

# Foreign Policy

## ARMENIA

At the 49th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May, 26 states, including Spain, Sweden, and the UK, urged Armenia to adopt anti-discrimination legislation explicitly covering SOGI, while others called for the establishment of legal gender recognition procedures. Although legislative amendments adopted in 2024 marked progress, States also expressed concerns over insufficient legal protections against gender-based violence and attacks targeting human rights defenders, as well as over the absence of guarantees for freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

## AUSTRIA

In May, Austria joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## BELGIUM

In March, Belgian authorities announced plans to update their travel advice for nationals heading to the United States, with a focus on risks faced by LGBTI travelers. The Federal Public Service (FPS) for Foreign Affairs confirmed it would revise its guidance in response to "the general strengthening of border controls" and the shifting legal and social climate for LGBTI people in the US. The move follows similar steps by Finland, Denmark, and Germany, after several European travelers were detained at the US border.

In May, Belgium joined a group of European States in issuing a joint diplomatic declaration condemning the introduction, by the Hungarian Parliament, of fines and potential bans on Pride events. In June, several Members of the European Parliament and national politicians, including Belgian representatives Elio Di Rupo (PS), Kathleen Van Brempt (Vooruit), Saskia Bricmont (Ecolo), Sara Matthieu (Groen),

Hilde Vautmans (Open VLD) and Christie Morréale (PS), announced they would travel to Budapest to participate in the city's banned Pride march.

In May, on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Belgium's commitment to the protection of LGBTI rights. It condemned ongoing violence, harassment and disinformation targeting LGBTI people and expressed support for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

In December, Belgium joined 17 other states in a joint statement expressing concern over Kazakhstan's legislative amendments banning so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation," stating that such measures are incompatible with international human rights obligations.

## CROATIA

Croatia was not among the 20 EU member states that signed in May the Statement on the Infringement of the Fundamental Rights of LGBTIQ+ Persons in Hungary. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained the government "took into account the overall relationship between Croatia and Hungary as neighbouring countries linked by a number of important areas of cooperation, from economic ties to the protection of national minorities in both countries."

## CZECHIA

In May, Czechia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## DENMARK

In May, Denmark joined 15 other EU member states in

a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## ESTONIA

In May, Estonia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## FINLAND

In May, Finland joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## FRANCE

In May, France joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Finland, Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Denmark,

Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

## GEORGIA

In October, the Georgian Dream party began promoting disinformation about LGBTI people to portray the European Union as interfering in Georgia's internal affairs. This came as the EU threatened to suspend visa-free travel for Georgian citizens over the government's failure to protect LGBTI rights and its enactment of anti-democratic legislation. Under Georgian Dream, the government rejected previous plans for EU membership and ignored the August 31 EU deadline to implement measures ensuring LGBTI protections and repealing anti-democratic laws.

Since 2024, the ruling party and allied pro-Russian groups have accused the EU of promoting "LGBT propaganda" and attempting to erase Georgia's national identity. Party officials have publicly framed EU recommendations as unreasonable demands, including that the EU requires Georgia to introduce marriage equality and legal gender recognition procedures.

Following an official letter from the European Commission requesting clarification on Georgia's fulfillment of conditions for continuing visa liberalisation, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze stated that the government is prepared to abandon the EU visa-free regime if it is treated as an ultimatum.

Kobakhidze described these conditions as "empty political ultimatums" lacking legal basis and emphasised that Georgia's priorities are sovereignty, peace, and stability. He stated that visa liberalisation is a matter of convenience, whereas traditional values and societal stability are existential issues.

## ICELAND

In March, Iceland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the preparation of travel guidance specifically for LGBTI people, with an emphasis on personal safety. Foreign Minister Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir said the initiative reflects the need for greater caution in the current international climate. The chair of Samtökin '78 also underlined the

importance of being alert when travelling abroad, particularly to the United States.

## IRELAND

In March, the Irish government aligned itself with a broad coalition of EU member states in publicly denouncing new Hungarian legislation that, in practice, outlaws Pride marches. In May, Ireland joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden. Speaking at the Marriage Referendum +10 Conference in May, the Tánaiste and then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Harris, highlighted Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2026 as a key opportunity to build on the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy, affirming that Ireland "will work closely with EU institutions and Member States to combat inequalities experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, and promote respect for equality as one of the Union's fundamental values." In November, the Irish Government launched a public consultation on the development of the Priorities and Policy Programme for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026.

