

Table of Contents

- ***Does hope or fear prevail among Europe's LGBTI people?***
- ***ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map points to make-or-break moment for LGBTI rights in Europe***
- ***Over 100 European NGOs endorse a statement calling for emergency support to sex workers amid the COVID-19 crisis***
- ***Annual review of the situation of LGBTI people paints a picture at odds with widespread notion that in Europe the work is done***

Does hope or fear prevail among Europe's LGBTI people?

FRA (14.05.2020) - <https://bit.ly/36ee9l6> - More lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people are now open about who they are but fear, violence and discrimination remain high, show the results of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's survey on experiences of LGBTI people in Europe. With 140,000 respondents, it is the largest ever survey on hate crime and discrimination against LGBTI people. The findings should drive policy measures to further protect and promote the rights of LGBTI people.

"Too many LGBTI people continue to live in the shadows, afraid of being ridiculed, discriminated or even attacked. Even though some countries have advanced LGBTI equality, our survey findings show that overall there has been too little real progress, leaving many LGBTI people vulnerable. Their job and healthcare difficulties may worsen due to COVID-19. Policymakers should take note and do more to actively promote full respect for rights of LGBTI people," says FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty.

European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli added: "Despite the important steps forward regarding the equality of LGBTI+ people in the EU in the last years, LGBTI+ people still report high levels of discrimination. More worryingly, we have recently witnessed within the EU anti-LGBTI incidents such as attacks on prides, the adoption of 'LGBTI ideology-free zone' declarations, fines for LGBTI-friendly advertisements and others. Everybody in the European Union should feel safe and free to be themselves."

The '[A long way to go for LGBTI equality](#)' report looks at how around 140,000 LGBTI people in the European Union, the United Kingdom, Serbia and North Macedonia experience their human rights. It also underlines changes since FRA's first LGBT survey carried out in 2012.

Comparing the two surveys reveals little overall progress over the seven years. The EU averages mask important differences between countries. In some, over 70% LGBTI respondent say society is more tolerant, while in others, up to 68% say it is less.

Key survey findings include:

- **Openness:** 6 in 10 avoid holding hands in public with their partners.
- **Harassment:** 2 in 5 respondents say they were harassed the year before the survey.
- **Attacks:** 1 in 5 trans and intersex people were physically or sexually attacked, double that of other LGBTI groups.

- **Discrimination:** 1 in 5 feel discriminated against at work and over 1 in 3 feel discriminated against when going out to eat, drink or being social.
- **Schooling:** 1 in 2 LGBTI students say someone among their peers or teachers supported LGBTI people.
- **Economic situation:** 1 in 3 LGBTI people say they have difficulties to make ends meet. The situation is worse for intersex and trans people (about 1 in 2).

This evidence will support the European Commission's LGBTI Equality Strategy due this year. FRA calls on the EU and its Member States to put in place measures protecting the rights of LGBTI people, including:

- **Hate crime** – build a culture of zero tolerance towards violence and harassment of the LGBTI community so that LGBTI people can enjoy their right to move freely and without fear. Invest in training to ensure that police can recognise, record and properly investigate hate crimes against LGBTI people so that victims feel safe to report attacks and are treated equally.
- **Reporting** – make it easier for victims to report crimes and discrimination through online reporting tools, community liaison and police training. Adequately resource equality bodies so they can effectively support victims of discrimination.
- **Discrimination** - adopt the Equal Treatment Directive to extend protection against discrimination beyond employment. Realise comprehensive national actions plans to promote respect for rights of LGBTI people across all areas of life.
- **Schooling** - create safe and supportive environment for young LGBTI people at school. Help schools and teachers to share experiences, counter bullying of LGBTI students and ensure educational materials do not equate being LGBTI with having a disease.
- **Lead by example** - everyone can play their part so that equality becomes a reality.

This survey covers the EU 27 Member States, the UK, Serbia and North Macedonia. For the first time, it includes experiences of intersex people and young LGBTI people aged 15 to 17.

Together with the main survey results, FRA publishes an extensive [online data explorer](#), which allows to filter data by country, by survey question and by L, G, B, T or I group.

