

## &gt;THEMES

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

## ALBANIA

The 14th Festival of Diversity opened on 17 May and events were held throughout the month, including a national forum on hate speech and hate crimes, and a flashmob. Tirana Pride was held on 20th of May under the motto, 'Open Your Heart'. Government and Ombudsperson office representatives spoke at the opening.

## ARMENIA

The 8th Rainbow Forum was held in Yerevan between 30 November and December 2.

## AUSTRIA

The 27th Vienna Pride was held on 18 June and was attended by roughly 300,000 people. Three young men, two of whom are minors, were arrested ahead of the Pride march for allegedly planning a bomb attack. The police had apparently known about the planned attack since spring.

## AZERBAIJAN

(See also under Bias-motivated Violence)

On 8 March, feminist and queer activists held the '8 March - We Want to Live!' rally, again demanding that the government ensure equal rights for all without discrimination on grounds of SOGI, investigate femicides, bring perpetrators to justice, take effective measures to prevent violence and femicides, and ratify the Istanbul Convention. The police pushed and shoved several participants. The Baku Municipality said the march had no purpose.

## BELARUS

(See also under Freedom from Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment)

Since the historic protests against the government in 2020, the government has continued its brutal crackdown on protesters, journalists, and civil society, through unlawful arrest, detention, violence, and ill-treatment. Freedom of expression, assembly and association continued to be extremely restricted.

A possible LGBT 'propaganda' law remained on the agenda this year. In April, a possible amendment of the Media Law was discussed in Parliament. The Ministry of Information however stated that the government's restrictions in place are already as effective as the propaganda law in Russia.

The Minister reported that they had already sent hundreds of letters to publishers and bookstores to clarify that in case of books with LGBT content, the Ministry will take administrative measures.

In May, MP Igor Zavalei said that stopping LGBT-themed films from circulating is difficult, but said that such films are very low quality and have poor ratings.

In June, the General Prosecutor's Office proposed to introduce administrative measures against the promotion of 'non-traditional sexual relations', gender reassignment, 'paedophilia' and childlessness, and to introduce chemical castration for 'paedophiles'. The bill was adopted in October. Several human rights organisations condemned the law, which counters international human rights law.

In September, following a warning from the state security service, a company took down an online ad, which featured a man dressed up as a woman.

On a positive note, the Gender Gap program was launched on Euroradio, where Iryna Sidorskaya examines the arguments of state propaganda against LGBT rights and gender.

Civil society organisations continued to be dissolved or forced to dissolve themselves, including several that work on LGBT issues. Several websites were blocked this year, including CSOs.

LGBTIQ+ Belarusians organised contingents in Prides in Warsaw, Berlin and Vilnius.

## BELGIUM

Belgium Pride was held in May (see here and here), with the motto 'Protect the Protest'.

In Flanders, Antwerp Pride celebrated its 16th edition in August.

The first Pride march in Wallonia backed by official institutions will take place in Liège in 2024. TransPédéGouines Pride, organised by grassroots groups, took place for the second time in May.

The "anti-rioters" draft law, which would have severely restricted freedom of assembly, was eventually dismissed in November when the PS and Ecolo parties refused to vote in its favour.

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### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

On 8 March, several participants of the Women's Day March in Banja Luka were attacked by four men, including two minors, because one participant was carrying a rainbow flag. The extremists took away the flag and verbally and physically harassed several people. Previously, the event was excluded from the city's official programs.

On 17 March, Pride organisers were to host a march, a film screening, a discussion, and a party in the town of Banja Luka. A few hours before the event, the police banned the screening allegedly due to increasing threats from violent groups. When activists met up to discuss the cancellation, the police told them to leave the premises and also leave the city as they were not safe. The police left the activists and two journalists unprotected on the street the street, who were physically and verbally attacked by 30-40 extremists shortly thereafter. The activists reported that the police were present, but did not intervene. Three activists were injured. Some fled the region soon after. The screening's venue was also vandalised. A few days before the screening, President Dodik said the authorities should consider banning the event, which was echoed by the mayor. Both politicians condemned the violence, but took no responsibility. Dodik said he felt "no remorse". On 21 March, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issued a statement condemning the ban and affirming that threats cannot be a reason to restrict freedom of assembly.

