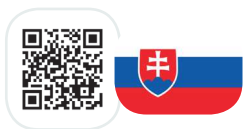


ANNUAL REVIEW

OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS
AND INTERSEX PEOPLE

2019



Annual Review

of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex
People in Slovakia covering the period of January to December 2018

Slovakia

Bias-motivated speech and violence

In June, a gay couple, both high school students, was insulted, followed and beaten by a group of men outside the Stejdž club in Trenčín.

"First, they started shoving my friend and shouted vulgar homophobic taunts," one of the victims told the Aktuality.sk website. "We went inside, since there is a security guard there. After some time we hoped they had left and so we went away, too. However, they were waiting for us outside and started chasing us. We received several punches." The attackers allegedly followed the couple across the park to a bus station where they caught and beat them. A taxi driver saved the boys, driving them to a neighbouring. They suffered chin injuries and bruises. They did not report the case to the police.

In June, the Initiative Inakost' (Otherness) wrote an open letter to Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, other politicians and the media, stating that such cases are not uncommon. According to a nationwide LGBT poll (see under Equality and non-discrimination), half of LGBTI people in Slovakia have experienced verbal or physical attacks. Inakost' urged the police leadership to help rebuild the public's trust in the police. Inakost received no official response to the letter.

Education

On 1 November, an amendment to the Higher Education Act entered into force (adopted in September), obliging universities and colleges to issue new certificates, such as university degrees, for trans people who have changed their legal gender.

Employment

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and Pontis Foundation, awarded the title of "Family, Gender Equality, and Equal Opportunities-Friendly Employer" to the IT company Accenture Slovakia, for granting LGBTI employees family benefits. Slovak legislation does not guarantee any such benefits.

Equality and non-discrimination

Inakost' conducted the largest survey to date on the situation of LGBT people in the country and published its results in May. The survey collected responses from 2088 LGBT people, over the age of 15. More than 80% considered prejudice, stereotypes,

misunderstanding and ignorance as the most serious problem in their lives. Many reported low self-confidence, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. 40% have experienced discrimination, this rate being higher among trans respondents. Almost half of LGBT people did not hold hands with their partner in public.

On a positive note, the survey revealed that LGBT people face less rejection by their families than thought earlier. Over 80% of parents were supportive of their child after they had come out and their relationship did not change. That said, hiding their relationship from the family was still identified as a major problem for many.

The survey also showed that according to popular belief among Slovak churches, a third of LGBT people are believers, and most of them Catholic.

In November, NGO Inakost' launched a counseling service for LGBTI people, which provides help online, by phone, and in person if needed. During the first weeks of its operation, 55 clients turned to the service.

Family

Following the Romanian Coman judgment of the CJEU in June (see chapter on Romania), the Slovak authorities stated that "as of 1 January 2012, the law on the residency of foreigners is valid, part of which is the directive on the law of EU citizens and their family members to move freely and stay on the territory of member states." This means that family members of an EU citizen enjoy the right to reside in Slovakia, even if they accompanied their spouse before the Coman ruling.

Meanwhile, the Slovak Justice Ministry also stated in June, that Slovak law does not recognise same-sex partnerships or same-sex marriage. The Slovak Constitution stipulates that marriage is a unique bond between a man and a woman. In September, a bill about rights of cohabiting couples (including same-sex couples) prepared by the Freedom and Solidarity party, was rejected by the Parliament. Only 31 of 150 MPs voted in favour, no MP from the ruling coalition supported the bill. Minister of Justice Gabor Gal pledged to prepare a governmental proposal for legislation about cohabitation. The Freedom and Solidarity party has been working on the issue since 2012, but all attempts failed so far.

In July, the leader of Smer and former Prime Minister Robert Fico stated that under his leadership Smer will never support same-sex marriage, but that he had no problem with granting specific rights to cohabiting couples.

Freedom of assembly

Rainbow Pride in Bratislava took place without any incidents. On 1 September, Kosice held its annual Pride march. Around 20 supporters of the extremist ĽSNS party tried to disrupt the march, but police and organisers formed a human chain to prevent this. The attackers chanted homophobic slogans.

Participation in public, cultural and political life

The diaries of Imrich Matyáš (1896-1974), one of the very first LGBTI activists in Czechoslovakia, were recently found. NGO Inakost' dedicated a website to Matyáš.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG](https://rainbow-europe.org)