## ITALY

In February, Italy's fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN in Geneva concluded with a record 19 recommendations on LGBTI rights, the highest number ever received. In July, Italy rejected 12 out of 19 of the recommendations. Italy accepted only seven recommendations on general principles such as combating discrimination, promoting equality, and fighting hate speech, which associations criticised as commitments with no concrete obligations.

In October, following the adoption of legislation criminalising surrogacy abroad, the Italian government engaged in advocacy against surrogacy

at the United Nations. Through statements by Minister for Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities Eugenia Roccella, the government promoted its opposition to surrogacy in international forums, framing the practice as incompatible with human rights.

## LATVIA

In May, Latvia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## LITHUANIA

In May, Lithuania joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## LUXEMBOURG

In May, Luxembourg joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## MALTA

In April, Malta's Foreign Minister Ian Borg expressed his discomfort with Hungary's constitutional amendment banning LGBTI gatherings but refrained from outright condemnation. Borg added that he would raise the matter directly with his Hungarian counterpart to seek clarification, while underscoring that Malta's government had made significant advances in LGBTI rights over the past 12 years.

## NETHERLANDS

In March, the Transgender Netwerk Netherlands put out a statement advising trans people in the Netherlands to avoid traveling to the United States unless "absolutely necessary," citing executive orders issued by President Donald Trump and restrictive state laws as reasons for concern. In April, the government echoed similar concerns as it joined several countries that updated their travel guidance for trans citizens traveling to the United States, following federal rollbacks on trans rights under the Trump administration.

In May, the Netherlands initiated a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

In late May, State Secretary Mariëlle Paul (VVD) announced that she would not take part in the Budapest Pride march, citing uncertainty about the situation and the risk of possible arrests. Paul had travelled to Budapest to address Hungary's human rights record on behalf of the Dutch cabinet. She stated that she would base her decision on the circumstances surrounding the march and concluded that the situation was too unclear for her in her capacity as a cabinet representative.

## NORWAY

In May, Socialist Party (SV) politician Kathy Lie raised concerns about Norway's European Economic

Area (EEA) cooperation with Hungary following the country's ban on Pride events. In a written question to the Minister of Culture and Equality, Lie asked how EEA funds could be effectively used to promote human rights and support civil society in Hungary, given that Norway opposes the Pride ban and other authoritarian measures by the Hungarian government. Similarly, the Green Party (MDG) national board adopted an emergency resolution demanding that the government freeze EEA funds for Hungary until further notice, if the Hungarian government does not lift the ban on Pride events.

## PORTUGAL

In May, Portugal joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## SLOVAKIA

In early November, news outlets reported that the Netherlands was willing to invoke the procedure under Article 7 of the EU Treaty against Slovakia, which could potentially suspend a member state's voting rights in the Council if serious violations of fundamental EU values are found. The Netherlands is contesting Slovakia's recent law, which enshrines only two genders in the constitution, restricts adoption to married heterosexual couples, and bans surrogacy.

## SLOVENIA

In May, Slovenia joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France,

Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## SPAIN

In April, the PSOE introduced a [proposal](#) in Congress calling for a formal condemnation of hate speech by international leaders such as Argentina's President Javier Milei and former US President Donald Trump against the LGBTI community. The initiative urges the Spanish government to take a leading role within the EU and the United Nations in promoting a global effort to combat the criminalisation of LGBTI people.

In June, the Foreign Office issued [Spain's Foreign Action Strategy 2025-2028](#), which underpins diversity as a core value of its foreign policy, stressing areas such as labour relations or development cooperation. Spain is also committed to the decriminalisation of same-sex relations, which is the main goal of the Equal Rights Coalition, co-chaired by Spain and Colombia in 2025 and 2026.

## SWEDEN

In May, Sweden joined 15 other EU member states in a declaration urging Hungary to revise legislative and constitutional amendments adopted in March and April 2025, which could impose fines on participants and organisers of LGBTI events, authorise the use of facial recognition software at such gatherings, and potentially allow bans on them. The declaration was initiated by the Netherlands and co-signed by Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, and Sweden.

## TURKEY

In November, the Russian Embassy signaled [support](#) for Refah Party's anti-LGBTI stance by attending the party's 3rd Ordinary Grand Congress. In a statement on its social media accounts, the embassy highlighted the "similarity of our attitudes on issues such as the preservation of traditional values, especially family values, and the need to counter the practices of neocolonialism of our age." During the congress, Refah's Deputy Chairman Erbakan claimed that, if elected, his party would abolish the Istanbul Convention, alleging that the foundations of the family had been undermined. Erbakan also declared

that LGBTI associations and activities represent "one of the most important indicators of social collapse and immorality," signaling his intention to end such associations and activities if his party came to power.