Trans Rights Index & Map 2024 reveals polarisation in trans rights in Europe and Central Asia

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Progress in some countries and concerning regressions in others

Today, **TGEU (Trans Europe and Central Asia)** launches its annual update of the Trans Rights Index & Map, which documents the legal situation of trans people in Europe and Central Asia.

This year's data shows polarisation in legal protections for trans people. There is continued progress in many countries, although less compared to 2023, and some alarming regressions in others, which calls for attention. TGEU applauds the actions of states that improved protections and human rights for trans people in 2024, particularly **Greece**, who made good progress this year, and **Iceland**, who topped the ranking for the second year running**.** However, **Russia** is a particularly concerning example of a country where trans people's human rights have been significantly eroded over the past year. The July 2023 ban on medical and legal transition is yet another escalation in the attack on the trans community in Russia and Russian-occupied territories in Ukraine.

Two new indicators for 2024

In 2024, TGEU has introduced **two new legal indicators.** In the context of growing anti-migrant sentiment in the region and harsh EU-level laws targeting asylum seekers, the first new indicator focuses on **trans refugees** and the countries that make **legal gender recognition (LGR)** available for them. Trans refugees' socio-economic integration can be greatly assisted by documents reflecting their gender identity. TGEU highlights good practice by awarding a full point to **11** states that have a procedure that is easily accessible: **Germany, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain** and **Switzerland. Seven** other countries (**Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Poland, Sweden,** and **the United Kingdom**) have provisions in theory, but need to improve their accessibility, e.g. provide information online and in multiple languages. TGEU calls on all states to make LGR available and accessible to refugees and asylum seekers.

The second new indicator maps **where legal gender recognition is not banned.** This indicator needs to be introduced in response to a growing trend from governments to block trans rights. Three countries, **Russia, Bulgaria** and **Hungary,** do not achieve this bare minimum as their authorities took deliberate action to ban legal transition. TGEU is concerned that these bans will lead to more countries removing hard-won gains in rights for trans people, an already marginalised community.

Progress in trans rights

Greece brought in important protections for trans people. Its anti-discrimination law now explicitly protects trans people in the areas of education, health and housing. We applaud **Czechia** for a new law protecting asylum seekers on grounds of gender identity. There was good progress in the health category. **Belgium, Cyprus, Iceland, Norway** and **Portugal prohibit conversion practices** on grounds of gender identity, doubling the total of countries where conversion practices are banned. It is now illegal in 10 countries to attempt to change someone's gender identity. **Iceland** joined **Malta** as the second country to have fully depathologised access to trans-specific healthcare.

Legal Gender Recognition

Compared to previous years, this year's update sees minimal progress in legal gender recognition, with no new laws coming into effect. **Last week, the Czech Constitutional Court struck down forced sterilisation. Germany's and Sweden's recent LGR reforms** will only come into effect in November 2024 and July 2025 respectively. **Andorra's** 2022 LGR law was shown to be effective in practice, resulting in the country gaining four more points.

Regression and stagnation

In 2024, it becomes much more evident that besides an overall positive trend of progress, regression is taking up traction, with three times as many points removed as in 2023. Anti-trans rhetoric and disregard for the human rights of trans people have led to a loss of rights in some places and delayed reforms in others. **Russia** lost all its remaining points and joined Hungary (2020), Kyrgyzstan (2021) and Bulgaria (2023) in removing the right to legal gender recognition. **Montenegro** lost three points for allowing various policies to lapse (Equality Action Plan, Policy Tackling Hatred, Asylum Policy).

There was also concerning stagnation in many countries and policy areas, such as:

- The Netherlands' failed LGR reform
- Elapsed equality action plans in countries usually thought of as progressive
- Scapegoating of trans people to distract from political failures, for example, by the UK and Slovak governments
- A proposed bill in France that seeks to ban and criminalise the provision of trans-specific healthcare for minors
- some German federal states ban on using gender-sensitive language.

These dangerous developments in and of their own not only harm trans people domestically but also assist restrictive developments elsewhere.

In **Slovakia,** administrative protocols regulating medical and legal aspects of legal gender recognition have been officially cancelled, leading to arbitrary decisions. Sometimes, sterilisation or medical interventions are still required for LGR. TGEU insists that trans people need positive rights codified in law to strengthen these protections and make them harder to take away. There was **no progress** in the area of **family rights** for trans people. Only six states recognise trans parents, and two recognise non-binary parents. Stagnation also continues in **Central Asia**. For four countries (**Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**), the 'bare minimum' of not having a ban on legal gender recognition is the only point they have been awarded.

"This year's analysis highlights the tangible consequences of polarising human rights. Trans people are stripped of fundamental rights, including the recognition of their true selves. Having escaped the Egyptian dictatorship, I intimately understand the reality of repression; it was a pervasive part of my life. I endured persecution and discrimination. I implore policymakers in ostensibly progressive nations to redouble their efforts and champion human rights both domestically and internationally. The rights of minorities are sacrosanct," **comments TGEU Interim Executive Director, Suma Abdelsamie,**

Freya Watkins, TGEU Research Officer, adds: *"This year, we have seen a trend towards polarisation, with some continued progress, but also more rights lost than in recent years. The ban on medical and legal transition in Russia is particularly concerning, with the potential for anti-gender actors in other states, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, to push for copycat legislation. On the positive side, there is considerable progress in banning abusive conversion practices against trans people. However, these laws must cover not only trans youth but also adults, and specify likely perpetrators, including medical professionals, when accessing trans-specific*

healthcare. As always, our mapping project reflects the legal situation, but trans people need these laws to be implemented in practice to make a positive difference to the quality of our everyday lives."

TGEU Asylum Policy Officer, Farah Abdi, adds: *"This year, we call attention to the fact that only a handful of states make legal gender recognition available and accessible to trans refugees. When trans refugees face disparities between their gender identity and the gender markers on their official documents, they often encounter formidable obstacles to their socioeconomic integration in a new country. For instance, they may struggle to access employment opportunities because their documents don't reflect their gender identity, leading to discrimination during job applications or in the workplace. Additionally, obtaining essential services such as healthcare or education can be hindered when official documents don't align with their gender identity, causing confusion or refusal of services. These challenges impede their ability to fully participate in and contribute to their new community, exacerbating their already vulnerable situation.*

More info

About Trans Rights Index & Map

Spanning over a decade of data collection, TGEU's Trans Rights Index & Map is the most comprehensive analysis of trans rights in Europe and Central Asia to date. Started in 2013, it now illustrates the legal situation of 54 countries in 32 areas of trans-specific legislation. Central Asian countries were added to the map in 2019. This year, TGEU's research team added a Czech version to the previously available English, Russian, Spanish, French and Croatian. The map tracks six legal categories:

- Legal gender recognition
- Asylum
- Hate crime and speech
- Non-discrimination
- Health
- Family.

Go to the Trans Rights Index & Map 2024

The Trans Rights Index & Map is made in collaboration with ILGA-Europe and launches on the same day as ILGA-Europe's Rainbow Map and Index 2024.