

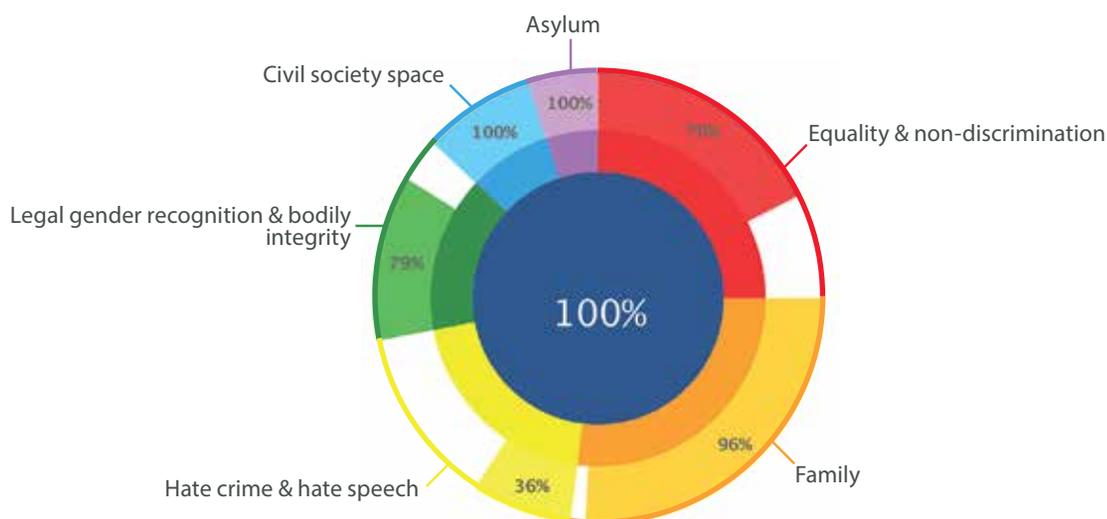
# Norway



Building on the work of an expert group and consultations carried out in 2015, Norway updated its legal gender recognition framework. The law, passed in June, was based on the principle of self-determination, without the need for sterilisation or medical diagnosis. Norway is the fourth country in Europe to opt for a self-determination model, a promising indication that an increasing number of European governments recognise the bodily autonomy of trans people. The government's LGBTI action plan's new reference to sex characteristics was another hopeful development (although some NGOs were disappointed at the lack of specific actions set out in the actual action plan). The words of King Harald, speaking about the value of diversity and how LGBTI people are part of the fabric of Norwegian life, were a welcome gift in a year where populist statements had a tendency to grab headlines across Europe.

For more information on developments in 2016, visit [www.rainbow-europe.org](http://www.rainbow-europe.org) where you can read the full country chapter.

# Legal and policy situation in **Norway** as of 31 December 2016



In order to improve the legal and policy situation of LGBTI people, ILGA-Europe recommend:

- ➔ Prohibiting medical intervention on intersex minors when the intervention has no medical necessity and can be avoided or postponed until the person can provide informed consent.
- ➔ Including express mentions of all SOGISC (sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics) grounds in laws designed to tackle hate crime.
- ➔ Updating the existing legal framework for legal gender recognition, to ensure the process is not limited to a binary understanding of gender (eg: allowing for recognition beyond strictly male/female gender identities).

## Asylum

- LGBTI NGO FRI (The Norwegian Organisation for Sexual and Gender Diversity) expressed concern, during meetings with politicians in 2016, over the treatment of LGBTI asylum seekers. Specifically, the NGO highlighted the fact that there are no regulations or policies to make conditions at reception centres safer for LGBTI asylum seekers. The NGO also queried why there is no automatic right for LGBTI asylum seekers to have their case tried in person before the immigration appeals board.

## Bias-motivated speech

- A neo-Nazi group (which has branches in other Nordic countries as well) regularly spoke out against LGBTI equality during 2016. The group used social media, websites, posters and leaflets (distributed in towns and cities throughout Norway) to target what they referred to as the 'gay lobby'. The group also announced their intention to demonstrate at Pride parades in Norway in 2017.

## Bias-motivated violence

- Two young people were the victims of an unprovoked attack on 20 March in Oslo city centre. On 9 December, three men were convicted of assault. The Oslo District Court found that the violent crime was motivated by the victims' sexual orientation. Each of the three attackers was sentenced to 120 days imprisonment.

## Diversity

- In a speech at the Palace Park on 1 September, King Harald spoke about diversity in Norway, saying "... Norwegians are single, divorced, families with children, and old married couples. Norwegians are girls who love girls, boys who love boys, and girls and boys who love each other. Norwegians believe in God, Allah, the Universe and nothing... In other words: Norway is you. Norway is us."

## Equality and non-discrimination

- An LGBTI action plan was published by the government on 21 June, covering sexual orientation, gender identity and (in a new addition) sex characteristics. The plan lists aims in 40 different areas of life, including

hate crime/speech, young people and LGBTI people in vulnerable groups, such as refugees. Some LGBTI activists were disappointed that the plan was not more goal-orientated, and pointed out that it did not commit the authorities to take specific actions.

## Family

- The Lutheran Church of Norway voted in favour of carrying out marriage ceremonies between same-sex couples. In a vote on 11 April, 88 delegates out of 115 at the Church's annual conference approved the proposal. Same-sex couples are now entitled to be married in their local church; church officials have a right to refuse to officiate.
- Later in April, the Norwegian Catholic Church announced it was asking for Vatican permission to stop conducting civil weddings. Oslo bishop Bernt Eidsvig said that "...it's clear we must distinguish our own Church marriages from others". Eidsvig also commented on the Lutheran Church vote: "My own reaction is one of sorrow and disappointment, and we can't foresee the longer-term consequences for inter-church contacts here".

## Foreign policy

- On 13 July, during the Montevideo Global LGBTI Human Rights Conference, Norway, together with 30 other states, joined the Equal Rights Coalition, a coalition committed to work towards equal rights and the eradication of discrimination and violence against LGBTI people.

## Legal gender recognition

- In January, the Ministry of Health was continuing work on a draft law on legal gender recognition, following consultation in 2015. The draft law was published by the health ministry on 18 March and proposed a legal gender recognition procedure based on self-determination. On 17 June, the parliament voted in favour of the bill by 79 votes to 13. No sterilisation, diagnosis or medical treatments are required, and the procedure is open to all over 16 years of age. Children aged 6 to 16 can have their gender legally recognised with the permission of one or both parents. The law entered into force on 1 July 2016. Norway is the fourth European country to introduce self-determination measures for legal gender recognition.