



Belgium

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In April, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) issued a decision concerning RTBF's broadcast of "Le 128e sexe" on Le Grand Cactus, which parodied the song "Le 3e sexe." The CSA noted that the segment reinforced stereotypes about trans and non-binary people and could be perceived as offensive. RTBF acknowledged the misstep and issued a public apology. The broadcaster also engaged in discussions with LGBTQIA+ associations to improve its practices, and several training sessions were organised for staff.

In August, Belgian tennis player Greet Minnen publicly shared a homophobic threat she received after her loss at the Prague Open, including violent language targeting her sexual orientation. The case attracted media attention and highlighted the prevalence of online bias-motivated speech against LGBTI athletes.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In 2025, Belgian civil society organisations highlighted a continued rise in cases of bias-motivated violence in Belgium compared with previous years. They pointed to a marked increase in ambushes arranged through dating app, growing rates of attacks against LGBTI spaces, greater levels of workplace harassment, and expanding social-media-driven disinformation campaigns targeting and antagonising LGBTI people. At the same time, reporting rates remained low, with only 14% of assaulted LGBTI people in Belgium reporting incidents to the police.

For what concerns LGBTI-phobic ambushes, in April, the trial of several individuals accused of assaults linked to entrapments opened in Brussels, with the sentencing of two of the accused taking place in May. Similarly, in November, a 31-year-old man was sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment for the assault of a man at a gay cruising site. The incident occurred in August 2024, when the perpetrator filmed himself repeatedly striking the victim while uttering homophobic remarks.

The judgment explicitly recognised the homophobic motive as an aggravating factor in the offence. Finally, in December, prosecutors in Leuven reported that four minors were arrested in connection with

an attempt to lure two victims to a secluded place through a dating app to assault them and rob them, leading to one of the victims sustaining serious injuries.

The first half of 2025, the Rainbowhouse of Verviers was subjected to several attacks, including its rainbow flag being ripped from the facade and torn, stones being thrown against the door, and the defacement of a mural. It took several messages including public call-outs, for the local authorities to finally react. In February, three men appeared before a Belgian court in connection with a homophobic assault committed in 2024, when they attacked two individuals after perceiving them to be a same-sex couple. Also, in February, Georgian journalist Lucas Ablotia and a trans friend were assaulted on a bus in Brussels after assailants confronted them and asked whether they were gay.

EDUCATION

In April, a study conducted by the Jeugdonderzoek-splatform (JOP) in Flanders showed that, compared to the results of a similar survey in 2018 and 2013, students in secondary school aged 16 to 18 are significantly less accepting of lesbian and gay (LG) people. The data highlighted that 1 in 5 surveyed people found aggression against a LG person acceptable. In 2018, it was less than 1 in 10.

EMPLOYMENT

In 2025, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men launched a new guide for supporting intersex, trans, and non-binary people in the workplace. Aimed at employers, colleagues, unions, and others, it helps stakeholders understand their legal rights, duties, and responsibilities while addressing both practical and human aspects of support.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In April, the Brussels Regional Government reaffirmed its commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) by announcing that DEI criteria would be progressively integrated into public procurement and linked to regional economic support for employers. The Region also signalled its intention to promote DEI at federal and European levels. In June, implementation of measures under the

Brussels regional equal opportunities framework entered into force, requiring local administrations to adopt diversity plans in order to access certain subsidies.

In July, in Brussels, the court of first instance ruled in favour of a 51-year-old trans cyclist who challenged the International Cycling Union's (UCI) updated eligibility rules for women's competitions. Until mid-2023, she had been allowed to compete provided her testosterone levels remained below a set threshold for 24 months, but new rules introduced last July required that trans women must have begun their transition before puberty or before the age of 12. The court found this condition discriminatory, stressing that it excluded virtually all trans women and was unsupported by solid scientific evidence. While acknowledging UCI's aim of protecting women's competitions as legitimate, the judge held that the measures were neither proportionate nor necessary. The ruling prevents the UCI from refusing her entry into women's competitions, though the organisation may still appeal.

The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men published a leaflet aiming to raise awareness of intersex variations to promote an approach based on respect, autonomy and fundamental rights, and to encourage intersex people who are victims of discrimination to contact the Institute.

FAMILY

In April, the Flemish social-democratic party Vooruit, together with Equal Opportunities Minister Rob Beenders, announced plans to enshrine same-sex marriage in the Belgian constitution. The proposal would insert explicit protections into Article 22, which concerns private and family life. Beenders argued that, with LGBTI rights facing growing pressure worldwide, constitutional recognition would provide an "additional barrier" against any rollback.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In October, federal minister of security and internal affairs, Bernard Quintin, submitted a bill that would allow the government to issue an administrative ban on certain associations that 'pose a threat' to national security, or even dissolve them without going

through court. This project has spurred concerns from civil society organisations. In an opinion issued at the end of December, however, the Council of State highlighted a series of legal flaws, which are considered too vague to enable citizens to know what behaviours are criminalised. The minister said the government would revise the text.

