

>THEMES

EDUCATION

ALBANIA

Aleanca's annual survey found that 30% of LGBTI respondents were unable to complete compulsory education because of discrimination and economic challenges. 63% believe teachers and principals are not well informed on LGBTI issues despite training carried out in the frame of the National Action Plan. 262 people participated in the survey, which has not been publicly published. CSOs continued to advocate for more inclusive school curricula, particularly in relation to sex education. Aleanca reimbursed university fees and vocational courses for 15 cases.

PINK Embassy and CRCA/ECPAT Albania followed up on over ten cases of bullying of LGBTI minors, revealing that public schools lacked protocols for handling SOGI-based violence or discrimination.

The Albanian National Child Helpline (ALO 116-1110) reported a 30% increase in calls from LGBTI children reporting peer bullying and violence. One adolescent attempted suicide due to continuous bullying without adequate protection.

AUSTRIA

VIMÖ, together with the Austrian midwife organisation began a workshop series in Vienna and Linz to train midwives on intersex issues.

AZERBAIJAN

ECRI recommended that Azerbaijan tackle anti-LGBTI bullying in schools.

A 17-year-old student was repeatedly harassed and verbally insulted and threatened by a peer and a teacher in Baku. In the lack of any law that would protect people from discrimination, bullying and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), the police did not take action. The teenager faced verbal harassment at the police station as well. Thanks to the Ombudsperson's intervention, the peer apologised and the teacher was reprimanded. The student may file for a civil case.

In September, after taking time off from their studies due to the persistent harassment, the same student was beaten by another pupil on their second day back to school.

The new Gender Equality university textbook, co-released by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Problems includes no mention of SOGIESC.

BELARUS

Following this year's developments (see under Freedom of Expression), the Ministry of Education is planning to introduce Fundamentals of Family Life classes, to "protect" children from the influence of so-called Western values, i.e. non-traditional sexual relationships, gender reassignment, paedophilia and childlessness, as well as courses to promote traditional families and increase the birth rate.

In October, the Ministry of Education banned a popular blogger from participating in school events after being accused of 'LGBTQ propaganda'.

BELGIUM

(See also under Bias-motivated Speech)

The Ook Genks Wel Anders (OGWA) association's IDAHOBIT event at a school in Genk was attacked by approximately 100 far-right students, who also assaulted a volunteer and city representatives. In response, the city and OGWA launched a campaign against anti-LGBT hate in schools.

The Hasselt Sports School suspended eight teachers for racist and homophobic speech on a messaging app. An official investigation was launched and later dismissed because of a lack of evidence, but a disciplinary investigation continues.

Sint-Rita college installed a rainbow crossing upon a students' initiative (see more under Equality and Non-discrimination). Students in the Herzele municipality received rainbow bracelets for IDAHOBIT.

In June, the Constitutional Court struck down the so-called 'attainment targets' for second and third-grade secondary education. The new targets don't explicitly include LGBTI+ rights and experiences. Civil society found the ruling alarming and a step back.

A survey conducted by çavaria revealed that the situation for LGBTI+ students in secondary schools in Flanders has not improved in the past five years.

>THEMES

Sex education (EVRAS) became mandatory in French-speaking schools. The law was voted almost unanimously but the decision was used by far-right and religious groups to stage violent protests, including a wave of disinformation on social media and the vandalisation of some schools. Some of these groups looked at bringing the new law before the Constitutional Court.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

(See under Freedom of Expression)

BULGARIA

Civil society organisations provided training in educational settings to promote the inclusivity of LGBTI students. Bilitis trained 40 teachers. Single Step trained 20, conducted an international training for 45 people, and hosted a Human LGBTI+ Library.

CYPRUS

(See also under Bias-motivated Violence)

As of 1 September 2023, holistic sex education is mandatory by law at all levels in both public and private schools. SOGIE concepts are properly introduced in secondary school. The change was met with hostility from some politicians, religious groups, and parents, the latter alleging that the classes would promote “gender fluidity”, undermine traditional family values and the Christian faith.

Accept-LGBTI Cyprus met with the new Minister of Education to demand the nationwide implementation of the ‘Code of Conduct Against Prejudice in Schools’ and the ‘Guide to Handling and Recording of Incidents of Prejudice’. However, it is still up to each school to request support and training, therefore implementation remains flawed.

