

## ALBANIA

Recent misinformation and hate speech targeting the LGBTI community in Albania contributed to increased incidents of discrimination and harassment. Many LGBTI people face hostility in the workplace, schools, and within their families, resulting in social isolation leading to mental health challenges like anxiety and depression. The pervasive fear of public exposure forces many LGBTI people to hide their identities, denying them the basic freedom to live authentically.

## ANDORRA

According to Law 6/2022, this year, businesses and civil society organisations were bound to implement protocols for the effective implementation of the right to equal treatment and opportunities, as well as for the establishment of guarantees of nondiscrimination. Nonetheless, the law is built on the notion of gender, not gender identity, and defines gender as “the cultural and social construct that, based on biological differences, assigns different emotional, intellectual, and attitudinal characteristics to men and women,” stating that “based on these biological differences, gender shapes social relationships and power dynamics between men and women.” The omission of gender identity results in a gap in explicit protections for trans people in the scope of this law.

## ARMENIA

After ongoing advocacy efforts from HR activists, Ministry of Justice has in 2024 provided a new draft for an anti-discrimination law that broadly defines discrimination. However the draft still omits references to sexual orientation and gender identity and instead of setting up the Equality Body as an independent body, foresees it to operate under the Ombudsman’s office, which diminishes its authority and the legal weight of its decisions. Another critical gap in the draft law is the lack of legal competence granted to public organisations.

By the end of the year, at least 57 cases of discrimination, violence, and hate speech based on sexual orientation and gender identity were reported by LGBTI people. Violations recorded included instances of torture and inhumane treatment, such as conversion practices, domestic violence and breaches of privacy, robbery and extortion, and educational discrimination, including bullying and neglect by teaching staff. Notably, many of these discrimination cases entailed blackmail incidents targeting LGBTI people. Throughout the year, at least five hate crime cases were reported to Pink NGO, in which perpetrators extorted individuals by threatening to expose their sexual orientation or gender identity to family members or co-workers. In some instances, these crimes were perpetrated by the victims’ partners, who exploited their personal vulnerabilities for financial gain.

In September, ECOM published its 2024 analysis of Armenia’s national legislation concerning sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) and HIV, offering a range of recommendations for the Armenian government. The suggestions include adopting a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that defines discrimination, its types, and explicitly lists SOGI as protected grounds. It also urges amendments to various legal acts and norms to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on SOGI, as well as revisions to hate crime regulations in the Criminal Code to include SOGI in the list of protected characteristics.

## AUSTRIA

Starting in October, the “QueerFacts” training workshops will expand to Carinthia, Upper Austria, and Vorarlberg. Originally launched by the RosaLila PantherInnen association in collaboration with HOSI Vienna, HOSI Salzburg, VIMÖ, Verein Amazone, and INSIEME Kärnten, these workshops have been conducted in Styria, Salzburg, and Vienna. Their goal is to prevent extremism and sexism by fostering discussions on queer topics in educational institutions.

## BELARUS

In February, Prosecutor General Andrei Shved announced that the Prosecutor General’s Office plans to introduce a law imposing administrative penalties for “LGBTI propaganda”. The draft law has not been tabled yet.

Activist reports indicate that at least ten trans people left Belarus last year due to discrimination and repression. Further information about the context is reported under Legal Gender Recognition and Police and Law Enforcement.

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Although the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina already recognises sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics in national anti-discrimination provisions, its implementation is inconsistent at the entity, district, and canton levels, which have yet to align with state-level legislation. Civil society organisations have underscored the need for incorporating these national measures at the local level, stressing that while the state Action Plan to Improve the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of LGBTI People in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2021-2024 took effect in 2021, its formal adoption did not occur until the summer of 2022, resulting in a limited implementation timeline of less than 18 months. Recognising the urgency of the situation and the challenge of achieving the plan’s goals within such a short period, the BiH Council of Ministers, upon the recommendation of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, has extended the Action Plan’s implementation period to the end of 2025.

Enhancements to the judicial information system now allow for the comprehensive collection of data on discrimination cases within BiH courts, including details regarding the relationship between victims and perpetrators in instances of gender-based violence.

## CROATIA

In the [European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award](#), a competition among 70 regions and cities in the European Union, the city of Zagreb was [awarded](#) the golden prize for the European Capital of Inclusion and Diversity for 2024. Zagreb Mayor Tomislav Tomašević emphasised the city's commitment to inclusivity and highlighted Zagreb's dedication to fostering an inclusive society across all areas of life.

