

>THEMES

FOREIGN POLICY

BELGIUM

Belgium initiated the joint action of 18 EU Member States who condemned Hungary's new propaganda law banning the discussion of LGBT topics in front of minors. The 2020 coalition agreement stated that Belgium will advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights globally. MEPs of the far-right Vlaams Belang Belgian party voted against the resolution on Hungary.

In response to the so-called LGBT-free Zones in Poland, Wallonia declared itself an LGBTQIA+ Freedom Zone in July.

CYPRUS

Cyprus and the UK have approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Protection and Promotion of the rights of LGBTI+ people in Europe. In October, the UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy on LGBT Rights met up with the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Advisor to the President on Multiculturalism and Diversity, and other stakeholders to discuss joint actions.

CROATIA

Croatia was among the few EU Member States that did not condemn the Hungarian anti-LGBT law.

CZECHIA

Czechia failed to publicly condemn the hostilities against LGBTI+ people in Poland and Hungary again this year, despite joint and individual actions of EU Member States on the matter. Nevertheless, civil society held a protest in front of the Hungarian embassy.

DENMARK

LGBT+ Denmark launched a global Queer Solidarity Fund. Denmark adopted a new foreign policy strategy, which is very weak on LGBTI rights.

ESTONIA

The change of government had a positive impact on Estonia's foreign policy. The new government adopted a framework and action plan for human rights diplomacy, which includes the promotion of LGBT+ rights internationally.

In June, Estonia joined other EU Member States in condemning the Hungarian anti-LGBT law.

GERMANY

The government adopted its foreign policy LGBTI Inclusion Strategy, inclusive of trans rights issues.

Chancellor Angela Merkel criticised the Hungarian propaganda law in June.

HUNGARY

In July, Hungary lost over 200 million euro of funding in grants from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, which could have supported civil society, due to the government's failure to agree with the funders on how the grants would be disbursed.

ICELAND

In February, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein cancelled a major grant to Poland for its continued crackdown on LGBTI people and the public support of "LGBT-free zones".

In March, the Minister of Environment sent a public letter to Pope Francis asking him to withdraw his decision on banning Catholic priests from performing same-sex marriage ceremonies.

IRELAND

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

ITALY

In September, during an LGBTI UN Core Group event, Deputy Minister Benedetto Della Vedova called for a UN strategy to protect LGBTI rights.

In November, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation created the Special Envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the Human Rights of LGBTI People.

LIECHTENSTEIN

Liechtenstein, alongside Norway and Iceland, cancelled grants to Poland to show its firm stand against Poland's 'LGBT-free Zones'.

LITHUANIA

Lithuania refused to join the 17 EU Member States who jointly condemned Hungary's new propaganda law. The President condemned the European Commission's scrutiny over Hungary.

LUXEMBOURG

Prime Minister Xavier Bettel stood firmly against the new law in Hungary this year, which bans any discussion of SOGI issues in schools and on primetime television.

In July, Luxembourg declared itself an LGBTIQ+ Freedom Zone, in response to developments in Hungary and Poland.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs participated by funding a 'Luxembourg Truck' at Cologne Pride in the summer. This action took place in the framework of a visit of Luxembourg Pride to Cologne Pride. The host city of Luxembourg Pride is Esch-sur-Alzette, Cologne's sister city.

MALTA

Malta and its MEP Cyrus Engerer took a lead on the European Parliament's resolution to declare the EU an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone, following the adoption of a propaganda law in Hungary and continued attacks against the LGBTIQ community in Poland.

NETHERLANDS

In June, civil society held a demonstration against Hungary's propaganda law.

COC launched the government funded the Power of Pride programme, supporting LGBTI organisations in 22 countries.

NORWAY

Nordic countries agreed to cooperate on a number of initiatives to address discrimination against LGBTI people in the region, including when moving from one Nordic country to another. The activities include the sharing of good practises with a focus on education, healthcare, and employment.

Norway withdrew over two billion NOK worth of EEA funding from Hungary this year, following the erosion of the rule of law, Hungary's new propaganda law, and the unwillingness of the government to agree on an independent oversight body to manage civil society funds.

The new government program highlights continued support to combat persecution and discrimination based on sexual orientation in Norwegian Foreign Policy.

POLAND

France's Minister for EU Affairs was allegedly refused entry to Kraśnik in March, one of Poland's 'LGBT-free zones', which Poland denied.

In May, the family affairs ministers of the Visegrád Four (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) signed a 'Declaration Pro Familia' to commit to supporting 'families'. Poland was the only EU country to openly endorse Hungary's new propaganda law. 17 EU Member States jointly condemned the law.

PORTUGAL

Portugal signed the joint statement of 18 EU Member States condemning the Hungarian propaganda law, but only after its Presidency of the Council of the European Union ended in late June. Initially, Portugal only condemned the law, saying it needed to be 'neutral' holding the Presidency.

In June, ILGA Portugal participated in the LGBTI Citizenship Seminar organised by the National Commission of Human Rights and Citizenship of Cape Verde. The seminar took place to celebrate Pride and brought together local LGBTI activists and organisations with members of Cape Verde's government and other stakeholders.

On 2 November, the Portuguese Embassy in Bulgaria signed a joint statement condemning the anti-LGBTI attacks against the Rainbow Hub community centre in Sofia.

SERBIA

In May, Serbia's Ambassador to Poland, Nikola Zurovac was fired after expressing support for the Polish LGBTI community.

SLOVAKIA

On 13 May, the family affairs ministers of the Visegrád Four (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) signed a 'Declaration Pro Familia' to commit to supporting 'families'.

Slovakia did not join the 17 EU Member States who jointly condemned Hungary's new propaganda law banning the discussion of LGBT topics in front of minors. Nonetheless, President Zuzana Čaputová spoke out against the law in July.

Pope Francis' visit to Slovakia in September received some pushback from conservatives in the country who are concerned about the Pope's accepting stance towards LGBT people.

SLOVENIA

Slovenia refused to join other EU countries in speaking out against Hungary this year after the Hungarian government introduced a propaganda law to ban the discussion of LGBT issues in front of minors. Slovenia's opposition criticised the government.

SPAIN

In January, the government presented its 2021-2024 Foreign Action Strategy and Feminist Foreign Action Strategy, which mainstreams gender and LGBTI issues in its actions.

UNITED KINGDOM

As co-chairs of the Equal Rights Coalition, the UK and Argentina launched the ERC's first strategic plan for the period of 2021-2026.

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan continued to lobby for the protection of the "traditional family" in its foreign policy work and to consider the LGBT community a destructive force of the Western world aimed at undermining the country.