

Family

ALBANIA

A strategic litigation case seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriage is currently pending before the Administrative Court of Appeal of Albania. The case challenges the exclusion of same-sex couples from civil marriage under Albanian law and may have significant implications for access to family-related rights.

ARMENIA

In May 2025, Pink Human Rights Defender NGO published a report titled "The Human Rights Situation of LGBT+ People in Armenia During 2024" documenting 65 cases of violence and discrimination against LGBTI communities, recorded during the previous year, 38 of which involved domestic violence, making it the most prevalent form of abuse. Despite this scale, only 10 cases were reported to law enforcement authorities, and just three resulted in ongoing investigations, pointing to serious gaps in access to justice. As reported by Pink Human Rights NGO, this is due to the fact that victims frequently encounter insensitive treatment by law enforcement, including revictimisation, ridicule, and dismissive attitudes. Further, protection mechanisms for minors remain particularly weak, with authorities frequently prioritising "family reconciliation" over the protection of victims, often resulting in minors being returned to the same environment where violence occurred. At the same time, NGOs face legal constraints in assisting minors, as legal representation can only be provided with the consent of the minor's legal guardian – who may be the perpetrator or complicit in the abuse. Finally, the research underscored that the number of shelters operated by NGOs falls far short of existing needs, leaving many victims without immediate protection.

Austria In June, Austria introduced a [legislative package](#) amending the Private International Law Act to ensure the legal recognition of same-sex marriages, even when one partner is not an Austrian citizen. The law is expected to be adopted within the current legislative period.

BELGIUM

In April, the Flemish social-democratic party Vooruit, together with Equal Opportunities Minister Rob Beenders, announced [plans](#) to enshrine same-sex

marriage in the Belgian constitution. The proposal would insert explicit protections into Article 22, which concerns private and family life. Beenders argued that, with LGBTI rights facing growing pressure worldwide, constitutional recognition would provide an "additional barrier" against any rollback.

Bosnia and Herzegovina In October, the first session of the Working Group of the Government of the Federation of BiH on the Same-Sex Partnership Law was held. The establishment and initial meeting of the Working Group marked a formal step forward following years of advocacy by LGBTI organisations for legal recognition of same-sex couples in the Federation entity. However, by the end of 2025, no draft law had been published and no clear timeline for adoption had been communicated.

Cyprus In March, a gay couple [reported](#) being stranded in Cyprus after the birth of their twins via a surrogacy arrangement, due to ongoing delays in obtaining passports for their children. Despite submitting all necessary documents and applying for the passports in January, their application has been repeatedly delayed by administrative errors, including miscommunication and misplaced documents.

CZECHIA

In January, new [rules](#) governing same-sex partnerships came into effect in the Czech Republic following an amendment to the Civil Code. While the original draft aimed to introduce full marriage equality, parliament ultimately limited the reform to establishing "partnerships" rather than extending marriage rights to same-sex couples. The term "registered" was removed, and the updated legislation grants partners access to certain rights, such as joint property and survivor's pensions. However, restrictions remain, particularly concerning adoption.

DENMARK

In May the Parliament passed a draft bill on taxing inheritance. Under the new law, inheritance received from a biological parent who is not recognised as a legal parent - a position recognised in Danish law - will be subjected to the same taxation regime as that

deriving from legally-recognised parents.

In August, Children's Conditions, Save the Children and LGBT+ Denmark released a [statement](#) urging lawmakers to ensure that all parents in multi-parent families are legally recognised, arguing that current legislation fails to reflect the realities of many families in Denmark. They stressed that the forthcoming LGBTI action plan presents a crucial opportunity to correct gaps left by the 2022 plan, which pledged to "promote the recognition of LGBTI families" but did not deliver legal equality for multi-parent households.

GERMANY

In June, the District Court of Pforzheim [ruled](#) that Germany's current law of descent (Abstammungsrecht) is unconstitutional in its treatment of rainbow families, finding that the exclusive automatic recognition of the birth mother as the sole legal parent violates the fundamental rights of both children and parents in same-sex families. The court referred the question of constitutional compatibility to the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, noting that existing law discriminates by preventing families with two mothers from being recognised as such at birth. Several other specialist courts have initiated similar Normenkontrollverfahren (review of legal norms) on the same grounds, and one constitutional complaint remains pending before the Federal Constitutional Court.

