

2023
**ANNUAL
REVIEW**

OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS
AND INTERSEX PEOPLE IN EUROPE
AND CENTRAL ASIA

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MOLDOVA

ASYLUM

Civil society organised help for people fleeing Ukraine, including those who are LGBT+.

In October, border guards denied the request of a non-binary person fleeing Russia, saying there was “no more space” in Moldova. Thanks to civil society’s intervention, the person’s asylum procedure is now in progress. Several other LGBT people from Russia are awaiting a decision in their asylum cases.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Hate speech by politicians and religious leaders remained a serious issue this year. In June, for instance, Chisinau’s mayor, Ion Ceban said LGBT people should hold their Pride march at home. In October, a member of the Bloc of Communists and Socialists, Diana Caraman made homophobic statements during a parliamentary debate on sanctioning sexual violence. Metropolitan Vladimir called for a ban on the march in Chisinau. Balti’s Bishop demanding the same in Balti, even though no Pride event was planned in the town. In November, the same Bishop called LGBT people ‘perverts’.

GENDERDOC-M revealed this year’s anti-LGBT awards in June, featuring Petru Corciun of the Ministry of Defense, Ion Groza of the Socialist Party, PSRM, OceanFish (see under *Employment*), and the General assembly of UTA Gagauzia.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Several hate crimes took place this year and several LGBT people reported domestic violence cases to civil society.

Amendments to the Criminal Code, which will cover SOGI as protected grounds, passed its second parliamentary reading in April and entered into force in June.

EDUCATION

A 16-year-old trans girl committed suicide in April after being repeatedly and brutally bullied by students, and the school administration failing to intervene on numerous occasions. Civil society held a protest outside the Ministry of Education calling on the government to protect trans and LGBT+ children

and young people. A new trans advocacy group was set up as part of GENDERDOC-M and named after Felis. GENDERDOC-M held a training of trainers for 38 individuals working in the education sector.

EMPLOYMENT

In May, the Equality Council found that OceanFish discriminated against Marin Pavlescu (see under *Police and law enforcement*), on the basis of his sexual orientation and possible desertion status, when denying him employment.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In February, civil society expressed its disappointment that Moldova voted against Resolution 2417 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which condemns attacks on LGBTI people.

Amendments to the anti-discrimination law, which will cover SOGI as protected grounds, passed the first parliamentary reading.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

On 25 May, the National Assembly of Gagauzia adopted a law banning ‘LGBT propaganda’. Civil society firmly condemned the move, reminding that such a ban violates Moldova’s Constitution. The Ombudsman issued a statement reminding of the obligation to uphold freedom of expression and assembly without discrimination.

This year marked Moldova’s 21st Pride Festival, featuring its largest and longest Pride march to date. 500 people attended the Pride march, including six MPs. The Pride march was held on 19 June and no attacks were recorded. Nevertheless, several participants were verbally harassed by police officers.

A week prior to the event, Chisinau’s mayor Ion Ceban said he would not allow it to go ahead. Nevertheless, the mayor had no mandate to ban Pride.

The European Court of Human Rights communicated two cases to the government, both concerning the ban on Pride marches, in 2013 and 2014.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

LGBT activist Angela Frolov gave interviews reflecting on the vote on banning 'LGBT propaganda' in Gaugazia and received several death threats afterwards.

GENDERDOC-M awarded [Arios Vendrig](#) and [Olenu Shevchenko](#) this year for their work as human rights defenders, and [Doina Ipatii](#) for her journalism work.

Most civil society activities were held in person this year, after two years of a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

The civil society Coalition for Inclusion and Non-Discrimination continued its work this year.

GENDERDOC-M filed a civil complaint against the Public Services Agency on behalf of trans people who are unable to change their legal gender without litigation, and in response to the government's failure to legislate on the matter. In February, the Equality Council [established](#) that the lack of a legal framework constitutes discrimination against trans people. The PSA has appealed against the decision.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The second edition of the [LGBT Film Festival](#) was held in Chisinau in October.

Podcasts, interviews, and [positive stories](#) about LGBT+ people in Moldova were published again this year.

The first LGBTQ+ media platform, called [Bang Bang](#) was launched in August.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In February, the Equality Council [established](#) that 19-year-old soldier Marin Pavlescu, who had [suffered](#) homophobic abuse and mocking at his army base in 2021, was a victim of harassment on the basis of sexual orientation. The Council called on the Ministry of Defense to apologise to Pavlescu and initiate disciplinary proceedings against all those who failed to protect him. The Ministry of Defense asked

GENDERDOC-M to [hold](#) training on LGBT+ issues for 23 of the army's psychologists, which took place in May.

In April, the Ombudsman also [published](#) a report about the case, calling on the military to ensure non-discrimination and investigation of harassment and abuse.

The Prosecutor's Office [refused](#) to start a desertion investigation against Pavlescu, denying the request of the Ministry of Defense. The Prosecutor affirmed that Pavlescu's reason to stay away from the base was the bullying he had to suffer and the military's failure to protect him.

Moldova's President, Maia Sandu [said](#) in regard to the case: "We respect all citizens and must not allow abuses, especially in public institutions." Sandu said she would discuss a reform plan with the Ministry.

PUBLIC OPINION

A poll commissioned by GENDERDOC-M [found](#) that 55% of Chisinau residents have a positive or neutral attitude towards LGBTQ+ people, compared to 33% just three years earlier. The rate of those being strongly against LGBTQ+ people also significantly decreased.

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