NORTHERN CYPRUS

As part of continuous advocacy, research and capacity building to promote greater inclusivity in education, QCA released the *LGBTI+ Inclusive Education is Possible* brochure on LGBTI+ terminology, the effects of bullying faced by students, and ways to support LGBTI+ students in education.

QCA met with the VP of the Assembly of the Republic and discussed school curriculum, fighting hate speech, and more (see under Legal Gender Recognition).

QCA criticised the intention of the local body responsible for education to revise a number of primary school textbooks and bring them more in line with conservative values, and called for a curriculum that promotes diversity on SOGIESC grounds.

QCA research on teachers’ attitudes showed that a large proportion of teachers support LGBTI+ inclusive education.

CROATIA

Local NGO LORI published a study finding that 77% of LGBTIQ high school students have been regularly exposed to homophobic and transphobic comments from their peers, and 20% from teachers of staff. LORI also analysed textbooks and curricula, finding that LGBTIQ issues are mostly invisible or underrepresented. Over 50% of students learned about LGBTIQ topics in school in a negative context.

CZECHIA

Trans*parent offered accredited trainings for teachers and educators on trans and non-binary issues in schools, and started working with the Ministry of Education on a methodology to promote trans inclusivity in schools, to be published next year.

In April, the Regional Court in Ostrava ruled that an educational institution had to re-issue a trans graduate’s certificates and diploma following their change of name and gender marker.

A report from Queer Geography, “Being LGBTQ+ in Czechia” found that LGBTQ+ people feel discriminated against based on their identity most often in schools or universities.

DENMARK

The government launched a consultation on the draft law on mandatory sex education in upper secondary education - civil society recommended to include GIE issues in its scope.

In 2023 the government also launched the first major survey of the wellbeing of LGBT+ pupils from 15–25 years in the Danish educational system, results are expected to be published in 2024. Queer educational centre Normstormerne continued to be targeted by politicians, and the centre lost major funding.

>THEMES

FINLAND

In 2023 the city of Helsinki rolled out “[rainbow workshops](#)” to all sixth-to-ninth graders in the city’s schools. The project was a result of the city’s participatory budgeting process where citizens can make proposals into the city’s budget. The city chose Seta as the service provider to design and implement the workshops. MP Päivi Räsänen [criticised](#) the initiative.

FRANCE

Lucas, a 13-year-old boy, who had been targeted by homophobic bullying, [committed](#) suicide in January. Four students were [convicted](#) of school harassment in the case. The family [appealed](#) the decision as it failed to condemn the minors for harassment leading to suicide. Media reports [suggest](#) the official investigation was inadequately conducted.

Later in January, former Minister of Education Pap Ndiaye [announced](#) he would put in place an awareness-raising plan to fight discrimination and bullying against LGBTI students. On 17 May, the Ministry [launched](#) an awareness campaign in middle and high schools to combat anti-LGBT school bullying.

Teachers [reported](#) a Catholic school and its principal for homophobia and [censoring](#) films on abortion and queerness. The Prosecutor launched an investigation.

In May, Bretagne [announced](#) setting up an observatory for the prevention and fight against LGBT + discrimination in education.

In September, incoming Minister Gabriel Attal [declared](#) that preventing bullying at schools is his “absolute priority”. In the same month, a high school student was [arrested](#) after bullying and threatening to kill a 14-year-old trans student.

GERMANY

(See also under Bias-motivated Violence)

In April, two teachers in Brandenburg [published](#) a letter of concern about right-wing extremism, sexism and homophobia on school grounds. The police started an investigation. The Brandenburg Minister of Education [called](#) for moral courage and asked schools to promptly report similar incidents. The two teachers received the Prize for Civil Courage Against Anti-Semitism, Right-Wing

Radicalism and Racism, but due to hate and harassment, they both [quit](#) their teaching jobs.

Activists at the Technische Universität in Berlin posted gender-neutral signs on toilets, a move [endorsed](#) by the university’s Queer Referat.

In January, Humboldt University [allowed](#) trans, inter and non-binary students who have not gone through legal gender recognition or name change yet to use their chosen names on university ID cards, following a class action lawsuit [filed](#) in 2022. The HU took this step before the court decision.

The far-right AfD in Lower Saxony [announced](#) their plans to restrict sex education in schools, allegedly to tackle “child abuse”.