Several other international entities expressed concern about the attacks.

The fourth Sarajevo Pride was held in June, under the slogan 'Proudly Together'. The march was joined by hundreds of people and went ahead safely, despite a counter-demonstration again this year.

Adopted in July, a European Parliament report which called on the government to ensure LGBTIQ+ people can exercise their freedom of assembly and that they are protected from violence. The report condemns the attacks in Banja Luka.

In March 2023, SOC filed an anti-discriminatory lawsuit against BBI Center and Sarajevo Center Municipality, also related to the right to freedom of assembly.

### BULGARIA

(see more under Bias-motivated violence)  
The 16th Sofia Pride, focusing on the theme of family, was held in June and attended by thousands. A day before Pride, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kalin Stoyanov, met with the organisers and assured them of police protection. A parallel counter-demonstration for "Christian family values" was also organised. In the weeks leading up to Pride, several anti-LGBTI incidents took place (see more under Bias-motivated violence).

Sofia Pride also hosted a Human Rights Forum, which gathered over 100 participants, including embassies, representatives of the European Parliament Intergroup on LGBTI Rights, Sofia's mayor, representatives of the executive, the judiciary and the prosecutor's office.

### CYPRUS

Cyprus Pride 2023 was held in May in Nicosia under the theme 'In solidarity we thrive'. Over 6,000 people attended.

On 17 June 2023, the bicomunal event United by Pride was held for the second time in Nicosia, with two parallel Pride marches on both sides of the cities, bringing together people from across the island. The African LGBTQ Community Cyprus, LGBT Pilipinas, LGBTI Cyprus Diaspora, and two LGBTI university student organisations co-hosted the marches with Queer Collective Cy and Queer Cyprus Association (QCA).

Several LGBTI groups joined anti-fascist marches and actions in response to the unprecedented wave of xenophobic and racist rhetoric and violence against migrants in late summer.

### CROATIA

(See also under Bias-motivated Violence)

The 21st Queer Zagreb festival was held in May. The fourth Pride Ride was held in Zagreb in June. Split hosted its 12th Pride march and Karlovac its first one - no incidents took place.

The 22nd Zagreb Pride Festival kicked off on 22 May and the Pride march was held successfully in June, under the motto "Together for trans rights!". The mayor joined the march for the third time this year, and other politicians

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were also present. Mayor Tomašević said Zagreb “is side by side with European cities”. No incidents were recorded.

### CZECHIA

The Prague Pride Festival was held in August and focused on the theme of “More traditional than you think”. No incidents were recorded during the festival and the annual Pride march, which gathered again at least 60,000 people.

### DENMARK

The number of Pride marches in the country continues to grow, with Prides now taking place in 17 cities. The municipalities of Aarhus, Aalborg and Copenhagen are all funding LGBT+ safe spaces.

### ESTONIA

This year’s Baltic Pride was held in Tallinn in June, under the motto of “One for all and all for equality”. The one-week festival featured many cultural events, a conference, and the Pride march on 10 June, which was attended by a record number of 7,000 people. Incidents were recorded again this year (see under Bias-motivated Violence).

### FINLAND

(See under Bias-motivated Speech)

Pride events were held in a record number of over 40 different cities and small towns this year, which is twice as many as just five years ago.

Helsinki Pride was held on 1 July, focusing on the themes of triumph and rebellion, and brought together around 100,000 people. No incidents were recorded. Former President Tarja Halonen acted as the matron of Helsinki Pride Week this year.

Several MPs, Ministers, and cabinet members joined the Pride march, but were criticised by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and other conservative politicians.

The indigenous Sápmi Pride was held for the ninth time this year and took place in Heahttá in August.

### FRANCE

In June, Lyon Pride was disturbed twice: one man punched several participants and a group threw bottles at the marchers.

A screening of *Tomboy* in Saint-Amand-Montrond received backlash from far-right organisers, but was held and supported by many as a response.

