by a nationalist group; four activists were beaten, and their phones and a car were stolen. In the occupied territories, the office of the LGBTQ organisation Insha in Kherson was attacked by Russian soldiers in May. Insha's staff had been evacuated earlier.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Trans people faced particular difficulties this year when trying to flee the country if their documents did not match their gender expression. The inclusion of trans people in military processes and an unclear interpretation of the legislation on military records, among other reasons, prevented trans people from crossing the border.

Trans people who could not receive gender-affirmative screenings due to COVID-related measures have experienced difficulties in accessing diagnosis and psychiatric screenings during the war.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Well-known actor, Oleksandr Piskunov came out as gay in a social media post, which he deleted later.

Two feature films centering LGBT characters were being produced this year.

In November, the Taras Shevchenko National Museum in Kyiv presented an exhibition featuring the photos and stories of LGBTIQ+ military personnel.

In December, Fulcrum conducted the III Forum of Allies BAM! (business, activism, media). There, members of the Parliament, business representatives, artists and entertainers discussed why it is essential to support LGBTIQ equality during war time. These discussions were addressed to the larger society and had a great reach on social media.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

According to unofficial statistics, about 10% of LGBT people participate in military operations against Russia. There are confirmed cases of trans people joining the army, but no measures are in place to ensure inclusion and safety. Several people reported harassment and discrimination on the basis of SOGI or HIV status in the army and in recruitment and social support centres, and/or when being drafted for service. Nash Mir also documented physical and sexual violence LGBTIQ people suffered at the hands of other soldiers.

Since the onset of the war, LGBTIQ civilians have reported countless incidents where they faced harassment and violence at checkpoints where the police, the army, or the Territorial Defence checked their documents and personal belongings. The head of the LGBT military association called for legal recognition for same-gender couples, highlighting that many LGBT people serve in the army and have fought in the ongoing war.

In a survey, prison managers said no LGBT people are currently detained in Ukraine. The Kharkiv Institute of Human Rights highlighted that LGBT inmates do exist and face discrimination and detention.

PUBLIC OPINION

A number of public opinion studies were published this year, showing that public attitudes towards LGBT people had increased significantly over the past few years, including in terms of family recognition (see here), equal rights in general (see here), and the prohibition of discrimination and hate speech targeting LGBT people (see here). One study found that the number of people with a positive attitude towards LGBT people had quadrupled since 2016.

KyivPride conducted national research on attitudes towards LGBT people during wartime. The study looked at opinions on hate speech, marriage equality, same-sex relations and other. Preliminary results show that although negative attitudes remain, over half respondents had an indifferent (45%) or positive attitude (13%) towards LGBT people. The study may be published in 2023.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Activists managing shelters reported that communication with mainstream humanitarian organisations had been cumbersome, and many LGBTIQ people avoided appealing to these due to fear of discrimination, and that some experienced discrimination.

UKRAINE WEB PAGE

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UNITED KINGDOM

ASYLUM

Civil society launched the [#NoPrideInDetention](#) campaign, calling for an end to the detention of LGBTQI+ people.

In April, the UK government [announced](#) plans to process asylum claims and set up reception centres in Rwanda, which LGBTQI+ asylum support groups [highlighted](#) could be a detrimental move for LGBTQI+ asylum seekers.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-trans rhetoric continued to cause serious damage in the UK again this year, with continued hostile [reporting](#) in mainstream newspapers. Mermaids for instance was at the centre of some of these attacks (see under *Human rights Defenders*). Two trans journalists [pulled out](#) of working with the Guardian's coverage on Pride, due to its transphobic articles and posts online.

Politicians also continued the crackdown on trans rights. Former PM Boris Johnson announced that trans people would not be included in the so-called 'conversion therapy' ban (see under *Bodily Integrity*). In June, Johnson also [expressed](#) support for the ban on trans women competing in elite swimming. Following Johnson's resignation, [several](#) PM candidates [weaponised](#) trans rights. Incoming PM Rishi Sunak's previous anti-trans statements, including "trans women are not women", were covered by media after his appointment in October.

While anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ hate continued rising in the UK, and despite previous [calls](#) from civil society, the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) continued to fail trans people this year (see under *Equality and Non-discrimination*). In February, leaked emails showed that the EHRC held private meetings with anti-trans organisers.

Mermaids [appealed](#) against the Charity Commission [approving](#) the registration of the anti-trans 'LGB Alliance' as a public charity [began](#) in September.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes against LGBT people in the UK have reached dramatic numbers. The UK Home Office's

annual hate crime statistics report [highlighted](#) that homophobic hate crimes increased by 41% and transphobic hate crimes by 56%, in England and Wales. This marks the starkest annual increase since 2012. The report attributes the rise in transphobic hate crimes in part to anti-trans media reporting. Galop's 2022 Hate Crime Report [echoed](#) these numbers and the reasons behind them.