In July, the German Ministry of Justice presented a [draft reform](#) of the law of descent intended to implement the Federal Constitutional Court's April 2024 ruling on family life and parental rights under Article 6 of the Basic Law. The proposal mainly clarifies how paternity can be challenged. However, it does not address the automatic recognition of both parents in rainbow families, leaving existing legal inequalities unresolved. It also places greater emphasis on biological parenthood and does not clarify whether private sperm donors could be allowed to contest legal parenthood despite prior agreements.

GREECE

In April, the Greek government announced a [reform](#)

restricting access to surrogacy for same-sex male couples and single men. Under the new rules, only women, whether single or in a relationship, who are medically unable to carry a child will be eligible. Justice Minister Giorgos Floridis framed the measure, part of a broader Civil Code revision, as an effort to clarify eligibility criteria.

In late May, Greece's Council of State [ruled](#) that civil marriage between same-sex couples, as stipulated by a 2024 law, is constitutional. The Court [confirmed](#) that allowing marriage between persons of the same sex, as well as the right for such couples to adopt jointly or for one spouse to adopt the other's child, does not violate constitutional provisions on the protection of marriage, family, motherhood, childhood, or equality. The case was examined following a [request](#) for annulment filed by three religious associations seeking to overturn the regulation that records spouses' and parents' details in civil registry documents.

HUNGARY

In June, Hungary's Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that same-sex couples married abroad must be recognised as registered partners within Hungary, setting a deadline of October 31 for Parliament to enact the necessary piece of legislation. The case [originated](#) from a constitutional complaint lodged by an Hungarian-German couple, whose foreign marriage had been treated by Hungarian authorities as non-existent and was not recognised either as marriage or as a registered partnership. They argued that this lack of recognition violated their right to human dignity and respect for private and family life under the Fundamental Law, and was inconsistent with relevant European Court of Human Rights and Court of Justice of the European Union case-law. While same-sex marriage remains prohibited in Hungary, registered partnerships have been available since 2009. A 2016 draft law also stipulated that same-sex marriages contracted abroad should be treated as registered partnerships domestically. However, because the provision was eventually removed from the bill presented to the Parliament, it was never approved. No legislation implementing the Constitutional Court's decision has been tabled.

IRELAND

In February, Cuan, Ireland's national agency addressing domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV), [launched](#) The Hardest Stories campaign. Through fictionalised narratives, the campaign seeks to break the silence and foster a society where all individuals can live free from the threat of violence. Among the stories shared as part of the campaign is one that specifically targets the LGBTI community.

In April, the LGBTQ+ Parenting Alliance (comprising Equality for Children, Irish Gay Dads and LGBT Ireland) launched a [petition](#) calling on the Irish Government to urgently introduce legislative reform to ensure all children born into LGBTI families are afforded full legal recognition and protection in respect of both parents. The Alliance emphasised that, under the current legislative framework, a significant number of children in LGBTI families continue to lack comprehensive legal recognition of both parents, leaving children without essential rights and creating inequalities between family types. Representatives of the Alliance met with the Minister for Health to reiterate the need for urgent legislative action to amend the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024 through the proposed Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) (Amendment) Bill. Although the Minister indicated in July 2025 that the proposed amending legislation was "at an advanced stage", by the end of 2025 the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024, enacted in 2024, remained largely uncommenced, and no general scheme or draft amendment Bill had been published.

In April, the Irish High Court [ruled](#) that children of same-sex couples born abroad are entitled to Irish passports. The court found that the State cannot deny citizenship solely because of a parent's gender or the child's place of birth. The cases involved two Irish mothers, who had been refused recognition as legal parents of their children born in Australia and Spain.

