

Annual Review 2026

Annual Review of the Human Rights situation of lesbian, gay bisexual, trans, and intersex people, covering the period of January to December 2025.

ILGA-Europe has been publishing the Annual Review for fifteen years. It brings together research and expertise from ILGA-Europe staff and members, including more than 200 activists and legal professionals across 54 countries, to document developments in legal protections, discrimination, freedom of assembly and expression, health rights, asylum practices, hate crimes, intersex bodily integrity, civil society space, and other areas affecting the lives of LGBTI people.

This year's edition introduces two structural updates.

First, the institutional section has been consolidated into a single chapter, providing a clearer and more coherent overview of how regional and international bodies have shaped the human rights environment for LGBTI people.

Second, a dedicated thematic chapter on Pride and freedom of assembly has been added. This chapter examines trends over recent years, highlighting how restrictions on Pride events reflect broader patterns of democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space across the region.

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2026 HIGHLIGHTS AND TRENDS

Here are the key overview findings of this edition of the Annual Review. To access the full analysis, download the complete trends report.

1. Legislative Pride bans and shrinking civic space

For the first time, an EU Member State adopted primary legislation banning Pride and other LGBTI assemblies, with fines for organisers and participants and the use of surveillance tools to identify attendees.

Across Europe and Central Asia, Pride marches were prohibited, blocked, or subjected to criminal proceedings, while foreign agent and grant control laws in countries such as Georgia and Serbia imposed escalating administrative burdens on civil society. Rather than isolated incidents, these measures form part of a broader consolidation of tools that restrict who can assemble, organise, and participate in public life.

2. Recriminalisation through “propaganda” and extremism frameworks

Criminal and quasi-criminal measures framed around child protection, public morality, or national values have expanded. In Hungary, Pride organisers faced indictment under a new Assembly Law.

In Turkey, LGBTI 11 activists were charged under the Associations Law, and an LGBTI magazine editor was arrested for alleged “terrorist organisation” membership. Turkey also detained Council of Europe Youth Delegate Enes Hocaogullar after he criticised police violence and democratic backsliding. In Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, laws criminalise positive LGBTI “propaganda.” In Russia, extremist designations prompted raids, prosecutions, digital surveillance, and broader legal insecurity.

3. Targeting and erasure of trans, intersex and non-binary people

A marked shift away from rights-based governance is restricting trans and gender-diverse people’s full participation in public life. Several states advanced constitutional or legislative measures defining sex as strictly biological and immutable, narrowing or removing legal gender recognition.

In Hungary, constitutional amendments entrenched binary definitions. In Slovakia and Georgia, changes removed references to gender identity from equality frameworks. In the United Kingdom, a Supreme Court ruling defined sex as biological at birth, affecting equality duties. These shifts limit recognition, healthcare access, and participation for trans, intersex, and non-binary people.

4. Education and youth spaces as frontline battlegrounds

Child protection and curriculum regulation are being used to define what can be taught, discussed, or even acknowledged in educational settings. Restrictions increasingly materialise in schools and universities. Hungary's Child Protection framework continues to prohibit educational content deemed to promote homosexuality or gender reassignment.

In Italy, school projects addressing gender identity face political pushback, while in France and Germany, equality and diversity education programmes have been publicly challenged or curtailed. In Belarus, amendments provide a basis for excluding LGBTI-related information from youth contexts. University groups in Turkey were shut down, and equality and diversity education initiatives faced public and political challenges in several European countries.

5. Diverging trajectories: resistance and institutional safeguards

Despite escalating repression in parts of the region, 2025 also recorded important reversals and reinforcements of protections. Poland repealed its final "LGBTI-free zone" resolution. In Spain, regional parliaments rejected attempts to dismantle equality laws and strengthened sanctions against LGBTI-phobia.

At regional level, the Council of Europe adopted a new Recommendation on the human rights of intersex people, affirming standards on bodily integrity and non-discrimination. These developments demonstrate that democratic institutions remain contested arenas, and that political will continues to make a decisive difference.

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