

# PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

## ANDORRA

In the last week of October, Diversand participated in Andorra's Associations Fair, one of the biggest civil society events in the country, for the second time.

## AZERBAIJAN

On 7 February, snap presidential elections took place in Azerbaijan. Understanding the importance of LGBTI representation and active engagement in such important electoral events, Nafas facilitated the involvement of LGBTI people in the monitoring of the elections, contributing to the fight for both electoral transparency and LGBTI political representation.

Despite the intention to foster inclusivity in electoral processes, the efforts of LGBTI observers were met with backlash from local media, which accused them of staging provocations and smearing the election process. [An article published by Axar.az released four hours before the election](#), warned about "groups planning to sabotage election day," while singling out Nafas as one of the leaders of such groups. On 9 February, [in another article published by Musavat](#), Nafas was exclusively targeted and accused of being "the main interlocutors for smearing the election process." Following the backlash similar events occurred during the parliamentary elections which were held on September 1.

Although there was no such plan of observation by any LGBTI groups in the country, [an article titled "Rainbow" Observers - What and Who Do They Serve?](#) was published on the Azvision media platform just days before the election and warned against the same scenario.

## BULGARIA

In September, the National Film Centre stopped the LGBTI-themed Bulgarian-Spanish film 'Luben' from [participating in the Golden Rose Film Festival](#) in Varna. This happened against the backdrop of criticism from the pro-Russian Vazrazhdane party, which called the film "homosexual propaganda", claiming that a violation of the law was committed in its making because of the involvement of an actor who was underage at the start of filming.

## CROATIA

In April, Zagreb Pride [released a list](#) of well-known and previously out or outed LGBTI candidates for the Croatian Parliament. This action led many other local LGBTI organisations to publicly [disassociate themselves](#) from such a decision, criticising the unauthorised disclosure of private information.

## FRANCE

After his [appointment](#) as Prime Minister in January, Gabriel Attal was subjected to waves of [homophobic and anti-Semitic comments](#) on social media.

In January, [Catherine Vautrin](#) was appointed Minister of Labour and [Aurore Bergé](#) as Minister Delegate for Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination. LGBTI activists expressed their concerns about the appointment due to their previous opposition to same-sex marriage and adoption.

In May, the Professional Football League (LFP) [expanded its anti-discrimination campaign](#) by adding the LGBTI flag to the logos of the Ligue 1 and Ligue 2 competitions.

In May, the efforts spearheaded by Pierre-Yves Bournazel, co-president of the Independents and Progressives (GIP) group on the Paris Council, led to the approval of the project for the creation of [a new centre for LGBTI artistic and cultural expressions](#) in Paris.

This year, France welcomed the Olympic games and, despite facing criticism from conservative groups, the [Paris 2024 Olympic Games' opening ceremony](#), directed by Thomas Jolly, achieved global acclaim while also setting a [new record](#) for the number of openly queer athletes participating in the games. For the Games, an area dedicated to LGBTI people and their allies – the [Pride House](#) – was created on the banks of the Seine. Nonetheless, the [opening ceremony garnered](#) a considerable amount of online hatred, eventually leading the Paris prosecutor's office to launch multiple investigations into the hate speech directed at visible LGBTI figures who partook in the ceremony.

In July, the Paris prosecutor's office [announced an investigation](#) following a complaint filed by DJ Barbara Butch, who reported receiving lesbophobic, fatphobic and antisemitic insults and threats related to her participation in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games' opening ceremony. The prosecutor's office noted that the national centre for combating online hatred has referred the case to the central office for combating crimes against humanity and hate crimes for an investigation into discriminatory messages based on religion or sexual orientation.

In August, French drag queen Nicky Doll filed a [defamation complaint](#) following a wave of online hate due to her performance at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games' opening ceremony on July 26. As reported by Le Monde, the legal action targets anonymous users and British actor Laurence Fox, who labelled her a "paedophile" in a social media post.