In October, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health published a pre-legislative scrutiny [report](#) containing 18 recommendations to make Ireland's assisted human reproduction and surrogacy framework

more inclusive of diverse family structures, including those of LGBTI families. The recommendations are intended to inform the drafting of the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) (Amendment) Bill, which remains under development, and include mechanisms to recognise parentage for second parents in international donor-assisted reproduction and surrogacy arrangements. During the same period, the government [established](#) the Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority (AHRRA) with appointed leadership, marking a key step toward implementing and overseeing the 2024 Act and future legislative changes. Certain provisions of the 2024 Act have also been commenced via secondary legislation, even as full commencement and further reform await the forthcoming Amendment Bill.

ITALY

In March, the Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that single people, including LGBTI people, are eligible to adopt foreign minors through international adoption procedures, overturning a 40-year restriction that had limited such adoptions to married couples.

In April, the Italian Court of Cassation [ruled](#) in favour of changing the wording on national identity cards, replacing the distinction of "father" and "mother" with the term "parents." With this ruling, which followed an appeal brought by civil rights associations, the Court emphasised the need for administrative and bureaucratic language to keep pace with social and legal developments. The reform will apply to all newly issued identity documents across Italy.

In May, the Constitutional Court [declared](#) the constitutional illegitimacy of Article 8 of Law 40/2004 insofar as it excludes recognition of children born in Italy through assisted reproductive technologies (ART) abroad to two women. The Court [ruled](#) that when both women have given prior informed consent to the procedure, the child must be legally recognised as the child of both, with full parental responsibility. Nonetheless, the ruling still did not [provide](#) similar legal protections for single women resorting to ART.

In September, the Court of Cassation issued a [ruling](#) confirming that partners in a civil union are eligible

for the dissolution allowance provided under the 2016 law on civil unions. In Italian law, civil unions do not include a separation phase, and therefore do not provide for a maintenance allowance. Dissolution occurs through an administrative process lasting approximately three to four months, after which the economically weaker partner may request the dissolution allowance. Since 2018, divorce allowances have been granted either to individuals who lack adequate means of subsistence or to those who, despite being economically self-sufficient, have made personal or professional sacrifices in the interest of the family that result in a significantly unequal economic position compared to the other partner. The Court of Cassation applied these criteria to civil unions, reiterating that the dissolution allowance is available under the same conditions as for heterosexual couples, as established by existing legislation since 2016.

LIECHTENSTEIN

In January, following a May 2024 parliamentary vote, same-sex marriage became legally recognised in Liechtenstein.

LITHUANIA

In April, the Constitutional Court of Lithuania ruled that the Civil Code's provisions limiting civil partnerships to opposite-sex couples are unconstitutional. Specifically, Article 3.229 was found to violate the constitutional principles of human dignity, protection of private life, equality, and family protection. This decision stemmed from a request from the former conservative-liberal government - comprising the Homeland Union (TS-LKD), the Liberal Movement, and the Freedom Party - which requested the Court to assess two provisions of the Civil Code and its enacting law. The Court later clarified that, although Parliament has not yet established a legal framework for registering partnerships, same-sex couples can now seek recognition through the courts. Following the ruling, two same-sex couples applied to register civil partnerships while the Parliament faced mounting pressure to regulate the matter through law. Notably, President Gitanas Nausėda emphasised in his sixth annual State of the Nation Address that the previous parliament failed to act despite ambitious promises and urged the Parliament to finally take

a decision that reflects societal expectations regarding partnership recognition for same-sex couples.

In July, representatives of the LGL met with Ministry of Justice officials, academics, and NGOs to present their priorities for the forthcoming Partnership Institute legislation. The Ministry of Justice committed to preparing legislative amendments by October. Due to the change in the Ministry of Justice leadership, a set of amendments to the Civil Code that would establish a legal framework for gender-neutral registered partnerships on November 4th, 2025, were registered by 11 members of the Lithuanian parliament (Seimas) instead.

MOLDOVA

Proposals submitted by opposition actors during the year sought to restrict adoption rights for LGBTI people by framing non-traditional family relations as incompatible with Moldovan moral and cultural values. These initiatives formed part of broader legislative efforts to curtail LGBTI visibility and participation in public life (see also under Equality and Non-discrimination).