The Zagreb City Assembly has adopted the City Program for the Equality of LGBTIQ+ Persons (2024–2026), marking the first time a public authority in Croatia has introduced an LGBTIQ+-focused strategy. The program was developed by a dedicated commission that included representatives of civil society organisations and experts. Its implementation will be monitored over the next two years.

## CYPRUS

In February, Deputy Government Spokesman Yiannis Antoniou [expressed](#) that LGBTIQ rights, including same-sex marriage and adoption, are not currently prioritised in either the political or social spheres in Cyprus. Antoniou acknowledged that while there might be discussions in the future, the stagnation of past efforts—such as in enabling adoption for LGBTIQ couples and advancing measures previously championed by President Christodoulides during his campaign—highlight the slow pace and complexity of reforms in this area.

## CZECHIA

In June, the Old Catholic Church in the Czech Republic [announced](#) its intention to comply with an amendment to the Czech Civil Code, which will define a partnership as a permanent union between two individuals of the same sex, effective January 1, 2025, (see also under Family). In May, the Synodal Council, the church's governing body, expressed its readiness to permit the celebration of church blessing ceremonies for same-sex partnerships, thereby enabling these partnerships to be recognised as church marriages under Czech law.

## DENMARK

The non-binary musician Freja Kirk [was greeted](#) by homophobic chants at a school concert.

## ESTONIA

In April, the government of Estonia announced the development of an [action plan](#) for equal opportunities for LGBTIQ people, focusing

on improving their security and ensuring fair treatment.

The plan addresses four key areas: safety, education, health, and employment, with particular attention to the wellbeing of trans people. Minister of Social Protection Signe Riisalo emphasised the plan's goal of fostering a supportive and safe environment for LGBTIQ people in all areas of life, noting that this is not always the current reality in Estonia.

In June, the Estonian LGBTIQ Association [expressed support](#) for a draft law aimed at enhancing gender equality and equal opportunities. The draft law seeks to address gaps in the Equal Treatment Act, which does not fully prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and the Gender Equality Act, which lacks explicit protections for gender identity, gender expression, and gender characteristics. In September, the government introduced the draft law, initiating formal discussions on its implementation.

## FINLAND

In the 2024 Finnish elections, presidential candidate Pekka Haavisto faced significant [scrutiny](#) over his sexual orientation. A University of Helsinki [survey](#) conducted prior to the elections revealed that one-third of respondents cited Haavisto's partner, from Ecuador, as a factor influencing their decision not to vote for him in the presidential race.

In August, Finnish media [reported](#) that Foreign Trade Minister Ville Tavio of the Finns Party has prohibited the inclusion of any reference to mentions of LGBTIQ people and related topics in public speeches written for him.

## FRANCE

In January, then-Prime-Minister Gabriel Attal [spoke](#) to the National Assembly, highlighting how attitudes have evolved in France and noting that being openly gay and serving as prime minister demonstrates significant societal change.

In March, the Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination, [requested](#) that the Interministerial Delegation for the Fight against Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Anti-LGBTIQ Hatred report inflammatory comments to the public prosecutor. Although she did not name the source directly, her request was prompted by recent statements from Father Matthieu Raffray, a Catholic priest who equated the fight against homosexuality with combating other "sins" like gluttony and anger and suggested that homosexuality could be "cured" by resisting "the voice of the devil."

In early May, activist groups [called for nationwide protests](#) following the publication of a controversial Senate report on the right of minors to gender care, and of the book *Transmania*, which critics argue echoes harmful rhetoric against trans people.

In May, the shutters of the Le Trinquet bar in Tardets, Basque Country, were defaced with homophobic graffiti after the bar started hosting events for the Prefosta association, including Bekat'uros day celebrating LGBTI visibility.

In July, the ECtHR dismissed the case of M.A. and Others v. France, ruling that France's criminalization of those seeking to purchase sexual acts did not violate the right to private life under Article 8 of the ECHR, a decision that prompted criticism from human rights groups. (See also under Participation in Public, Cultural, and Political life)

## GEORGIA

In March, Georgia's ruling party unveiled a proposal for a bill named the "Protection of Family Values and Minors." The law, widely referred to as the anti-LGBTI law by activists, encompasses a broad range of discriminatory provisions. By June, the Georgian Parliament granted preliminary approval to the draft legislation. The law came into force in December 2024 and includes measures that prohibit non-heterosexual people from adopting children, prevent LGBTI people from changing their gender marker on identification documents, outlaw public gatherings that promote same-sex relationships, and prohibit educational institutions from presenting what the government terms "LGBTI propaganda." Additionally, the law bans legal gender recognition, criminalises medical procedures related to transitioning, equates same-sex relationships with incest, and declares May 17 a "Day of Family Purity and Respect for Parents", a holiday opposing the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). In addition, the law exempts labour relations from anti-discrimination obligations to avoid terminology referring to "biological sex".