GREECE

In March, parliament [adopted](#) legislation to combat bullying and violence in education, which covers SOGIESC grounds.

The Teaching Federation of Greece [affirmed](#) that a teacher in an Athens primary school did nothing wrong when showing the film *Boys in the Shower* to his class of ten-year-olds. The teachers received backlash from parents.

HUNGARY

ECRI [reminded](#) Hungary that children should receive information about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) in schools, to tackle anti-LGBT stigma, discrimination, and violence.

A Catholic literature textbook [replaced](#) the term “gay” with “Hungarian” in a poem, but corrected this after the poet complained.

A far-right website [published](#) a list of LGBTQI and -friendly teachers. The National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information launched an investigation ex officio, Háttér Society’s complaint was merged with it. No decision has been delivered yet.

Some teachers have reportedly lost their jobs for speaking about feminism, LGBTI and progressive issues in the classroom.

Labrisz educational programme came to an end after 20 years, as schools fear inviting LGBTI organisations to provide workshops.

>THEMES

ICELAND

There was serious backlash this year, including hate speech, [misinformation](#) and negative talk about sex education and education on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE) issues in school (see also under Bias-motivated Speech). In September, the Ministry of Education, municipalities, the Children's Ombudsman, the National Parents Association, and civil society organisations [co-published](#) a statement condemning these attacks and defending children's right to comprehensive sex education and information about SOGIE issues. Samtökin 78' signed agreements with several towns and municipalities this year to continue its education program (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

IRELAND

In January, the first cohort of 34 people joined a new postgraduate programme for post-primary teachers teaching Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and/or Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). In addition, between March and May, over 400 teachers attended a seminar on the new specifications for Junior Cycle SPHE.

In March, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association [sent](#) letters to two ministries to ask that pupils are not taught about trans issues in primary schools. [Civil society](#), the [Irish National Teachers' Organisation](#) and the government all [condemned](#) the contents of the letter. The President, the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste all [expressed](#) support for informing students about gender diversity. The Minister for Children and Equality [said](#) students should "absolutely" be taught more about trans people and respect for diversity.

Civil society [welcomed](#) that the new Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) junior cycle curriculum, [published](#) by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, [includes](#) LGBTQ+ rights throughout. The primary school curriculum is currently undergoing revision. In September, a Catholic group printed 100,000 leaflets to [invite](#) parents to a meeting against the SPHE curriculum.

Enoch Burke, the teacher who was [put on administrative leave](#) in 2022 for intimidating the then-principal Wilson's Hospital School in County Westmeath by confronting her following a request to address a student who was transitioning by a new name and the pronouns they/them,

continued to be fined and [held](#) in custody for refusing to stay away from the school, despite a High Court Order for him to do so. In September Burke was [jailed](#) for repeatedly turning up at the school in breach of the Court order and remained in prison at the end of 2023.

A primary school teacher [penned](#) a letter criticising Cork businesses for supporting Pride.

ITALY

ProVita and Brothers of Italy continued sending [warning notices](#) to all schools that grant 'alias careers' to their students. An "alias career" allows trans students to have their gender identity recognised in class registers and participate in their education accordingly, without change of official documents.

In April, a demonstration was held in support of trans youth in [Rome](#). In September, a similar demonstration took place in [Milan](#).

KAZAKHSTAN

Young people [shared](#) experiences of bullying in a campaign from NGO's in the media.

LATVIA

Liene Voronenko, president of the Latvian National Centre for Education was [suspended](#) in September after releasing educational materials to help teachers run sex education classes and including information about gender identity and the existence of trans people.

LITHUANIA

(See also under Bias-motivated Speech)

A draft amendment to the Law on Education was [tabled](#) in September. The amendment [proposes](#) integrating sex education into religion and ethics courses.

Following the ECHR ruling on *Macatė v. Lithuania* in January (see also under Freedom of Expression), the Ministry of Justice proposed to repeal the anti-LGBTI "propaganda" law. In response to this, MP Gražulis initiated a proposal to ban the "sexualisation of children".

An LGL survey showed that LGBT students aged 14 to 19 feel more insecure about their sexual orientation in the classroom compared to the previous survey from 2017.

>THEMES

Over six hundred students participated in the survey, examining their experiences between 2021 and 2022.

