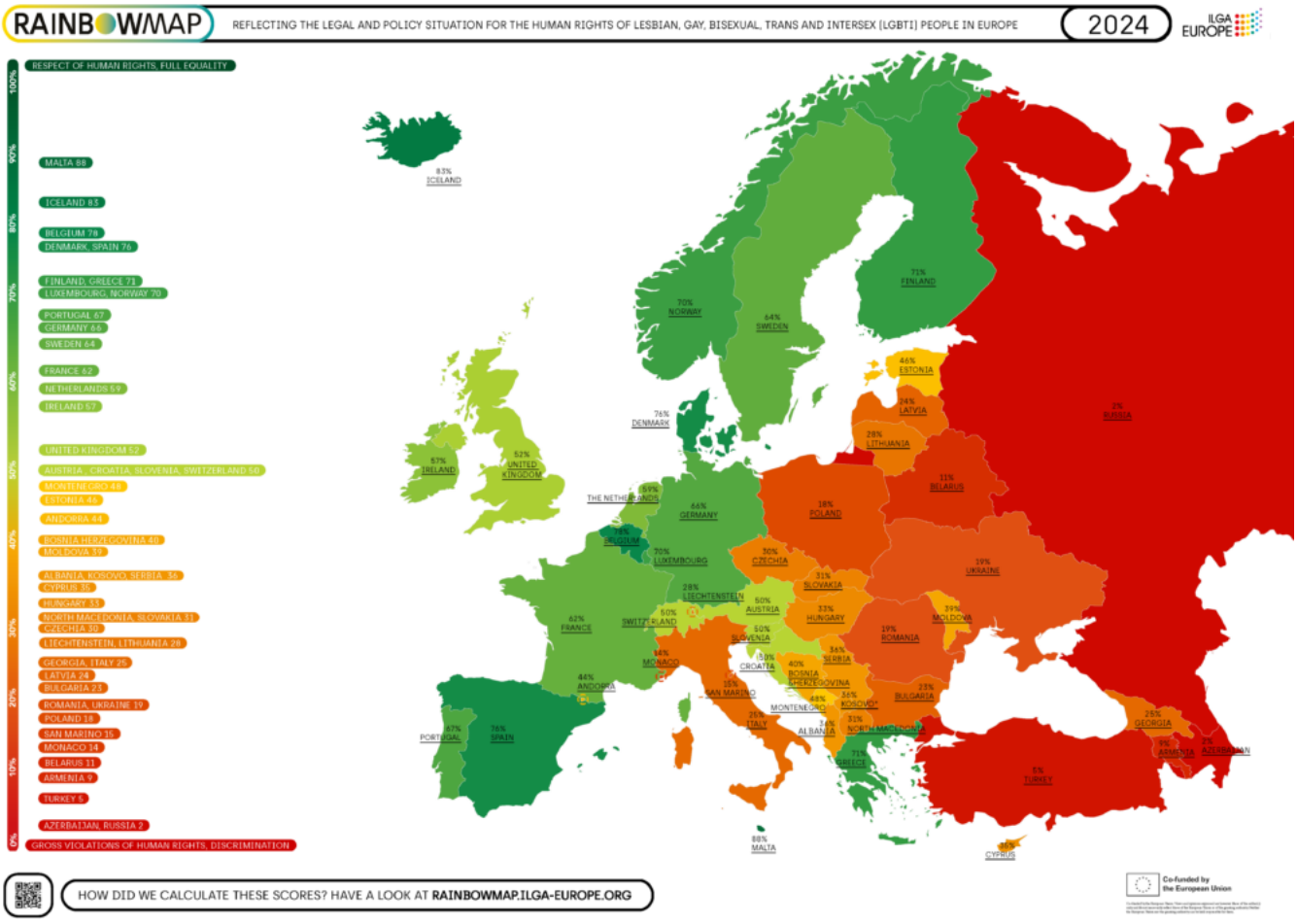
Rainbow Digest May 2024

Newsletter

With elections looming, Rainbow Map shows that LGBTI rights have become a marker for the protection of democracy

Published on May 15, our 16th annual Rainbow Map shows that while authoritarian leaders across Europe continue to use the scapegoating of LGBTI people to divide and mobilise their electorates, others are conversely showing robust political will to honour commitments to advancing and protecting the human rights of LGBTI people. The findings of the 2024 Rainbow Map make it more clear than ever that only legal protections can ensure that fundamental rights are guaranteed.

Find out more on our new interactive website.



"Europe needs stronger laws and policies to protect LGBTI people. Without these, we cannot talk about

safety or about rule of law and democracy."

Chaber, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe

Which candidates in the EU elections will protect and advance LGBTI human rights?

Amid fears of a rise in the far-right in the European Elections this June 6-9, a thousand-plus candidates across every member state have pledged to protect and advance LGBTI human rights if they are elected. The Come Out 4 Europe website collects these signatures, helping LGBTI voters and allies decide on who to vote for. Let's seize this moment to make history and set sail for a Europe that truly lives up to its promise of freedom and equality for all.

Find out who has signed the Come Out 4 Europe pledge

ILGA-Europe News

Get the most from digital ads

On 12 and 26 June, we're organising two Skills Boost sessions for LGBTI activists to about digital ads and how to use them more strategically.

Register now here.

Two exciting job opportunities at ILGA-Europe

We're looking for an Event Coordinator and Finance Officer and a Senior Programmes Officer to support the growth and power of our movement.

Read more and apply now.

Activists share tips on crisis communications

In May, ILGA-Europe hosted a two-day learning event on crisis communication for LGBTI organisations. It was an opportunity for 25 activists from over 15 countries to come together and address the complex challenges they face when communicating to their communities, the media and other stakeholders at times of crisis.