## GERMANY

Germany continues to block the adoption of the EU anti-discrimination directive, despite the federal government's coalition agreement promising a reform of the national anti-discrimination law.

In May, "Just now. For all," a campaign of about 200 non-profit organisations advocating for the preservation of funding for civil society initiatives, appealed to Chancellor Olaf Scholz with a petition to review the 2025 federal budget and the austerity measures proposed by the Ministry of Finance.

The campaign underscored that budget cuts would endanger civil society projects and initiatives throughout the country, causing serious implications on democracy promotion, child and youth services, political education, and voluntary programs. In December, the Federal Government presented a report on the progress of the 2022 "Queer Living" Action Plan's implementation.

The report revealed that nearly two-thirds of the 134 proposed measures have already been implemented or are in progress. Civil society organisations have expressed their disappointment that key initiatives such as the inclusion of a ban on discrimination based on sexual identity into common law have not been implemented. They also criticised the lack of adequate funding for several measures and called on future governments to prioritize the action plan and fulfill outstanding reform promises.

## GREECE

After the 2024 European elections and the low electoral results of his party, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis gave a TV news interview claiming that his party suffered political damage due to the marriage equality legislative initiative. Additionally, he noted that no other change will be made regarding family law and specifically on adoption. Instead, he announced wanting to focus on improving societal attitudes towards LGBTI issues rather than on implementing further legislative change.

In November, party Elliniki Lysi ("The Greek Solution") submitted a proposal to repeal the marriage equality law and the legal gender recognition law. In another instance, the party Niki ("Victory") submitted a proposal to "protect the two genders and minors", aiming to "ban gender ideologies and non-traditional sexual orientations", erase the term "gender identity" from the Greek legislation and prevent minors from accessing trans-specific healthcare.

Three associations submitted a petition to the Council of State claiming the marriage equality law is unconstitutional because "it fundamentally modifies the traditional institution of family". The National Commission for Human Rights intervened in favour of its constitutionality. The trial has been postponed to April 11, 2025.

## HUNGARY

Gergely Gulyás, head of the Hungarian government office, confirmed that Hungary would not alter its policies criticised by the European Union for infringing on LGBTI rights and asylum seekers' rights.

## IRELAND

In March, Sport Ireland released an advisory document aimed at guiding sporting bodies on policies for trans and non-binary athletes. The document notably emphasised the need for national governing bodies to proactively develop policies for the inclusion of trans and non-binary people in sports.

In June, LGBTI activists marched in Dublin to oppose instances of anti-trans rhetoric, advocating against misinformation about trans healthcare.

A [report](#) by UCD's School of Information and Communication Studies, supported by LGBT Ireland and the trade union Fórsa, highlights the impact of anti-LGBTI library demonstrations on the staff of these establishments. Since 2022, a coordinated campaign by anti-LGBTI agitators, opposed to the presence of LGBTQ+ reading material, has targeted public libraries across Ireland. These protests have led to harassment of library staff, with many reporting feeling unsafe and being verbally abused, including being called "paedophiles" or "groomers."

## ITALY

In January, a [statement](#) from the Ministry of Education addressing the Holocaust Remembrance Day failed to mention the persecution of LGBTI people.

In March, Italy voted against a European Commission regulation aimed at guaranteeing the cross-border recognition of same-sex parents.

In May, during the traditional spring assembly with Italian bishops, Pope Francis [reiterated](#) his stance against admitting gay men to seminaries. He reportedly expressed concerns about what he described as an inappropriate atmosphere within the Church, urging bishops to exclude LGBTI people from seminaries.

In June, the Puglia region enacted new [legislation](#) introducing structural measures to ensure equal rights for LGBTI people and address discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In October, Senator Ivan Scalfarotto [revisited](#) the case of a prison police officer who faced discrimination in his workplace, the Vercelli prison. The officer was subjected to workplace discrimination by his colleagues and a prison inspector due to statements made by inmates about his perceived sexual orientation. After receiving such statements – which were later retracted – the inspector subjected the victim to a psychological evaluation and reported him to his superiors. While the Regional Administrative Court awarded the victim compensation, the issue remains unresolved, with the disciplinary proceeding against the inspector still pending and a parliamentary question being submitted by the Italia Viva Party on his qualifications and professional background.

