

>THEMES

EDUCATION

ALBANIA

CSOs continued to experience difficulties working with the Ministry of Education and there has been no progress on including LGBTI rights issues into the curriculum. Aleanca has conducted a study on the issue.

Aleanca's study with LGBTI high school and university students found that 65% feel unsafe at school; 93% heard homophobic slurs in school very often and almost a third have skipped or changed schools due to bullying.

PINK, Aleanca, and Streha supported the first openly trans person to attend university and was met with a welcoming attitude from teachers and students.

ANDORRA

The NGO Diversand, in cooperation with the State Secretary of Equality and Citizen Participation, launched a children's book on Trans Day of Visibility on 31 March. Loan Poulet's *'Don't call me Pol, call me Sarai'* is based on interviews with Andorran families.

On 28 June, DiversAnd read out its main claims at the annual Pride event (see more under **Equality and non-discrimination** and **Legal gender recognition**), including a need for inclusive education and training for key stakeholders in Andorra. The event was co-organised with other NGOs and was joined by key political leaders, such as the Minister of Social Affairs, Youth and Equality, Judith Pallarès.

DiversAnd held three trainings for primary school teachers on gender diversity and for those undertaking teacher training at the University of Andorra.

ARMENIA

Civil society reported that a college student was allegedly physically assaulted by his peers due to his sexual orientation and suffered serious bodily injuries. He reported the violence to the school, to no avail, and later to the police. The police detained him and refused to start a criminal investigation.

Several trans people continued reporting discriminatory treatment in higher education, to Right Side NGO.

AUSTRIA

Almost 50 schools in Vienna put up rainbow flags on their

buildings during Pride month in June. The action was joined by the Minister of Health in person.

Regarding education on diversity of sex characteristics and gender identity, VIMÖ held more than 60 training events across the country.

AZERBAIJAN

A queer student reported queerphobic bullying at school No. 244, which he repeatedly raised with the headmaster to no avail. He started an online campaign to raise awareness about bullying and discrimination in schools (see also here, here).

BELGIUM

From 1 September, in the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, parents can now enrol their children in secondary school under a neutral gender. The change aims to reduce discrimination and will include measures to make bathrooms and changing rooms gender neutral.

The Flemish parliament adopted new legislation this year obliging schools to teach about sexual orientation and gender identity in secondary schools.

BULGARIA

In 2020, Bilitis launched the Live Without Bullying Platform, offering psychological support to youth, their parents, and teachers. Over 350 people have registered on the platform and over 40 teachers were trained.

Bilitis published a handbook on using theatre to combat hate among youth.

CYPRUS

Following the tragic bullying case in February (see above), civil society urged the government to put in place sensitising training programs in schools to prevent and address the issue. The Ministry of Education has not formally responded to the request.

Accept - LGBTI Cyprus held two training sessions this year for educators on tackling homophobia and transphobia.

CROATIA

Zagreb Pride published a guide for social workers, education and health professionals on working with LGBTI+ children and youth.

Zagreb Pride also developed the “Queer Classroom” program for young people under 30.

Civil society held an online workshop for teachers on LGBTI topics, which received so many applications that it had to be prolonged to go over several days.

DENMARK

LGBT+ Youth and LGBT+ Denmark’s study found that more than half of LGBTQ+ students aged 13-25 have had suicidal thoughts or self-harmed. 44% were bullied or faced discrimination in school; 37% felt lonely [general student population: 6%]. Only 23% learned about different sexual orientations and 9% about gender identities.

ESTONIA

The Estonian LGBT Association collected testimonies this year of young LGBT+ people who have experienced bullying in school. The testimonies were used in the Estonian LGBT Association’s campaign to promote LGBT+ pupils’ safety in schools.

FRANCE

A 14-year-old girl committed suicide after two years of lesbophobic and islamophobic bullying.

The principal in a Lyon school was found to have discriminated against a teacher when ordering her to take off her rainbow COVID-19 face mask. For the past five years, SOS Homophobie has reported a steady rise in anti-LGBT discrimination and bullying in schools.

The Ministry of Education banned the use of inclusive writing in schools.

Internal guidance (circulaire) was produced by the Ministry of Education on the inclusion of trans children in schools. One concern raised by NGOs is around schools requiring parental consent for this work. This document was also challenged and instrumentalised by some political parties.

GEORGIA

In May, the Ombudsperson issued a general recommendation for the Ministry of Education to ensure trans women’s equal access to university studies without discrimination during application procedures.

GERMANY

A study found that some religious schools taught anti-LGBT contents in North Rhine-Westphalia, for instance comparing ‘homosexuality’ to ‘pedophilia’.

Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein banned gender-equitable language in schools (e.g. Schüler*innen or Schüler_innen)

GREECE

Students and civil society reported a microbiology textbook taught in *Hygiene* class in vocational schools, which equates homosexuality with the spread of STIs. The homophobic content was part of a national exam. Deputy Minister of Education Zetta Makris failed to condemn the textbook and blamed the Central Examination Committee. In July, MP Kritonas Arsenis (MEPA25) demanded the Ministry immediately withdraw the book.

A specialised course on LGBTQI+ issues ran for the second year in the undergraduate programme of Psychology at Panteion University and Social Work of the University of West Attica, designed and instructed by Orlando LGBT+.

HUNGARY

Hungary’s new propaganda law (see under **Freedom of Expression**) bans the promotion of homosexuality and trans issues in school and sets out that schools can only invite external sexuality education programs that have undergone mandatory state registration.

ICELAND

As a follow-up to their school well-being survey findings from 2020, Samtökin ‘78 secured a contract with the School of Education at the University of Iceland and the municipalities of Grindavíkurbær and Snæfellsbær. Samtökin ‘78 has rapidly expanded its education work in the last three years and hired three contractors to deliver training.

IRELAND

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".

ITALY

The University of Palermo introduced new regulations allowing trans students to use an alias of their choice as a first name.

KYRGYZSTAN

The Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy presented the draft Concept of Spiritual and Moral Development and Physical Education in April, which calls for education on 'traditional values' and 'family ideals'. Civil society warned that the Concept could be used to silence civil society and the media. The police referred to this decree as a legal basis for conducting raids against sex workers.

MONTENEGRO

Spektra signed a memorandum of understanding with several high schools, including in Kotor, Mojkovac, Kolašin, and Podgorica, and held workshops for students and some teachers. Spektra and Juventas held a workshop for trans and non-binary students in a Cetinje high school.

NETHERLANDS

The Senate passed a law obliging all Dutch schools to make sure that LGBTI youth and teachers are respected and protected, which entered into force in August. Nonetheless, alarming reports emerged alleging that the Gomar School Community teaches that being LGBT is a sin and has forced students to come out to their parents - in some cases locking them up in a classroom until they did so. The Education Inspectorate reprimanded the school. In October, the parliament banned the use

of 'identity declarations' whereby parents can consent to anti-LGBTI school content. The Minister of Education pledged to make LGBTQI content mandatory in all teacher training.

A study with responses from 30,000 students found that at least one in four LGBTI young people are bullied in school compared to 13% of cisgender straight peers. In December, about half a million students in 2,500 primary and high schools participated in the 12th Purple Friday, organised by COC's GSA Network.

NORTH MACEDONIA

94 CSOs welcomed the government's plans to reform primary education in February, including by prioritising gender equality and efforts to combat discrimination and violence in school. The Ministry for Science and Education adopted the new Concept note on primary education in March. Nevertheless, several draft laws were withdrawn due to high public pressure and the influence of the growing anti-gender movement (see above).

The new Law on Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was adopted in January, envisioning sex education in schools and violence prevention.

HERA's pilot program for comprehensive sex education continued in three schools at 9th grade level, but with ample backlash (see under **Bias Motivated Speech**).

Coalition Margins signed a memorandum of collaboration with the Bureau for Development of Education, to provide teacher training on preventing and reporting anti-LGBTI violence in primary schools.