In [our video](#) LGBTI people tell us about their lives - in their own words.

More information

For more information, please see the [press pack](#) or contact media@fra.europa.eu (link sends e-mail) / Tel.: +43 1 580 30 653

ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map points to make-or-break moment for LGBTI rights in Europe

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, the annual ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map shows we have come to a pivotal moment for LGBTI people's human rights in the region.

ILGA-Europe (14.05.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3g5m4Fx> - Published today, May 14, 2020, the ILGA-Europe [Rainbow Map and Index](#) reveals that once-leading countries in Europe are falling behind in their commitments to equality for LGBTI people. Combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affects the most vulnerable and is being used by some governments as an excuse to advance their agendas to curtail human rights, the Map's findings identify a make-or-break moment for LGBTI equality in Europe.

Key findings of the Rainbow Map 2020 include:

- There has been no positive change in 49% of countries
- For the second year in a row, countries are moving backwards on the Rainbow Index, as existing protections are disappearing
- Trans rights are where most of the current movement in terms of LGBTI equality is happening, for better or worse.
- Other forward movement, although on a smaller scale, is in the inclusion of equality measures protecting intersex people against discrimination
- Regression is most visible where civil and political rights are eroded: LGBTI human rights defenders increasingly at risk, authorities taking active measures to undermine civil society associations, and attempts to ban public events

According to Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, Evelyne Paradis: "This is a critical time for LGBTI equality in Europe. With each year passing, more and more countries, including champions of LGBTI equality, continue to fall behind in their commitments to equality for LGBTI people, while more governments take active measures to target LGBTI communities. History shows that those who are vulnerable before a crisis only become more vulnerable after a crisis, so we have every reason to worry that political complacency, increased repression and socio-economic hardship will create a perfect storm for many LGBTI people in Europe in the next few years."

"Our call to put high political priority on LGBTI equality has never been more pressing. The results of this year's Rainbow Map show that equality measures are falling through the cracks in several countries, not because of lack of political and public support but because of widespread complacency about the need for LGBTI equality measures. Fewer and fewer decision-makers are picking up the mantle to see important pieces of legislation through and keep political momentum, so processes are stalling or not being followed up. There are reasons to be extremely worried that this situation will spread as political attention is immersed in the economic fall-out of COVID-19."

Amidst overall stagnation and regression, advances continue to be made on trans and intersex rights. Indeed, most of the positive changes reported this year take place in countries which included gender identity and sex characteristics in equality laws (as was the case in Andorra, Belgium, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, and Switzerland) and adopted new legal gender recognition (LGR) legislation which respects the principle of self-determination (Iceland) and gives minors access to LGR (Spain). However, in an increasing number of countries, LGR legislative measures are being stalled (Albania, Cyprus, Finland and Sweden), including in the context of a hostile climate on trans rights fuelled by opposition groups, as was the case in the UK. A number of countries are also losing points this year (namely Hungary, Azerbaijan, Serbia, and the UK) because existing administrative and legal procedures that allow for name or gender marker change in official documents for trans people are not effective in practice.

According to Viima Lampinen, Co-chair of the ILGA-Europe Executive Board: "The news that more governments are adopting laws that protect trans, intersex and non-binary people must be read with extreme caution. Targeted attacks on trans rights by opposition groups have been observed in an increasing number of countries across the region, especially transphobic speech fuelled online. The safety and wellbeing of trans communities in Europe remains precarious and only made more fragile by governments' responses to the current pandemic, which is affecting these communities particularly hard. Trans, intersex and non-binary people need governments to stand strong as vocal allies, taking all necessary steps to secure their rights in law and in practice, and taking their needs into consideration in their COVID-19 responses."

The 11th ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map is published at an unprecedented time in the world, during which vulnerable minorities, including LGBTI people, are particularly affected and the inequalities in our societies have been starkly brought into focus. Along with this, a number of European governments have used the pandemic as an excuse to make aggressive moves against LGBTI and other human rights. This is happening at a time when countries like Poland (dropping to the bottom of the EU ranking) and Turkey are going backwards on the Rainbow Index for having failed to uphold such fundamental freedoms as freedom of assembly, freedom of association and protection of human rights defenders.