MONACO

In October, National Council member Béatrice Fresko-Rolfo called for reforms to address legal inequalities affecting same-sex families in Monaco. Speaking as President of the Commission for Women's Rights, Family and Equality, she emphasised that "children's rights must be protected in all circumstances; this principle is neither negotiable nor conditional." Fresko-Rolfo denounced the existing "legal loophole" that leaves non-biological parents in same-sex families without recognition, urging legislative action in the name of equality and child welfare.

MONTENEGRO

In November, Montenegrin institutions met in Podgorica to review progress on harmonising national legislation with the 2020 Law on Same-Sex Partnerships, five years after its adoption. Despite the law's entry into force, full alignment across sectoral legislation remains incomplete, particularly in areas such as social security, taxation, and administrative

procedures, limiting the practical enjoyment of rights by same-sex couples. The meeting, organised under the joint EU-Council of Europe action Combating Hatred and Intolerance in Montenegro, brought together representatives of relevant ministries to assess progress since July, identify remaining gaps, and outline next steps. Participants agreed to continue regular coordination, with a follow-up session scheduled for March 2026.

NETHERLANDS

In late October, the body of independent experts responsible for monitoring the implementation by the parties of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (GREVIO) urged the Netherlands to ensure its policies reflect that domestic violence disproportionately affects women, and said its gender-neutral approach could leave women at risk. GREVIO's feedback was aimed at recent Dutch laws against harassment and discrimination in which references to gender had been removed.

NORWAY

In July, the Storting reached a majority in favor of granting automatic legal parenthood to co-mothers in same-sex relationships. Previously, co-mothers had to apply to the state to be recognised as legal parents, but the upcoming amendment to the Children's Act will give them full parental rights from birth. The change in law will also include unmarried couples, who will now be able to declare co-maternity in the same way as paternity.

POLAND

In February, the ECtHR ruled against Poland in a case concerning same-sex couples who were denied certificates of non-impediment to marry abroad. These certificates, issued by Polish registry offices (USC), confirm that no legal obstacles prevent a marriage. The Court determined that the absence of legal recognition for same-sex unions infringed Article 8 of the ECHR, which guarantees respect for private and family life. The Court held that by refusing the certificates, Poland had "left the applicants in a legal vacuum" and failed to recognise and protect same-sex couples in stable, committed relationships.

In April, the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) stated that Poland must recognise same-sex marriages lawfully concluded in another Member State. The case concerned two Polish nationals, married in Berlin in 2018, whose request to register their marriage certificate in Poland was refused on the basis of domestic provisions limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples. Following a referral from a Polish court, the CJEU ruled in November that, under the EU principle of freedom of movement, Poland must recognise marriage certificates issued in another Member State where necessary to ensure the effective exercise of EU rights. The Court found that refusal to transcribe such certificates is incompatible with EU law insofar as it interferes with free movement, requiring Poland to enable registration to the extent necessary to give effect to those rights.

In April, the ECtHR issued a ruling in *Andersen v. Poland*, finding Poland in violation of Article 8 of the ECHR due to its failure to provide a legal framework that recognises and protects same-sex unions. The Court noted that Poland must provide legal recognition and protection for same-sex partnerships, emphasizing that, under Polish law, same-sex couples - even if married abroad - are treated merely as de facto relationships.

In April, the District Court in Zielona Góra issued a final judgment in *Marta v. Gmina Sława* (Sława Municipality), ruling that the term "closest family member" under the Polish Civil Code includes same-sex life partners. The case concerned compensation for the death of Marta's partner in 2015, which resulted from the municipality's negligence in maintaining trees. The court held that an informal, committed relationship should be treated equivalently to a marriage for the purposes of compensation, irrespective of the partners' gender. Marta had initiated the proceedings nearly ten years earlier, seeking recognition of her harm and loss as an immediate family member.

In July, the Lewica Party introduced a draft law on civil partnerships to the Sejm (the lower house of parliament), aiming to establish a new form of legal recognition for couples in Poland. The initiative is designed to extend legal protection and stability both to same-sex couples and to different-sex

couples who either cannot or do not wish to marry. The proposal addresses issues like the inability of partners in informal relationships to file joint taxes, inherit automatically, be covered under a partner's health insurance, or take leave to care for a sick partner.

