

# ESTONIA

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, the government of Estonia announced the development of an action plan for equal opportunities for LGBTI people, focusing on improving their security and ensuring fair treatment.

The plan addresses four key areas: safety, education, health, and employment, with particular attention to the wellbeing of trans people. Minister of Social Protection Signe Riisalo emphasised the plan's goal of fostering a supportive and safe environment for LGBTI people in all areas of life, noting that this is not always the current reality in Estonia.

In June, the Estonian LGBTI Association expressed support for a draft law aimed at enhancing gender equality and equal opportunities. The draft law seeks to address gaps in the Equal Treatment Act, which does not fully prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and the Gender Equality Act, which lacks explicit protections for gender identity, gender expression, and gender characteristics. In September, the government introduced the draft law, initiating formal discussions on its implementation.

## FAMILY

In January, a law recognising same-sex marriage and joint adoption by LGBTI couples came into effect in Estonia. Initially approved in June 2023, the law also outlines the option for same-sex couples in registered partnerships to convert their status to marriage.

## HEALTH

Since March, Estonian blood centres have updated their donor selection criteria to allow men having sex with men to donate blood on the same terms as men who have sex with women. Previously, Estonia had reduced the permanent ban on blood donations from men who had sex with men to a 12-month restriction, and later to four months as of 2022.

## DATA COLLECTION

In May, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released the results of its 2024 "LGBTIQ equality at a crossroads – Progress and challenges" survey. The findings for Estonia revealed that 62% of LGBTI respondents often or always avoid holding hands with their same-sex partner, 40% steer clear of certain locations due to fear of assault, and 48% reported being harassed in the year prior to the survey.

## FOREIGN POLICY

On IDAHOBIT, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Margus Tsahkna emphasised that human rights must be upheld for everyone,

regardless of sexual orientation. He highlighted that rainbow flags were displayed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its global offices to symbolise opposition to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

## PUBLIC OPINION

The latest survey by the Estonian Human Rights Centre revealed increasingly positive attitudes toward LGBTI people in Estonia, with notable shifts among non-Estonian speakers. Over half of respondents (56%) consider homosexuality completely or somewhat acceptable, with 64% of Estonian speakers and 39% of non-Estonian speakers expressing this view. However, 38% of respondents still regard homosexuality as somewhat or completely unacceptable, often citing perceptions of it as abnormal, unnatural, or untraditional.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In July, the Estonian Human Rights Centre took up the case of a Russian trans woman and her partner, advocating for their right to be recognised as a family in Estonia. The Police and Border Guard Board had previously denied recognition, citing the absence of marriage or cohabitation registration in Russia.



MORE INFORMATION ON [WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG](http://WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG)