

# LGBTI rights are human rights

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On Human Rights Day we reflect on struggles and milestones for the European and Central Asian LGBTI movement in 2024.

Human Rights Day reminds us of the universality of human rights: freedoms that belong to all people, no matter their identity. This principle is at the heart of the LGBTI movement, as LGBTI rights are human rights. In 2024, these rights were both challenged and celebrated, often reflecting broader societal shifts.

Across Europe and beyond, anti-LGBTI measures highlighted the fragility of hard-won freedoms. [Georgia](#) adopted both a “foreign agent” law and an “anti-LGBTI propaganda” law, echoing a troubling global trend of restricting civil society and stifling dissent. On December 2nd, the restrictive law came into force, banning legal gender recognition and equating same-sex relationships with incest, further institutionalising discrimination against LGBTI communities. The law also declared May 17 a holiday opposing the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, amplifying the state’s anti-LGBTI stance. [Bulgaria](#) introduced laws targeting the discussion of LGBTI issues in schools, marking another attack on both education and freedom of expression. In [Russia](#), the international LGBTI movement was branded as “extremist” in late 2023, but 2024 saw the first convictions under this extremist label, intensifying the risks for activists and organisations. [Kyrgyzstan](#) followed suit by enacting a Russian-style “foreign agents” law in April, subjecting non-profits to extensive state oversight and jeopardising the work of press freedom groups and civil society, including LGBTI organisations.

These developments show how attacks on LGBTI rights often signal deeper human rights violations. In [Turkey](#), trans rights faced severe setbacks with [new regulations](#) restricting access to essential hormones, disproportionately affecting trans masculine people and those in poverty. [Police repression](#) of LGBTI demonstrations further highlighted the shrinking space for activism and public dissent. The suppression of freedom of speech, association, and democratic principles often accompanies discrimination against LGBTI communities. As such, defending LGBTI rights is part of defending the foundations of democracy and equality for all.

## Progress, despite setbacks

Despite these setbacks, 2024 was also a year of hope and progress. [Germany's](#) adoption of a self-determination law marked a major step forward for trans and non-binary people, simplifying legal gender recognition. [Greece](#) joined the growing list of European countries recognising equal marriage, while [Malta's](#) introduction of non-binary markers on official documents underscored its commitment to inclusivity.

Beyond Europe, global human rights institutions also made strides for LGBTI people. The [UN Human Rights Council](#) adopted a resolution affirming the rights of intersex people, a relevant step in recognising and addressing the unique challenges they face. The [European Court of Human Rights](#) ruled that Poland must provide legal recognition for same-sex couples, and the [Court of Justice of the European Union](#) declared that Romania must respect gender recognition granted in other countries.

## Ensuring no one is left behind

These moments of progress illustrate that advancing LGBTI rights benefits societies as a whole. Laws that affirm equality and dignity strengthen the social fabric, ensuring that no one is left behind. This year's developments—both the setbacks and the victories—show that progress is possible, but it requires vigilance, solidarity, and collective action.

In February 2025, ILGA-Europe will publish its [Annual Review](#), documenting these and other critical moments from the past year. Stay tuned!