Says Darienne Flemington, Co-chair of the ILGA-Europe Executive Board: "Countries like Hungary, Poland, Turkey have been in the spotlight because of their policies targeting LGBTI communities prior to the pandemic. The proposed ban of legal gender recognition in Hungary, proposed laws to ban abortion and sex education in Poland, scapegoating of LGBTI people as the source of the coronavirus by Turkey's political leaders – these are all alarming signals of how governments with strong authoritarian tendencies are emboldened by the crisis to further limit the rights of vulnerable groups and minorities. If there was ever a time for European governments and institutions to stand firm on the rule of law and human rights, it is now."

Evelyne Paradis concludes: "Amidst the public health emergency and economic turmoil we are facing, there is a crisis of structural inequality unfolding as well, one that makes the many vulnerable people in our societies even more at risk. In the current climate, it is only more evident that laws and policies are often the last lines of defence for LGBTI communities as other marginalised groups. That's why it's never been more important that governments enshrine the protection of LGBTI people into law and take concrete measures to make sure that they can live as who they are in societies that are just, equal and fair."

Executive summary

Rainbow Europe – ILGA-Europe's annual benchmarking tool – is comprised of the Rainbow Map and Index and national recommendations. ILGA-Europe have produced the Rainbow Map and Index since 2009, using it to illustrate the legal and policy situation of LGBTI people in Europe.

The Rainbow Map and Index ranks 49 European countries on their respective legal and policy practices for LGBTI people, from 0-100%.

In order to create our country ranking, ILGA-Europe examine the laws and policies in 49 countries using a set of 69 criteria – divided between six thematic categories: equality and non-discrimination; family; hate crime and hate speech; legal gender recognition and bodily integrity; civil society space; and asylum. More information on the list of criteria and their weight on the total score can be found at www.rainbow-europe.org/about

Rainbow Europe 2020 individual criteria and the percentage 'weight' assigned to them remain exactly the same as the 2019 version, meaning that it is easier than ever before to compare a country's momentum or regression on LGBTI equality laws.

Policymakers, researchers and journalists are able to go 'behind' the points and see the original information sources that we base our Map and Index ranking on. This additional layer of information is available through our updated Rainbow Europe web module, www.rainbow-europe.org.

The Rainbow Map and Index presents a picture of what the policy landscape is like right now, while our country-specific recommendations attempt to answer the question "what's next?" These recommendations for national policymakers are intended to encourage policymakers to address the most pressing legal and policy priorities within the framework

of our Rainbow Map and Index. The recommendations were gathered following an online consultation with a wide range of LGBTI organisations in the various countries. As a result, the recommendations are tailored to the needs of activists working on the ground.

Over 100 European NGOs endorse a statement calling for emergency support to sex workers amid the COVID-19 crisis

Sex workers are at a disadvantage during the pandemic as the nature of their work has prevented many from receiving government aid.

By Rebecca Kelly

Gay Community News (28.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3dddWAB> - The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) is a sex worker led network which represents 104 organisations led by or working with sex workers in 33 countries in Europe and Central Asia.

As well as this, the ICRSE includes 150 individuals from many different careers such as sex workers, academics, trade unionists, human rights advocates, and women's rights and LGBT+ rights activists.

The ICRSE who fight for the rights and support of sex workers are now pushing for European governments to include sex workers in COVID-19 financial and social aid that other citizens are receiving.

Due to the criminalised and stigmatised nature of their work, many sex workers work informally and many have been excluded from government aid amid the global pandemic.

In attempts to alleviate some of the strain on sex workers during the COVID-19 outbreak, sex worker organisations have been very proactive in providing support for their community by distributing food parcels, providing money to cover accommodation and other basic necessities, while continuing to offer emotional and administrative support to each other and formulating their common demands to policymakers across borders.

Co-convenor of ICRSE and Secretary of the Spanish sex workers' union OTRAS, Sabrina Sanchez explained how vulnerable sex workers are during the coronavirus as they are not being given adequate support by their governments.

