

Benchmarking LGBTI rights: Behind the scenes with ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map

[Blog, Rainbow Map and Index](#)

For over a decade, ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map and Index has been an essential tool for benchmarking LGBTI people's rights across the region. But have you ever wondered how it comes together? In this blog, we'll take you behind the scenes and show you the makings of our Rainbow Map, and how has it changed over time.

If you are reading this, you probably know that our [Rainbow Map and Index](#) ranks all 49 European countries on a scale between 0% and 100%, where 0% means gross violations of human rights, and 100% means full equality of LGBTI people.

In the present edition and for the eighth year in a row, Malta continues to occupy the number one spot of the ranking, with a score of 89%. The three countries at the other end of the scale are Armenia (9%), Turkey (4%) and in bottom place Azerbaijan (2%), exactly the same as the last three years. Among them, only Armenia increased an index point after revoking its ban on blood donations from men who have sex with men.

We use 74 criteria divided into seven categories: equality and non-discrimination; family; hate crime and hate speech; legal gender recognition; intersex bodily integrity; civil society space; and asylum.

The Rainbow Index shows which criteria each country fulfils under each category, while the Rainbow Map displays each country in a colour based on their total score. Together they reflect the legal and policy protection of LGBTI people in Europe.

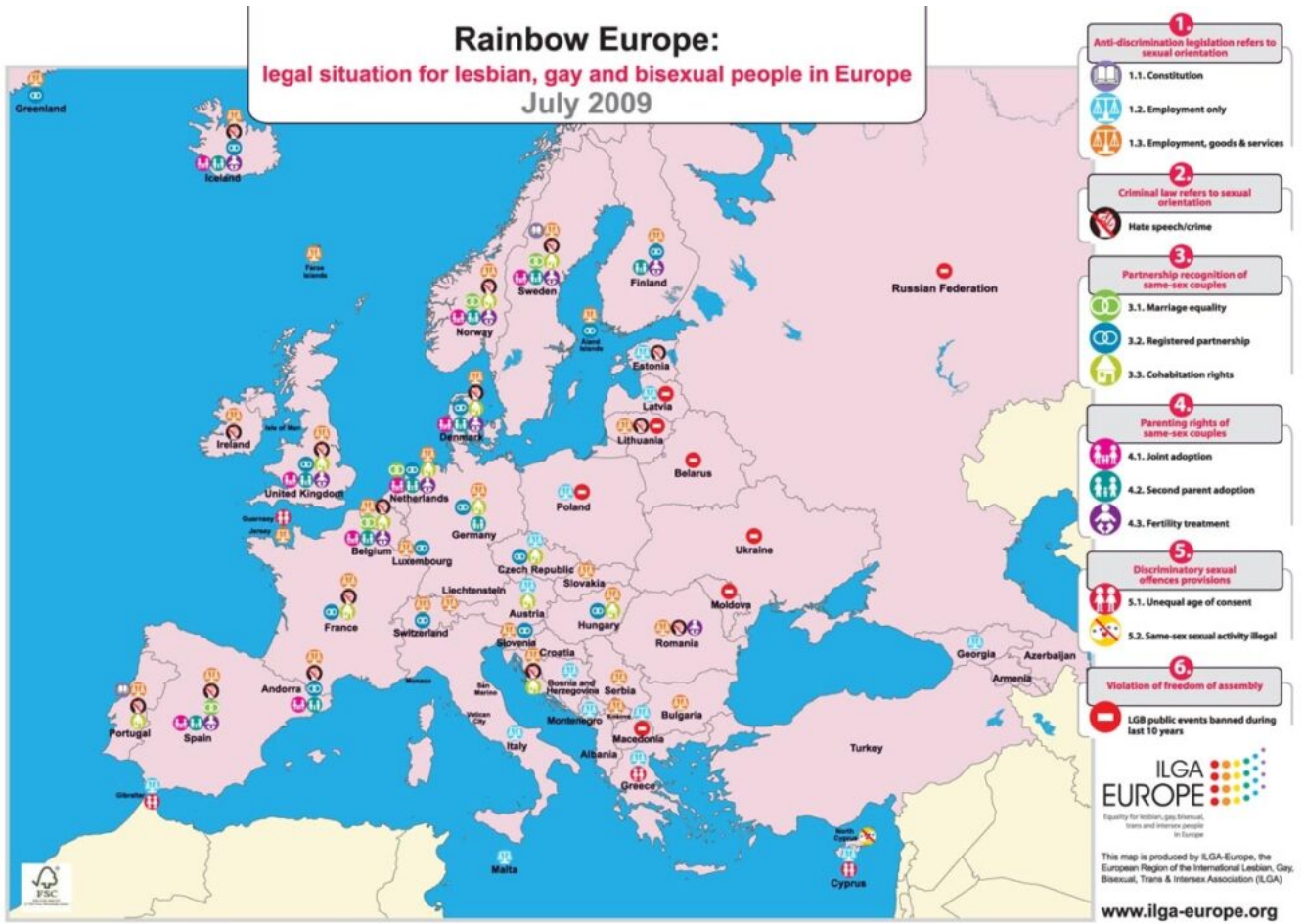
How do we put the Rainbow Map and Index together?

Throughout the year, we collect relevant data sets and verify the data with member organisations and our network of country experts. This network consists of LGBTI human rights defenders, researchers, lawyers, and other experts from the 49 countries of Europe.