The new Scottish [hate crime law](#), which covers LGBTI people as protected groups and strengthens protections, is yet to be brought into force. The Crown Office (COPFS) published its annual [Hate Crime in Scotland](#) report in June, finding that the number of transphobic hate crimes increased by 87% in just one year.

In Northern Ireland, there were more hate incidents recorded across each hate motivation strand when compared with the previous twelve months (with the exception of faith/religion incidents) with 15% increase in homophobic and 24% in transphobic incidents. Research carried out by The Rainbow Project in 2021, has shown that 51% of those who had experienced hate crime had not reported it to the Police Services of Northern Ireland. The most common response was that they are still not confident that their complaints will be taken seriously, some unaware that PSNI can take action and were fearful of repercussions.

The Northern Ireland Department of Justice launched a consultation on a proposed new Hate Crime Bill, which will [include](#) "age, sex/gender and variations in sex characteristics", and trans people under "sex/gender". This initial consultation which was split into two parts took place in early 2022. A second part of the consultation is expected in early 2023.

Galop's report '[LGBT+ Experiences of Abuse from Family Members](#)' highlighted that 29% of LGBT+ people have experienced abuse from family members - 60% attributed this to them being LGBT+. 63% of the victims were under 18 when they first faced violence at home. Galop's adjoining report [warned](#) that support services for LGBT+ victims are rare and insufficient. Galop also published its '[LGBT+ People & Sexual Violence Report](#)' on the basis of almost 1,000 LGBT+ survivors. More than half thought that the



violence was inflicted upon them due to them being LGBT+ and most reported detrimental consequences on their mental health.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Despite years of civil society advocacy and government promises, the process of banning so-called ‘conversion therapies’ continued to be stalled this year in most of the UK. In March, a leaked report revealed that the government wanted to drop the process altogether. A few hours later, the government announced that the ban would cover sexual orientation, but not gender identity - later affirmed by the Queen’s Speech. The announcements sparked outrage among civil society, protests were held across the country, and 80 organisations pulled out of the UK’s LGBT+ conference ‘Safe to be Me’ planned for 29 June. In the end, the government cancelled the conference, which many interpreted as an attempt to avoid civil society backlash (see more under *Equality and Non-discrimination*). In April, the UK’s first LGBT+ Business Champion resigned from his role as a form of protest. In May, the parliament had to address a petition with over 140,000 signatures demanding a comprehensive ban, but only reaffirmed its previous position.

The Scottish Labour party featured a candidate this year who is a proponent of ‘conversion therapies’, which was met with firm criticism by many.

The Expert Advisory Group on Ending Conversion Practices was set up by the Scottish Government in March and presented its final report and recommendations in October. The Scottish Government has committed to consulting publicly early in 2023 on proposals to end conversion practices and to introduce legislation by the end of 2023.

On 21 April, Northern Ireland Assembly passed a non-directive motion on a ban on conversion therapy practises. The Department for Communities alongside two researchers from Queens and Ulster University in Belfast (directed by a steering group of LGBTQIA Sectoral Partners) has conducted research in regards to the experiences of victims and survivors of so-called ‘conversion therapy’. This research work, which

will continue in 2023, will be essential in drafting legislation.

Intersex NGOs have no clear pathway to funding which suffocates activists working on this field. A report by IntersexUK and Pride Sports based on national data and intersex people’s responses on medical interventions, mental health and inequalities was not authorised to be printed by Sport England, which had funded the project.

DATA COLLECTION

The anti-trans group Fair Play for Women began court action in 2021 to challenge the 2022 Census in Scotland, which would allow trans people to self-identify their sex. In February, the court ruled that the Scottish Government acted in their power when approving the self-identification guidance - civil society welcomed the ruling.

EDUCATION

Media reported in February that the government pressured the Equality and Human Rights Commission to withdraw its guidance resource for schools on supporting trans students in 2021. The guidance could have helped schools prevent bullying and support children.

LGBT Youth Scotland’s ‘Life in Scotland’ report found that 57% of trans students, 58% of bisexual students, and 70% of lesbian and gay students had experienced bullying in school. Only 10% of LGBT youth thought that school was a “good place” for LGBT students.

EMPLOYMENT

A 2021 letter written by Minister for Women and Equalities Kemi Badenoch was leaked in July, in which she urged the Financial Conduct Authority to drop its trans inclusion policy, which the FCA did a month later. Badenoch was one of the PM candidates this year.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2417(2022) on ‘Combating rising hate against LGBTI people in



Europe’, highlighting the alarming developments in the UK, alongside countries like Poland, Russia, and Hungary.

