



# MONTENEGRO

## ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

NGOs Juventas, Queer Montenegro, Spektra and Stana distributed food and hygiene packages to LGBTIQ people most in need during the COVID-19 pandemic, redesigning their organisational budgets.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

There was a continued increase in anti-LGBTI and misogynistic political rhetoric this year. For instance, MPs Jovan Vučurović and Jelena Božović made anti-LGBTI statements - a complaint was sent to the Ombudsperson. The parliament failed to condemn the statements. In August, the Ombudsperson urged political leaders to refrain from anti-LGBTIQ hate speech.

Nevertheless, some political leaders, namely the Minister of Internal Affairs Sergej Sekulović and Deputy Prime Minister Dritan Abazović spoke out against hate speech and acknowledged that Montenegro needs to take more targeted action, but did not indicate any clear actions to take.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Trans, intersex and gender diverse people, who had to move back to their families due to the COVID-19 pandemic, continued reporting feeling isolated and being targeted by violence by family members or partners. The victims did not want to file formal complaints.

The Ombudsman highlighted at a roundtable in February, that anti-LGBTI hate crimes are seriously underreported and when they do end up in court, they are often mishandled as misdemeanours.

## EDUCATION

Spektra signed a memorandum of understanding with several high schools, including in Kotor, Mojkovac, Kolašin, and Podgorica, and held workshops for students and some teachers. Spektra and Juventas held a workshop for trans and non-binary students in a Cetinje high school

## EMPLOYMENT

Queer Montenegro launched the first study into the experiences of LGBTIQ people in employment. The results will be published in 2022.

Spektra and Stana held crafting workshops to support the

self-employment of LGBTQ people, who sold their crafts during Pride week.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The number of local government focal points on LGBTI rights increased from 17 in 2020 to 21 in 2021.

Juventas, Queer Montenegro and Spektra continued to support local municipalities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. The municipality of Mojkovac will adopt a local LGBTI action plan soon, and the municipalities of Pljevlja, Cetinje and Bar are in the drafting process.

The Ombudsman's Office published an anti-discrimination manual this year.

Civil society reports that due to political tensions, human rights issues were difficult to put on the government's agenda this year.

## FAMILY

On 25 July, the first ever same-sex partnership was concluded in Montenegro, in the town of Budva. The same-sex partnership law was adopted in 2020, making Montenegro a leader in the region as the first Western Balkans country outside the EU to adopt such legislation. Civil society hopes that all relevant bylaws will be amended speedily, so that the law can be implemented in its entirety. The Law on Social and Children's Protection was amended for instance, but amidst hateful remarks by MPs.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The 9th Montenegro Pride organised by Queer Montenegro in support of Juventas, Spektra and LGBTQ women association "Stana" was successfully held on 16 October and was attended by several government representatives.

## HEALTH

Worsening hormone shortages and border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a serious impact on trans people. Many trans people have turned to self-medicating, thereby jeopardising their own health. Spektra called on the authorities, including the Ministry of Health, the Public Health Centre, and Health Insurance Fund, and others, to remedy the shortages, but has not received a response.



Juventas continued to provide medical support and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted and blood borne infections prevention services and testing in the LGBTIQ Drop-in center and during outreach activities all around Montenegro in collaboration with Queer Montenegro, Spectra, LBTQ women association “Stana” and the Montenegro Pride initiative.

Trans, intersex and gender diverse continued reporting to Spektra that their medical care, relating to transitioning or HIV, were interrupted.

Civil society organisations continued responding to the growing need for mental health support in the LGBTI community in year two of the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society resources are stretched too thin and many remain without support. Civil society has called for targeted funding.

## HOUSING

Queer Montenegro, Juventas and Spectra provided rent and utilities support together with urgent humanitarian aid in food and hygienic products packages to 70 LGBTIQ persons (each of the persons received at least 10 packages) during 2020 and 2021, as per the COVID-19 pandemic.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Some LGBTI human rights defenders were targeted by hate speech throughout the year.

The “Community (self)organising of transgender movement in Western Balkans region” report features a chapter on the state of the trans movement in Montenegro.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Legal gender recognition reform continued to be stalled this year, amidst ongoing civil society criticism. Spectra published “Legal recognition of gender identity in the legal system of Montenegro”.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The new head of police, Zoran Brđanin met with LGBTI CSOs, committing to keep LGBTI people safe and work on internal capacity building in the police.

Queer Montenegro organised first education on Human Rights of LGBTIQ persons for members of the Military of Montenegro and Ministry of defence.

Juventas, Queer Montenegro and Spectra organised trainings for police officers, judges, prosecutors as well as police academy cadets on human rights of LGBTIQ persons.

## PUBLIC OPINION

Juventas’s study (not published), conducted by Kantar, found that over 70% of the population believes that being LGBT is a disease, but over two-thirds would report anti-LGBTI violence to the police.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Juventas continued to provide psychological and social support in the LGBTIQ Drop-in centre established in 2011 in Podgorica, as well as legal aid support, together with peer to peer support, in collaboration with Queer Montenegro, Spectra, LBTQ women association “Stana” and the Montenegro Pride initiative.

The LGBTIQ Shelter continued to provide housing, psychological and legal aid and the SOGI Center provided psychological and social services.



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