Read more.

Are you in Brussels on 4 July?

Join us for the Equality Fundraiser 2024 and lend your support for our work towards the equality of all LGBTI people. Last year's event was sold out, so get your ticket now!

LATEST NEWS

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The Council of the EU adopts the first ever EU rules on combating violence against women

On 7 May, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence as a groundbreaking step. ILGA-Europe will work to ensure that the implementation of the Directive will protect all victims and survivors of gender-based violence, no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

Read more.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Civil society files a joint submission to the European Court over a case on discrimination on sex characteristics

OII Europe, ILGA-Europe and the International Commission of Jurists filed a joint submission before the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in a case concerning the South African athlete Caster Semenya. The ECtHR ruled in 2023 that Semenya was discriminated against as she was not afforded sufficient procedural safeguards when challenging the World Athletics regulations requiring her to reduce her natural testosterone level to be allowed to participate in international competitions in the women's category. We hope the Grand Chamber will confirm the Court's judgment and clarify that sex characteristics is a protected ground of discrimination under the ECHR.

Read more.

DATA COLLECTION

Harassment and violence against LGBTIQ people on the rise

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has just launched the results of its third LGBTIQ Survey with worrying findings on discrimination and violence across Europe. Over two thirds of respondents encountered hate statements, and a significant increase in violence since the last survey in 2019.

Read more.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

European states committed to pursue a European policy for LGBTI rights

During the week of IDAHOBIT, the European states signed two major declarations. On 15 May, 32 member States of the Council of Europe signed a joint ministerial declaration calling for renewed commitment to protecting the rights of LGBTI people through Council of Europe mechanisms, as well as on national level. On 17 May, on the initiative of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union, 18 EU member states joined the EP in calling for a strong Union of Equality under the next European Commission and a EU LGBTIQ strategy 2025-30.

Sex characteristics have been mentioned explicitly in an EU directive for the first time

On 7 May, two new directives on minimum standards for equality bodies were officially adopted by the EU, one of which includes in its recitals and articles the grounds of gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics in addition to sexual orientation. This marks the first time sex characteristics have been mentioned explicitly in an EU directive, and the second time gender identity and gender expression have been mentioned in an EU directive. This is an important milestone for the protection of LGBTI people in EU legislation, and follows two years of joint advocacy on these directives by OII Europe, TGEU, ILGA-Europe, EL*C and IGLYO.

Read more.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

Council of Europe publishes a new document on trans prisoners

The Council of Europe Committee on the Prevention of Torture published a hard-hitting document focused on the treatment of trans prisoners in Europe, laying out clear standards for adequate protection from harm and ill treatment.

Read more.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND EXPRESSION

Georgia's new foreign agent law is likely to target LGBTI NGOs first

On 14 May, Georgia's Parliament voted in favour of the 'foreign agent' law that would require foreign-funded organisations and media to register as "agents of foreign influence". On 21 May, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission published its urgent opinion which strongly recommends repealing the law, as its fundamental flaws will involve significant negative consequences for freedoms of association and expression, the right to privacy, the right to participate in public affairs as well as the prohibition of discrimination. The new Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, highlighted that the law is likely to target LGBTI NGOs first, amidst a rise in violence and discrimination against LGBTI people across Europe.

Read more.

Anti-SLAPP recommendations from the European institutions

The European Union officially adopted its anti-SLAPP Directive, which protects journalists and human rights defenders against abusive court proceedings aimed at silencing public debate on matters of public interest. Fundamental rights are named as a matter of public interest, and the Directive specifically lists LGBTIQ rights defenders when discussing human rights defenders being able to participate actively in public life and promote accountability without fear of intimidation. Similarly, the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering the use of SLAPPs, establishing robust and authoritative standards that member states must meet in order to ensure compliance with their human rights obligations. The recommendation notes that women and persons with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics, face specific dangers in their capacity as journalists, human rights defenders and other public watchdogs.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Constitutional Court of Czechia finds the sterilisation requirement for LGR unconstitutional

On 7 May, the Constitutional Court of Czechia found that the requirement to be sterilised to receive legal gender recognition is unconstitutional. We urge the government to adopt legislation in line with the ruling and ensure that all trans and non-binary people have access to human rights-based LGR.

Find out more.

EU Court of Justice Advocate General calls for automatic recognition of legal gender recognition

On 10 May, the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) issued an opinion calling

for the automatic recognition in birth certificates of new name and gender marker acquired in a Member State. This recognition, argued the Advocate General, is essential in upholding the rights to free movement and private and family life guaranteed by the European Union.

Read more.

A new draft law in France targets trans minors

On 28 May, the French Senate voted in favour of a draft law that would ban trans-specific healthcare for minors. The draft bill will now proceed to a voting at the National Assembly, which has different party majorities than the Senate. On 5 May, thousands of protestors gathered in 50 cities throughout France rallying against the draft law.

Read more.

RESOURCES FOR LGBTI ACTIVISTS

Good practice map on the human rights of intersex people

OII Europe published its Good Practice Map highlighting advancements achieved in 2023 towards the better protection of intersex human rights across Europe. Download your copy.

Trans Rights Index and Map 2024

TGEU launched its annual update of the Trans Rights Index & Map. This year's data shows polarisation in legal protections for trans people. Check out.

New global report on LGBTI people's human rights

ILGA World published their new landmark report mapping laws affecting LGBTI communities across the world. Download the report.

Notice board

- The European Institute for Gender Equality is looking for a Procurement Officer, Communications Trainees, and an Expert on Gender-based Violence. Read more and apply.
- The Digital Freedom Fund is accepting grant applications to support strategic litigation on digital rights in Europe. Read more and apply by 15 July.