LUXEMBOURG

The University of Luxembourg signed an agreement with Centre LGBTIQ+ Cigale to support, train, and empower LGBTQ+ staff and students.

MALTA

The Ministry of Education launched a new policy to make schools more inclusive to trans, gender variant and intersex children.

MOLDOVA

In February, a school psychologist in Chisinau told students to “not tolerate ‘dysfunctions’ like lesbians, gays, and bisexuals” and “report those people to her” so she can “cure them”. GENDERDOC-M reported the case and suggested the Ministry of Education hold awareness training for psychologists at schools. The Ministry did not accept the offer.

NETHERLANDS

In December, about half a million students in more than 3,000 schools participated in the 14th Purple Friday, organised by COC’s GSA Network.

NORTH MACEDONIA

In March, parents that are supported by anti-gender groups campaigned against a first-grade class handout that included a gay couple and their child. The school defended the material.

The Orthodox Church demonised comprehensive sexuality education throughout the year. HERA warned about the dangerous spread of misinformation and false allegations about sex education, and harassment of civil society organisations. The 2021 Law on Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence envisioned sex education in schools and violence prevention, but implementation has been lacking since.

POLAND

PiS continued to make stigmatising statements about information on LGBTIQ+ issues to students. Education Minister Czarnek said he would put the controversial ‘Lex Czarnek’, vetoed by President Duda twice in 2022, back on the parliament’s agenda following the elections.

Upon the initiative of Ordo Iuris, leader of the governing party PiS Jarosław Kaczyński proposed a bill against the “sexualisation” of children called “Protect Children, Support Parents” in May, similar to ‘Lex Czarnek’. The ‘Let’s protect children’ citizen’s initiative gathered 250,000 signatures and led to the lower parliament chamber (Sejm) passing an amendment of the Education Law in August that bans external organisations from “promoting issues related to the sexualisation of children” in preschools and primary schools.

The initiative was supported by the Speaker of the Sejm. In September, a coalition of NGOs turned to the European Commission to ask for the temporary suspension of funds to the Ministry of Education and Science, listing among the reasons the head of the Ministry’s anti-LGBT statement and the planned registry of youth, including LGBT+ youth, seeking support.

This year’s LGBT school ranking, published by LGBTplusMe.com in May, identified the most inclusive and accepting schools in Poznań, Warsaw, Łódź, Gdańsk, Olsztyn, Kraków and Kędzierzyn-Koźle. A protest was held outside the school in Kędzierzyn-Koźle, featuring signs “School should teach, not corrupt” and “NO to LGBT in schools”. The Ombudsperson for Children Mikołaj Pawlak announced he would inspect the top ranking schools, to see if they had screened their teachers and staff for ‘paedophilia’. In July, the Commissioner for Human Rights questioned Pawlak about the legal basis of his planned inquiry. This year’s Rainbow Friday on October 27 supported LGBT+ students in over 100 schools with workshops and educational packages, earning extensive media and social media coverage.

PORTUGAL

(See also under Bias-motivated Speech)

In April and August, the parliament adopted amendments to ensure the law on self-determination of gender identity is applied in the education system. Schools will now be in charge of ensuring that children and youth can use their self-assigned name in all school activities. In 2022, The National Council of Ethics for Life Sciences (CNECV) presented its opinion on the issue, encouraging the parliament to adopt a wider education anti-discrimination and anti-bullying law, advocate for mandatory gender-neutral toilets and locker rooms, and increase training, awareness-raising, and inclusive policies.

In June, the Portuguese government launched new

>THEMES

guidelines to prevent discrimination against LGBTI students at school and educational settings and provide guidance on the transition of trans pupils

ROMANIA

In March, the Ministry of Education presented proposals for two new Education Laws, intended to replace the National Education Law. The new laws included obligations to promote diversity, inclusion, and tolerance, and banned discrimination based on sexual orientation. 13 religious groups called for the withdrawal of provisions and a protest against these changes to the Education Laws was organised by NGOs in front of the Government. As a response, over 50 civil society organisations, student unions and hundreds of teachers, parents and students joined a petition to the Ministry of Education to call for inclusion, diversity, and non-discrimination in education. Following the controversy, the majority parliamentary groups deleted the explicit mentions of sexual orientation as a ground, but instead included a reference to the non-discrimination legislation (Government Ordinance 137/2000) and ensuring in this way that sexual orientation is covered.

