

NORWAY

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Trans people and allies continued to be targeted by the rapidly growing anti-gender movement. Much of the hostile rhetoric was about access to trans-specific healthcare, particularly for minors, legal gender recognition and generally against the trans movement.

The Conservative party, which in the 2023 local election received 0,5 % of the total votes and became Norway's thirteenth largest party, targeted FRI's education program Rosa Kompetanse, claiming that it was linked to paedophilia and nazi ideology; that it tells children to break from gender and sexuality norms; that it makes children "gender-confused"; among others.

Trans-inclusive women's organisations and other NGOs continued to be targeted by anti-gender forces and accused of being influenced by the "LGBT-lobby".

An adviser from FRI filed a report against the leader of Women's Declaration International (WDI) for anti-trans harassment and hate speech. This case received international attention and led to demonstrations in several countries. A similar case was also investigated on initiative by the police themselves. Both cases were dropped.

In the aftermath of the Oslo shooting (see under Bias-motivated Violence), a report by Analyse & Tall was released on the social media climate for queer and trans people. It found that the number of X (formerly known as Twitter) posts about trans people has increased from 1,485 in 2018 to a striking 23,465 in 2022, with a large proportion of them being critical, negative, or hateful. It also showed that the percentage of supporting tweets towards Pride had dropped from more than 60% in 2018 to less than 40% in 2022, and the amount of hateful tweets increased from 16% in 2018 to 27 % in 2022.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In March, 17 LGBTI groups petitioned the government to demand a wider investigation into the terrorist attack in 2022, which killed two people and wounded more than 20 people outside Oslo's queer haven and oldest queer bar, the London Pub. In June, the police-commissioned investigative report concluded that the police had known about terror threats before it, but failed to prevent the attack or inform the organisers. The alleged main perpetrator was charged with murder, attempted murder and terrorism, but no trial date has been set and the case is still under investigation. So far five people have been charged for the attack. Commemorations were held across the country on the anniversary of the attack.

Threats targeted this year's Oslo Pride again this year - one suspect was detained. The police released a threat report in May.

The 2023 hate crimes report from the police found a continued increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes, from 97 in 2020 to 240 in 2021 and 285 in 2022. According to the police, hate crimes linked to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are solved in 45% of cases, while the total for all hate crimes are higher (51.9%).

BODILY INTEGRITY

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 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.

EMPLOYMENT

Esben Esther Pirelli Benestad, a prominent figure within trans healthcare and professor of sexology, had their medical licence revoked in February for providing trans healthcare outside the monopolised system. Several protests were held across Norway in solidarity with the doctor. In July, the Health Authority partially reinstated their licence, with limitations such as only being allowed to practise under supervision in the public healthcare system.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The new Action Plan for Gender and Sexual Diversity (2023-2026) was published in February. It identifies three priority areas: LGBT+ people with a minority background and in religious communities; trans people and people with gender incongruence; and sports for all. The Action Plan includes 49 measures. Civil society criticised the plan for not including people with disabilities explicitly.



The Co-operative Council for Religious and Belief Communities (STL) has organised dialogue meetings between representatives from queer organisations and religious and belief communities. They published a joint [statement](#) in September, emphasising a wish to listen more to each other and focus on common ground, as well as supporting each other when being subjected to attacks.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The commission reviewing the state of freedom of expression in Norway [published](#) its report. The Norwegian Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence [criticised](#) the report for being more focused on the chilling effects of the hate speech legislation than protecting minorities from hate speech, which also was supported by other organisations.

HEALTH

Despite the 2020 [guidelines](#) on trans healthcare, which centre user participation and an individualised approach to care, care provision remained centralised again this year. Civil society and the city of Oslo continued to demand that HKS become the national competency centre but the Health Ministry [denied](#) this request in March. Previously, only one hospital in the public healthcare system, in Vestfold, has provided services to non-binary people, such as wigs and prosthetics, but not hormones or surgeries. Other such regional centres are underway in the other regions of Norway.

Trans healthcare for minors became a particularly critical issue this year. In March, the Norwegian Healthcare Investigation Board (UKOM) [published](#) its recommendations, urging the government to revise the care provision guidelines and to redefine trans healthcare for minors as 'experimental', which would also demand mandatory participation in research for minors receiving care'. Civil society and [civil rights attorneys](#) expressed deep concern about the report, which ignores international standards, relies on very limited literature, and [fails](#) to meaningfully involve trans youth and organisations. CSOs [published](#) a detailed response to the report. In June, the

Ministry of Health announced it may [reconsider](#) the provision of care to minors and was quoted as saying that care for minors should only be provided by the specialist health service at Rikshospitalet. Civil society met with the Directorate the next day and was reassured that they would be involved in decisions, and [they](#) received the clarification from the Ministry that as long as it is safe, treatment can also be carried out in municipal or private institutions.

In September, the Nordland Research Institute published a damning [report](#) about service provision in Rikshospitalet. Rikshospitalet has long been criticised by service users and trans organisations for [unethical research](#), unethical treatment, using a [pathologisation](#) as standard and rejecting more than half of those who turn to them for help.

Civil society is [alarmed](#) by all these developments, particularly as the denial of HKS as a national competency centre came a month after the adoption of the new LGBT+ action plan, which identifies trans people as a priority group.

Despite clear signals from the County governor that a GP referral is sufficient to have access to trans-specific healthcare, Rikshospitalet has not implemented this in practice.

Despite calls from civil society, the Minister of Health has still not organised targeted and proactive support for those affected by the Oslo shooting in June 2022 - an estimated 200 people.

The Minister of Health [changed](#) the blood donation regulations, which no longer impose a 12-month deferral period on men who have sex with men. The change will enter into force in 2024.

Access to the Monkeypox vaccine [improved](#) this year.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

FRI [received](#) the 2023 Humanist Award from the Human-Etisk Forbund.

FRI [apologised](#) that the organisation in the 1980's, by a small, but prominent part of the leadership, had given the so-called 'paedophile working group' acknowledgement as a subgroup of the organisation. The group was quickly excluded. FRI states that inclusion of the group never should have happened, and hopes that more openness regarding abuse can provide necessary support for victims.



LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Non-binary recognition remains a gap in Norway. In June, the Directorate for Children, Youth and Families finalised its report on introducing a third legal gender category and submitted it to the Ministry of Culture and Equality. The report envisions three possible measures, namely: to no longer include gender in ID documents; to introduce a third legal gender option; or to prepare a national guide for recognising gender diversity. The parliament had previously decided that the gendered social security numbers would be changed due to the system running out of numbers, but that this change would only be introduced in 2032. Thus hindering the implementation of a full third legal gender for nearly a decade.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The police uniform regulations have been changed, so that police employees now can wear whichever uniform they want regardless of gender. The police will no longer allow off-duty officers at Pride to wear their uniform.



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