In June, the town of Bastia in Corsica held its first Pride march. Guadeloupe held its second Pride event in July. compensation.

### GEORGIA

Tbilisi Pride Week was held between 1-8 July and was targeted by hate and violence again this year, including by the far-right Alt-Info group. Pride week, held under the motto “Love Cannot Be Defeated!” was joined by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and supported by embassies and UN agencies. All the events were held indoors and with pre-registration.

Prior to Pride week, far-right groups carried out mass mobilisation, called for violence, and spread misinformation. Previously, civil society groups called for police protection and the organisers held months-long negotiations with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who vowed to protect the events.

On 8 July, about 2,000 violent far-right protesters broke the police cordon, and stormed and attacked the venue where the the Pride festival was scheduled to take place. Instead of expelling the mob, the police evacuated the Pride organisers, who had to cancel the event.

In a joint statement, human rights groups have emphasised that the police failed in its duties to protect the participants. The organisers suspect that the government coordinated the disruption with the far-right Alt Info group and the evacuation was the default plan all along. The Ministry of Interior and the speaker of the Parliament both condemned the violence but welcomed that the police were able to prevent physical injuries.

The President said such statements were not meaningful when the government continues to perpetuate hate speech. The Public Defender, several politicians, Embassies, Council of Europe and UN mandates condemned the violence. The Public Defender affirmed that it was the state’s responsibility to protect the Pride participants. The European Parliament’s LGBTI Intergroup urged the European Commission and the Equality Commissioner to condemn the attack and impose targeted sanctions on Alt-Info and its leader, Konstantin Morgoshia.

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On 11 July, MP Fridon Indzhia of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia party [said](#) that while sexual minorities should be accepted, their gathering in public spaces should be limited.

In October, WISG together with EHRAC and GYLA [submitted](#) a report to the Committee of Ministers indicating that since the 2021 ruling of the ECtHR in the [WISG and others v. Georgia](#) case, no one has been brought to criminal justice, no one has been granted a victim status, the LGBTQI community in Georgia is not able to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and the State is not taking any measures towards minimising the level of LGBTphobia in society.

### GERMANY

Several participants of the Berlin CSD (Pride) march were [attacked](#) this year, including before and after the event. The police said the number of attacks was not unusual given the size of the march. A high number of Prides across the country were attacked this year.

### GREECE

Several LGBTI+ organisations, and over [100](#) groups in total, [joined](#) the Walk against Discrimination on 21 March to say no to racism, discrimination and violence against minorities.

Several incidents [took place](#) during Athens Pride, held in June. The starting point of the march [was](#) moved due to an election campaign booth in the original location, which many activists [criticised](#) as backing down. The new route [did not pass](#) by the parliament's building. A group of fascists [attacked](#) a trans person on the morning of Pride and took their flag away. Several migrants were also targeted.

On 29 June, Vuziballs [held](#) the first Pride march in Chania (Crete).

### HUNGARY

In April, the Hungarian Asexual Community [held](#) Hungary's first asexual Pride march.

In April, the Curia/Supreme Court [upheld](#) the police ban on the far-right Mi Hazánk protest, which would have taken place at the same time and place as Budapest Pride and would have [hindered](#) freedom of assembly.

The annual [Budapest Pride](#) march, held in July, brought together approximately 35,000 people again this year. The organisers [said](#) the crackdown on LGBTQ visibility has intensified, but also that the government backlash has boosted participation. Pécs [held](#) its third Pride march in September - no incidents were recorded.

### ICELAND

Hinsegin Vesturland [held](#) a queer festival in July, which [included](#) a 400 metres rainbow flag painted in Akranes, the longest rainbow street in the country.

Reykjavik Pride, held in August, [brought](#) together a record number of people this year. Pride events were held in several towns.

### IRELAND

Numerous Pride events and marches were [held](#) across the country. The [40th](#) Dublin Pride was [attended](#) by tens of thousands in July.

A record number of 3,000 people [attended](#) Trans and Intersex Pride in Dublin in July.

[Clare](#), [Letterkenny](#), [Navan](#), and [Athlone](#) held their first Pride events this year.