## GEORGIA

In October, the [parliamentary elections](#) in Georgia were marked by significant challenges, with international observers noting reports of voter intimidation, particularly in rural areas, and a significant imbalance in financial resources, with the ruling party enjoying significant advantages. The election sparked numerous protests across the country, driven by frustration over the

government's delay in EU accession negotiations and calling for a new parliamentary election, alongside chants against Russian influence. (See also under Freedom From Torture, Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment, and under Police and Law Enforcement.)

## GREECE

The film "Lesvia" by Tzeli Chatzidimitriou, a documentary about the lesbian community in Eressos, was released to audiences in Greece and abroad.

In December, the National Museum of Contemporary Arts hosted Maria Cyber's exhibition "Portraits", a moment of lesbian representation and visibility in the arts.

## HUNGARY

In June, Dávid Bedő from the Momentum Movement disclosed that the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament blocked the approval of a [conference](#) focused on fundamental human rights, which would have included members of an LGBTI organisation.

In September, Válasz Online [reported](#) that high-ranking members of the ruling Fidesz party are aware of video and photo recordings showing Gergő Bese, a Catholic priest with close ties to the Orbán government, attending LGBTI parties, despite his public opposition to "LGBTI propaganda." In an attempt to sever ties between Bese and the Orbán government, all the pictures that featured the priest were [removed](#) from governmental social media pages.

## IRELAND

In Ireland's recent general election, eight LGBTI TDs (Members of Parliament) were elected to the Dáil, marking the highest number of LGBTI representatives in the country's history.

In October, far-right agitators in Ireland were [reported](#) to be planning a campaign to gather LGBTI books from libraries across the country and burn them, as indicated in posts shared on Facebook. The individuals involved are believed to be the same group that previously targeted libraries, harassing staff and threatening to destroy LGBTI literature.

In November, 18 LGBTI organisations in Ireland [launched](#) a manifesto urging election candidates to commit to LGBTI rights. Key priorities included strengthening rights, investing in health, and tackling hate speech. In [response](#), political parties like Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Sinn Féin, and the Green Party expressed varying levels of support, with commitments on healthcare, anti-bullying, and trans rights.

A Presbyterian minister in Dublin, [resigned](#) after facing multiple disciplinary actions linked to her support for the LGBTI community. She had previously been censured in 2021 for allowing

a same-sex married man to serve as a council member. In 2023, she participated in a religious service with LGBTI Christians for RTÉ's Pride coverage, leading to further complaints and a formal rebuke from the church.

## ITALY

In November, the headquarters of the Mario Mieli Homosexual Culture Circle in Rome were [vandalised](#) with homophobic graffiti on its rainbow-coloured ramp. Lara Ghiglione, secretary of the CGIL, [expressed](#) dismay, stating that the attack confirmed once more the hostile climate in the country for LGBTI people.

In December, an [LGBT+ Jubilee](#) event organised by La Tenda di Gionata was removed from the Vatican's official website without explanation. A Vatican official later clarified that its prior inclusion did not imply official support from the Holy See.

## KAZAKHSTAN

In April, various LGBTI initiatives, including the Education Community, LBkeshter and Amirovki, ran a [crowdfunding campaign](#) to support victims of April floodings in Kazakhstan to improve intersectional collaboration and positive coverage of LGBTI community.

## LUXEMBOURG

In January, Rosa Lëtzebuerg's Rainbow Centre published the first issue of the Queer.Lu print and online magazine with a launch event. The magazine is intended to be a platform for the LGBTI community in Luxembourg to discuss activities, opinions and ideas. With the support of the Ministry for Equality and Diversity, the magazine is published quarterly and is available free of charge.

The national LGBTIQ+ action plan is currently being revised by the Ministry of Equality and Diversity (MEGA), with a strong focus on collaboration with civil society actors. MEGA has involved LGBTI associations across the country through working groups, ensuring diverse perspectives are included in the process.

## MALTA

The 2024 [Malta Pride Week](#) took place from September 6 to 15, commemorating 20 years since the country's first Pride celebration. The theme for this year, #20YearsofPride, highlighted not only the celebration of diversity but also the continued fight for LGBTI rights and visibility.