## KAZAKHSTAN

In March, the government-organised National Quryltay (an informational congress of government-selected public figures) brought together politicians, economists, and cultural figures to address [pressing societal issues](#) in Kazakhstan. Among other issues some participants advocated for the introduction of a legislative ban on LGBTI representation.

In June, a [petition](#) to ban all forms of LGBTI 'propaganda' gathered enough signatures to be officially reviewed, as reported by El.kz and confirmed by the press service of the Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan. In July, the working group reviewing the petition held its [second meeting](#) with representatives from the government. In response to an official media inquiry from The Village Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan [defended](#) the petition. The Ministry notably argued that the petition does not infringe upon human rights or advocate for discrimination and instead solely aims to limit children's and adolescents' exposure to information promoting "non-traditional family values." Reports have surfaced that the petition's success was orchestrated by [coercive tactics](#) among employees of public institutions. A schoolteacher and a nurse revealed receiving directives to sign the petition via group chats affiliated with the ruling political party. In August, a [public discussion](#) on the petition took place at Astana's Kazmedia Centre, with interventions by government officials like that of a Ministry of Internal Affairs representative who attributed the rising crime rates to the online dissemination of information about sexual freedom.

## LATVIA

In June, the Latvian Supreme Court [reviewed](#) appeals against decisions by the Administrative Regional Court, which had previously dismissed applications seeking legal recognition of same-sex couples' family relationships. The appellants argued that the registry office should be compelled to issue favorable administrative acts to legally register their relationships. The Supreme Court's decision on these appeals is pending.

## LIECHTENSTEIN

In May, with a 24-1 vote, Liechtenstein legalised same-sex marriage by approving an amendment to the Marriage Law of 1973.

## LITHUANIA

In February, the Lithuanian government [asked](#) the Constitutional Court to review the constitutionality of a law banning the dissemination of information about same-sex relationships to minors. The Court began its hearing in early December. Later that month, the Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that Article 4(2)(16) of the Law on Protection of Minors Against Detrimental Effects of Public Information violates several provisions of the Constitution. The Court determined that restricting information about different family models infringes upon minors' rights to receive information and hinders their development into well-rounded individuals. It emphasised that legislation cannot automatically deem information about various family structures and relationships as inappropriate for minors, as this contradicts the constitutional principles of equality, pluralism, and tolerance. The ruling concluded that the challenged regulation improperly limited the

constitutional concept of family and failed to provide minors with objective information that would aid in forming a worldview aligned with constitutional values and human dignity.

In March, President Gitanas Nausėda appointed Laurynas Kasčiūnas, head of the Seimas Committee on National Security and Defence, as Defence Minister. The nomination came despite protest from over 20 human rights organisations denouncing Kasčiūnas views and opposition to human rights, particularly concerning the Istanbul Convention.

In April, Lithuania launched the state-funded project “More Effective Protection of LGBTI Rights by Strengthening Inter-Institutional Cooperation” (SV5-147), coordinated by the Lithuanian Gay League. Partnering with Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), the Seimas Ombudsmen’s Office, and Vilnius City Municipality, the project evaluates municipal public policies in sectors like education, healthcare, and social protection to assess their inclusivity for LGBTI people. Results were shared at the National Human Rights Forum in December.

## LUXEMBOURG

In July, Luxembourg Pride marked its 25th anniversary, featuring a supporting programme with over 24 different activities. The festival was attended by six members of the government, including Deputy Prime Minister Xavier Bettel and Minister for Equality and Diversity Yuriko Backes.

## MALTA

An audit by the National Audits Office published in December slammed the EuroPride 2023 budget blowout and discrepancies in procurement procedures and documentation, which significantly exceeded its original budget of €2.5 million by 86%.

Seven NGOs expressed frustration over the lack of consultation and transparency regarding the costs of EuroPride.

## MOLDOVA

In January, Transnistria released an official document titled “Preservation of Traditional Values is the Priority of the State.” The document addresses the rise of various movements and subcultures that advocate for non-traditional sexual relationships among youth. It describes this as widespread promotion carried out through media channels and public events, including online film screenings. The document asserts that the demonstration of what it terms “deviant behaviour” is increasingly viewed as normal in contemporary society.

In June, a draft law aimed at approving the Concept of the National Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of

Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values in the Republic of Moldova was registered by six deputies from pro-Russian parties.