In October, the government introduced a [draft bill](#) on the status of the 'closest person' and the agreement of cohabitation. The bill was formally [presented](#) to parliament in mid-October, with media reports suggesting that it offers a very limited set of rights for same-sex couples, primarily addressing fiscal and inheritance matters, but not covering adoption or broader rights for rainbow families. The cohabitation agreement would be formalised before a notary, without altering the partners' civil status, meaning they could not marry another person simultaneously.

ROMANIA

Despite the binding ECtHR judgment in *Buhuceanu, Ciobotaru and 20 other families v. Romania*, requiring the state to provide legal recognition and protection for same-sex families, no legislative initiative has been adopted to guarantee family rights for LGBTI couples. In December, the Constitutional Court of Romania [examined](#) a case concerning equal access to healthcare for same-sex families, specifically regarding the recognition of same-sex spouses as co-insured persons within the public health insurance system.

SERBIA

In September, Jelena Jerinić of the Green-Left Front (ZLF) [submitted](#) a draft Law on Civil Partnership to the National Assembly. The proposal seeks to provide legal recognition for same-sex partnerships, an issue long advocated for by LGBTI organisations in Serbia. The next procedural step depends on whether the President of the National Assembly, Ana Brnabić, places the draft law on the parliamentary agenda for debate and potential adoption.

SLOVAKIA

In October, Justice Minister Boris Susko (Smer) [presented](#) a draft reform to Slovakia's Civil Code, which included a provision stating that a marriage

would end - without the consent of either partner - upon the change of gender marker by one of the spouses. The legal consequences, including division of property and child custody arrangements, would be handled as in divorce proceedings. The proposal is currently in public consultation, where institutions and citizens can file objections. Parliament is expected to debate it next year, with the goal of introducing the new code in 2027.

SPAIN

In June, a lesbian couple pursued a [claim](#) for patrimonial responsibility after a Civil Registry official refused to register their child because the couple were not married. Although an administrative complaint was filed, the Galician authorities classified the official's conduct as a minor infraction and closed the case. The couple subsequently sought compensation from the Ministry of Justice, but by the end of 2025 no final decision had been issued.

In July, the Ministry of Justice [approved](#) an instruction clarifying that lesbian couples may register their newborn children in hospitals regardless of marital status. The measure aims to resolve inconsistent practices following the 2023 LGBTI law and will be published in the Official State Gazette.

SWEDEN

In July, a [study](#) conducted by the Institute for Social Research (SOFI) for Stockholm University revealed that women in heterosexual relationships experience the steepest decline in income after becoming mothers, while birth mothers in female same-sex relationships face significantly smaller losses. The research examined register data from more than 170,000 different-sex couples and over 2,800 female same-sex couples and highlighted how gender roles and welfare policies shape parents' financial outcomes.

TURKEY

In May, the General Directorate of Family and Community Services issued a nationwide [directive](#) to all units of the Ministry of Family and Social Services and to provincial directorates in all 81 cities, instructing staff to avoid using terms such as "gender," "gender identity," and "sexual orientation".

In July, Turkey's Presidential Communication Centre (CİMER) introduced a new [survey](#) that frames LGBTI people as a threat to the family. One question asks respondents which public policy should be prioritised to protect the family, listing "combating LGBT" alongside options such as promoting marriage, expanding family counseling services, and increasing birth-related subsidies.

UKRAINE

In July, Kyiv's Desniansky District Court issued a landmark [ruling](#) formally recognising a same-sex couple as a family under Ukrainian law. The case, brought by diplomat Zoryan Kis and his partner Tymur Levchuk, marked the first legal precedent of its kind in Ukraine. The couple, together since 2013 and married in the US in 2021, had filed a complaint after the Foreign Ministry refused to acknowledge Levchuk as Kis' spouse and denied him diplomatic spousal rights. In September, the Kyiv Court of Appeal [upheld](#) the landmark decision recognising same-sex couples as families and rejecting appeals that cited "traditional family values" against the ruling.