



SWEDEN

AGE OF CONSENT

Investigative journalists from the newspaper, Svenska Dagbladet set up a fake account of a 14 year-old boy on a dating site, which received over 100 propositions in days, including from a key person in the Pride community. Regrettably, the action focused on LGBT sites, wrongfully suggesting that pedophilia is characteristic of the LGBT community only. Stockholm Pride issued a statement that they are investigating the case and will take immediate measures if the rumour is true. The age of consent in Sweden is 15.

ASYLUM

RFSL continued to criticise the asylum authorities for unlawfully denying asylum status from LGBT asylum seekers, often questioning their credibility or whether they would be persecuted in their countries of origin. The Swedish Migration Court denied the asylum claim of a 19-year-old gay man from Iran this year. Mehdi Shokr Khoda stated he feared for his life as he could be executed in Iran both for being gay and Christian. The Court said they lacked evidence of Khoda's sexual orientation and faith, despite his relationship with his partner and his conversion in Sweden.

In June, the parliament decided to prolong changes in the asylum law until 2021. The changes were initially introduced in 2016 on a temporary basis. Instead of permanent residence, the changes made temporary residence the default status granted to refugees. They also made family reunification harder for those that were granted status as "alternatively in need of protection" ("alternativt skyddsbehövande"). The changes have negatively affected the assessment of asylum claims, including by LGBTI asylum seekers, as found by RFSL. Stricter rules on family reunification were not prolonged.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The amendments on the hate speech legislation to include transgender people entered into force on 1 January.

DIVERSITY

Rainbow Muslims, a group of LGBT Muslims in Sweden, took part in Stockholm Pride for the first time.

FAMILY

From 1 July, parental leave can be transferred to a partner without the requirement of having been or being married to the person or them being another legal parent or guardian of the child. RFSL welcomed the positive change, partly because it gives extended rights to families where more than two parents are taking care of the child. An important family law case is making its way to the European Court of Human Rights, as Sweden still makes a difference between children of same-sex and different-sex couples if they reside abroad. Petra Nordqvist, a Swedish citizen and her wife Lindsay Manning, a British citizen, live together in the UK and have two children. In the UK, Petra is recognised as the parent of both Emma and Theo. In Sweden however, she is only recognised as the parent of Emma, who she gave birth to. In 2017, the Swedish Tax Agency declared that Theo cannot be recognised as Petra's child and will not be granted citizenship. Petra would have to move to Sweden to adopt Theo, which she cannot do in the UK as she is recognised as a parent there. Several other cases have been referred to the Supreme Administrative Court, which has now referred Petra and Lindsay's case to the European Court of Human Rights.

HEALTH

In April, a TV program (Uppdrag Granskning) on the Swedish public service television company (SVT) presented a story on the negative experiences of a few trans people who accessed trans healthcare, and also views from parents' of young trans people. Trans people and trans rights organizations such as RFSL harshly criticised the show for spreading misinformation on gender affirmative healthcare. Following the broadcast, heated public debate sparked condemnation of young trans people's access to trans specific healthcare, using transphobic and stigmatising language. Trans youth have been routinely excluded from these discussions.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The introduction of new gender recognition legislation was further stalled during 2019. The government ordered further consultation, following the public debate stirred by Uppdrag Granskning's show on trans healthcare in April (see under **Health**) and on legal gender recognition in October. The latter criticised the fact that under the legislation, gender



recognition would be made available for trans people under the age of 18.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In May, RFSL cancelled its participation in this year's Almedalen political festival in Visby to protest that the police had permitted the neo-Nazi group Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen - NMR (Nordic Resistance Movement) to be present during the past three years, and to highlight security concerns. In 2018, NMR's presence led to several cases of disruption and charges of assault. In July, the government appointed a parliamentary committee to investigate if racist organisations should be outlawed, which, if implemented, would make NMR illegal.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A series of events organised by and for sex workers and allies took place in Stockholm between 28-30 September. On 28 and 29 September, workshops were organised on self-advocacy, healthcare and other key issues. On 30 September, local sex worker organisation Fuckförbundet and the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) held an international conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Swedish Model. Fuckförbundet presented its report "20 years of failing sex workers: a community report on the impact of the 1999 Swedish Sex Purchase Act", calling for decriminalisation. The conference was followed by a demonstration by participants.