Pride events in Meath were [disrupted](#) by anti-LGBTQ+ protesters.

### ITALY

53 Pride marches were held in a [coordinated](#) manner across Italy between April and September, with family rights [being](#) at the forefront of Pride events.

Following Pride marches, participants were [harassed and assaulted](#) in Bologna, Chieti, Lombardy, Pavia, Palermo and [Toscana](#).

The Lazio Region withdrew its patronage of Rome Pride this year, [saying](#) the Pride posters were "promoting illegal behaviour", such as surrogacy.

### KAZAKHSTAN

Several activists who participated in the 2022 [protests](#) were sentenced to prison this year. Many activists were punished on fabricated grounds (see the story of [Aigerim Tleuzhan](#)). The sentences were a worrying sign for civil

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society in Kazakhstan about the growing pressure from Tokaev's authoritarian regime.

Several protests were denied permission this year in Almaty, with fabricated justifications such as “ongoing repairs” or “patriotic events”. The 8 March rally was also denied a permit, in what the organisers saw as a clearly political and discriminatory move. In the end, after four rejections, the Feminist Women's meeting was allowed to go on in a more remote area of Almaty. The authorities wanted to limit participants to 300, but between 700-1,000 people joined the rally. This year's event called for bodily autonomy and protection against sexual violence.

On 8 April, a feminist rally against domestic violence took place in Astana bringing together 400 people urging the government to adopt laws that protect women. A day before the event, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK) published a hostile and stigmatising statement (see also under Bias-motivated Speech). A few days later, MP Nazarov (see also under Bias-motivated Speech) suggested that young people who participated in a march in April, which featured rainbow flags, should be monitored and their parents should take responsibility for the participants' actions.

In January, an LGBTQIA+ activist from 'Feminita' applied to hold The Equality March (Pride event) in June in Almaty several times. She got the denial from the local council. 'Feminita' has an ongoing trial process regarding this case.

In May an LGBTQI+ activist applied to organise a Pride event in Astana. The city administration falsely cited ongoing repairs and cultural events to deny the request. A court hearing took place in October after the activist's appeal to the decision. The court withheld the ruling of the previous court and refused to satisfy the activist's appeal.

### KOSOVO

CSGD, CEL, and other human rights groups jointly organised Kosovo Pride Week again this year, between 5 - 10 June. This year's motto was “I love you as you are!”. The Prime Minister joined the opening event, which his office and the Office for Good Governance co-organised with civil society. President Vjosa Osmani spoke about hate crimes and violence against LGBTI people in Kosovo and globally.

Pride Week featured various events, including movie

nights, parties, exhibitions, discussions, and a conference. For the first time, Prime Minister Kurti also attended the Pride march. Other political figures were also present. The march was celebrated by hundreds on 10 June and no incidents were recorded.

### KYRGYSTAN

(See also under Freedom of Expression)

Since 2020, authorities continue to impose bans on peaceful assemblies and protests in city locations. To conduct the Women's Day March on March 8, it is mandatory to obtain approval from both the mayor's office and law enforcement agencies.

In 2023, a prohibition was instituted regarding the display of paraphernalia such as flags representing specific countries, notably Ukraine and Russia, as well as items associated with the rainbow symbol. A man who wore a rainbow-coloured face mask was detained by the police. Several others who had symbols relating to LGBT+ rights or Ukraine were also approached by the police.

### LATVIA

This year's Riga Pride was held under the motto ‘We are Latvia too’. The festival ran between 29 May and 4 June. The march was the largest to date with over 7,000 participants, and an outdoor party was held for the first time this year. No major incidents were recorded, but one counter-protester was detained.

### LIECHTENSTEIN

Liechtenstein held its second Pride event on 10 June in Schaan, featuring the first Pride march, panel discussion, performances, and a party. The event called for marriage equality, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, employment integration, and education on LGBTI issues in schools.

FLAY's main annual event was held on the national holiday in August.

