

ESTONIA

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The process to introduce legislation criminalising hate speech continued to be stalled this year. In 2020, the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against Estonia for its failure to have hate speech legislation in place.

ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia, published in March, called on the government to better address hate speech.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

On 9 July, a migrant black trans woman from Jamaica was murdered in her accommodation in downtown Tallinn. Two men were arrested and the investigation is ongoing. Several media reports misgendered the victim in their reporting.

BODILY INTEGRITY

ECRI's report called for the prohibition of non-consensual medical interventions against intersex children and for more research on the situation and needs of intersex persons.

EDUCATION

ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia called for targeted action against anti-LGBTI bullying as part of the implementation of the 2017 'Bullying-free Education' concept and several ongoing programs to prevent bullying.

EMPLOYMENT

A record number of employers signed the Diversity Charter this year, making the total number of signatories, companies, public institutions and NGOs, 178. As of this year, 49 employers have earned Diverse Workspace label 'Respecting Differences'.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, the Estonian LGBT Association opened an exhibition about the experiences of LGBT+ students and youth, featuring a 300-square-meter rainbow flag in downtown Tallinn. The Association's campaign shared stories from LGBT+ youth in school, with shocking accounts of bullying.

ECRI's report called for the adoption of an LGBTI action plan.

The Estonian LGBT Association organised support for LGBT+ people in Ukraine this year.

In December, the Estonian Human Rights Centre published a critical overview of the previous governing period, highlighting that none of the governing parties fulfilled their promises on human rights.

FAMILY

Civil society remained alarmed that the current legislation differentiates between same-gender registered partners and different-gender married couples and that the implementation of the Registered Partnership Act remains flawed. The Act was adopted back in 2014, but still lacks the necessary bylaws that would make its smooth implementation possible. ECRI's sixth country report on Estonia called on the government to adopt the necessary implementation provisions of the 2014 Registered Partnership Act.

Registered partners for instance are not allowed to take each other's name. In September, the parliament adopted new regulations restricting the entry of Russian citizens, which discriminate against cohabiting same-gender partners. The regulations make an exception for 'close family' but exclude unmarried cohabiting partners.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Around 1,000 people participated in Tartu Pride on 11 June. Pride's motto was 'How long can we wait?', referring to the lack of significant progress in achieving LGBT+ rights equality over the past years. The event also marked the 30th anniversary of the decriminalisation of same-sex relations in Estonia. Some participants were targeted with verbal abuse before and after the march.

HEALTH

In May, the blood donation deferral period for men who have sex with men was lowered from 12 to four months. The Chancellor of Justice published an opinion in July to say that any such blanket restriction is unreasonable and discriminatory. In June, the new trans expert panel had its first meeting with the purpose of supporting the Estonian

LGBT Association and Mõttekoda Praxis in the development of a trans healthcare protocol. The Ministry of Social Affairs is one of the partners in this project.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The Medical Examination Committee, an integral part of the legal gender recognition procedure, disbanded itself at the beginning of the year. The new Committee was set up in July and started its work. The law and the LGR process remain the same but are now accessible to residents with health insurance.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The Estonian LGBT Association published its recommendations to political parties ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections.

The LGBT Association presented the book, 'Out of Kalev', which features stories of LGBT+ people from 19th and 20th century Estonia.

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