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BODILY INTEGRITY

ARMENIA

(See under Health)

AUSTRIA

The process of banning so-called ‘conversion practices’ continued to be stalled this year due to the ÖVP’s lack of support, despite the National Council calling for legal reform twice over the past four years.

During Pride month, the ÖVP proposed that there should be a ban on ‘conversion practice’ for minors but wanted to specifically exclude trans and intersex people. The Green Party, SPÖ, NEOS and civil society organisations objected. The proposed ban on non-consensual and medically unnecessary treatments performed on intersex children also continued to be stalled this year. Over 70 civil society organisations signed an open letter to the parliament and a related petition collected over 7,000 signatures to demand a ban. At the Vienna Pride Conference, a ÖVP member of the national council publicly said that politicians cannot decide on this matter; only doctors can.

AZERBAIJAN

ECRI recommended that Azerbaijan ban non-consensual medical interventions performed on intersex children. Civil society documented at least one case this year.

On July, video information about forced genital surgery of a 13-year-old intersex child was shared on social networks.

BELGIUM

In July, the parliament adopted a ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’, covering sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, in the case of both minors and adults. The sanctions will include prison sentences and/or fines.

The parliament is yet to ban non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children, in line with the 2021 parliamentary resolution on intersex people’s rights. Civil society continued to lobby for a ban, and also for sanctions, better access to healthcare for intersex people throughout their lives, and access to their own medical history.

In an important judicial victory, the Brussels Court of Appeal held a hospital accountable for non-consensual medical interventions performed on an intersex minor. Civil society widely welcomed the ruling.

CYPRUS

In a historic move, Cyprus banned so-called ‘conversion practices’ on 23 May, covering SOGIE grounds, both adults and minors, and including sanctions advertising. In a last-minute amendment, it was clarified that priests can still provide counselling to LGBTI people, but they are not exempt from the ban, as sought by the far-right. This means that priests cannot conduct “conversion practices”. The ban, endorsed by Cyprus’ psychologists association, is the result of extensive advocacy by civil society.

CROATIA

In May, the Možemo! party called for a ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’.

DENMARK

In October, Denmark signed a joint statement calling to better protect intersex people. The statement was delivered during the 54th UN Human Rights Council. However, civil society organisations criticise that the government continues to not abide by its commitments. In December, the UN Committee Against Torture issued its concluding observations on Denmark as part of its 8th Periodic Review, noting that it received evidence that “unnecessary and irreversible surgery and other medical treatments” are performed in Denmark without the personal consent of the individual. The Committee recommended that Denmark undertake studies of intersex people and their experiences, offer robust psychosocial counselling and support to the parents of intersex people, ensure that those subject to unnecessary interventions have access to remedy, and intersex adults should have access to treatment without discrimination based on their gender identity.

FINLAND

A citizens’ initiative to ban so-called ‘conversion practices’ gathered over 50,000 signatures in only a few weeks, but the parliament did not discuss it before the elections. A previous citizens’ initiative had been pending in the parliament since 2021. In June, another initiative was launched to ensure that this time the government does have sufficient time to discuss it. The parliamentary debate started in November 2023 and is set to continue in 2024.

HUNGARY

In March, the Council of Europe’s European Commission

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Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) [published](#) its latest report on Hungary, and called for a ban on medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries on intersex children.

Former Catholic priest András Hodász [gave](#) interviews this year and apologised for his past stance in support of so-called ‘conversion practices’.

A 2022 [research](#) showed that so-called ‘conversion practices’ have caused one in four respondents to attempt suicide and over half to consider it.

ICELAND

On 9 June, Iceland [banned](#) so-called ‘conversion practices’ covering sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity and [protecting](#) both children and adults. The vote was unanimous.

IRELAND

Trinity College Dublin [published](#) its comprehensive report on ongoing so-called ‘conversion practices’ in Ireland, commissioned by the government in 2022. In February, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights [urged](#) Ireland to adopt a ban. In June, the Minister for Children and Equality again [promised](#) to pass the ban this year, which was [welcomed](#) by civil society.

No progress was made on banning medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children.

LUXEMBOURG

CSOs also continued to lobby for a ban on non-consensual medical interventions performed on intersex children.

The working group, gathering representatives of the ministries of justice, health and family [have not reached](#) an agreement on the scope of a possible ban.

MALTA

In February, three people were [charged](#) with promoting so-called ‘conversion practices’, including a man who [claims](#) to have “healed” from ‘homosexuality’ through his religion, and the two owners of a website that live streamed the man’s interview. Several LGBTIQ+ people spoke about the harmful impact of the man’s claims and of other forms of so-called ‘conversion practices’ (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

In March, a parliamentary committee [approved](#) amendments to the 2016 ban on these harmful practices,

including clearer definitions of what counts as promotion and advertising.

NETHERLANDS

The Dutch professional association for psychiatrists [issued](#) an apology for [harming](#) and trying to ‘cure’ LGBTIQ+ clients because they considered them ‘disordered’ in the past.

The bill on banning so-called ‘conversion practices’ was [submitted](#) by the parties D66, VVD, PvdA, GroenLinks, SP and the Party for the Animals to the Lower House in [October](#). The bill sets out a 22,500 EURO fine or one to two years in prison for those administering the harmful practice. The law is part of the 2021 [Rainbow Ballot Box Agreement](#), which was adopted as part of the coalition agreement.

In July, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport [announced](#) an exploration of the ‘pros and cons’ of a ban on medically unnecessary and non-consensual treatments on intersex children. In January, a Parliament-initiated study [confirmed](#) that the surgeries continue to take place in the Netherlands, reporting up to 8461 surgical interventions in a period of seven years (2014-2020) of which many were medically non-necessary. Civil society continued to [lobby](#) for a ban throughout the year, including through a petition that almost 90 organisations [signed](#).