### LITHUANIA

Vilnius Pride, held on 1 July, was attended by over 5,000 participants and was joined by the city's newly elected mayor. This year, the march was organised by trans organisation Trans Autonomija and Demonstrate. Despite road closures, one car drove through the crowd on one of

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the main streets, which many understood as a dangerous provocation. No one was injured, but the police started an investigation. Several counter protesters were also in the streets.

LGL's demonstration in September (see Freedom of Expression) was disrupted by counter-protesters. The police did not take action to secure the safety of LGBTI protesters from hostile crowds. A pre-trial investigation was initiated regarding the actions of the counter protesters, however the actions of police officers have not been investigated, despite authorities acknowledging that mistakes were made (see under Police and Law Enforcement).

### LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg Pride Week took place in July this year. Roughly 3,500 people joined the Equality March on 8 July.

### MALTA

Malta hosted EuroPride Valletta 2023 between 7-17 September, under the theme #EqualityFromTheHeart. The ten day festival featured cultural events, a Pride march, discussions, a conference, and a community dialogue held by the NCPE and with the participation of Maltese EU Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli. The conference and the Pride march were attended by the Prime Minister. The Pride march, held on 16 September, gathered thousands, including the staff of the NCPE, and featured Christina Aguilera as the final performer. The Maltese President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, did not join the events.

Several human rights groups and the former president Marie Louise Coleiro Preca urged the organisers to withdraw the invitation of the 2018 EuroVision winner Netta Barzilai from Israel and show that EuroPride does not support apartheid and occupation. EuroPride did not follow suit. Several people chanted 'Free Palestine' during Barzilai's performance.

Gozo, a more conservative area in the Maltese Islands, held its second Pride march on 9 September. One incident took place (see under Bias-motivated Violence).

### MOLDOVA

On 25 May, the National Assembly of Gagauzia adopted a law banning 'LGBT propaganda'. Civil society firmly condemned the move, reminding that such a ban violates

Moldova's Constitution. The Ombudsperson issued a statement reminding of the obligation to uphold freedom of expression and assembly without discrimination.

This year marked Moldova's 22nd Pride Festival, which focused on the theme of same-sex partnership and marriage equality, and was held between 12-18 June. The Pride march on 18 June was the biggest to date, attended by over 500 people. A number of MPs from the ruling Action and Solidarity party (PAS) were present, but one of them said Moldova was not ready for marriage equality.

No attacks were recorded and fewer police officers were present than before, which the organisers welcomed as a positive step towards marching freely. Small groups of counter-protesters were present, holding religious symbols and chanting "shame".

A week before the march, Chisinau's mayor Ion Ceban said he would not give the organisers a permit - similar to last year. Nevertheless, the mayor had no mandate to ban Pride. The PAS mayoral candidate condemned Ceban's statements and said he would support the Pride march. Several memes were posted, making fun of Ceban's stance. Ceban was re-elected in local elections in November.

### MONACO

Monaco held its second Pride event this year. Over 100 representatives from the government, the National Council, businesses and others gathered on 1 June.

### MONTENEGRO.

Transpozijum IX / Transposium 9, a rich cultural, educational, and social event bringing together trans activists from the region, was held in Petrovac in September, in cooperation with Trans Mreza Balkan.

The 11th Montenegro Pride was held in October, organised by Queer Montenegro, featuring a range of events. The Pride march in Podgorica was held on 21 October and was attended by almost 3,000 people and several government representatives, Ministers, and the Ombudsman. No incidents were recorded. With this year's motto 'Self-determination', Pride organisers called for a legal gender recognition law that is based on self-determination (see here and here).



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### NETHERLANDS

Civil society addressed the stagnation of LGBTI+ emancipation in The Netherlands during Pride Amsterdam 2023. Organisations asked government and political parties for strong measures, with research for the first time showing a small decrease in acceptance among the population, the country taking fourteenth place in the Rainbow Europe Index, increased online hate speech, more reported incidents of violence and discrimination and increased feelings of unsafety.

55 rainbow municipalities continued their work this year, and with government funding.

Transgender Network's annual monitoring report found that the number of reported anti-trans discrimination cases almost doubled from 78 in 2021 to 149 in 2022. This was the highest annual number to date.