A report from Campus Pride assessed the level of LGBT visibility and inclusion on Romanian university campuses. It found that at 34% of faculties, homophobic discourse has been used. 81% of trans respondents stated that their university and its staff do not respect their gender identity. However, testimonials showed that there are an increasing number of allies among colleagues and professors, making Romanian students optimistic about the future.

RUSSIA.

St. Petersburg State University refused to change a trans man's diploma and give him a new document with a new gender marker.

High school students in Moscow, who made a film about gay-straight conflicts in school, were detained.

The Higher School of Economics changed its 'gender studies' course to "men and women's studies".

SERBIA

Da se zna filed a complaint with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality against the Kragujevac Faculty of Medical Sciences for promoting Alek Račić's new book

with harmful anti-LGBT content (see under Bias-motivated speech).

SLOVAKIA

Inakost's survey found that 86% had heard anti-LGBTI+ comments in school and 37% had been personally targeted by negative comments or behaviour from their classmates. In April, OĽANO tabled an amendment to the Education Act which would introduce a parental veto on sex education in schools. The amendment was rejected.

Smer promised in its election campaign that it would seek to ban the discussion of LGBTI+ topics in schools.

The student association of Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University, Light* held the second annual LGBTI+ festival in March.

In November, MPs of the former OĽANO (now "Slovakia") party submitted a bill to parliament identical to the amendment to the Education Act rejected in April, which would introduce a parental veto on sex education in schools. The first reading of the bill should take place in early 2024.

SLOVENIA

One of the leading right wing media websites posted an article about a child who came out as trans. The article named the school, quoted the principal, and shared other potentially identifying information, which was a violation of the child's right to privacy and protection from media. The parents are now in a legal battle regarding this situation.

SPAIN

A 12-year-old trans boy committed suicide in Barcelona in February due to transphobic bullying in school. A 15-year-old trans girl committed suicide in Mallorca in June, in what could have been the consequence of transphobic bullying in school.

COGAM's study found that 35% of students in Madrid have prejudices towards LGBTI classmates (2019: 15%). 7% of LGBT and 17% of trans students suffered insults. 42% of students would prefer if their partner was not bisexual.

Asturias amended its protocol against bullying to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds.

>THEMES

The new Family Law, adopted in March, does not include a ban on ‘parental veto’, which would have allowed parents to prevent their children from participating in school workshops that include content that goes against their beliefs or morals.

SWEDEN

In September, several media outlets spread false rumours that preschoolers are taught sex education. Sweden Democrats (SD) continued to speak against sex education and norm-critical education in hostile ways.

SWITZERLAND

In June, the Federal Court ruled that the firing of a teacher, who refused to address a trans student by the name and gender he determined for himself, was legitimate.

In June, the National Council dismissed attempts to prohibit universities using gender-neutral language.

In the Canton of Ticino, several students changed the cover of their annual calendar, which showed a peace flag, because it could be mistaken for the rainbow flag.

A school in Zurich canton had to cancel their Gender Day event due to serious threats.

The local council in Chur voted against an LGBTIQ-themed day at city schools in March.

In September, the grand council of the Canton Valais supported the demand for a better inclusion of trans and non-binary pupils in public schools.

TURKEY

In September, the Ministry of Education announced introducing a new optional course on ‘The Family in Turkish Society’ to combat “LGBT values”.

UNITED KINGDOM

Civil society expressed grave concern about the government’s planned trans guidance for schools in England, which could forcibly out trans, non-binary and gender nonconforming students to their parents, place a blanket ban on social transitioning, and allow single-sex schools to refuse trans children (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). The government did not consult LGBT+ groups about the guidance.

Due to delays in the guidance, NHS England took it upon itself to say students should not be allowed to socially transition, i.e. change names, pronouns, or decide which bathroom to use, without parents’ knowledge and consent.

A primary school in Glasgow became the first to introduce a comprehensive education curriculum that covers LGBT issues, history and culture, based on the toolkit provided by the government. Scotland is currently consulting on new sex education guidance, which is separate from LGBT inclusive education in the broader curriculum.

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission found that many schools currently teach students that ‘homosexuality’ is wrong, shaming and stigmatising young people.