Serbia

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In 2025, Rainbow Ignite, in its report The Rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Serbia, recorded instances of same-sex couples being denied rental housing or services due to perceived sexual orientation. Amnesty International similarly noted persistent structural discrimination against LGBTI persons in everyday transactions and service access.

ASYLUM

In September, a European Parliament report noted that Serbia has enacted a legal framework recognising persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity as a basis for granting asylum. While commending this legislative development, the Parliament urged the authorities to improve sensitivity training for asylum officers in order to prevent refoulement and secondary victimisation in practice.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Throughout 2025, hate speech by politicians and religious officials -particularly from the Serbian Orthodox Church – remained unpunished, as reported by Human Rights Watch and by Rainbow Ignite, which further documented similar institutional tolerance for homophobic discourse and the normalisation of anti-LGBTI rhetoric in media and politics.

EDUCATION

In 2024, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommended that Serbian authorities urgently establish a comprehensive system for effectively monitoring racist and LGBTI-phobic incidents in schools, including clear procedures for reporting, sanctioning perpetrators, and supporting victims. Serbia has since developed the national platform "Čuvam te / I Protect You" to prevent and respond to violence involving children, but the platform fails to explicitly recognise or address violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

EMPLOYMENT

According to Open for Business, workplace exclusion and wage gaps contribute to income insecurity among LGBTI people in Serbia, increasing their risk of poverty and limiting access to adequate food. These findings draw in part on data and qualitative input from the Serbian LGBTI organisation Rainbow Ignite, which contributed to the Open for Business analysis. Within this research, a significant proportion of LGBTI respondents reported having no income, while more than half earned below the national average, highlighting the link between economic discrimination and basic living standards.

In 2025, Rainbow Ignite reported in The Rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Serbia that, although Serbian labour law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and, through the provision of "other personal attributes," indirectly protects gender identity and expression, the lack of explicit recognition of gender identity leaves many trans and non-binary individuals vulnerable in practice. The report also underscored that persistent barriers to equality remain in the labour market, including low rates of permanent employment, high unemployment levels, and widespread workplace mobbing and harassment against LGBTI persons. Within this context, women and non-binary respondents reported the highest exposure to hostile work environments, reflecting the intersectional challenges faced by marginalised groups within Serbia's workforce.

FAMILY

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.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In June, Novi Sad Pride Week took place under heightened police security, following an attack earlier in May when a lit flare was thrown at participants during a drag performance. Organisers described

the attack as "indicative" of the broader climate in Serbia, where authorities have been accused of fostering a culture of violence and tolerating assaults on activists.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In December 2024, members of the Movement of Socialists (Pokret Socijalista), led by Aleksandar Vulin, introduced a draft *Law* on the Special Registry of Agents of Foreign Influence to Serbia's National Assembly. The proposal would require non-profit organisations and media outlets receiving 50% or more of their funding from abroad to register as "foreign agents." The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) issued a warning that the draft law poses a significant threat to Serbia's democratic development and its progress toward European Union integration, expressing concern that such legislation would severely restrict civil society, media freedom, and citizens' associational rights. The draft had not been adopted by the end of 2025 and remained pending before the National Assembly.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In November, the European Commission 2025 Report on Serbia flagged back-sliding in freedom of expression. While formal legal guarantees exist, the Commission highlighted that media remain subject to strong political and economic influence, undermining newsroom independence and pluralism. Journalists and media outlets face an environment where self-censorship and external interference prevail.

HEALTH

In 2025, access to gynecological and reproductive healthcare for lesbian, bi+ and trans (LBT) women in Serbia remains legally guaranteed but often undermined by stigma and provider bias. Rainbow Ignite's 2025 survey found that 42% of lesbian and bisexual respondents delayed or avoided gynecological visits due to fear of discrimination, and only 27% felt safe disclosing their orientation to doctors. While national cervical screening programs exist and formal equality is guaranteed by the Law on Patients' Rights, implementation gaps persist. The Equality Commissioner previously ruled that excluding people with same-sex relationships from reproductive cell donation was discriminatory, showing how institutional bias can infiltrate regulations.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In 2025, in Serbia, the right to bodily integrity for LGBTI people remains under serious pressure according to the Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) "Country Factsheet on Serbia." The factsheet noted that 32% of respondents reported they had experienced conversion practices to change their sexual orientation or gender identity - compared to 24% for the EU's 27 member states.

PUBLIC OPINION

According to the FRA's "Country Factsheet on Serbia", 80% of respondents reported avoiding holding hands with a same-sex partner often or always (compared to 53% for the EU-27 average) and 43 % said they avoided certain places for fear of assault (EU-27: 29%). Only 29% of respondents said they were "fairly or very open" about being LGBTI (EU-27: 51%), 45% of respondents reported feeling discriminated against in at least one area of life in the preceding year (EU-27: 37%).