HERA's report 'Peer Violence and the Role of Professional Services' found that over a third of high school students in Skopje were aware of anti-LGBT violence against another student and that only one in four victims reported cases to a professional.

POLAND

In January, UN Special Procedures questioned Poland on the crackdown against Rainbow Fridays and restrictions on sexuality education in schools. KPH published resources for schools and young people planning to celebrate the annual Rainbow Friday, on the last Friday of each October. Several schools participated this year, but most did so under the radar to avoid backlash.

New amendments to the Education Law were tabled this year, initiated by the Minister of Education and Science, Przemysław Czarnek, known for his anti-LGBT views (see under **Bias-Motivated Speech**). ‘Lex Czarnek’ would take discretionary power away from schools and could mean dismissal or even criminal sanctions for teachers or school management who openly support LGBT+ students or discuss LGBT issues in school. The law would practically ban sex education.

Civil society fears the detrimental impact the law could have on LGBT+ young people. Lex Czarnek has a much broader impact as well, by placing limitations on what can be taught in schools and creating an atmosphere of intimidation for any teachers or principals, whose beliefs may not align with those of the conservative government. Civil society organisations launched a campaign #WolnaSzkoła [Eng: Free School], providing information on the proposed limitations and uniting those against the law.

Constitutional Court judge and former PiS politician Krystyna Pawłowicz posted the first name, age, and primary school of a trans child on social media, violating the girl’s right to privacy and exposing her to danger. Pawłowicz made hostile remarks about the school for using the girl’s name that aligns with her gender identity in school.

This year’s LGBTQ+ school ranking identified the most inclusive and accepting schools in Warsaw, Olsztyn, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Elbląg, Toruń and Łódź. The schools all received Equality Diplomas, which were signed by civil society and municipalities.

PORTUGAL

In January, NGO Plano i published the results of their 2020 survey, finding that 9% of their respondents experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation and 4% because of their gender identity.

AMPLOS, the Parents of LGBTI people organisation, published a guide for schools on LGBTI issues.

ROMANIA

The right-wing nationalist AUR party announced in July that it would seek to introduce legislation similar to the one adopted in Hungary to ban any discussion of SOGIESC issues in schools and in the media. A number

of other parties also proposed propaganda laws. On 28 July, ACCEPT requested the Government to stand firmly against such initiatives. On 23 December, a group of UDMR (Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania) MPs tabled a draft bill in parliament.

RUSSIA

On 5 April, President Putin signed the amendments to the Law On Education, which add the concept of ‘educational activities’ in formal and informal education and place them under state control. ‘Educational activities’ are defined very broadly in the law and could cover podcasts, YouTube and other outreach platforms. The law was first tabled in 2020 and caused outrage among academia, scientists, and civil society. Several NGOs condemned the law and a petition against it gathered close to 250,000 signatures.

In June, the Russian LGBT Network released their findings on school bullying on the basis of 2,000 responses from LGBTI youth aged 13-20. The final study found that many experienced bullying directly from their teachers; that bullying resulted in the plummeting of academic performance; and that students rarely received help – due to the 2013 ‘propaganda law’, teachers and social workers are scared to step up.

SLOVENIA

Legebitra’s study ‘LGBT youth – let’s break the silence in schools!’ found that one in four LGBT young people in Slovenia witnessed anti-LGBT remarks in school and that in most cases teachers either did not intervene or did so inefficiently.

In June, Legebitra and Ljubljana Pride held an event focusing on the results of the study as well as best practises and recommendations.

SPAIN

In January, the NGO Chrysallis published “Guide for Teachers: Education in Diversity and Equality”, focusing on creating a safe and inclusive school environment for trans youth.

Thanks to Chrysallis’s continued advocacy, Andalusia’s online school platform finally provides recognition for trans students, who can enter the name and gender that corresponds to their identity.

Students taking university entrance exams are now able to

use their social name on their application form.

Chrysalis, FELGTBI+ and Fundación Triángulo urged the Minister of Equality to ensure students' rights to relationship and sex education and to prevent the parental veto, as proposed by the far-right Vox party, from being introduced.

