Asylum

NGO FRI (The Norwegian Organisation for Sexual and Gender Diversity) finds it worrisome that Norway continues to practice a strict asylum policy, creating fear that people seeking asylum on the grounds of SOGIESC will not be granted protection. FRI has also criticised authorities for relying on stereotypes and a Western understanding of coming out and reflections on SOGIESC, when assessing claims.

Bias-motivated speech and violence

On 26 June, the government published a guide for police force on how to correctly register bias-motivated crimes, including on grounds of “gay orientation”, as part of the implementation of the Government’s Plan against Hate Speech (2016-2020). Implementation of the national “LGBTI Action Plan: Safety, Diversity, Openness” (2017-2020) also continued.

The neo-nazi group the Nordic Resistance Movement, spoke several times throughout the year in different cities, used hate speech and threatening language toward LGBTI people. They use “Crush the gay lobby” as their slogan and threaten LGBTI people and activists by photographing them in Pride parades and publishing them on their websites. They also advocate for the banning of homosexuality in the public sphere.

Civil society reported that hate crimes against LGBTI people have been on the rise in recent years, particularly around the time of the annual Pride events. Two people were attacked this year and others received threats. The government has suggested to amend the section of the Penal Code on hate crimes, and include gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds, among others. The public could comment on the proposal. Civil society hopes that the vote will happen in 2019.

Bodily integrity

Legal gender recognition has been based on self-determination since July 2016. In June and September, two trans people took the Norwegian state to court, as according to the former requirements of LGR, they had to be sterilised to change their legal gender. The cases are at the second instance court, with a judgment to be expected in 2020.

Equality and non-discrimination

The new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act came into force in January. The new law combines the previous separate acts on different discrimination grounds. The law explicitly includes SOGIE grounds. Sex characteristics were only mentioned in the preparatory documents, and later omitted from both the current and previous laws. This leaves intersex people without protection from discrimination.

Family

In June, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of marriage equality in Norway, FRI launched a new website highlighting the inequalities same-sex couples and non-traditional families still face in everyday life in Norway.

Health

In 2018, the Ministry of Health set up a working group to draft new national guidelines on trans healthcare, including relevant civil society organisations, with an aim to bring service provision in line with ICD-11 and WPATH’s standards of care (SOC v.7). The guidelines are scheduled to be made public by the end of 2019.

On 1 April, the Norwegian “National Treatment Centre for Transsexualism’s” (NBTS) published a policy stating that the centre will reject referrals for trans people who have started hormones or undergone surgeries before being referred to the service and also terminate the diagnosis process of those who have started hormones or undergone surgeries before being diagnosed by the NBTS.

On 18 April, Transgender Europe, the Board of the European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH) and ILGA-Europe sent a joint letter to the Ministry of Health, voicing their serious concern regarding the policy. The organisations stressed that trans people are entitled to healthcare that is accessible, centres the individual, and enables people to make informed treatment choices. On the same day, roughly 30 NGOs held a protest.

“The situation now is unbearable. Four out of 5 seeking help from the National Treatment Centre for Transsexualism are denied entry, and the service people
receive is poor. Many adult trans people have given up on receiving treatment, teens share health tips online and medicines with each other, while parents are in despair because their children aren’t being heard.”

Ingvild Endestad, head of FRI

From September this year, people living with HIV are no longer receiving the same level of treatment as earlier. Instead, they will only get access to the medication that their local healthcare facility can afford to provide. This can lead to more side effects, worse quality of life and increased risk of infection being spread. The Norwegian HIV organisation “Hiv Norge” voiced their concerns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG