

ICELAND

ASYLUM

In March, Iceland's Parliament passed an immigration bill imposing severe restrictions on the rights of asylum seekers, most notably by withdrawing access to housing and healthcare services 30 days after asylum applications have been denied. The bill also grants Iceland more latitude in applying the Dublin Regulation, which holds the first EU member state where an asylum application is made responsible for processing the claim, and permits the deportation of asylum seekers to that state if they apply elsewhere. The legislation has sparked significant backlash from human rights organisations, who argued that the bill will further marginalise LGBTI asylum seekers and other vulnerable categories by allowing, for instance, the physical examination of those seeking asylum.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The chairman of the Northwest District of the political party Lýðræðisflokkurinn (Democratic Party), Eldur S. Kristinnsson, is facing a legal complaint for hate speech over comments made between 2022 and 2024. These remarks included a series of inflammatory and derogatory statements targeting the LGBTI community, such as accusations that LGBTI people groom children, labeling trans women as pedophiles, and promoting harmful rhetoric against LGBTI rights.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2024, eight reports of physical violence were recorded by LGBTI organisation Samtökin.

BODILY INTEGRITY

On January 1st, a law banning conversion therapy for sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression took effect. The law was passed on the 9 June, 2023 with 53 out of parliamentarians voting in agreement.

DATA COLLECTION

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Market recently released a study conducted by University of Iceland's Social Science Research Institute, as part of the government's Action plan for LGBTI issues 2022-2025. The study, conducted by the SSRI, involved mapping the frequency and manifestations of domestic violence and violence in intimate relationships of queer people. The survey found that young LGBTI people are more likely to have witnessed physical violence in their home, to have been subjected to physical violence in their home, and to have been subjected to physical violence in an intimate relationship. A fairly high percentage had also experienced such behavior at the hands of parents, but a lower percentage had experienced emotional abuse at the hands of a current partner or other family member.

EDUCATION

During a meeting with the National Youth Council of Iceland, as part of Iceland's Parliamentary election campaign in November, two parties claimed to be against education on LGBTI topics. LGBTI-inclusive education was also the subject of criticism by the leader of the Centre Party, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson.

EMPLOYMENT

A new study conducted by three unions revealed that the annual salaries of LGBTI men are, on average, 30% lower than those of their heterosexual counterparts. The study also found that only about half of the respondents are fully open about their sexual orientation at work, and nearly 60% report a general disadvantage in terms of conditions and rights in the labour market.

In October, Registers Iceland became the first institution to receive the Hinsegin certification from Samtökin '78, followed by the engineering office LOTA in November, and Ölgerðin earlier this year. This growing recognition highlights a shift towards workplaces taking tangible steps to ensure equal treatment and respect for all genders and sexual orientations. The Hinsegin certification, grounded in diversity education, assesses how effectively workplaces foster an inclusive environment, marking an important move toward more inclusive and equitable workplaces.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In late June, Hinsegin Vesturland held the 4th edition of the West Iceland LGBTI Festival in the town of Borgarnes. Similarly, Hinsegin dagar í Hrísey, in the north of Iceland, also held a LGBTI festival in the same period. In August, the Family Rainbow Festival (Regnbogahátíð), held by Hinsegin Austurland in Seyðisfjörður, celebrated 10 years of Pride in the east of Iceland. Reykjavík Pride was celebrated for the 25th time, and the newly elected President of Iceland, Halla Tómasdóttir, addressed the crowd.

HEALTH

In October the Minister of Health made changes to regulations regarding blood donations. From July 2025 blood donations for men who have sex with men (MSM) will be allowed following a nucleic acid testing (NAT) to screen for HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. Iceland had previously been one of the few European countries to uphold a ban on blood donations for MSM.

Analysis of the data from the Icelandic Youth Survey showed that young people who identify as genderqueer or "other gender" are more likely than cisgender teens to have witnessed physical violence in their home, to have been subjected to physical violence in their home, and to have been subjected to physical

violence in an intimate relationship. Furthermore, the data from the Icelandic Youth Survey highlighted that 15-20% of Icelandic children and youth identify as LGBTI.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Guðrún Karls Helgudóttir, the incoming Bishop of Iceland, the church's past on the LGBTI community, underlining the debt owed by the church to LGBTI people.



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