



Slovenia

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

A number of hateful articles appeared online responding to *Pil* magazine's January issue (see under **Freedom of expression**), calling it an “aggressive imposition of LGBT ideology”. Articles also attacked installment of gender neutral bathrooms at a university (see under **Education**), calling it a “perversion” and “degeneracy”.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Legebitra documented five hate crimes through its Ni Prav online platform, which was launched last year, including against a group of friends in Maribor in June and a young gay couple in Ljubljana in August.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The INTERcoalition's work was stalled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In June, however, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality published a report on the situation of intersex people, finding that surgical procedures on intersex children are routinely performed in lack of medical necessity, and that there are no clear or consistent decision making protocols in place. The Advocate made recommendations to several stakeholders for systemic change. For instance, it called on the Ministry of Health to establish an interdisciplinary working group to revise existing protocols and put in place new ones that are in line with human rights based medical practice; and recommended health institutions to refrain from performing any medically unnecessary procedures on intersex children.

EDUCATION

The Social Sciences Faculty and the student health centre at the University of Ljubljana installed gender neutral bathrooms, to better accommodate trans and gender non-conforming students (see more under **Bias-motivated speech**).

EMPLOYMENT

Many LGBTI people lost their jobs in the pandemic and resorted to precarious work, which was difficult to do during lockdowns.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Following the resignation of Slovenia's Prime Minister in January, a new government was formed, with far-right Janez Janša as the new Prime Minister. The new government rule has had a grave impact on journalists with the cutting of ties to the government, and NGOs with the loss of funding. The roles of the police and the army increased to worrying levels at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society has organised massive demonstrations since the start of this political change, which

will have lasted for over 30 weeks by the end of December. The police presence became milder over the summer, but during the October lockdowns there were more police on the streets again. Civil society is concerned that Slovenia is following in the footsteps of Hungary and Poland.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The first Pride march in Slovenj Gradec was held on 12 September, with 150 participants, and no incidents. This is the third city to have its own Pride march.

The Ljubljana Pride march celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The January volume of *Pil*, a teen magazine, featured the question “Do you like boys or girls?” on its front page. Some criticised *Pil* for the move (see more under **Bias-motivated speech**). The magazine's editorial board stood firmly for equality and responded:

“Our articles [...] always advocate equal treatment of people, regardless of religion, race, nationality or sexual orientation. These are the foundations of a civilized society.”

HEALTH

On 11 March, the interdisciplinary team for gender affirming care was set up by the Ministry of Health and the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana. Despite the terms of the establishment setting out at least one meeting with NGOs Legebitra and Transakcija per year, no meetings were convened in 2020.

In the spring and autumn, Transakcija was told to leave the premises of the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana when accompanying a trans person to use the services.

As of February, people living with HIV can pick up their medication every three months, instead of on a monthly basis - a change welcomed by civil society.

HIV and STI testing services were suspended during lockdowns, causing an increase of new HIV and STI infections.

HOUSING

Student dorms were closed as part of lockdown measures, pushing many LGBTI students without a safe and accepting home into homelessness or housing insecurity. Student



organisations and Legebitra successfully lobbied for the dorms to be open for those who could provide a reason why they could not go home.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a lot of burden on LGBTI organisations. Legebitra reported increased administrative burdens, to apply with requirements while working remotely; inability to raise funds at events or via training; reductions in state funding; and fears of termination of project contracts. Organisations have tried to move services, including training, counseling, peer support, etc. online. Transakcija reported a stark increase in the number of trans people reaching out for support online, including trans women, and young trans masculine people.

Civil society is concerned that the negative attitude of the new government towards LGBTI organisations will play a role in how funds are distributed in the future, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 19 October, NGOs operating at 6 Metelkova street in Ljubljana, including those working on LGBTI rights, received a termination of lease from the Ministry of Culture and an order to vacate the building by 31 January 2021. The Ministry has not offered an alternative office space for those concerned and has failed to communicate with the NGOs. The organisations launched a petition.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society continued to be excluded from the legal gender recognition working group this year, which was set up by the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities in 2019. With the new government in place, NGOs are concerned about what the future holds - especially in light of the 2020 ban on legal gender recognition in neighbouring Hungary.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Legebitra started cooperation with the police on hate crime training this year, and the establishment of LGBTI liaison officers. It is yet to be seen how the cooperation continues with the new government in place.



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