Trans and intersex people who were forcibly [sterilised](#) in the past as a requirement for legal gender recognition could [apply](#) for financial [compensation](#) of 5,000 euro until 18 October.

NORTH MACEDONIA

ECRI published its report on North Macedonia in September and [called](#) for a ban on medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries on [intersex](#) children.

NORWAY

In June, the government [tabled](#) the ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’, which was one of the government’s commitments in the 2021 [LGBTQI](#) Action Plan. The new text suggests an absolute ban on the harmful practice regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, both exercised in Norway and abroad, and also sanctions advertisements. The bill envisions special protections

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for minors. Civil society criticised the suggestion for not including gender expression and covering a wider understanding of sexual orientation. The parliament had two hearings in December and approved the ban with a majority vote.

In October, the Nordland Research Institute [published](#) a report in which one in four respondents stated they had been subjected to actions which could be understood as conversion practices in Norway.

PORTUGAL

On 21 April, the parliament [adopted](#) a ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’ based on SOGI, which [punishes](#) their solicitation or management. Those promoting the practice face up to two years in prison.

RUSSIA

The law banning trans healthcare provision (see under Health) [sets out](#) an exception for some medical interventions on intersex individuals. Interventions related to intersex variations that aim to form sex characteristics of the “other sex” aren’t prohibited if they are authorised by the state medical commission, including in relation to children.

SPAIN

Citing procedural reasons, in January Madrid’s government [closed](#) the second case against Elena Lorenzo for running her ‘Road to Heterosexuality’ course, i.e. a form of so-called ‘conversion practice’.

The [LGBTI law](#), which [includes](#) a ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’ and non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children under the age of 12, was [adopted](#) in February.

SWEDEN

In July, Court of Appeals Councilor Maria Hölcke presented her [report](#) concluding that there was no need to ban so-called ‘conversion attempts’ and that the current penalties were sufficient. In 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs, [released](#) its report [finding](#) that conversion attempts are very much present in Sweden and particularly impact trans youth.

A pastor, who was dismissed for inviting people to so-called ‘conversion practices’ is [suing](#) the Pentecostal Church for firing him.

SWITZERLAND

In December, the Council of States supported a [motion](#) asking for ethical medical guidelines on the diagnosis and treatment of children born with variations of sex development. The guidelines shall be developed by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, in consultation with intersex organisations and implement the National Advisory Commission on Biomedical Ethics [opinion](#), published in 2012. In return, a [motion](#) to ban irreversible medical interventions on intersex children was withdrawn.

In August, the Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of States [positioned](#) itself in favour of a federal ban on so-called ‘conversion practices’ but postponed the decision on a motion until a report on the subject will be published. The National Council supported the demand for a [federal ban](#) in 2022, a motion that the Council of States would have to vote on as well. This vote is pending until after the publication of the report.

In the canton of Fribourg, a [motion](#) to ban conversion measures was handed in. The parliaments in the Cantons of [Jura](#) and [Zurich](#) [voted](#) on motions to ban so-called ‘conversion practices’. The [Valais](#) cantonal government started a public consultation on such a ban. The parliaments of the cantons of [Geneva](#) and [Vaud](#) discussed a ban; the parliament of the canton of [Neuchâtel](#) approved a law proposal to ban conversion measures.

TURKEY

In some hospitals in big cities, doctors have gradually reduced or stopped performing non-consensual surgical interventions, but civil society reports that in provincial hospitals, surgeries continue at the same pace.

Inter Solidarity, the country’s only intersex organisation, continued to develop relationships with medical professionals and advocate within the medical community on the protection of bodily integrity. The organisation held two [workshops](#) with medical students and doctors in 2023.

Inter Solidarity was included in the Ankara Medical Chamber LGBTI+ working group.

In December 2022, Nationalist Movement Party Vice President Feti Yıldız announced that the party would “submit a [bill](#) to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey that prohibits gender transition except for medical necessity.” Throughout 2023, intersex and trans activists

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mobilised against the bill and the Nationalist Movement Party claimed it could not submit the bill to the parliament.

UNITED KINGDOM

Despite years of civil society advocacy and government promises, the process of banning so-called 'conversion practices' continued to be stalled this year in most of the UK. In January and June, PM Sunak vowed that the bill would be back to parliament and cover both sexual orientation and gender identity, but with an exception for 'consenting' adults. The EHRC also called for a ban in October, but a group of Tory MPs urged Sunak to drop the ban. The topic was then missing from the newly crowned King's speech in November. In November, a bipartisan bill on the ban made it to the House of Lords, but this is not the government's initiative.

The process has been delayed in Scotland also. As part of the mandatory legal process, the Scottish Government will consult publicly on the details of a bill, most likely in January 2024. The process in Northern Ireland is also stalled until the Executive is restored.

UKRAINE

As of November, over six million people are living outside Ukraine as a consequence of the war. Trans people continued reporting harassment and discrimination when trying to cross the border. Many people who had fled the war, returned to Ukraine this year.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Illegal Migration Act was adopted in July. Lawmakers vowed it would not be used to expel LGBTQ+ asylum seekers to their home or a third country, but civil society is concerned that it will do just that.

In September, Home Secretary Suella Braverman said asylum seekers "pretend to be gay" to receive status and that facing discrimination because of being a woman or LGBTQ+ person is no grounds to get protection. A protest was held in London and over 200 human rights groups signed a joint letter to PM Rishi Sunak, demanding that the UK government respect and protect women and LGBTQ+ people. UNHCR warned the UK should not restrict its asylum definition.