After over 80 organisations pulled out of the UK’s LGBT+ conference ‘Safe to be Me’ in April, civil society launched the #NotSafeToBeMe campaign, drawing attention to the UK’s regression on LGBT+ rights.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission stated that trans people can be excluded from single-sex services if there are “justifiable and proportionate” reasons at play, “for reasons of privacy, decency, to prevent trauma or to ensure health and safety”. In February, the media reported that the Commission wanted to restrict bathroom access to trans people with a gender recognition certificate, which roughly 1% have. A 2021 leaked and unpublished guidance recommended businesses and organisations to bar access to trans people, in order to “protect women”. Former PM Liz Truss responded to this reporting by saying this was not what the government wanted.

Following Boris Johnson’s resignation in July, Liz Truss took over as Prime Minister for a short period, followed by Rishi Sunak. Civil society is alarmed about Sunak’s statements made in November that the revised Equality Act should clarify that “sex means biological sex rather than gender”.

The gender-critical group, For Women Scotland lost their case when the court affirmed on 13 December that a trans person’s sex, for the purposes of the Equality Act, is the sex shown on their gender recognition certificate.

LGBT Youth Scotland’s ‘Life in Scotland’ report found that the rate of LGBTI young people thinking Scotland was a “good place for LGBTI young people to live” dropping from 81% to 65% in just five years (see more under *Education*). The Scottish Minister for Equalities, Christina McKelvie vowed to work on the issues highlighted.

HEALTH

An interim Cass report was published in July, making a series of recommendations to the NHS on how it should reform care for trans youth. The NHS’s

response includes plans to decentralise care, close down and replace Tavistock with regional centres by spring 2023. In October, the NHS presented its proposals for care provision and launched a consultation. Civil society expressed serious concern about some of the proposals, which include preventing trans children from social transitioning unless diagnosed with “clinically significant distress”, mandatory participation in research when a child is provided puberty blockers, the introduction of an extra phase before a child is placed on the waiting list, the quasi prohibition of families seeking care outside the NHS. Mermaids held community consultations and published several concerned responses from trans youth.

In August, civil society organisations published a joint letter to the Health Research Authority regarding the Cass report’s plans to conduct quantitative research and look into 9,000 Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS) records without explicitly asking trans people to willingly participate.

In June, Mermaids launched a report gathering the voices of trans youth on their experiences in trans healthcare.

Access to gender-affirming healthcare for trans adults in Northern Ireland continued to be almost completely non-existent. The waiting list is still over 700 and the waiting times average three to five years.

The Scottish Government continued to work on improving trans healthcare in Scotland, over 2022 and 2024. They provided a grant to support a full-time Lived Experience Coordinator to feed in the experiences of trans / non-binary people to the Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group.

A joint civil society report about the impact of the Bell v Tavistock case highlighted that nine out of ten people said the ruling had negatively affected their mental health, that parents felt powerless and guilty that they could not help their child more, and that people feared the case would further increase transphobia in the UK.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Mermaids was targeted by an unprecedented smear campaign this year and received threats and abuse phone calls to the extent that it had to shut down its helpline for a few days. Mermaids reported that some of its funders were intimidated and had to launch a fightback fund to continue its work.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, the UK parliament rejected the plea of over 137,000 people who signed a petition calling for legal gender recognition (LGR) on the basis of self-determination and available for non-binary people as well.

In March, the Scottish Government presented a bill to amend the Gender Recognition Act to allow recognition by self-declaration, and to reduce the minimum age from 18 to 16. The law was adopted on 22 December and was widely welcomed by civil society, the United Nations, and the Council of Europe. The law does not allow for the recognition of non-binary people. Soon after the adoption, news was leaked that the UK government might block the law.

In July, the Scottish Government hosted Working Group on Non-binary Equality presented 35 recommendations for improving non-binary equality, to which the government responded.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Civil society organisations launched an open letter urging national sporting bodies to support trans-inclusive policies after a number of them adopted trans bans this year.

PUBLIC OPINION

The 'Britons and Gender Identity: Navigating common ground and division' study highlighted that the hostile political discourse against trans people is not in sync with public attitudes in the country. Most agreed with a 'live and let live' approach, wanted schools to be safe and inclusive and talk about trans issues, and agreed that trans women were women and trans men were men. Respondents were more divided on bathroom access and sports.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Although abortions were legalised in Northern Ireland in 2020, services remain inaccessible. The Department of Health has failed to issue any guidance to health and social care trusts on the provision of abortion services, including when and in what circumstances medical staff may exercise their freedom of conscience when delivering a service. In December, Secretary of State Chris Heaton-Harris said that the UK Government would act and he instructed Stormont's Department of Health to press ahead with setting up the service.