"Like every member of society, sex workers want to contribute to ending this pandemic. However, unable to work and without economic support from the state, how are we meant to survive? The situation is critical. The EU and Member States must include sex workers in the emergency measures and long term recovery plans. Ignoring us and our demands must end now," she explained.

While Kate McGrew, also co-convenor of ICRSE and Director of Sex Workers Alliance Ireland noted that the sex worker community in Ireland: "has been facing an increased level of surveillance, exploitation and violence since the introduction of the abolitionist Swedish model, the criminalisation of clients in 2017."

She continued to say that the current crisis is only highlighting the risk associated with the criminalisation of sex and "without state protection and labour rights, the most precarious sex workers face the hard choice between abiding the confinement rules by not working and selling sex to feed themselves and their families".

The ICRSE warns that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will increase the number of women and LGBT+ people selling sexual services to compensate for income loss and reimburse debts accrued during the crisis, as a similar spike was observed after the 2008 recession.

The organisation is calling on European institutions and states to implement evidence and rights-based policies, as the outcome of government bodies continually ignoring the needs of their most marginalized and vulnerable citizens could be detrimental to public health.

Annual review of the situation of LGBTI people paints a picture at odds with widespread notion that in Europe the work is done

Amid rising hate speech and crime, vulnerable people across Europe find themselves disconnected from the popular story of the region's success in securing LGBTI rights, major human rights review finds.

ILGA-Europe (03.02.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2v5g7FJ> - Launched on the 4 February 2020, the 10th edition of [ILGA-Europe's Annual Review](#) details the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people across the 49 European countries, and the five countries of Central Asia. Created with LGBTI activists and experts on the ground, the Review also identifies trends, both current and on the rise.

This year's review, which charts developments during the 12 months of 2019, paints a complex picture that diverges from the widespread narrative that all is well for LGBTI people in large parts of Europe. Central to this is a sharp rise in anti-LGBTI hate speech carried out by public figures across Europe - in countries ranging from Bulgaria, Poland and Turkey, to Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Portugal and Spain - and the very real consequences of this for LGBTI individuals and groups. In many countries across the European and Central Asian regions, and not only those with a documented growth in official bias-motivated speech, there has also been an equally sharp increase in online hate-speech and physical attacks on LGBTI people, many of the latter premeditated and brutal.

The review identifies that this is a pan-European phenomenon, from the UK where the populist narrative surrounding Brexit can be linked to an increase in anti-LGBTI hate crimes and incidents, to the banning of events in many towns and cities on the continent, the prosecution of participants in Pride marches in Turkey, and a growing presence of anti-LGBTI and neo-Nazi protesters in public spaces during LGBTI events across the region.

Alongside the rise in hatred, there is increased movement of people from within the region to countries perceived as less harsh. More LGBTI people left countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan for neighbouring countries where the situation might be perceived as relatively safer. There is also an anecdotal rise in people saying they want to leave countries like Poland for other EU countries.

Reported obstacles in access to healthcare, bullying in schools and the workplace, and LGBTI people being denied services, often with a lack of governmental intervention, all play a part in the overall picture of a Europe where lived experiences for a large part do not match up with the surface message that LGBTI rights and equality have been fully secured.

According to Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe:

“It is not all bad news. The issue of bodily integrity for intersex people continues to gain more prominence on the political agenda of governments and institutions. 2019 was a year of positive developments for rainbow families in the region, with an expansion of family rights in a few countries; and important advancements continue to be made on reforming or establishing legal gender recognition procedures, even if in many countries progress is slowing down.

“However, the lived reality of LGBTI people in many parts of Europe and Central Asia is increasingly difficult and for a large part remains invisible, even to organisations like ILGA-Europe. Action is needed. Governments still have so much to do, from adopting laws that guarantee the protection of people's rights and giving public authorities the means to translate policy into practice across sectors, to leading by example in having a discourse promoting social acceptance and inclusion.

“By making people aware of such a broad and nuanced picture, which is constantly shifting and evolving, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review aims to give a sense of the enormity of issues and areas that affect the lives of people, which will continue to require attention, especially in a context where LGBTI people are being targeted and vulnerability is heightened.”
