



# LATVIA

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Over 500 anti-LGBT posts were removed by a social media platform this year. 20 of these were reported to the police, but criminal proceedings were only initiated in two cases.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A total of 29 anti-LGBT hate crimes were reported to Mozaika this year, of which most (17) targeted gay men. The crimes included sexual and physical assault, blackmail, and arson. The victims did not report the cases to the police. The number of crimes signal an increase - in 2018, 22 cases were reported.

## DIVERSITY

On 12 February, the Open Centre association launched the [Latvian Diversity Charter](#), joining a number of other EU Member States. The Charter is a voluntary declaration to foster equality, inclusion and respect for vulnerable groups, including the LGBTI community. It has been signed by over 40 entities, including state institutions, municipalities, companies, and organisations.

## FAMILY

On 20 June, the Saeima/Parliament [voted down](#) the proposal to send draft partnership legislation to the Parliamentary Commissions for review. 23 of 101 [voted in favour](#), 60 against, and one abstained. The draft would have legally recognised same-sex unions. The bill was introduced by the parties Development/For! and New Unity. This was the third time that the Saeima rejected such an initiative.

In July, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [requested](#) information from Latvia to confirm that same-sex couples are included within the notion of family used in national laws, policies, programmes and strategies, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 21.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

Two cases of attempted human trafficking were reported to Mozaika this year by Latvian trans women. After providing support to the two women, Mozaika was threatened by the traffickers. They referred the case to an NGO working in the field.

## PUBLIC OPINION

The Eurobarometer 2019 survey [found](#) that even though social acceptance of LGBTI people in Latvia has slightly increased in the past four years, it continues to lag far behind the EU average. 72 per cent of those in the EU say there is nothing wrong with same-sex relationships, compared to only 25 per cent in Latvia. The support for same-sex marriage is 69 per cent in the EU, compared to 24 per cent in Latvia. Latvia scored a little better on attitudes towards legal gender recognition, 41 per cent in support versus the EU average of 59 per cent.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The first LGBT House was [opened](#) on 27 November in Riga. The House will provide services to the LGBT community and their friends, including legal and healthcare services. Free HIV testing is also available.