## MONTENEGRO

Results of the research on socio-economic violence against TIRV persons by Spektra Association revealed that every participant in the study reported having experienced mistreatment over the past five years. The study also highlighted the specific types of violence experienced by respondents: 62.5% reported receiving threats of physical violence, while 37.5% had experienced attempted or actual physical violence. Additionally, 31.3% of participants reported receiving threats via telephone, 25% had personal property damaged or stolen, and 12.5% were threatened with weapons. Regarding sexual violence, one quarter (25%) of respondents had faced attempted rape or other forms of sexual violence, while 18.8% had been victims of rape or sexual assault. When asked about the most pressing issues for the trans/intersex/gender-variant community, 81.3% of participants emphasised the urgent need for legislation for more accessible Legal Gender Recognition, along with stronger enforcement of the anti-discrimination law.

## NETHERLANDS

On January 1, a new policy came into effect to put an end to discriminatory practices in blood donations against men who have sex with men.

In March, Ministers De Jonge (BZK) and Yeşilgöz (J&V) introduced a bill aimed at better protecting especially bi, intersex and trans people against discrimination. The bill includes sex characteristics, gender identity and gender expression as non-discrimination grounds into the penal code and replaces the term ‘homosexual orientation’ by ‘sexual orientation’.

In August, an open letter was addressed to the Government by a number of organisations advocating for the rights of LGBTI people, people of colour, Muslim and Jewish people, women, people with disabilities, and Dutch citizens with Moroccan and Turkish heritage to advocate for measures against discrimination and discriminatory violence. The National Voter Survey indicated a growing intolerance toward trans rights among residents of the Netherlands. The report noted diminishing support for gender reassignment surgeries and growing intolerance towards queer and intersex people.

The Bishops’ Conference of the Netherlands rejected the idea of providing blessings or prayers for same-sex couples, criticising a contrasting declaration by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.



## NORWAY

In June, the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombudsperson has published a [summary](#) of previous discrimination cases regarding gender identity and gender expression, to help with potential future cases and also function as a practical guide.

In September, the Lyngdal municipality [banned](#) the rainbow flag on its premises.

## POLAND

In January, the LGBTI flag [made a reappearance](#) on Poland's Morning TV, as two activists from Rainbow Poland were invited by the network to discuss the place for LGBTI people in Polish media. The broadcast represented the first time the LGBTI flag appeared on TV in eight years due to a now-lifted ban on LGBTI topics in the media.

In February, the Voivodeship Administrative Court in Warsaw [annulled](#) a 2019 declaration by the City Council of Mordy rejecting alleged LGBTI influences on social life. The court ruled that the local government lacked the authority to issue a resolution deemed discriminatory and inconsistent with Polish and international law.

In February, TVP presenter Wojciech Szelaq [issued a public apology](#) for the channel's previous treatment of LGBTI people.

In May, a leadership crisis within the Volunteer Equality Foundation triggered a [split](#) among Pride organisers in Warsaw. This conflict resulted in three separate marches: one organised by the foundation, supported by Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, and others by existing volunteers and the Praga Equality Collective.

Following a shift in both the mayor's office and the council majority, in May, the Radzyń Podlaski Council [repealed](#) its discriminatory Local Government Charter of Family Rights, ending the region's LGBT-free zone status. At the time of writing there are only three LGBT-free zones remaining in Poland, all located in Podkarpacie, and the Ombudsman for Human Rights has submitted a [letter](#) to the local authorities advocating for change.

## PORTUGAL

The Armed Forces have [announced](#) the development of a manual to improve the integration of women and trans people. The initiative was promoted as part of the National Defence Sector Plan for Equality 2022-2025.

In January, the General Inspection of Internal Administration initiated [disciplinary proceedings](#) against 13 PSP police officers and GNR soldiers for sharing xenophobic and homophobic posts on social media.

On International Day of Remembrance for Holocaust Victims, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa [urged](#) citizens to combat all forms of racism, anti-Semitism, discrimination, xenophobia, and homophobia.

On the IDAHOBIT the City Council of Funchal, Lisbon, Almada, Loures, Porto, Leiria [raised the rainbow flag](#), underscoring their commitment to combating violence and discrimination against the LGBTI community.

In May, the facade of the Assembly of the Republic in Porto was [illuminated](#) in rainbow colours to commemorate IDAHOBIT.

In July, addressing a parliamentary hearing, Minister of Youth Margarida Balseiro Lopes [acknowledged](#) that discrimination against LGBTI people exists in Portugal and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to human rights.

In July, the Lisbon City Council approved [municipal plans](#) extending to 2026 focusing on gender equality, LGBTI rights, and the prevention of violence against women. The initiatives aim to promote LGBTI rights and work towards a more equitable municipality free from violence and discrimination.

## ROMANIA

In January, the CNCD [ruled against](#) a Bucharest printing house that had refused to print posters with pro-LGBTI messages. Nonetheless, several NGOs [accused](#) the CNCD of increasingly straying from its mission to uphold non-discrimination principles. The NGOs denounced the body's decision not to sanction the printing house, as opposed to a previous case where the council sanctioned an art exhibition considered offensive to Christians.