[UNITED KINGDOM WEB PAGE](#)

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UZBEKISTAN

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Due to the military invasion of Ukraine, the economic situation deteriorated this year. The price of food, supplied from Russia, Ukraine, and the EU, significantly increased.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Article 120 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises consensual same-sex conduct, continued to serve as justification for anti-LGBT violence and impunity. Due to criminalisation, LGBT people cannot report violence to the authorities, who are often perpetrators themselves.

In August, the Ministry of Interior proposed a new law that would mandate the police to carry out mandatory STI and HIV testing as part of police raids, if those target “dangerous groups” or those with close contact.

Religious figures also continued to call for violence against LGBT people and to do so with impunity. Several known figures and bloggers also called for violence in posts and on their Telegram channels. In May, for instance, a feminist ‘activist’ wrote in a post that LGBT people’s information from messaging apps should be sent to the authorities.

Shelters for women affected by violence continued to reject trans women.

DATA COLLECTION

Monitoring and data collection became increasingly difficult due to the state intensifying control over human rights defenders. Activists reported that they need to find new ways of communicating and documenting abuses.

EDUCATION

In May, a student at the Webster Institute in Tashkent, who had spoken out for gender equality and acceptance of LGBT people, was reported by peers and accused of creating an LGBT club.

EMPLOYMENT

LGBT people continue to face discrimination and violence if their SOGI is revealed at work.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The US Embassy issued a statement on the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May, to stand with the LGBTQI+ community in the country.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Uzbekistan to tackle discrimination on grounds of SOGI, in its recommendations published in September. The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women echoed similar concerns in February and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in March.

FAMILY

As part of the constitutional reform process, MP Tulkinjon Karimov proposed a new amendment that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev supported the amendment in a statement in June.

FOREIGN POLICY

Uzbekistan continued to strengthen economic ties with Russia. At the same time, the government continues to engage in “reputation laundering” at international fora.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

State actors continued to threaten, intimidate, psychologically and physically torture, and detain LGBT people. The Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA), the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM) and the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) published ‘Like living on a different planet: Gays, bisexual men and trans people vulnerable to abuse, imprisonment and discrimination in Uzbekistan’, shedding light on widespread and institutional that the community faces. Abuses include rape, physical violence, torture, and extortion.

Uzbekistan had been repeatedly urged by international human rights bodies and civil society to repeal Article 120 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises consensual same-sex conduct between men with up to three years in prison. Under Article 113, which criminalises the transmission of HIV infection and is used to persecute LGBT people, those detained and charged under Article 120 continued



to be subjected to mandatory HIV tests. In March, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights called on Uzbekistan to decriminalise same-sex relations and to abolish laws discriminating against people living with HIV.

Forced anal testing and so-called ‘conversion therapies’ also continued to be reported.

Upon the request of the International Partnership for Human Rights, the National Centre for Human Rights (Ombudsman) shared that 49 people were convicted under Article 120 in 2021. Eleven people are currently in prison for same-sex conduct, six of them in general and five in high-security facilities. The Ombudsman also stated that same-sex relations were against the country’s religious and cultural norms.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The political climate remained restrictive in terms of freedom of assembly.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Civil society organisations continued to be barred from registering.

On 14 December, the Information and Mass Communications Agency proposed to amend the Information Code, which would ban “the use of mass media for the purposes of [...] propaganda of unnatural relations between same-sex persons”.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In January, several bloggers were detained, questioned, and banned from reporting on the protests in neighbouring Kazakhstan.

On 21 January, the blogger Miraziz Bazarov was found guilty of slander and sentenced to three years of restriction of liberty. Bazarov had in the past called for the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relations between men. Last March, he attempted to organise a K-Pop gathering, labelled by religious groups as a Pride march. Mobs attacked young people they perceived as LGBT and Bazarov was also beaten and hospitalised. He was later blamed and detained for instigating the riots and put on trial. Since April 2021, he had been under house arrest. Bazarov was prosecuted under the law, adopted last year, which

criminalises “insult and slander” against Uzbek leaders, prohibits “disrespect for society, the state, state symbols (national and universal values)”, and labels demonstrations as being “in violation of the established order”.

HEALTH

The level of healthcare access continued to decrease, with many unable to see doctors. Accessing medication that was previously supplied by Ukraine or Russia, became very difficult and prices significantly increased. LGBT people continued to report that they hid their identity in healthcare settings, fearing for their safety.

Medical staff at AIDS centres continued to report patients to the authorities after finding out their sexual orientation.

HOUSING

The war in Ukraine and the influx of immigrants from Russia affected the rental market by doubling prices.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders continued to work under difficult circumstances, facing state surveillance, intimidation, and physical and psychological torture. All activities were conducted in secret.

Cooperation with other human rights activists also remained difficult this year, due to criminalisation.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The police continued to be the main perpetrators of anti-LGBT violence, including through extortion.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Civil society reported that there are few organisations that provide social assistance and support to LGBT people.

**Some of the information about Uzbekistan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous.*

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