

IRELAND

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In January, a Dublin bus service was fined 7500 euro for repeatedly abusing a passenger with homophobic slurs.

The postal service launched LGBTQI-themed stamps for Pride month.

ASYLUM

Minister for Equality, Roderic O’Gorman announced in June that his Department would develop a policy to make Direct Provision housing safer. For instance, safe accommodation for trans people will be put in place.

In January, a bisexual man from Nigeria was denied refugee status and faced deportation after the Minister for Justice questioned his claim, saying it was unrealistic that a man would have a same-sex partner if that was illegal in his home country. The High Court did not accept the man’s appeal for procedural reasons, but took issue with the Minister’s arguments and so did CSOs. In the same month, a lesbian asylum seeker who fled death threats in Zimbabwe was also denied status.

In October, 26 LGBTI+ refugees were welcomed to Ireland from Afghanistan and are supported by LGBTI+ individuals and organisations.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several rainbow flags and LGBTQI hubs were vandalised, including in Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Waterford, and other towns. The Minister for Equality condemned the attacks.

In April, leading trans activist was notified by the Gardaí of a treat to their life by far right aggressors.

In September, a non-binary person was physically and verbally assaulted in Galway, a week after Pride events.

In October, a man who violently assaulted a prominent LGBTQI activist in Dublin was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

Ireland is set to increase sentences for racist and anti-LGBT hate crimes - a draft legislation is expected for 2022.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The new QUASA group started public discussion over sexual assault in queer spaces.

Civil society continued campaigning for an all-island prohibition of conversion therapy and set up the Anti Conversion Therapy Coalition. The new government prepared a scoping paper and launched a public consultation, which CSOs fear will cause further delay.

Dublin City University hosted Ireland’s first international, interdisciplinary conference on intersex issues.

DATA COLLECTION

In May, the Department of Equality launched ‘LGBTI+ Youth in Ireland and across Europe’, highlighting research gaps related to LGBTI+ youth.

EDUCATION

In March, Ireland announced a new LGBTI+ Youth Leadership Programme for young people between 15 and 24.

This year an additional two schools (total: 20) worked with BeLonG To, to create a safe space for LGBTI+ students in Ireland’s first Safe & Supportive Schools Project.

The Irish National Teachers’ Organisation’s (INTO) annual congress heard that thousands of teachers still fear disclosing their sexual orientation at work.

In April, the Catholic Church published its ‘Flourish’ sex education guide, which fails to educate on LGBTQI relationships and endorses heterosexual marriage only. Following criticism from civil society, parents, and others, the government re-stated its commitment to inclusive sex education, through legislation if necessary.

In November, homophobic relationship and sexuality teaching materials were removed from the Department of Education’s website. The resources asked students to debate statements including “all gays molest children” and “all gays are HIV positive”.

EMPLOYMENT

Sex worker activists spoke about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives, including a loss of income, a lack of access to unemployment benefits, and critiqued Ireland’s flawed quasi-legalisation on sex work.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Several gay men were arrested by undercover police



officers, when cruising in public bathrooms, in what resembles homophobic persecution from decades ago.

The Department of Justice established a working group consisting of representatives from the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), the Office of the Attorney General and three individuals from the LGBTI+ community, to exonerate men prosecuted when ‘homosexuality’ was still criminalised.

FAMILY

The Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2021 passed through all stages of parliament, granting male same-sex couples adoptive leave. Previously, only mothers or single fathers could take this leave.

In March, for the first time, a female same-sex couple were both recognised as ‘parents’ on their twins’ birth certificates. In December, the High Court found that a child born out of surrogacy to a same-sex couple, where one parent is a citizen, has the right to citizenship.

After delays, the Irish special rapporteur on child protection published his report on the 2015 Children and Family Relationships Act and its gaps, with recommendations on parenthood recognition and surrogacy. On 12 April, civil society launched a petition urging the government to adopt all the recommendations.

FOREIGN POLICY

Ireland has stood firmly against Hungary’s new propaganda law.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The Our Lady of the Assumption Church received backlash after raising the rainbow flag. Locals held a vigil to show solidarity with the Church.

HEALTH

BeLonG To’s national survey found that 97% of LGBTI+ young people had struggled with anxiety, stress, or depression since the COVID-19 pandemic started - the worst figure in the past 10 years. BeLonG To’s annual report highlighted a 113% increase in their support service reach, totaling 1,540 individuals in 2020 compared to 717 in 2019.

Pride events were held online again. BeLonG To, Youth Work Ireland, and Foróige youth services, as part of the #BringingPrideHome campaign, prepared 1,000 self-care packs.

In March, Crumlin Children’s Hospital announcement, responding to the UK’s Tavistock case, that it would continue providing hormone blockers to trans youth. Trans youth still must wait for two-to-three years for an appointment. TENI and BeLonG To, testified in June at the Oireachtas Subcommittee on mental health hearing, warning of the lack of accessible trans healthcare, particularly since Tavistock. In April, the Irish Health Service (HSE) announced plans to hire additional staff, which did not happen by the end of the year. There remains no clinic to which young trans people could be referred - the Child and Adolescent service remains closed, with ongoing negotiations to reopen. Waiting lists for adult trans healthcare have increased to an estimated 800+, which means five or six years of waiting.

In December, CSOs welcomed the announcement that the 12-month deferral period on blood donations for men who have sex with men is to be phased out in 2022, after the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) announced it would import blood reserves from the UK to remedy its own blood shortage.

A new clinic was opened in Dublin this year for people living with HIV who are 65 and older and a new program was launched to improve Alzheimer support services for older LGBTQ+ people.

HOUSING

Sexual assault and family rejection were identified as some of the key reasons why young people end up being homeless in Ireland, in the ‘Empowerment to Rights’ report.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

LGBTIQ and sex worker organisations were among Ireland’s Equality Fund recipients this year.

In June, the Department of Equality announced the 2021 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call, making a total of 700,000 euro available for LGBT+ groups.



LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In November, the Gender Recognition Act was amended to simplify the process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate, removing several administrative and financial barriers.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

On the occasion of Pride month, the National LGBT Federation held a series of interviews with the three parties who form the government coalition, focusing on LGBTQI rights issues.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The government announced a list of almost 50 legislative priorities, including on assisted reproduction.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

LGBT Ireland launched a Telefriending service for older LGBTQ+ people aged 50 and over, to address loneliness and isolation.



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