



# Netherlands

## ASYLUM

In July, the Dutch House of Representatives adopted a new family reunification rule for asylum seekers, under which only legally married partners are eligible to join them in the Netherlands. Opposition MPs argued for an exemption for LGBTI asylum seekers, given that same-sex couples from most countries of origin cannot legally marry and would therefore be unable to meet the new condition. The government argued that LGBTI asylum seekers could still attempt to rely on European human-rights law (Article 8 ECHR). The NGO COC Netherlands underscored that this does not guarantee family reunification and creates a clear disparity between heterosexual married couples, who retain certainty, and same-sex couples, who are left without it.

In August, a 28-year-old trans woman from the United States launched a legal challenge against the rejection of her asylum claim in the Netherlands. She had applied for political asylum stating that she no longer felt safe in the US. Her lawyer's office explained that she travelled to the Netherlands because policies introduced under the Trump administration made her feel unsafe as a trans person. Official data show 29 Americans applied for asylum in the first half of 2025, without giving the cited grounds.

In late October, following the publication of NGO COC Netherlands' research on the safety of LGBTI asylum seekers (see also under Data Collection), COC and the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) signed a renewed cooperation agreement. Under the agreement, COA committed to strengthening measures aimed at ensuring safe and inclusive living conditions for LGBTI residents in asylum reception centres.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In November, rapper Emirhan X and members of his band were attacked during the Popronde festival in Venlo after performing in the festival's designated queer space. According to reports, a group of young people made Nazi salutes and subsequently verbally and physically assaulted the musicians after confronting them. One band member sustained a concussion and required stitches. COC Netherlands condemned the attack and called for clarity on

the incident, noting that it reflects a broader rise in violence targeting LGBTI people.

## DATA COLLECTION

In October, NGO COC Netherlands published a research report on the conditions of LGBTI asylum seekers in the Netherlands. The report found that around half of LGBTI asylum seekers experience insecurity in reception centres, with 57% reporting incidents of discrimination, ranging from verbal harassment and bullying to threats and violence. The findings also showed that only 20% of LGBTI asylum seekers are open about their identity to everyone in shelters, with insecurity identified as a key contributing factor (see also under Asylum).

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, the Reformed Political Party (SGP), joined by the Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB), Forum for Democracy (FvD), and JA21, submitted a motion calling on the government to withdraw a draft bill amending the Transgender Act before parliamentary debate. The proposed reform would have removed the requirement for a medical or psychological expert statement to change one's legal gender marker, replacing it with a self-determination procedure following a mandatory reflection period. It also provided for a court-based procedure for applicants under 16 with parental consent. Transgender Netwerk Netherlands criticised the motion, warning that halting the legislative process undermined democratic standards and negatively affected the safety and legal certainty of trans people. On 8 April, the House of Representatives adopted the motion, effectively ending the legislative process. In July, State Secretary Struycken confirmed that the cabinet had formally withdrawn the bill. In October, during an election debate organised by COC Netherlands, NSC MP Willem Koops acknowledged that withdrawing the bill before full parliamentary debate had been a mistake, while reiterating that his party would nevertheless have opposed the reform.

## FAMILY

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.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In May, the Dutch public broadcaster AVROTROS announced that it would formally object to a new rule introduced by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) prohibiting all flags other than national ones during official segments of the Eurovision Song Contest. According to the updated EBU policy for the 2025 contest, only national flags are permitted in official contest areas, including the stage and the Green Room, which excludes flags such as the rainbow flag, the Palestinian flag, and the EU flag.

## HEALTH

In July, Transgender Netwerk organisation reported that waiting times for an initial intake appointment in trans healthcare had reached six years in the Netherlands. The organisation's chair described the situation as a crisis that has gotten completely out of hand, noting that waiting lists continue to grow while no structural solutions are being implemented.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In January, a broad coalition of civil society organisations called on the House of Representatives to adopt a ban on conversion practices. In February, the Dutch Senate opened its first round of debate on the proposal, focusing on the scope of the ban, enforcement mechanisms, and potential exemptions. The House of Representatives subsequently published an explanatory note clarifying that the bill aims to criminalise attempts to suppress or change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Christian medical association and a UK-based Christian lobby group criticised the proposal, warning that it could affect pastoral conversations and counselling. In September, a revised version of the bill was introduced. The

updated text limits criminal liability to *systematic and intrusive* attempts to change or suppress sexual orientation or gender identity, explicitly excluding casual conversations and voluntary counselling. Following these amendments, several parties that had previously opposed the proposal, including NSC, CDA, and BBB, indicated increased support. On 9 September, the House of Representatives adopted the revised bill by majority vote. By the end of 2025, the bill had not yet been adopted into law. It remained pending further consideration in the Senate, with no final vote having taken place.

## DATA COLLECTION

In July, research by Act4Respect and NNID showed that intersex people in the Netherlands face multiple forms of violence that accumulate and often occur at the same time, resulting in long-term psychological stress. The findings indicate that intersex people are exposed to sexual violence and other forms of sexually abusive behaviour from an early age, alongside ongoing structural violence directly linked to being intersex.

In August, the television programme EenVandaag published its annual Pride survey, based on responses from more than 2,400 LGBTI people. The survey found that 42% of respondents had experienced negative incidents in the previous year, including insults, harassment, or derogatory remarks framed as "jokes." Twelve per cent reported having received threats, while 9% reported being spat on. Incidents were reported not only in public spaces, but also in workplaces (18%) and private settings (20%). Respondents frequently described verbal harassment by groups of young people in public spaces. Researchers noted that intolerance was reported across different social groups, while highlighting recurring patterns in respondents' accounts. Separate research commissioned by the government also indicated an increase in reports of violence or discrimination to the police, with annual reports rising by more than 600 over the past four years, reaching over 2,700 cases per year (see also under Freedom of Assembly).

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Survey data published by *EenVandaag* indicated that LGBTI people continue to experience hostility in public spaces, including around Prides. Respondents reported verbal harassment, threats, and other forms of intimidation occurring in streets and other public settings, contributing to feelings of insecurity when expressing their identity openly. These findings align with government-commissioned [research](#) from 2024 showing a sustained increase in reported incidents targeting LGBTI people, raising concerns about the safety of public participation and visibility. (See also under *Data collection*)

## FOREIGN POLICY

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.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In late October, leaders and representatives of seven political parties [signed](#) a Rainbow Ballot Agreement 2025 with COC Netherlands. Through the agreement, the parties committed to advancing safety, emancipation, and human rights for LGBTI people during the upcoming cabinet period. The agreement was signed by Frans Timmermans (GL|PvdA), Henri Bontenbal (CDA), Rob Jetten (D66), Dilan Yeşilgöz (VVD), Bastiaan Meijer (SP), Ines Kostić (PvdD), and Marieke Koekkoek (Volt).