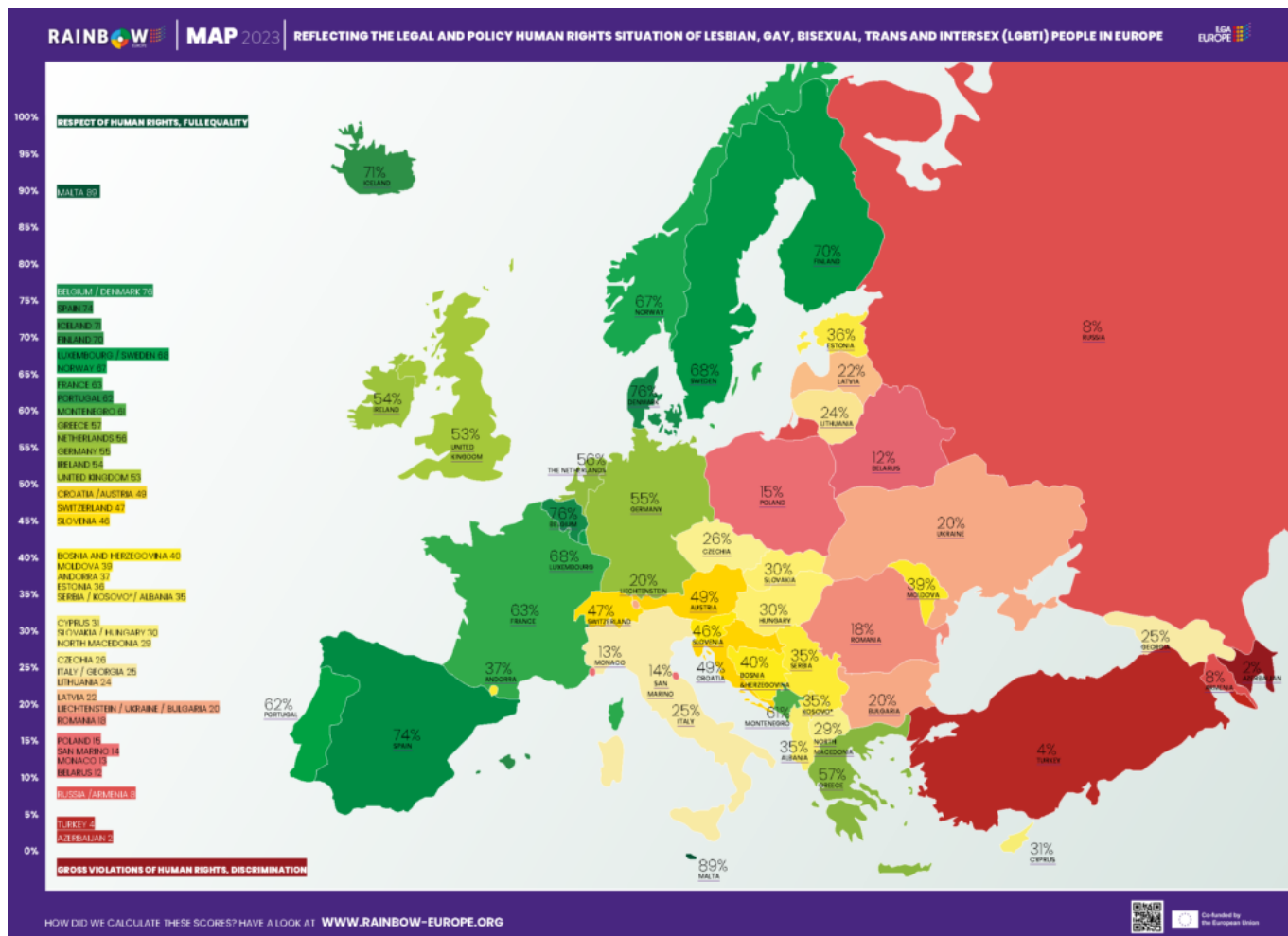
We use this data to create country scores, country rankings, and regional averages. In case you were wondering, we don't use a magic wand to compile and analyse the data. Our magic is done using Excel spreadsheets!

We then design a map and index and update the online website module for the launch, which usually happens during the IDAHOT Forum, an annual intergovernmental focal point meeting of the Council of Europe about LGBTI rights, where many European government officials come together.

A changing map for a changing reality



Rainbow Map 2009



Rainbow Map 2023

What a journey has it been for our Rainbow Map! The first edition in 2009 consisted of a map which provided information concerning 13 issues. In the 2010 edition, we added an index and collected data with regard to 14 indicators. Fast forward to 2023: in the latest edition we are using 74 criteria, including the most recent category, intersex bodily integrity, introduced last year. This evolution shows that for the LGBTI movement in Europe, equality and non-discrimination laws, legal gender recognition, bodily integrity, protection from hatred and violence, family rights, and protection of asylum seekers are all interconnected and equally essential for the full enjoyment of human rights for LGBTI people.

Each of the 74 criteria has a different percentage of weight allocated to it. The weight for each has also been changed over the years, as we have added new elements to the criteria. As a result of these alterations, the Rainbow Map and Index gives a more accurate and evolving picture of what LGBTI people really need and what matters to the lives of people in different parts of LGBTI communities across Europe.

Alterations to our criteria make year-on-year comparisons difficult, but certain lessons are clear – countries that are expanding their legislative horizons are moving up in the ranking.

	EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION	FAMILY	HATE CRIME & HATE SPEECH	LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION	INTERSEX BODILY INTEGRITY	CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE	ASYLUM	TOTAL
WEIGHT IN 2021	25%	20%	20%	20%	-	8%	7%	100%
WEIGHT IN 2022	23%	17.5%	19%	17.5%	5%	9%	9%	100%

ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map and Index is a powerful tool to understand how European countries are protecting LGBTI people and to keep governments accountable. It serves as a reminder that the fight for full equality and human rights for LGBTI people is far from over, but we're making progress, one country at a time.

The Rainbow Map & Index 2023 was launched on 11 May, check out now how your country is doing at www.rainbow-europe.org.