

How you can support the Polish LGBTI community against the “LGBT-free zones”

[News](#), [Bias-motivated Speech](#), [Poland](#)

What can be done to support the LGBTI community in Poland regarding the hate stirred through the “LGBT-free zones” and the threat to bring the authors of the Atlas of Hate to trial?

ILGA-Europe is working in close cooperation with LGBTI organisations in Poland, assessing together on an on-going basis how civil society organisations, European and national policy-makers and other authorities can support the Polish LGBTI community in the light of these fundamental rights challenges and an increasingly hateful climate.

“LGBT-Free Zones”

Currently, over 100 municipalities in Poland have symbolically declared themselves “LGBT-free zones” by adopting declarations that implicitly or explicitly discriminate against LGBTI people. About 30 of these municipalities have signed a [“Local Government Charter of the Right of the Family”](#) initiated by Ordo Iuris, a far right religion based foundation, that has been and still is campaigning among others against LGBTI rights, against non-discrimination education in schools and for a total ban of abortion rights in Poland.

The Charter does not explicitly mention LGBTI people, but calls on municipalities to protect traditional families in all their policies, initiatives and funding. The ‘traditional family’ is here defined as a (married) union between a man and a woman and their biological children. By calling on only focusing on these kind of families, the Charter calls for the discrimination of all other forms of families, including single parent families, patchwork families and same-sex couples and their families. This is incompatible with Art. 71 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which reads: “The State, in its social and economic policy, shall take into account the good of the family. Families, finding themselves in difficult material and social circumstances – particularly those with many children or a single parent – shall have the right to special assistance from public authorities.” and Art. 18 “Marriage, being a union of a man and a woman, as well as the family, motherhood and parenthood, shall be placed under the protection and care of the Republic of Poland”.

Atlas of Hate

In order to raise awareness of the rapid spread of municipalities adopting discriminatory declarations, three Polish LGBTI activists: Kuba, Paulina and Paweł have created the [Atlas of Hate](#), a map listing the municipalities that have in one way or another declared themselves LGBTI free zones or adopted discriminatory Charter.

Threat of legal challenges to the authors of the Atlas of Hate

In a [statement](#) made on 8th March 2020, Ordo Iuris announced that municipalities who adopted the Family Charter will bring the authors of the Atlas of Hate to Court. They claim that the Charter is supposed to protect families and does not discriminate LGBTI people. According to Ordo Iuris, being mentioned in the Atlas among declarations against “LGBT ideology” is defamatory and violates the reputation of local governments.

The justifications and statements of decision-makers regarding anti-LGBT resolutions and the Local Government Charter on Family Rights leave no doubt as to the intentions of their authors. The resolutions are intended to dehumanize LGBTQ people and reduce them to “ideologies” and lifestyles allegedly threatening the family, and at the same time the Charter discourages employees of state institutions from equality and anti-discrimination measures. Thus, they create an atmosphere of consent to violence against LGBTQ people.

Calling for the discrimination against LGBTI people by excluding them from the definition of family, is also a strategy we have seen across Europe and globe on many other occasions, as for example in the Referendum in Romania in 2018, that aimed at changing the definition of family in the Romanian Constitution, or the European Citizen Initiative ECI “Mum, Dad & Kids” in 2017, which aimed at changing the definition of family to the “traditional model” for EU legislation.

STOP LGBTI initiative

At the same time, Kaja Godek’s Life and Family Foundation have started a new campaign, [Stop LGBTI](#), this time [collecting signatures](#) to demand a ban on all Prides in Poland. Authors of the initiative claim the “LGBT movement is increasingly demanding legal privileges. The promotion of this idea is carried out by manifesting in an increasingly perfidious way, disregarding the rights and feelings of the **normal** majority of society (...) Citizens’ activity can prevent the decay of the moral order that has been taking place in Western Europe for decades. That is why it organizes the #StopLGBT civic legislative initiative, which aims to ban homopropaganda on the streets of Polish cities.”

What you can do?

Apart from blocking any measures and policies in Poland that would ensure protection against discrimination and hate against LGBTI people and ensure full protection of freedom of assembly, all these hateful and discriminatory initiatives create a climate of hate that is impacting on the LGBTI community and has already been translating to significant increase in hate crimes.

- Polish activists ask for attendance one of the many Pride marches in smaller cities across Poland that have been taking place for the first time last year. Attendance of European Institutions and Policy-makers will increase the security of these Marches and support the community directly! Reach out to Magdalena ?wider from KPH (mwider@kph.org.pl) who can put you in touch with local Pride organisers directly.
- Be in touch with policy-makers in Poland and start a dialogue, highlighting why these measures are extremely discriminatory against the LGBTI community and their direct harmful impact on Polish citizens’ lives and demanding a response on how municipalities and the government plan to ensure non-discrimination and safety of the LGBTI community in the light of these developments. This can be done from local level, especially through municipalities who have twinning or other arrangements with Polish cities, for MEPs through their political families, country visits or other occasion. Polish activists clearly ask for creating a dialogue with Polish authorities on local and national level, rather than stopping cooperation such as twinning arrangements as that would only further isolate the communities.
- On EU level, both the [European Parliament](#) and the [European Commission](#) have clearly condemned the LGBTI free zones. It is now important to keep pushing for such fundamental rights violations to be included in the planned annual rule of law reviews.
- Use your social media to raise awareness about the situation in Poland. Inform media representatives about discriminatory declarations that threaten respect of human rights in Poland. Reach out to Cecylia Jakubczak from KPH (cjakubczak@kph.org.pl) who can provide you with press materials.