

MOLDOVA

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

A trans woman was denied service in a bank due to the mismatch between her documents and her gender expression. Her complaint to the Equality Council brought a decision confirming the discrimination and recommendation to the bank to take measures to prevent such situations in the future.

In June, an online news site disclosed the location of GENDERDOC-M's Trans Camp that was planned to take place in July. Following the news and threats to the originally designated hotel, the organisers moved the event to another location.

ASYLUM

Civil society organised help for LGBT+ people fleeing Ukraine and Russia.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Despite the 2022 law making anti-LGBT hate speech and hate crimes a criminal offence, hate speech by politicians and religious leaders remained a serious issue this year, as highlighted by the Ombudsperson. In January, the Metropolitan of Chisinau, Vladimir said that the Orthodox Church would firmly respond if Moldova provided legal recognition to same-sex couples (see more under Family) and that the authorities would become "traitors" to promote foreign values and the "propaganda of sin". Genderdoc-M filed a hate speech report against the Metropolitan. In June, several politicians made hostile statements about the Pride march (see here and here). Paediatrician Igor Pletosu called LGBT people "mentally ill" in June. Hate speech, misinformation and stigmatising statements were also common in the lead up to the municipal elections in November.

A man was found guilty of hate speech and fined for hate messages and threats to an activist last year.

A man who threatened to kill gay ex-soldier Marin Pavlescu (see under Police and Law Enforcement), was arrested upon entering the country in June.

A two-day event bringing together thousands of evangelical Christians, known for their anti-LGBT views, was held in Chisinau - the organisers met with the mayor.

GENDERDOC-M revealed this year's anti-LGBT awards in June, featuring Orthodox Bishop Markel, the leader of "Our Party" Renato Usatii and Communist Party MP Diana Karaman. Usatii,

for instance, said in January that he would give a house in Italy to same-sex newlyweds as long as they get married there and move from Moldova. Karaman had made several statements against Pride and also against the Istanbul Convention. The Shor party, which was found to be unconstitutional and banned this year, received the main prize.

Hate speech by politicians increased during the campaigns for local elections. For example, the Socialist Party distributed a newspaper that said "Ban on gay parades and LGBT propaganda in schools". In October, Maxim Moroşan, a candidate for the mayor of Bălţi and a TV presenter engaged in a homophobic dialogue with threats and incitement to hatred during the TV show *Evening Conversation*. Both cases have been reported to the police.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several hate crimes took place this year and several LGBT people reported domestic violence cases to civil society. In June, a gay man was attacked while he was walking to, and in his car. The police detained the attackers and classified the case as a criminal offence.

In September, the Renaissance Party organised a protest in the city centre against European integration. At the protest, a flag with rainbow colours and the EU flag colours was torn apart by the party leader, Alexandr Nesterovskii.

In October, a young man was attacked outside a nightclub by other club customers with homophobic slurs and physical violence. Neither the security nor police identified the attackers. A misdemeanour case has been opened.

EDUCATION

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.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The buildings of the EU Delegation and the US Embassy raised a rainbow flag on the occasion of IDAHOBIT in May. 30 Embassies joined this year's IDAHOBIT statement and urged the authorities to protect Pride participants in June. In his 2022 annual report, the Ombudsperson called on the state to protect the rights of LGBT people.



FAMILY

Following the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights on [Fedotova v. Russia](#) in January, family rights [became](#) a heated topic in Moldova. The Court affirmed that the lack of legal recognition for same-sex couples is a violation of the right to private and family life (Art. 8). Moldova's Metropolitan for instance [called](#) the judgement "outrageous" and ex-President Igor Dodon [said](#) recognition for same-sex couples would never happen in Moldova. In June, the People's Advocate, Moldova's NHRI, [said](#) the state will have to find a solution to comply with the ECtHR ruling. Currently, the Constitution defines family as marriage between a man and a woman and the Family Code sets out that same-sex marriage is not permitted.

Six couples turned to the authorities to request legal recognition, including in the form of marriage (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)) - all six were [denied](#). Several couples shared their stories in interviews this year (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Six couples [turned](#) to the courts after the registry denied their request.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Disney's *Strange World* was [removed from](#) cinema schedules in the Transnistrian region due to alleged 'LGBT propaganda'.

In February, Alexandr Nesterovschi, a deputy from the Communists and Socialists Bloc, [proposed](#) the inclusion of a draft law on the parliamentary plenary session's agenda that bans LGBTI "propaganda" in schools. The parliamentary majority declined this initiative.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

This year, the Ministry of Justice continued to work on the legal gender recognition law. In 2022, the Equality Council [established](#) that the lack of a legal framework constitutes discrimination against trans people.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Soldier Marin Pavlescu, who had [suffered](#) homophobic [abuse](#) and mocking at his army base in 2021, [filed](#) a lawsuit against the [Ministry of Defense](#).



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