

The State of the World's Human Rights; Romania 2025

Roma people continued to face systemic exclusion and discrimination. LGBTI people's rights remained limited. Xenophobic rhetoric against migrants intensified. Journalists and NGOs faced harassment and legal threats. Reports of domestic violence increased. Reproductive rights and access to abortion were eroded. Romania advanced its 2030 fossil-free fuel strategy, but environmental activists continued to face the threat of lawsuits.

Background

Following the Constitutional Court's annulment of the November 2024 presidential vote, new elections were held in May. In January, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission criticized the court's unilateral annulment as lacking legal basis, evidence, or due process. It called for urgent legislative reforms and a possible reversal of the decision to restore democratic legitimacy and safeguard future electoral integrity.

The government's austerity measures—wage and pension freezes, benefit cuts and hiring limits—sparked criticism. NGOs, unions and students argued that they disproportionately affected vulnerable groups.

Discrimination

A government plan to merge the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) with the office of the People's Advocate (Ombudsman) triggered concerns. Civil society organizations warned that such a merger would breach EU anti-discrimination rules, weaken mandates and limit victims' access to justice. They called for meaningful consultation and the strengthening of the CNCD's independence.

Roma

Roma people continued to face police violence, racial profiling, and discrimination in education and housing. A 2025 study by NGOs on the use of EU funds in six countries including Romania found that, in some cases, the funds allocated amplified the segregation and marginalization of Roma communities. The report highlighted several funding cases where Roma pupils were segregated into separate classes or buildings within schools, and where Roma families were accommodated in social housing units built in isolated, low-quality container-type settlements.

LGBTI people

Despite growing public support, LGBTI people's rights remained restricted, with progress towards civil partnership legislation stalled. ILGA-Europe, an LGBTI-rights NGO, ranked Romania last among EU states in relation to the legal and policy landscape for LGBTI people. Around 30,000 people participated in the largest-ever Pride march in the capital, Bucharest, celebrating LGBTI visibility and advocating for civil partnerships, transgender healthcare and legal protections. A small counter-protest also took place, promoting "traditional family values" and opposing same-sex marriage.

Migrants

Authorities in Bucharest launched a public consultation on a new Migrant Inclusion Strategy amid a sharp rise in migrant numbers in the city. However, xenophobic rhetoric intensified, especially in the context of anti-rights protests and online hatred campaigns. Civil society called on the CNCD to act pre-emptively to protect migrants from intimidation and hate speech.

Freedom of expression and association

The US State Department reported that journalists and NGOs faced restricted access to public information as well as frequent litigation, harassment and legal threats, including strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). State-owned energy company Romgaz briefly sought Greenpeace Romania's dissolution after it opposed the company's Black Sea gas exploitation project.

Despite civil society and EU pressure, Romania had not adopted anti-SLAPP laws by year's end. Drafts remained under debate, with concerns raised over their limited scope and enforcement.

Gender-based violence

Eurostat data from June placed Romania fourth among EU countries for levels of violence against women. Reports increased, with over 138,000 domestic violence cases and 59 femicides recorded by the year's end.

Some legislative strides were made. The "Romania Without Violence" law adopted in June doubled assault penalties and strengthened restraining orders. Parliament and the Ministry of Justice made progress towards adopting broader reforms to protect women from violence and launched a consultation on proposals to increase penalties for aggravated femicide. These followed protests demanding stronger measures against violence against women.

Sexual and reproductive rights

NGOs denounced increasing restrictions on sexual and reproductive rights in the country, including the right to access abortion and contraception. Barriers included conscience-based refusals of care by doctors and entire hospitals, as well as anti-abortion activism including the spreading of misinformation, which disproportionately affected rural and marginalized women.¹

A bill submitted in September by two parliamentarians aimed to further restrict and potentially criminalize abortion in Romania. The bill provoked widespread condemnation from civil society and NGOs, who warned that it would increase demand for unsafe abortions and violate international standards.

Right to a healthy environment

Romania advanced its 2030 fossil-free fuel strategy, with increased solar capacity and expanded battery storage. Challenges remained, however, particularly in relation to coal plant closures which were delayed due to lack of progress in developing replacement projects.

Environmental activism remained robust, but activists continued to face pressure and the threat of SLAPP-type lawsuits. Civil society groups called for stronger legal and institutional protection for environmental defenders.