After almost 20 years of campaigning by COC, in January the Senate adopted Constitutional amendments to cover sexual orientation and disability in the prohibition of discrimination. During the parliamentary procedures, it was made explicit that the existing constitutional ban on discrimination on the basis of sex, includes gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. The provision entered into force in February.

After calls from civil society, the Dutch government published its first policy document addressing emancipation of bi+ people, probably the largest group in the Dutch LGBTI+ community.

### NORTH MACEDONIA

The 11th Skopje Pride Weekend art and cultural festival was held between 1-13 June and featured discussions, exhibitions, performances, and parties again this year.

The fourth Skopje Pride march was held on 24 June, with the motto 'Loud and Proud!'. CSOs published safety guidelines ahead of the march, advising participants to avoid the Church-led demonstration (see under Bias-motivated Speech), and to remove Pride-related symbols before and after the event. The march was attended by thousands, including several Ministers and MPs. No incidents were recorded.

### NORWAY

A year after the deadly at the London Pub (see under Bias-motivated violence) Oslo Pride was held in the summer. The Pride march gathered over 90,000 people and was joined by several politicians, including the Prime Minister.

The seventh Barents Pride, half an hour from the Russian border, was held in September. .

### POLAND

2023 has seen nearly 40 pride marches organised all over Poland, including towns as small as 10,000 inhabitants. The Warsaw Equality March, held under the motto "We foretell equality and beauty" was opened by mayor Rafał Trzaskowski and was joined by tens of thousands.

The police asked the authorities to modify the route of the fifth Pride march in Częstochowa, for it to not interfere with religious celebrations. Authorities denied the request. Several smaller cities held Pride events or marches this year, including Zielona Góra and for the first time Słupsk and Piaseczno.

### PORTUGAL

Lisbon Pride was held in person this year, with an estimated 100,000 participants. Pride in Porto was held in July, without any incidents, but following disputes with the municipality over the event's location. The organisers launched successful asking for Pride to take place in central Porto.

An LGBTI+ march was held for the first time in Évora.

### ROMANIA

More than 25,000 people joined this year's Bucharest Pride in July, marking the largest march to date. The Pride Festival featured 20 events and spanned over nine days. On the day of the Pride march, a counter-demonstration called March for Normality was held in the capital.

Timișoara Pride was held on 1 July, as part of the national cultural programme of the city, which was the 2023 European Capital of Culture. Around 600 people joined the third Iași Pride march, organised by Rise Out in June. A smaller group of far-right protesters was present again - they chanted hateful slogans and threw water at the participants. Oradea organised its first Pride Week in August, drawing 1,560 people - as well as an anti-Pride gathering in the city centre. The march in Cluj-Napoca

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was attended by 3,600 people and was not without its controversies. Aside from far right protesters on the side, one of the gendarmes tasked with protecting the march accused a trans participant carrying a trans flag of waving the “paedophile flag”.

### RUSSIA

Organisers and participants of public events on LGBTI rights continued to face harassment and violence (see under Freedom of Expression).

The police detained several people who protested against the ban on trans healthcare and legal gender recognition (see [here](#)). In June 2023, activist Aleksandr Sinko [went to protest](#) against the adoption of the law banning gender reassignment with a poster reading “Save the right to be myself”. On the same day, he was detained and a report was drawn up on him for “propaganda of non-traditional relations”. The case was reclassified from an article on LGBT propaganda to an article on violation of COVID-19 restrictions. In the end, Sinko was fined just 40,000 roubles (about 40 EURO).

Clubs and events were also raided (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

The queer art festival Open Art was [cancelled](#) after warnings from the prosecutor. Other events were also [cancelled](#).

QueerFest was [held](#) online again.

COVID-19 [restrictions](#) on holding mass events, including protests and even single [pickets](#), [remained](#) in force this year.

Several people who protested this year were detained (see a list [here](#)).

In November, the European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) in favour of LGBT activist Vyacheslav Vereshchagin, who was fined by the court in 2018 for participating in Pride in St. Petersburg.

