



ICELAND

ASYLUM

Civil society [condemned](#) and organised protests against the reform of the asylum system, which further marginalises queer asylum seekers. The new law, [adopted](#) in March, [strips](#) asylum seekers from essential services, including housing, social support and healthcare, 30 days after the application was rejected, civil society came together to protest the law (see [here](#) and [here](#)). In August, 29 NGOs [called on](#) the government to ensure the safety of queer refugees and actively consult civil society.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Anti-LGBTQ, and particularly anti-trans, hate speech was common again this year (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) and [increased](#) during international days and events related to LGBTI rights. Hate speech concerning trans minors' access to care also [remained](#) common.

Sex and queer education was a particularly heated topic this year - Samtökin '78, which [does](#) educational work in several municipalities, was [targeted](#) by hate speech on a daily basis for months (see more under Education). Terms like "groomers" and "child abusers" were commonly used against the organisation.

In January, a proposal for a parliamentary resolution on an action plan against hate speech 2023-2026 was [open](#) for comments. The results have not been published yet.

Trans rights activists campaigned against a gender-critical conference which was to be held in Iceland this year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Civil society noted with concern that harassment and violent attacks [increased](#) this year. Anti-LGBTQI+ 'barking' still [happens](#), but is less common.

Rainbow flags were again [vandalised](#) this year during Pride month.

In September, a guest of the Nordic LGBTI conference was brutally [attacked](#) on his way to the hotel. The investigation is ongoing.

In June, a woman was [sentenced](#) to two years of probation and fined for harassing a lesbian couple who were her neighbours.

BODILY INTEGRITY

On 9 June, Iceland [banned](#) so-called 'conversion practices'

covering sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity and [protecting](#) both children and adults. The vote was unanimous.

EDUCATION

There was serious backlash this year, including hate speech, [misinformation](#) and negative talk about sex education and education on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE) issues in school (see also under Bias-motivated Speech). In September, the Ministry of Education, municipalities, the Children's Ombudsman, the National Parents Association, and civil society organisations [co-published](#) a statement condemning these attacks and defending children's right to comprehensive sex education and information about SOGIE issues. Samtökin 78' signed agreements with several towns and municipalities this year to continue its education program (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

EMPLOYMENT

The company Ölgerðin is the first to be [certified](#) as a queer-friendly workplace.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

As part of Iceland's Presidency of the Council of Europe, Iceland [hosted](#) this year's IDAHOT Forum in May in Reykjavik. Implementing Iceland's first-ever comprehensive [LGBTI Action Programme](#) (2022-2025). Some ministries [received](#) training on LGBTI issues from civil society this year. All ministries have actions assigned to them in the Action Programme and some have started implementation already. A dashboard is now [available](#) where the public can follow the process implementation under each action.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Hinsegin Vesturland [held](#) a queer festival in July, which [included](#) a 400 metres rainbow flag painted in Akranes, the longest rainbow street in the country.

Reykjavik Pride, held in August, [brought](#) together a record number of people this year. Pride events were held in several towns.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Rainbow flags and trans flags were raised across the capital on the occasion of IDAHOBIT on 17 May and during trans visibility week.



HEALTH

The [LGBTI Action Programme \(2022-2025\)](#), adopted in 2022, commits to improving trans healthcare provision. Nevertheless, access to gender-affirming surgeries [remained](#) difficult this year, with waiting times remaining extremely long.

On 28 June, the Supreme Court [ruled](#) that a trans man, who underwent a mastectomy, was entitled to sick pay. In 2022, the National Court [ruled](#) against the man.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Trans Iceland [received](#) the Reykjavík Human Rights Award 2023 in May.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

A new bill was [tabled](#) in parliament in the autumn, to change a number of laws in an effort to bring them more in line with Iceland's Act on Gender Autonomy (2019). The changes include allowing people to choose -dóttir, -son or the gender-neutral -bur as endings to their family name, regardless of legal gender, and based on self-determination.

The Reykjavik Human Rights and Democracy Office shared that the number of non-binary applications [increased](#) by 75% in 2022.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Reykjavik [voted](#) to make its rainbow crossing a permanent part of its city landscape.

Samtökin '78 [continued](#) its [education program](#) targeting coaches, staff, and other key stakeholders in sport associations.

The Archery Association [introduced](#) a third gender category for competition and will organise unisex events as well.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Samtökin '78 [signed](#) an agreement with the National Police Commissioner to carry out education activities.

The prison authorities [shared](#) that no trans person was currently held in prison in Iceland. They affirmed that an individualised plan would be made for each trans inmate regarding their placement, which would take into account their gender identity.



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