The University of Barcelona Faculty of Medicine introduced a new subject this year on the provision of healthcare services to trans people.

A Castellón substitute judge ordered the removal of 32 LGBTI-themed books from libraries and educational centres, following the request of an ultra-conservative association. The ruling was overturned a few days later. FELGTBI+ and others are filing a complaint to the General Council of the Spanish judicial authority.

SWEDEN

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.

SWITZERLAND

In March, a vast majority of the Bern parliament (111:27) voted against a proposal to ban educational programs by lesbian and gay organisations in public schools.

On December 13, the Canton of Vaud minister of education signed into law a directive on supporting trans and non-binary pupils in obligatory and post obligatory schools.

TURKEY

On 1 January, President Erdoğan appointed Melih Bulu as the new rector of Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Academic staff and students held a series of protests, as Bulu is the first appointed rector from outside the University, which marks a next step of the government's crackdown on academic freedom in Turkey. Bulu is a long-standing ally of President Erdoğan, who has supported anti-LGBTI+ statements over the past years. The university's LGBTI+ student group was shut down, students were detained, and the police assaulted many demonstrators. In February, 328 civil society organisations in Turkey issued a joint statement to support the students and staff. 12 students stand trial for violating the law.

The European Commission condemned the violent repression of the protests, the mass detention of students, and the Istanbul governor's ad hoc ban on all meetings and protests in the university's neighbourhood. In July, the new acting rector of the university dismissed professor Can Candan, an avid supporter of LGBTI rights. Candan directed the film "My Child", a documentary about LGBTI+ families in Turkey. Candan's supporters launched social media campaigns to stand with him in solidarity.

In March, Genç LGBTI+ published "Monitoring LGBTI+ Equality in Universities" and found that institutions in Turkey score alarmingly low. The report recommends universities to support students in their freedom of expression, to provide safer and inclusive spaces for LGBTI+ and specifically for trans students, to mainstream SOGIESC issues in the curriculum, provide counseling, and other key measures.

During the graduation ceremony of Dokuz Eylül University in October, two students were forcibly removed from the event and beaten up for wearing face masks with the slogan "Istanbul Convention Stays Alive". Turkey withdrew from the Convention earlier this year (see under **Equality and Non-Discrimination**).

UKRAINE

A survey found that 80% of LGBT students feel unsafe in school and 87% feel excluded. Just in the month preceding the survey, 40% of LGBT students missed school because they feared for their safety. 70% of LGBT students heard anti-LGBT remarks made against them and two-thirds of them were also targeted by teachers. 55% said they had not a single adult in school they could turn to for support.

A lecturer at Lviv Polytechnic National University made hateful statements this year, for instance that lesbians and gays are sick.

UNITED KINGDOM

The government decided to cut funding for anti-LGBT+ bullying programmes despite an alarming 46% of LGBT+ students feeling unsafe at school.

In June, Just Like Us released the 'Growing up LGBT+' report finding that LGBT+ students are twice as likely to have been bullied than their cisgender heterosexual peers and that 91% have heard negative language about being

LGBT+ just in the past year. Over 1,000 LGBT+ students aged 11-18 participated in the survey. The study also found that LGBT+ students in Northern Ireland fared the worst. 82% of them have contemplated suicide compared to a fourth of that rate among non-LGBT+ peers. They were also more likely to have suicidal thoughts than LGBT+ youth in England (67%), Scotland (79%), or Wales (73%).

The Scottish government made available new resources on how schools can support trans students.

Relationship and sex education reform is ongoing in Northern Ireland, seeking to have better inclusion of LGBTIQ+ issues.

UZBEKISTAN

In April, students took photos and compared the length of their socks in Tashkent's school no. 110 alleging that boys with ankle socks were gay. The Ministry of Education said the students' activity was an attack against LGBT people. Nonetheless, some thought that negative LGBT propaganda is also propaganda and should not take place in school.

Civil society reports that in many higher education institutions the professors include anti-LGBT content in their classes. In some institutions LGBT issues were covered in a non-hostile way to some extent, but that was no longer the case since this year.