



SWEDEN

ASYLUM

In August, RFSL released a new [report](#), based on 1,360 decisions and judgments in LGBTI asylum cases between 2020-2023, which [found](#) that 96% of the decisions led to rejection; that LGBTI applicants rarely receive an individual examination; that the ‘discretion requirement’ and [stereotypical](#) requirements are both still applied; and that applicants are [deported](#) to home countries that criminalise LGBTI people, including with the death penalty. RFSL reminds that LGBTIQI refugees remain a priority group in the governing coalition’s [agreement](#), which also sets out a review of the asylum process to improve procedures for LGBTIQI applicants. In response to the report, the government [promised](#) to investigate the issues outlined.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

(See also under Education; and Freedom of Assembly)

Anti-LGBTIQI statements remained common this year, of which many originated from right wing populist politicians from the governments cooperation party Sweden Democrats (SD). In Eskilstuna SD [called](#) Pride a “radical political organisation” in April and requested the municipality to stop funding the event in order to “protect children from sexual influences”. In September, SD MP Björn Söder [said](#) that Stockholm Pride was not suitable for children and young people. MPs of SD [said](#) in parliament that drag story events violated the best interest of the child. In an interview, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson rebuked Söder’s statement.

Mockery and hate against trans children and their parents have become the norm, with parents and trans groups [urging](#) decision makers to take action. In September, the public service TV channel SVT launched the series “[The Trans War](#)”, which featured anti-trans rhetoric and misinformation. Civil society organisations issued several statements in response (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). At least 100 complaints were [sent](#) to the Review Board asking for the removal of the series. In April, a teenager in Gothenburg [said](#) they would “cut the throats of homosexuals” in response to the Pride flag at a local library.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A group of young Pride participants were verbally [harassed](#) on their way to Helsingborg Pride in July. The city reported the case to the police.

In February, the police [issued](#) a warning that several people

were lured on fake dates on a gay dating app, and were then robbed and assaulted.

Neo-nazis [tried](#) to block a touring drag show musical for children in Jönköping, but the event was held without disturbance.

Children’s right organisation ECPAT’s report [Consent is KEY](#) [found](#) that LGBTQIA+ children are more likely to suffer sexual violence than their peers and are five times more likely to ‘sell sex’.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In July, Court of Appeals Councilor Maria Hölcke presented her [report](#) concluding that there was no need to ban so-called ‘conversion attempts’ and that the current penalties were sufficient. In 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs, [released](#) its report [finding](#) that conversion attempts are very much present in Sweden and particularly impact trans youth.

A pastor, who was dismissed for inviting people to so-called ‘conversion practices is [suing](#) the Pentecostal Church for firing him.

EDUCATION

In September, several media outlets [spread](#) false rumours that preschoolers are taught sex education. Sweden Democrats (SD) [continued](#) to speak against sex education and norm-critical education in hostile ways.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

As part of the Swedish Presidency of the EU, Sweden and the European Commission [hosted](#) the High Level Conference on LGBTIQ Equality in the EU in April. Following the end of the Presidency, civil society [urged](#) the government to continue working on gender equality, LGBTIQI rights, and sexual and reproductive rights.

In July, the Minister for Equality Paulina Brandberg [announced](#) that the state would provide 4.6 million SEK to municipalities and regions to increase knowledge about the situation of LGBTIQI people and to promote digital meeting places.

1.4 million SEK will go to the Gender Equality Agency (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten) for a survey with LGBTIQI people who are exposed to partnership violence.



During Stockholm Pride in August, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson raised the flag at the PM's official residence. RFSL [welcomed](#) the move but asked for a more effective response to hate speech in parliament instead. Prime Minister Kristersson also, during Stockholm Pride, hosted a Pride cocktail party, which was the first time a Swedish Prime Minister hosted a rainbow event at his residence.

FAMILY

RFSL continued to [lobby](#) for law reform that protects all families. Since 2022, the [presumption of parenthood](#) is automatic for all couples who are married and have a child in Sweden, regardless of gender. The law includes two exceptions where parenthood can be later invalidated - in the case of home insemination or assisted reproduction that was conducted abroad and with an unknown donor.

FOREIGN POLICY

Sweden [joined](#) the European Commission's infringement proceedings against Hungary over its anti-LGBT legislation.

As one of the [final steps](#) of the Swedish Presidency of the EU, the EU Justice Affairs Council adopted [conclusions](#) on the protection of LGBTI communities in Europe.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

A camp for trans children, organised by Transsamans and RFSL Ungdom was [cancelled](#) in June due to threats.

HEALTH

In February, Transsamans [opened](#) the first national helpline for [trans youth](#).

Ahead of Women's Day, RFSL Stockholm released a [report](#) about LBQ women's access to healthcare. The majority of 812 participants reported having good contact with healthcare, but many avoid seeking care. For instance, almost a third said they do not go to a gynaecologist.

Following from the 2021 decision, the National Board for Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) classified gender-affirming care as so-called "national specialised healthcare". In March the Board [announced](#) that as of January 1, 2024, there will be six clinics, with three main ones in Stockholm, Alingsås, and Linköping, which cooperate with satellite clinics in Uppsala, Umeå and Malmö/Lund.

In June, the Agency for the Assessment of Health Technology

and Social Services (SBU) released a [study](#) to conclude that few people regret transitioning or detransition. The rate of between 0-4% is based mostly on literature from outside Sweden.

In September, the largest clinic in Sweden that provides care for trans minors [issued an internal guidance](#) telling care providers not to refer minors under the age of 11 to their clinic. The decision was made a few days after SVT's documentary premiered (see under Bias-motivated Speech). At the time, 74 of the 368 patients were under 11, which means that a significant rate of trans minors would be left without care.

The National Board of Health and Welfare investigated whether [the guidelines for adults with gender dysphoria](#) should be updated to better fit the national specialised health care system.

In October, Sweden Democrats (SD) in the parliament [proposed to raise](#) the age limit for trans healthcare to 25.

The government [said](#) they would commission the National Board of Health and Welfare to [plan](#) individual risk assessment for men who have sex with men (MSM) from 2024, instead of a blanket rule. The current blood donation rule [sets out](#) a six-month deferral period for MSM.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The youth organisation RFSL Ungdom [turned](#) 20 this year.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

(See under Equality and Non-discrimination)

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The legal gender recognition (LGR) reform continued to be [stalled](#) this year. In September, the Moderates (M) and Liberals (L), both government parties, shared that they were going to table a new bill in parliament, as a way of circumventing the deadlock in the government coalition, which would require an expert opinion from a doctor or psychologist and would make LGR available for those aged 16-17 if they have parental consent. The bill has high probability of becoming law. Civil society continued to lobby for a model based solely on self-determination (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). [50 organisations](#) are currently [supporting](#) this call and a demonstration was held in September by LGBTQI activists calling for LGR based on self-determination. Sweden is currently [the only Nordic country that does not have](#) such a model in place.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The play *Ulla & Zarah*, by Elisabeth Ohlson premiered in August. The play is about the relationship between the, during the 1930's and 1940's, between the celebrated Swedish singers, Ulla Billquist and Zarah Leander.



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