### SERBIA

Pride Week was held between 4-10 September under the slogan “We’re not even close”. On the eve of Pride Week, a few dozen far-right protesters [gathered](#) in Belgrade “for the defence of family and traditional values” and for a ban on Pride.

The [Pride march](#) was [held](#) on 9 September and was protected by riot police. This [was](#) the biggest march to date and [went](#) safely. About 50 ultraconservative protesters and Orthodox priests [showed](#) up. The President [refused](#) to raise the rainbow flag in the capital, which civil society has asked for. One person was [assaulted](#) after the Pride march, after refusing to take off rainbow symbols.

### SLOVAKIA

Activists [held](#) a demonstration outside the parliament in May against the proposed ban on legal gender recognition (see below). Minister of Finance Igor Matovič (see under Bias-motivated Speech) called the event “propaganda” and [got](#) into a physical fight with the participants, filmed them, verbally harassed them, and [tried](#) to take their signs away. Other MPs also joined him.

The Bratislava Pride march was [held](#) on 22 July and was [not open](#) to political parties given the upcoming elections. The festival’s slogan was ‘Proud and indestructible’. This year, the patrons of Pride [included](#) the Culture and Justice Ministers, Silvia Hroncová and Jana Dubovcová. No violent incidents were recorded, but the ultra-conservative and anti-LGBTI+ March for Family was again [held](#) at the same time.

Three allies and family members of LGBTI+ people [organised](#) the first ever Pride march in the town of Bardejov. Pride marches took place again in Košice and Banská Bystrica. Košice Pride faced opposition from counter-protesters during the march. About 30+ extremists from the neo-fascist Kotleba party attempted to disrupt the march, threw plastic bottles and yelled hate speech at attendees of the Pride.

Despite preparations and consultations with the local state police in Košice before Pride, a counter-protest took the police by surprise. Due to safety measures the police changed the route of the march. Organisers of Košice Pride felt that this was unnecessary backing down to extremists given that Košice Pride had been officially scheduled months earlier, and instead the police should have rerouted the counter protesters.

### SLOVENIA

The nine-day Ljubljana Pride Festival kicked off on 9 June and the Pride march was [held](#) on 17 June. This year’s motto was ‘More Communities, One Goal’. The march [gathered](#) approximately 3500 people. The Minister of Labour, Family,



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Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities joined the event and also [published](#) a supportive statement. Minister for a Solidary Future [Simon Maljevac](#), the first [openly gay](#) minister, was also present. For the first time, Slovenia's President [held](#) a speech at the march.

On the eve of Pride, a man [threw](#) a bottle and broke the window of a bar that displayed a rainbow flag, and which is [owned](#) by a prominent LGBTIQ+ rights activist. Several Pride participants were attacked before, during and after the march (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Some were [attacked](#) with eggs while marching, which was filmed and gathered countless hate comments online, including death threats. Some counter-demonstrators [chanted](#) anti-LGBT slogans, including “there are only two genders”.

A young woman [carrying](#) a rainbow flag was [assaulted](#) at a bar. Several rainbow flags were [burnt](#) around the city, which the perpetrators [filmed](#) and shared on social media. Human rights organisations and venues hosting events were also [targeted](#) (see also under Bias-motivated Violence). The Pride organisers shared that such incidents had not happened for years and advised participants to take off Pride-related accessories before and after Pride events. The [Prime Minister](#), the [Speaker of Parliament](#), and the [Ombudsperson](#) condemned the violence.

The Pride march in Maribor, held on 20 September with the motto ‘From Laws to Society’, was also [attacked](#). Counter-protesters were chanting anti-LGBT slogans, [assaulted](#) several people, including a well-known LGBTIQ+ activist who was taken to hospital. After the march, several others were [attacked](#), verbally harassed, and eggs were thrown at them.

The Minister for a Solidary Future, Minister of Culture, the President, the Ombudsperson, Maribor’s mayor, civil society and others condemned the attacks (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)).

### SPAIN

An estimated record number of 1.5 million people (2022: 600,000) [joined](#) this year’s Madrid Pride demonstration, which took place a few weeks before the general elections and with the motto [‘For our rights, for our lives: with Pride’](#).

