



Latvia

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In late December 2024, a singing protest was staged in front of the Saeima House in Riga to highlight the persistence of hate speech in Latvian society. The protest was organised by the informal youth group Harp in cooperation with the Riga Queer Choir and the association Safe Space. Participants and organisers drew particular attention to hate speech directed against the LGBTI community, stressing that victims often face dismissal of their complaints by law enforcement, reflecting institutional indifference and further discouraging reporting.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, a criminal case concerning the assault against two individuals in Daugavpils was still pending, following the lodging of a cassation appeal against the appellate judgment. The proceedings originate from a violent incident that occurred in 2023, when two people were attacked in Daugavpils after attending a community-organised picket held in support of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (See also under Equality and Non-discrimination). One of the victims reportedly received more than 20 blows to the head. The assault was prosecuted as hooliganism causing bodily harm and was alleged to have been motivated by the victims' perceived association with the LGBTI community. In 2024, the court of first instance found a perpetrator guilty of the offence and sentenced him to seven months' imprisonment. The court further ordered the payment of €840 in court costs and compensation for material damage and non-pecuniary harm to the victims. The judgment was appealed by all parties, including the defendant, the victims, and the prosecutor, leading to appellate review.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the Latvian Saeima voted to submit for further consideration amendments to the National Flag Law proposed by the opposition party Latvia First (LPV). The amendments would prohibit the rainbow flag from being displayed alongside the Latvian national flag. According to the LPV's annotation, state and municipal institutions must remain "neutral" toward different lifestyles and identities, and displaying the rainbow flag alongside the national flag undermines this neutrality.

In October, the Latvian parliament (Saeima) voted to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, following sustained political campaigns framing the treaty as an expression of so-called gender ideology. The vote was made possible after a conservative partner within the governing coalition broke ranks, supporting the withdrawal against the stated positions of both the Prime Minister and the President of Latvia.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In 2025, Pride took place amid a hostile public climate marked by political debates over the display of rainbow symbols and claims of institutional neutrality. The march, organised by the LGBTI and their Friends Association Mozaika, provided a platform for participants to assert visibility, reaffirm fundamental rights, and challenge societal prejudice. A small number of counter-protesters were present.

DATA COLLECTION

Between March and May, the Safe Space association, in partnership with the informal youth group HARP, the Riga Queer Choir, and a team of interdisciplinary researchers, carried out the largest-ever survey of Latvia's LGBTI community. According to the report, 84% of LGBTI people in Latvia feel poorly represented at the national level, and more than a third avoid being open about their identity with wider society or even loved ones due to fear of discrimination, violence, or social exclusion. The survey also highlighted the persistence of hate speech and violence. Only 36% of respondents had not encountered hate speech in the past year, while 6% reported experiencing physical violence. The survey results also outlined that 49% of respondents identified marriage equality as the top priority, followed by adoption and parental rights (24%), education and public attitudes (23%), trans rights (18%), and safety and security (16%).

In June, the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published its Sixth Report on Latvia. The report highlights several positive developments, including the entry into force of a legal framework on civil partnerships in July 2024. At the same time, the report notes the absence of a dedicated national LGBTI equality strategy, insufficient cooperation

between government institutions and civil society, and the lack of data collection on racist and anti-LGBTI incidents in schools. On hate speech and violence, the Commission underlined that half of all documented online hate speech in Latvia targets LGBTI people, while racist, xenophobic and anti-Russian rhetoric has also increased since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

FOREIGN POLICY

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.