In June, the AUR [urged](#) all Romanian political parties to endorse a "National Pact for Saving the Innocence of Children." Among other provisions, the Pact entails the prohibition of alleged 'LGBTI propaganda' towards children.

Another such [legislative initiative](#) also was registered in the second half of the year, initiated by former AUR members and PSD. The draft also bans the broadcasting prior to 22.00hrs of programmes that promote or present gender reassignment, homosexuality or any identification with a gender other than the biological one. It also obliges broadcasters to "classify media content according to the potential impact on minors in relation to LGBTQIA+ ideology.

## RUSSIA

The organisers of the Andrei Dementyev All-Russian Poetry Prize have [excluded](#) entries from trans people. The organisation stated that, "although submissions are accepted from poets regardless of

citizenship, nationality, profession, or residence, those who have changed their gender would be disqualified”.

Following the Kremlin’s intensified push for “traditional values” and its criminalisation of the LGBTI community, those who challenge gender norms or advocate for LGBTI rights found themselves particularly targeted. This includes drag artists who have reported the need to go underground, taking measures to keep performing away from the gaze of authorities.

In March, two patrons of the Sholes bar were charged under the “LGBTI propaganda” law after being reported for kissing in the establishment. Eyewitnesses filed a complaint with the head of the Investigative Committee, demanding action against the bar’s staff for inaction. In May, the bar announced a temporary closure for alleged renovations.

## SPAIN

In April, around a hundred people gathered in Barcelona to protest against the rising number of transphobic attacks and the growing influence of far-right forces and their inflammatory rhetoric.

In June, it was reported that the Xunta de Galicia had significantly reduced funding for LGBTI-related resources in recent years. These cuts affected support for inclusive education, healthcare, and public services. In response, Avante LGBTI Compostela called for greater financial investment and better training for public employees to address these gaps.

## SWEDEN

In February, Gender Equality and Deputy Labor Market Minister Paulina Brandberg held a meeting with several civil society organisations marking the beginning of the government’s efforts to develop a new action plan to ensure equal rights and opportunities for LGBTI people.

The National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden announced that an equally long withdrawal period for all blood donors after a new sexual relationship will be introduced, moving away from the current practice of dividing donors into separate risk groups. This shift will eliminate group-based risk assessments in favour of individualised assessments. Until now, men who have sex with men were categorised as a separate risk group and faced a longer deferral period of six months before being allowed to donate blood. Under the new regulations, the deferral period will be shortened to four months for all donors, regardless of sexual orientation. However, before this policy can be fully implemented, the introduction of the NAT-test (Nucleic Acid Test) for infection screening will be necessary in Sweden.

In October the Skurup municipal council adopted a new flag policy,

limiting the raising of the rainbow flag to May 17, IDAHOBIT. This decision followed a shift in the local government after the Sweden Democrats and Moderates took control in 2022. Schools and preschools in Skurup are now restricted to flying only the Swedish flag, with the Scanian flag allowed on Scanian Flag Day and the EU flag on EU Day. The policy also prohibits the display of Ukraine’s flag, though exceptions may be made. The decision has sparked debate, with opposition parties advocating for greater inclusivity in flag displays.

## SWITZERLAND

In January, the Grand Council of Basel-Stadt passed a revision of the Cantonal Equality Act. Although the revision was a highly-debated topic and sparked intense anti-trans rhetoric, no requests for referendums were lodged to halt the process and the revision was therefore enforced.

In September, the first LGBTI project leader started their position within the Basel-Stadt equality office. With the approval, Basel-Stadt became the first canton in German-speaking Switzerland to explicitly enshrine the equality of the LGBTI community in its legislation through the Basel-Stadt Equality Act, which ensures protections for all genders and sexual orientations.

Although similar gestures of support, such as raising the rainbow flag on public buildings during Pride Month, were accepted in other cities like Zurich and Winterthur, the city of Brugg in the canton of Aargau declined a request to do so. To justify the refusal, the city cited a policy to treat all interest groups equally and questioned the relevance of the rainbow flag to Brugg’s local context.

In May, the National Synod of the Christian Catholic Church in Aarau elected its first openly-gay bishop.

Zurich’s 30th Pride Anniversary drew tens of thousands of participants despite the presence of agitators who displayed anti-LGBTI banners and the arrest of two teenagers who were planning violent attacks against the event.

In November, the city of Biel/Bienne published two language guides: one on non-binary inclusive language and one on simple language, designed to make texts more accessible for people with reading or comprehension difficulties.