HEALTH

In January, the number of recognised specialised centres providing gender-affirming healthcare was increased from two to six, located in Ghent, Antwerp, Sint-Niklaas, Genk, Liège, and Brussels. Although people seeking care continue to face waiting times of between one and four years, this expansion makes psychosocial support more financially and regionally accessible.

In February, Belgium's first dedicated LGBTI healthcare centre, the Maison Arc-en-Ciel de la Santé (MACS), opened in Brussels. Accredited by the French Community Commission (COCOF), the centre aims to provide high-quality medical care in an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment, ensuring respect for all gender identities, sexual orientations and sex characteristics.

In July, Belgium confirmed its restrictions on blood donation by men who have sex with men (MSM). Under pressure from the Belgian Red Cross, the authorities again ruled out any prospect of fully ending the exclusion regime. Until 2017, MSM were subject to a permanent ban on blood donation. Following pressure from the Court of Justice of the European Union, Belgium replaced this with a deferral period of twelve months, which was subsequently reduced to four months as of 1 July 2023. By contrast, the MSM criterion was formally abolished for plasma donation in 2022, after the Prisme Federation successfully challenged the restriction before the Constitutional Court.

DATA COLLECTION

In April, the University of Liège published a study highlighting heightened housing and health insecurity among LGBTI people in the Walloon Region, particularly affecting trans people and young people. The report identified discrimination in housing, family

rejection, and barriers to accessing healthcare, and noted that these issues remain largely unaddressed in regional public policy.

In late November, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men released its third nationwide [study](#) on the living conditions of trans and gender non-binary people. The report warned that trans people are increasingly drawn into polarised political debates, exposed to persistent disinformation and hostility, and experiencing a deterioration in living conditions. Respondents reported higher levels of violence and discrimination than in previous studies, as well as increased behavioural adaptation, such as avoiding certain places out of fear.

In parallel, the Institute published its annual [statistics](#) on legal gender recognition. In 2024, 748 people changed the gender marker on their identity documents, the highest number recorded to date. A majority of applicants were under 25 years old. The continued rise in administrative gender marker changes, despite worsening reported social conditions, reflects both sustained reliance on Belgium's self-determination-based procedure and heightened visibility of trans people in a polarised climate.

FOREIGN POLICY

In March, Belgian authorities announced [plans](#) to update their travel advice for nationals heading to the United States, with a focus on risks faced by LGBTI travelers. The Federal Public Service (FPS) for Foreign Affairs confirmed it would revise its guidance in response to "the general strengthening of border controls" and the shifting legal and social climate for LGBTI people in the US. The move follows similar steps by Finland, Denmark, and Germany, after several European travelers were detained at the US border.

In May, Belgium joined a group of European States in issuing a [joint diplomatic declaration](#) condemning the introduction, by the Hungarian Parliament, of fines and potential bans on Pride events. In June, several Members of the European Parliament and national politicians, including Belgian representatives Elio Di Rupo (PS), Kathleen Van Brempt (Vooruit),

Saskia Bricmont (Ecolo), Sara Matthieu (Groen), Hilde Vautmans (Open VLD) and Christie Morréale (PS), [announced](#) they would travel to Budapest to participate in the city's banned Pride march.

In May, on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), the Federal Public Service for Foreign Affairs [reaffirmed](#) Belgium's commitment to the protection of LGBTI rights. It condemned ongoing violence, harassment and disinformation targeting LGBTI people and expressed [support](#) for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

In December, Belgium joined 17 other states in a joint statement expressing concern over Kazakhstan's legislative amendments banning so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation," stating that such measures are incompatible with international human rights obligations.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In April, Interior Minister Bernard Quintin (MR) publicly [proposed](#) not introducing a third gender option ("X") on identity cards but instead allowing non-binary people to request the removal of the gender marker. The proposal would establish two types of ID cards: one displaying the gender marker (M/F) by default, and another without any gender indication available upon request. The proposal follows years of political deadlock and a 2019 Constitutional Court ruling which found the lack of recognition for non-binary people unconstitutional. LGBTI organisations criticised the proposal as inadequate, stressing that it does not provide full legal recognition of non-binary identities and could expose individuals to discrimination, particularly in countries hostile to LGBTI rights.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

A [draft resolution](#) was introduced in the Belgian Senate by the PS political group. Its objectives included achieving pay equality between male and female elite athletes and promoting the inclusion of LGBTI people in sport. Both texts were rejected twice by the Belgian majority.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The Council of Europe has repeatedly called on its member states to guarantee the rights of intersex people. In Belgium, a draft bill "aimed at preserving the physical and psychological integrity as well as the bodily autonomy of persons with variations of sex characteristics" was introduced in July 2024 by the Ecolo political group. These legislative proposals explicitly build on the recommendations of the Council of Europe and seek to strengthen the protection of intersex people's rights. The proposals have been submitted on several occasions but have not been examined at plenary committee level; they remain blocked, thus preventing any progress in the legislative process.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In May, the Belgian Senate committee examined a draft resolution introduced by the Socialist Party aimed at promoting gender equality in sport, including achieving pay equality between male and female elite athletes and enhancing LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport. The committee rejected the resolution by a vote of 7 to 3, marking the second time the majority voted against the proposals.