



SWEDEN

ASYLUM

New asylum regulations were adopted in June, despite civil society's concerns on the changes over the past months. The law makes temporary residence permits the default for refugees and makes it significantly more difficult for anyone to acquire permanent residence in the country. Sweden has made its migration policies stricter in general, sparking concern among non-EU citizens this year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

A study on the National Partisan Movement, a new international hate group that emerged in 2020, found that two out of three of its leaders are Swedish youth.

The 2020 national hate crime statistics report found that the police documented 471 anti-LGBTI hate crimes last year.

BODILY INTEGRITY

RFSL published the anthology "Us too" ("Vi också"), including testimonies of sexual abuse among LGBTQI people.

In July, a staff member of RFSL Stockholm was convicted of rape and sexual assault against a number of asylum seekers who turned to the organisation for support. The perpetrator was sentenced to three years and four months in prison. The case received a lot of public attention, including internationally. RFSL has responded by introducing new guidelines and training within the organisation. RFSL Stockholm is said to have received internal reports before the cases were reported to the police.

EDUCATION

RFSU and RFSL's sex ed guide for trans people was found in a middle school in Umeå and sparked harsh debate. RFSU affirmed that the guide was not aimed at middle school students and offered other materials that are age appropriate.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January the government presented its LGBTQI Action Plan for 2020-2023, which includes measures to address discrimination against intersex people and to respond to suicide rates. Civil society expressed concern about the

lack of clear prioritisation of the legal gender recognition law reform and improvements on asylum.

FAMILY

In June, the parliament voted on a new law, which will make the presumption of parenthood automatic for all couples who are married and have a child in Sweden, regardless of gender. The law takes effect on January 1, 2022. This is a huge step forward and will stop the current discrimination of trans men who become parents in Sweden.

Sweden still differentiates between same-sex and different-sex couples when it comes to parenthood recognition to a child born and registered abroad. An investigation has suggested a new law that would change this for the better if it is adopted. In April, RFSL filed a case to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of UK-Swedish lesbian couple, who have struggled to have their parenthood recognised for years.

The government commissioned a study this year as part of the investigation into the Family Act to address the situation of children who have more than two important adults in their life. Interviews were conducted with families containing both legal and social parents.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

World Pride took place in Malmö (SE) and Copenhagen (DK) this year with a range of events running in August.

HEALTH

The waiting times for trans-specific healthcare remained very long, with a roughly two-year wait period for a first appointment at the gender clinics. In the beginning of the year, the National Board for Health and Welfare decided to classify gender-affirming care as so-called "national specialised health care" from 2022 onward and the number of teams working with trans people will be reduced from seven to three. The aim is to make this care more equal and to better connect it to research. However, civil society expressed severe concern about the consequences on trans people's well-being.

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare was expected to publish its new guidelines on hormone treatment for youth this year, but the publication is now planned for 2022.



A number of Swedish hospitals stopped giving puberty blockers and gender affirming hormones to trans youth, followed by criticism and concern among civil society. Persons with an ongoing treatment were not affected - only minors waiting to access hormone treatment. Karolinska Hospital was the first to do so, stating it would resume care in the context of a clinical trial, but no such research project is yet planned. The Swedish Association for Transgender People's Health (SFTH) wrote an open letter to Karolinska regarding its harmful decision, which has been already replicated by three more healthcare units in the country. The SFTH called on the hospital to revoke the policy change and provide trans healthcare services to trans youth.

Sweden's plan to reduce the mandatory deferral period for blood donation among men who have sex with men was reduced from one year to six months, instead of the four months that was the original suggestion. Civil society remains concerned and has continued to lobby for a much shorter deferral period, and for a focus on risky behaviours instead of risk groups.

RFSL's new study found that a third of those who would need PrEP do not know where they could access it.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The government allocated targeted funding for LGBTQI organisations' meeting places, particularly for LGBTQ youth. The government also continued to allocate funding this year to combat increased vulnerability during the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting organisations who work on domestic violence or support abused women and children, LGBTQ communities, or victims of honour-related violence.

The parliament increased the national HIV budget by 25 million SEK this year (approx. 243,000 euro), to be used mainly for regional prevention measures from 2022 onwards.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Legal gender recognition reform continued to be stalled for most of the year and civil society continued to be concerned about the delay. In September however, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven affirmed at the opening of the parliament's autumn session that a new law shall be adopted before the general election in 2022. A draft bill

was presented by the Government in November, and is out for commentary until Feb 2022.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Swedish Athletics Association announced in June that young trans people will be able to compete on sports teams that reflect their gender identity. Those over 18 will still need a medical certificate. Loui Sand became the first trans man to play for an elite men's handball team.

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom was appointed Education Minister on 30 November, becoming Sweden's first trans minister.

PUBLIC OPINION AND ATTITUDES

The trans organisation FPES's report on public attitudes towards trans people found that the Swedish public has a relatively high degree of knowledge about trans people and an overwhelmingly positive in their attitude towards them, but perceive anti-trans prejudice as common.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs found that there were a total of 66 meeting places for young LGBTQ people, none of which is located in a rural municipality (see more under **Institutional Support**).



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