



NORWAY

ASYLUM

A member of parliament questioned Norway's family reunification policy, which asks for proof of marriage of two years of cohabitation, which is close to impossible for LGBTQ asylum seekers to obtain.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Trans people continued to be targeted by the growing anti-gender rhetoric and campaigning among religious conservatives, the far right, anti-trans feminists, and LGB activists.

The amendments to the Penal Code, which criminalise hate speech and hate crime on grounds of gender identity and expression, entered into force on 1 January. Enforcing the law, in December the Hordaland District Court convicted a man for transphobic hate speech on social media and sentenced him to a suspended prison sentence and a fine. The judgement is not legally binding as of January 2022, as it may go to the Court of Appeal.

Following the entry into force of the new law, FRI launched the Fri-sone campaign to encourage the reporting of hate crimes.

The 2020 hate crimes report of the police showed a decrease in anti-LGBTI hate crimes from 122 to 97 cases, for the first time since 2016. The police suspect one reason may be the COVID-19 pandemic.

The national competence centre against hate crimes, which will support the police and encourage cooperation with CSOs, was launched in October.

BODILY INTEGRITY

Civil society published written feedback to the proposal from several parliament members from The Socialist Left Party regarding a public apology and providing financial compensation to trans people who were forced to undergo sterilisation in order to access legal gender recognition (LGR) before 2016. The government has been reluctant to make a move while court cases are ongoing. In March, the Court of Appeals ruled against a trans man who was required to undergo sterilisation as a requirement for LGR.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to ban conversion therapy in the new LGBTQI Action Plan and

released a draft text for consultation. In October, FRI submitted feedback, calling for an absolute ban, more clarity in the law, higher penalties, the sanctioning of advertising such therapies, and the clear inclusion of anti-trans therapies. Some conservative forces called for anti-trans therapies not to be banned.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In June, the government presented its new LGBTQI Action Plan (2021-2024). The Action Plan includes numerous measures, but civil society is concerned that it lacks clearly defined goals and the necessary funds to implement the measures. Civil society has also warned that in terms of conversion therapy, only assessment and knowledge acquisition are listed, and not a ban. The issues of children and young people are not specifically addressed either.

A number of important studies about the situation of LGBTI people in Nordic countries were published this year, including Mapping and analysis on LGBTI in the Nordics. For the first time since 2013, the government also commissioned a study on the living conditions of LGBTI people in Norway. The study 'Sexual orientation, gender diversity and living conditions' showed some alarming findings, including a third of trans people having experienced sexual abuse and a third have attempted suicide. Overall, trans people scored lowest on living conditions and bisexual people scored very low on mental health and other indicators. Cisgender lesbians and gay men reported living conditions similar to cisgender heterosexuals.

FAMILY

FRI called on the government to ensure that the review of the Children's Act makes it simple for same-sex parents, trans parents, and families with more than two parents to be recognised.

FOREIGN POLICY

Nordic countries agreed to cooperate on a number of initiatives to address discrimination against LGBTI people in the region, including when moving from one Nordic country to another. The activities include the sharing of good practises with a focus on education, healthcare, and employment.

Norway withdrew over two billion NOK worth of EEA funding from Hungary this year, following the erosion



of the rule of law, Hungary's new propaganda law, and the unwillingness of the government to agree on an independent oversight body to manage civil society funds.

The new government program highlights continued support to combat persecution and discrimination based on sexual orientation in Norwegian Foreign Policy.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Following last year's cancellation of Pride events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Pride was held on waters in addition to Pride Park, with the participation of hundreds of boats. For the first time, a navy boat joined and raised a rainbow flag. The National Broadcasting Channel (NRK) had a historic first official Pride broadcast live from Pride Park.

Three eighth-graders organised the first Pride march in the town of Steigen, which was supported by the mayor. The teenagers made signs to speak out against hate speech against LGBTI people and girls. More small towns followed with their own Pride parades.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Trans-inclusive women's organisations are targeted by anti-gender forces and accused of being influenced by the "LGBT-lobby".

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Several rainbow flags were torn down during Pride month in June, including from outside the Oslo municipality and from several Oslo schools. The schools and authorities repeatedly replaced the flags, and some communities provided rainbow flags for households in the area.

The issue of gendered indigenous Sámi clothing was discussed this year.

HEALTH

The report Health, well-being and living conditions among young LGBTI people in the Nordic countries concluded that trans youth are most vulnerable to mental health problems, loneliness, or suicidal thoughts or attempts. The new government program covers mental health and living conditions, but in vague terms.

Following the 2020 guidelines on trans healthcare, which centre user participation and an individualised approach to care, care provision remained centralised this year. The guidelines envision the setting up of regional clinics, but it is unclear what services they would provide and who would be in charge of training their staff.

In September, the County governor decided that Oslo University Hospital was wrong to deny treatment to a trans client only because their referral came from their GP - an important precedent to facilitate decentralised care.

Only one hospital, in Vestfold, provides therapy and gender-affirming aids to non-binary people, such as wigs and prosthetics, but not hormones or surgeries.

HOUSING

Trans people reported difficulties accessing gender-specific shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sex worker organisations are concerned that migrant sex workers are also facing obstacles getting the support they need during the crisis.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Oslo Pride was granted funding in the 2022 state budget, and promised funding in the years to come. Queer Youth's school project "Restart" and the organisation Salam were also granted funding in the budget.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil society urged the government to introduce alternative gender markers beyond 'male' and 'female'. The parliament failed to adopt respective regulations in February and the new government program also omits this measure - much to civil society's disappointment.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Ahead of the parliamentary elections in September, FRI released a voters' guide showing the level of support of political parties on various LGBTQI rights issues.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Norway's first Prison Pride was organised by Røverradion in Eidsberg prison.



SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

It is unclear whether under the new trans healthcare guidelines (see under **Health**) a trans man with the legal gender of 'man', or non-binary people, would be able to have their gametes frozen, or access IUI or IVF. Practice is that the preservation of gametes is allowed for trans women, but not trans men.



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