In November, voters from the city of Zürich upheld the city council’s language guide on non-binary inclusive language by a majority of 57%. The public vote was provoked by the popular initiative “Tschüss Genderstern” from the SVP party. In September, the Federal Council announced that amendments to the Therapeutic Products Act regarding blood donation, adopted by Parliament, will come into force on January 1, 2025. These

changes will enshrine the constitutionally guaranteed principles of non-remuneration and non-discrimination in blood donation law. Individuals will no longer be excluded from donating blood based on their sexual orientation. Instead, exclusion criteria will be based on individual risk behavior and scientific evidence.

## TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan's anti-discrimination legislation only partially aligns with the minimum standards outlined in the UN Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation. Although a working group was established in 2020 to draft the country's first Anti-Discrimination law including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds, by the time the law was adopted in July 2022, SOGI had been removed, leaving only "sex" as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

Since 2016, there have been reports that security forces in Tajikistan allegedly maintain a registry of individuals with diverse SOGI, subjecting them to systematic discrimination and human rights violations, including forced HIV testing. These actions are often driven by corruption or personal career advancement, linked to performance quotas that require officers to meet a minimum number of arrests or convictions. Authorities have reportedly targeted these individuals under criminal code articles related to HIV transmission (Art. 125) and more recently have shifted to using pornography-related charges (Art. 241). Those charged under Art. 125, particularly LGBTI people, often lack access to free government-provided legal aid and are convicted without sufficient evidence, as Tajikistan lacks the capacity to conduct proper testing to trace HIV transmission.

In 2024, a [report](#) prepared by ECOM documented at least 25 cases of human rights violations directed towards LGBTI people. In 15 of these instances, the report underscored that the offenders were law enforcement officers who arranged fake dates to force people to undergo rapid HIV testing, threatening to out them, and in some cases, revealing their HIV status to their colleagues and family members.

## TURKEY

In May, it was [revealed](#) that Mey alcohol expressed its support to LGBTI initiatives and its willingness to sponsor the KuirFest, organised by the Pembe Hayat LGBTI Solidarity Association. In May, the Provincial Civil Society Communications Office imposed fines on board members of the May 17 Association. The fines were justified through claims that international network membership fees and foreign services should be declared under the national foreign grant system.

In June, the Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that LGBTI activist Efruz Kaya had their right to privacy under Article 8 of the ECHR violated when their request to the Criminal Judgship of Peace to remove

targeted LGBTI-phobic content from various media outlets was rejected. Kaya was targeted by derogatory content from Yeni Akit and other media outlets after participating in an event about the Trans Day of Remembrance on 20 November 2019. The court granted an access ban on content with derogatory character and awarded Kaya 10,000 TL (270 Euro) in compensation for moral damages.

In June, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation World prepared a documentary titled "True Colours."

The documentary portrayed the LGBTI movement as "imported from the West" and perpetrating false information about LGBTI individuals.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs has unveiled a [Four-Year Strategic Plan](#) that designates LGBTI identities as "gender-based deviant ideologies that threaten the family." As part of the Plan, a budget of 2 million TL (54,000 Euro) was allocated to fund a campaign against LGBTI people and other activities aimed at promoting this agenda.

In October, the Turkish delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Committee stated that LGBTI people are seen as a "threat to the family [structure](#)" in Turkish society.

## TURKMENISTAN

A [report](#) by Amnesty International unveiled systemic discrimination against LGBTI people in Turkmenistan. The report underscored how the Turkmen government, under the pretext of upholding national culture, perpetuates significant oppression against sexual minorities.

Despite recommendations by international bodies like the UN Human Rights Committee, consensual same-sex relations continue to be [criminalised](#) in Turkmenistan. Despite previous indications of reform, a new version of the Criminal Code in April 2022 not only kept the "sodomy" provisions but increased both the severity and scope of punishments.

## UKRAINE

Since the beginning of the invasion, the participation of LGBTI soldiers to the conflict has highlighted significant [inequalities](#). Partners of deceased LGBTI soldiers find themselves still lacking the right to make decisions about their loved ones' remains and are ineligible for state support.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv [revoked an award](#) given to a prominent LGBTI activist and leader of the LGBTI military association, citing their disapproval of his "sinful preferences and LGBTI agitation."



In January, the Nash Svit Centre released a [report](#) on the social, legal, and political challenges faced by Ukraine's LGBTI community, noting an increase in openly LGBTI military personnel despite restrictive laws. While most experience tolerance from peers and commanders, cases of homo/transphobic discrimination and violence still occur.

