



Poland



The LGBTI community expressed growing frustration at the fact that no civil partnership proposal was successfully adopted in 2014. MP Robert Biedroń became the country's first openly gay mayor, and more political representatives attended the Pride march in Warsaw than ever before. However, the Catholic Church and conservative politicians led a ceaseless campaign against what they termed 'gender ideology', i.e. gender equality and LGBTI people's rights. The media relayed their arguments, which negatively affected public opinion on equality issues.

Bias-motivated speech

- After returning from the synod on family that the Vatican held in October, Polish delegate Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki welcomed the fact that the final statement omitted positive references to LGBTI individuals. Mr Gądecki congratulated himself on vehemently opposing the references during the global meeting.

Bias-motivated violence

- In January 2014, a gay student was beaten to death in Szczecin. The police and prosecutor, pressured by NGO KPH, examined a possible homophobic motive for the crime.
- LGBTI NGOs Lambda Warsaw and the Trans-Fuzja Foundation started work to open Poland's first shelter for LGBTI victims of violence or who have recently become homeless. The shelter was scheduled to open in Warsaw in February 2015.

Education

- Together with conservative politicians, the Catholic Church mounted repeated attacks against sexuality education workshops taking place in several secondary schools. In repeated and highly publicised attacks, religious leaders, professors, parents groups, politicians, and other public figures condemned 'gender ideology' throughout the year, in the form of educational workshops but also generally. Law and Justice (PiS, conservative Eurosceptic) MPs set up a parliamentary committee called 'Stop gender ideology' in January. The Polish Academy of Science condemned the classes as attempting to "unseat children from their own sex".

Equality and non-discrimination

- No action was taken in 2014 on the implementation of the National Action Plan 2013-2016 which includes a section on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Family

- Losing patience over the absence of a law on civil partnerships, several couples held their own weddings,

exchanging vows and signing legal deeds to combine one another's family name into a joint name. Often, their parents also granted rights to inheritance.

- In December 2014, a motion to add the first reading of a draft bill on civil partnerships to the parliamentary agenda was defeated in parliament. Another discussion on the issue is due to take place in May 2015.

Freedom of assembly

- The annual Equality Parade took place in Warsaw for the 14th consecutive year, with leading political figures attending. MPs from Your Movement (liberal/anti-clerical) and the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD, social-democratic) took part, including Your Movement MP Robert Biedroń. 27 foreign embassies lent their support to the march via an open letter, and although two groups of counter-protesters were on the parade's periphery, no incidents were reported.

Legal gender recognition

- The parliamentary subcommittee set out to examine a bill on legal gender recognition, which trans MP Anna Grodzka (Your Movement) had put forward in 2012. By the end of 2014, however, the subcommittee had paused its work after several of its MPs won local elections and stopped or suspended their parliamentary work as a result.
- The English language version of joint research into the legal requirements for gender recognition was published by trans rights NGO Trans-Fuzja and the Polish Society of Anti-Discrimination Law in 2014. The report covers 25 cases from 2009–2012, and results suggested that legal requirements often varied between jurisdictions, most notably with regards to the documents that must be produced (which sometimes included high school attendance certificates, declarations by employers or parents, or a skull scan). The report also emphasised that the legal fee (PLN 600, EUR 140) was often unrealistic for jobseekers, or those with lower incomes. Finally, the court records also demonstrated judicial and administrative authorities' poor knowledge of the legal and social aspects of transition.

Participation in public, cultural and political life

- With 57% of the votes against a candidate from ruling party Civic Platform (PO, centre-right), Robert Biedroń (Your Movement) was elected Poland's first openly gay mayor in December in the northern city of Słupsk (99,000 inhabitants). Biedron had also been Poland's first openly gay MP in 2011. Other openly gay candidates ran in these local elections, but none were elected.

Public opinion

- In a global survey on morality published in April by Pew Research, 22% of respondents in Poland rated homosexuality as morally acceptable, 26% as not a moral issue, and 44% as morally unacceptable.
- A survey of Catholic believers in 12 countries worldwide found that in Poland, 15% of respondents supported marriage equality (78% opposed it), and 8% thought the Church should perform marriages for same-sex couples (86% opposed it).