## MOLDOVA

Frolov criticised statements by MP Marina Tauber and Gagauz Autonomy governor Evghenia Guțul, who, during a visit to Moscow, claimed European integration would undermine Moldova's national identity and impose LGBTI values on the country.

During a visit to Moscow in September, Moldovan politicians Marina Tauber and Evghenia Guțul met with Russian officials, including Maria Zakharova and Olga Skabeeva. Tauber stated that European integration would destroy Moldova's national identity and impose LGBT values, sentiments echoed by Guțul.

In October, two false bomb alerts targeted an LGBTI festival in Chișinău. The festival's disruption came just days before key elections in which Moldova's pro-EU President Maia Sandu sought re-election.

## NORWAY

Alex Ramstad Døsvik was ordained as the first non-binary priest in Norway.

In June, the Riddu Ridđu Festival organised the first-ever Indigenous drag show, which brought together four indigenous drag artists from around the globe.

## POLAND

The "Iron Man" exhibition, organised by the Mieszkanie Gepperta Gallery under the Art Transparent Contemporary Art Foundation, was cancelled after receiving backlash for its explicit nature.

In May, TVP3 Poznań launched "Talks of the Day," an educational program aiming to educate viewers and dispel myths and prejudices about LGBTI individuals.

In October, the District Court in Warsaw acquitted the leaders of the Women's Strike—Marta Lempart, Klementyna Suchanow, and Agnieszka Czerederecka-Fabin—of charges related to organising the Black Protests following the Constitutional Tribunal's ruling. This decision marks a significant legal victory for the activists, who had faced charges for their involvement in the large-scale demonstrations.

## ROMANIA

This year marked significant milestones for LGBTI representation, with Nicu Ștefănuță, a pro-LGBTI advocate, elected to the European Parliament on an inclusive platform. Additionally, Romania now had its first openly LGBTI candidate, Florin Buhuceanu, running in the December parliamentary elections.

Two LGBTI new community centres opened in Romania this year, leading to a total of four such centres in the country.

Ahead of the 2024 Romanian Presidential Elections, the Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) distributed to relevant election bodies Guidelines for Interaction with Trans Persons, developed and provided by ACCEPT Association. No major issues were reported by trans voters.

Cases of systemic discrimination on the basis of HIV infections have been reported to ACCEPT, especially in the context of employment in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in the army.

The Romanian queer film 'Trei Kilometri Până la Capătul Lumii' gained international recognition by winning the Queer Palm at Cannes 2024.

In December, ACCEPT Association filed complaints against AUR and PSD for using discriminatory campaign materials targeting the LGBTI community during the parliamentary elections.

## RUSSIA

In August, the Russian Computer Sports Federation announced its decision to discontinue holding League of Legends tournaments, citing the presence of LGBTI characters in the video game.

In April 2024, a complaint was filed demanding the expulsion of volleyball player Ebrar Karakurt from the Russian Lokomotiv team due to her being openly lesbian.

## SLOVAKIA

In 2024, projects related to LGBTI rights were excluded from the evaluation of grant schemes at the Slovak Ministries of Culture and Justice, despite receiving scores that would typically qualify them for support.

In January, Culture Minister Martina Šimkovičová announced plans to cut funding for Pride events and LGBTI educational programmes. In a Facebook statement the Minister expressed her intention to halt what she described as the exploitation of department funds. In January, the director of the Kunsthalle Bratislava art gallery resigned following the Culture Ministry's decision to halt funding for the institution's 2024 artistic and educational programmes. The organisation expressed alarm on social media, questioning the ministry's commitment to the independence and freedom of cultural institutions.

In July, Slovakia's Foreign Ministry abruptly removed gay diplomat Metod Špaček from his position as permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, in a move that is deemed political.

In September, in response to actions by the Ministry of Culture led by Martina Šimkovičová (See more under Freedom of Expression), hundreds of cultural organisations, including theaters and galleries, threatened to go on strike. Their discontent stems from the Ministry's moves against cultural institutions, including dismissals of management at prominent organisations, and its criticism of liberal art and LGBTI educational initiatives. In response to these actions, the Culture Strike initiative, which represents over 340 organisations, and raised alarms and warned

that a full strike may follow if their concerns aren't addressed.

In October, Zuzana Ľapáková, the new director of the Slovak National Theatre (SND), canceled a scheduled performance of Moonstone by Prague's Studio of Heroes, which was set to be part of the Drama Queer festival. Ľapáková's decision was seen as discriminatory by festival organizers, who accused her of censorship.

## SLOVENIA

At the Museum of contemporary history and in the Museum of the city of Ljubljana, two exhibitions were set up in honour of the 40th anniversary of the creation of the LGBTI movement in Slovenia.

## SPAIN

In September, the Trans Platform Federation submitted a proposal for a Trans Memory Law to the parliamentary groups of the Congress of Deputies. The proposal includes provisions for a pension of an "identical amount" to that of social security for pensioners over 65 years of age who do not have family dependents. The Federation emphasised that this initiative aims to be a collective effort supported by all political parties committed to advancing the rights of the LGBTI community. However, at the time of writing, it is unclear whether the proposal has been officially considered or rejected by political parties.

## SWEDEN

In May IKEA announced that, for the sixth consecutive year, it would donate proceeds from the sale of its rainbow bag to support LGBTI causes, among which is RSFL's Newcomers initiative, which provides support to LGBTI refugees.

In September, the approval of the Swedish government's new budget lacked additional funding for LGBTI initiatives in the coming year and proposed a reduction in aid from 2026. While the government has introduced a new LGBTI action plan running until 2027, additional funding for this plan will only be provided in 2027, leaving LGBTI initiatives underfunded in the meantime.

## SWITZERLAND

In October, it was announced that starting in 2026, the city of Bern will implement a FINTA (Women, Intersex, Non-binary, and Trans People) quota for leadership positions in the city parliament, replacing the current women's quota. This change was proposed by the Young Socialists. While the legal framework for the new quota is still being developed, the initiative marks a significant step towards more inclusive representation in local government.

## TURKEY

Turkey's Culture and Tourism Ministry has withdrawn support from the Istanbul Film Festival after pro-government media and social media users started criticising sponsors for featuring LGBTI themed movies.

Reacting to LGBTI films being featured on the Medyascope website, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) President Ebubekir Şahin asserted that he would continue fighting "against productions that contradict beliefs, culture, customs, and traditions".

## TURKMENISTAN

In July, Radio Azatlyk released the documentary "Invisible Rainbow of Turkmenistan," spotlighting the activism of David Omarov, the first openly gay advocate for LGBTI rights in Turkmenistan.

## UKRAINE

In October, Kyiv's bookstore Collection started receiving threats following the announcement of a presentation for the photo book "Fragile As Glass," which shares the stories of queer Ukrainians. The bookstore's founder, Natalka Kuzmenko, revealed the threats via a Facebook post, explaining that several Telegram channels encouraged people to target the bookstore for promoting "perverse" views.

In November, the Readeat bookstore, in partnership with Pydyvanstvo, planned an event titled Queer-bate: Lessons of Tolerance in Ukrainian Culture, but had to cancel it after receiving threats hours before. Dmitry Feliksov, Readeat's founder, explained that ensuring security for the two-story venue became unfeasible after the publisher notified them of the threats.

## UNITED KINGDOM

In May, the Scottish Greens expelled 13 activists for signing a declaration advocating for sex-based rights and expressing concern over the suppression of gender-critical views. The Greens argued that these members posed a risk to the "safety of all trans and non-binary members" and pointed to a 2018 rule excluding "trans-exclusionary" individuals from membership.

## UZBEKISTAN

From November, in Uzbekistan, all films, TV series, cartoons, and musical works—both domestic and international—will undergo a "spiritual examination" before being aired. This was announced by Otabek Khasanov, head of the Centre for Spirituality and Enlightenment. The expert group will assess whether content aligns with state policies, national and universal values, and moral criteria, with particular focus on scenes promoting immorality or obscenity that could negatively influence personal qualities.