In February, Kharkiv Pride [revealed](#) that the advertising firm Megapolis abruptly ceased communication about an LGBTI military support campaign. The campaign intended to feature portraits and stories of LGBTI military personnel on advertising billboards in Kyiv and Kharkiv.

In March a 23-year-old man in occupied Yalta was [fined](#) 100,000 rubles (1,000 Euro) under Russia's "LGBTI propaganda" laws for appearing in women's clothing at a nightclub, reported Nash Svit Centre.

In March, the Ombudsman's Office released a [guide](#) for public officials and service providers on preventing discrimination, highlighting the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity under Ukraine's anti-discrimination laws. It outlines obligations to address discrimination against LGBTI people and provides recommendations for fostering equality and inclusive policies.

On May 17, the National Council of Ukraine on Television and Radio Broadcasting [issued a statement](#) for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, emphasising the importance of upholding principles of equality and non-discrimination in the media.

In December, the Verkhovna Rada [adopted Bill](#) 11456, amending Ukraine's law "On Free Legal Aid" to include victims of hate crimes based on factors like race, religion, and disability but notably [excluding](#) sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite [appeals](#) from Gender Stream and other human rights organisations to address this omission, the bill, criticised for neglecting LGBTI rights and violating European Commission recommendations, was adopted in just 13 minutes.

## UNITED KINGDOM

In July, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer [stated](#) that trans women with Gender Recognition Certificates should not have the right to access women-only spaces. Starmer further emphasised the need to protect "biological women's spaces."

In February, the group For Women Scotland lodged an [appeal](#) against the 2023 Scottish court ruling that "sex" in British equality law means sex as amended by gender recognition. They want the UK Supreme Court to rule that it only means "biological sex". In March, the UK's first trans judge sought permission to [intervene](#)

in this appeal, but was refused. The UK Supreme Court [heard the case](#) on 26 and 27 November, and judgement will be issued in 2025.

In March, Sports Minister Lucy Frazer from the Conservative Party [urged](#) all British sporting bodies to review their policies on trans athletes in women's sports to ensure fairness and integrity in competition. Emphasising the need for a thorough assessment of existing rules and regulations, the government has also [requested](#) an explanation from the Football Association regarding its current policy, which aims to balance inclusivity for transgender players with safety and fairness in women's football.

In October, following the appeal, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) [announced](#) that trans women who have gone through male puberty will be excluded from Tiers 1 and 2 of the new women's county competition, as well as from the women's Hundred. This decision aligns the ECB's eligibility policy with that of the International Cricket Council (ICC), which introduced similar [guidelines](#) in 2023.

Shadow Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson [endorsed](#) allowing trans women who have undergone gender transitions to use female toilets, addressing concerns about safe spaces for women.

In May, a group of 26 female hospital nurses announced their intention to [sue the NHS](#) after being required to share a changing room with a trans colleague who had not yet undergone gender reassignment surgery.

In May, Scotland's deputy First Minister Kate Forbes pledged to "serve all communities" in Scotland after the Scottish Greens expressed concern over what First Minister John Swinney's decision to appoint her as his deputy could mean for LGBTI people.

In May, the UK Government proposed [new regulations](#) requiring single-sex restrooms in all newly constructed pubs, restaurants, offices, and shopping centres in England. The decision followed a public [consultation](#) conducted by the UK Government in which 81% of respondents supported separate single-sex toilets, and 82% backed universal toilets where space permits.

In June, Women and Equality Minister Kemi Badenoch [criticised](#) LGBTI advocacy groups for allegedly misusing Britain's equalities laws. Badenoch pledged to uphold the "privacy and dignity of women and girls" against interpretations of sex and gender that go beyond biological characteristics.

August [marked](#) the 18th anniversary of the UK Black Pride, with thousands of participants joining the march in Stratford.

## UZBEKISTAN

In Uzbekistan, trans individuals face severe discrimination, harassment, and violence, exacerbated by both societal and governmental homophobia. A trans woman shared with Ozodlik having to present as male in public due to her official documents, which list her as male. As part of her testimony she cited encounters with law enforcement that often mock, humiliate, and physically abuse trans people.

The Uzbek government remains opposed to legalising same-sex relationships, citing concerns about public backlash and preserving the country's image within the Muslim world. Uzbekistan, with its close ties to Russia and historical tendencies to emulate Russian legislation, may use the Russian criminalisation of LGBTI identities to further marginalise LGBTI people. Russian and Georgian laws reinforce a narrative that could gain traction in Uzbekistan, where same-sex relations between men are already criminalised under Article 120 of the Criminal Code.