

>THEMES

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

AUSTRIA

Abortion became a topic of debate with the closure of the last clinic providing it in Vorarlberg. In October, the regional government of Vorarlberg authorised one hospital to provide abortions, so the service is once again available in the area. However, many Austrian regions are still underserved and require patients to fund the treatment.

BELARUS

(See also under Freedom of Assembly)

The upcoming law on 'LGBTQ+ propaganda and child-free behaviour' will further restrict the dissemination of information on contraception and "non-traditional relations" including fines up to 2,500 EURO.

NORTHERN CYPRUS

After the revision of the list of dangerous infectious diseases, people living with HIV will not be subject to deportation when seeking a student visa or residency permit, as long as they can cover their medication expenses and comply with quarterly check-ups. However, the potential for deportation still exists for those applying for a work permit.

CZECHIA

Conservative politicians called for the regularisation of surrogacy and populists called for its criminalisation. A parliamentary working group was set up. Conservative politicians and anti-LGBTI organisations continue to link marriage equality with surrogacy.

FRANCE

Over 22,000 requests were made for medically assisted procreation (MAP) by the end of 2022, following the 2021 law which made it available to lesbian couples and single women. In 2022, the Constitutional Council ruled that excluding trans and intersex people, whose legal gender is not 'female', from cost coverage for in vitro fertilisation is not unconstitutional. This July, some LFI MPs tabled a bill that would enable trans people to access MAP and also to preserve their gametes; it would also allow egg donation among female partners. The Ministry of Health has so far held its position against these additions.

In December, the 'Conseil d'Etat' delivered an opinion on the constitutional draft bill on abortion, deeming it

necessary to name women as beneficiaries of this right and not including gender identity as protected ground.

HUNGARY

(See under Institutional Support)

IRELAND

State funding was made available for IVF treatments this year, but completely excluding single persons, same-sex couples and other couples who require donor eggs or sperm.

The government said the eligibility criteria would later be expanded.

The government is undertaking a review of the 2018 abortion law, which still bars many from accessing services.

MALTA

Malta's Parliament legalised abortion in cases where a woman is at risk of dying. The majority of MPs voted in favor, removing Malta from the list of the last four countries with a complete abortion ban. The bill allows for abortion after the approval of three doctors and only when the pregnant person's life is at risk.

Abortion in cases of rape, incest and domestic abuse are still prohibited. Pro-choice activists criticised the amendments.

MGRM joined the pro-choice civil society coalition this year, and participated in the pro-choice rally on September 30.

There, Cynthia Chircop, coordinator of MGRM, stressed the paradox of Malta's civil rights record and added "LGBTIQ rights and the right to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, have one common foundation; bodily autonomy. This is a fundamental right."

MONTENEGRO

In March, the Ministry of Health adopted regulations related to the Law on Medically Assisted Fertilisation. The regulations ban anyone who had engaged in same-sex relations in the past five years from donating gametes. They also exclude women in a same-sex partnership from undergoing medically assisted reproduction. 20 NGOs launched a joint call for the withdrawal of the regulations,

>THEMES

which are explicitly discriminatory. The Ombudsperson started investigating the regulations.

POLAND

Huge protests were held in June after yet another woman died due to the strict abortion laws.

SAN MARINO

The decriminalisation of abortion approved in September 2022, started to be applied from February 2023 and more than 20 women requested the assistance of public welfare.

SERBIA

In 2022, President Aleksandar Vučić announced that medically assisted reproduction will be available from December onwards. It is available to all women, and it has been reported that lesbian couples have had good experiences of the process this year.

SPAIN

The new abortion law, which allows people over 16 to interrupt their pregnancy without parental permission, entered into force on 1 March. The law also establishes the right to abortion at state clinics and provides for free contraceptives and the morning-after pill at state clinics. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, praised the progressive law.

A clinic specialising in supporting trans people with fertility care opened in Valencia.

SWITZERLAND

A Sexual and Reproductive Health Consultancy Centre opened in Kadıköy.

UNITED KINGDOM

Scotland is consulting on legislation for Safe Access Zones (buffer zones) around abortion providers to prevent harassment and a Bill to this effect is in its first stage at the Scottish Parliament.