Thousands joined [Madrid’s Critical Pride](#) in late June to [speak](#) up against the far-right.

### SWEDEN

A camp for trans children, organised by Transsamman and RFSL Ungdom was [cancelled](#) in June due to threats.

### SWITZERLAND

The police [surrounded](#) an unauthorised Women’s Day protest in Basel on 8 March and [fired](#) rubber bullets at the participants. Amnesty International called for a thorough investigation into the police’s actions.

Several Pride events were held throughout the country. This year’s Pride in Geneva was [held](#) without sponsorship from major brands. Zurich Pride was the [largest](#) to date, gathering 55,000 people (2022: 40,000).

St. Gallen [held](#) its first Pride march this year - several people were [filmed](#) by the Swiss People’s Party’s youth section and ridiculed online.

The Bern Pride march was attended by 10,000 people, but many [expressed](#) concern that the police “intensively” [filmed](#) the entire march as a ‘preventive’ measure. The march coincided with Eurogames (see under Participation in Public, Cultural and Political Life).

### TURKEY

Türkiye continued to severely violate the right to freedom of assembly in the country this year, with systemic bans, violent attacks on demonstrations, mass detention, and violence.

Throughout the months of June, activists [organised](#) several Pride events and marches in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Eskişehir, among others, some of which were successfully held. The police [arrested 15 students](#) for peacefully [demonstrating](#) at METU. A week later, the police [blocked](#) [Istanbul Trans Pride March](#), [used](#) violence against the participants, and detained ten participants. The police did not grant a permit for the Istanbul Pride march on 25 June, installed roadblocks on the route, and suspended metro service near Taksim square. The organisers [held](#) an unannounced protest about 1 km from Taksim. The police [detained](#) over 100 participants in Istanbul and at least 50 in Izmir, where Pride was held on the same day.

Overall, the police backlash led to the [detention](#) of 241 people during Pride month, including four children, seven lawyers, five foreigners, journalists, and activists.

Several of the Pride marches were targeted not only by extremist religious and nationalist groups, but also by political parties. The Patriotic Party and its youth branch,

## >THEMES

Turkish Youth Union (TGB), targeted an LGBTI+ Pride Month event scheduled to take place at the Ankara Bar Association. A group of ten people [gathered](#) before a gender equality panel and insulted those attending. The police did not intervene, and the event went ahead despite the provocation.

Throughout the year, LGBTI+ picnics, concerts and film screenings were also [banned](#) and [obstructed](#) by police (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)).

LGBTI+ people [joined](#) Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır with rainbow flags, but were [attacked](#).

Several Women's Day events were [held](#) on 8 March in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Diyarbakır, Mersin, Eskişehir, Antalya, Gaziantep, Aydın, and Balıkesir. In some cities, police tried to ban and prevent the marches. 28 people including LGBTI+ activists were [detained in İstanbul](#) and released on the same night. and the police [used](#) excessive force against the participants.

The court case against 12 activists who participated in Pride at Boğaziçi University in 2021 continued this year and [ended](#) with an acquittal in January. The case against Ankara Pride participants also [continued](#). Court proceedings against Tarlabası Community Centre, a women's and children's rights organisation that planned an LGBTI+ event, [continued](#) this year.

## UKRAINE

Pride month in June [received](#) unprecedented support across from [businesses](#) and companies.

Kyiv Pride was [hosted](#) by the city of Liverpool, where the *Eurovision Song Contest* was held after Ukraine won in 2022. Over 20,000 [joined](#) the march, which used the motto "The war is not over". Several smaller delegations of Kyiv Pride joined Pride marches across Europe and beyond.

The fifth KharkivPride, at the beginning of September, was the only LGBTI Pride event held inside the country, with the theme "We Unite for Victory." The event aimed to increase LGBTI engagement in Ukraine's ongoing challenges by sharing community knowledge, contacts, and resources. The highlight was the Kharkiv Pride march, a 30-minute [art intervention](#) involving nearly 100 participants, symbolising the community's growing visibility and resilience.