

BELGIUM

The Belgian presidency of the EU Council organised an international conference on LGBTI rights in Brussels on May 17th.

CYPRUS

The Queer Cyprus Association, in collaboration with Accept LGBTI Cyprus, announced the “Come Out 4 Europe” pledge prepared by ILGA-Europe to the European Parliament candidates. As a result of these efforts, 19 out of 45 candidates signed the “Come Out 4 Europe” pledge.

ESTONIA

On IDAHOBIT, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margus Tsahkna emphasised that human rights must be upheld for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation. He highlighted that rainbow flags were displayed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its global offices to symbolise opposition to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

FINLAND

In September, Finland announced it would not participate in the “Alliance for Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Recovery” launched with the goal of ensuring that gender equality and women’s empowerment are central to Ukraine’s recovery efforts. This decision was made by Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Ville Tavio (Finns), who cited the alliance’s focus on promoting gender and sexual minorities’ rights as a reason for Finland’s withdrawal. In response to Tavio’s decision, Finland’s largest opposition party expressed intentions to seek a vote of no confidence against him. Tytti Tuppurainen, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) parliamentary group, confirmed that her party planned to submit a motion of no confidence but the motion against Tuppurainen ultimately failed. Finnish President Alexander Stubb also criticised Tavio’s decision, emphasising that Finland’s foreign policy should uphold long-standing values, including the protection of gender and sexual minorities.

GEORGIA

Georgia’s foreign policy took a dramatic turn away from the West, culminating on November 28, when PM Irakli Kobakhidze announced a halt to Georgia’s European integration process. All key strategic partners repeatedly expressed grave concern over the actions of the Georgian Dream party, which were contrary to the values and principles on which the European Union is based.

According to the enlargement report published by the European Commission, the rate of compatibility of Georgia with the common foreign and security policy of the European Union was significantly low, at 49%. Bidzina Ivanishvili, from the

Georgian Dream party, was sanctioned by the United States for “undermining the democratic and Euro-Atlantic future of Georgia for the benefit of the Russian Federation”. Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the EU for foreign affairs at the time, called on Georgian authorities to withdraw the anti-LGBT law, as it would “undermine the fundamental rights of the people and increase discrimination & and stigmatisation” and further derail the country from the EU integration path.

GERMANY

In June, the Bundestag passed a law aimed at further developing international criminal law during its second and third readings. This legislation establishes a legal framework for prosecuting international law crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and other queer people, empowering the courts to prosecute crimes committed against individuals based on their sexual orientation as violations of international law. Furthermore, the accompanying explanatory memorandum states that bias-motivated violence on grounds of gender identity, specifically those directed at trans and intersex people, can be classified and prosecuted as gender-based crimes.

HUNGARY

In January, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán asserted that Hungary’s economy is robust enough to function independently of EU funds. He downplayed concerns that the country’s access to these funds is contingent upon adherence to the rule of law.

ITALY

In June, Italy refused to support an open letter produced by the United States and already signed by 37 diplomatic representations denouncing LGBTI discrimination in Hungary.

In November, in response to the state-sponsored dissolution of national organisations addressing LGBTI issues in Argentina, 30 Western ambassadors united under the “Diplomats for Diversity” initiative, signing a statement affirming their support for the LGBTI community. Notably, Italy’s Ambassador to Argentina, Fabrizio Lucentini, did not sign this appeal.

MALTA

The Maltese nominee for European Commissioner, Glenn Micallef, was asked about his position on trans athletes participating in women’s sports in the parliamentary hearing to approve his nomination. He responded that decisions should be left to the sporting organisations that decide on such issues, and that “sport is for everyone, no matter the identity or gender”. He was later approved for European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport.

MONTENEGRO

Montenegro has included the adoption of the Law on Legal Gender Recognition based on self-determination in its 2024 EU Accession Plan for 2024-2025, specifically under chapters 19 and 23. This revision is part of the closing benchmarks Montenegro must meet to move forward in its EU accession process.

NETHERLANDS

The new government has announced a cut of about 2.4 billion euro to its development cooperation budget. This may affect the global fight for LGBTI human rights disproportionately, since The Netherlands is the largest donor in this field in the world. The United Nations Human Rights Secretariat protested the cuts. The government confirmed that LGBTI human rights as a priority in Development cooperation in a letter sent to Parliament at the end of November.

SPAIN

The city of Merida hosted a summit on LGBTI international cooperation supported by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which aims to boost the funds allocated for LGBTI projects and other topics included in the Merida Declaration.

In October, the United Nations General Assembly elected Spain as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2025 to 2027. The Foreign Office announced SOGIESC as a key priority during its mandate.

UKRAINE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has intensified its efforts to protect LGBTI rights by establishing the Council on Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Diversity, and electing a prominent Ukrainian LGBTI activist as the Council's secretary.