



FRANCE

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Bilal Hassani, who represented France in this year's Eurovision Song Contest was subject to racist and homophobic hate speech on social media, receiving over 1,500 messages and threats. Local NGOs and much of the public supported the singer, and many reported the comments.

On 9 July, the Lower House of the French Parliament adopted a new hate speech law, which would compel online platforms to take down hateful content within 24 hours. Platforms, such as Facebook, could risk a €1.25m fine. The bill was tabled by MP Laetitia Avia, who receives racist threats on her social media sites on a daily basis. After the adoption, NGO Inter-LGBT expressed concern that the new law violates freedom of expression and will also prevent victims from reporting hate speech and law enforcement to hold platforms accountable. The bill has yet to be approved by the Senate. A similar law was introduced in Germany last year and other countries might follow these examples.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

On 14 May, SOS Homophobie released its annual report revealing that in 2018 they recorded the highest number of hate crimes against LGBT people to date, a total of 231 cases. In 2017 the number was 139. The Ministry of Interior confirmed the alarming trend.

Two perpetrators, both minors, who physically abused two lesbians on a train in 2018, were sentenced to suspended prison terms in January. Only one of them was sentenced for committing a hate crime.

On the first anniversary of trans migrant sex worker Vanessa Campos's death in August, her friends and activists held a commemoration and called for justice. No one has been held responsible for her murder.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The draft law on bioethics (see under **Sexual and reproductive rights**) includes several major shortcomings, including the failure to ban intersex genital mutilation.

A number of committed MPs continued their efforts to ban conversion therapies and submitted a formal request to the Prime Minister's Office. The PM referred to the ongoing work against hate crimes and laws against torture and ill-treatment as being sufficient. A special investigative committee was set up in the Assembly, headed by the leader of the LGBT Caucus in the Lower House, Bastien Lachaud, and openly lesbian MP, Laurence Vanceunebrock-Mialon. The committee focuses on conversion therapies regarding both sexual orientation and gender identity.

DATA COLLECTION

SOS Homophobie released its annual report (see under **Bias-motivated violence**) presenting a dramatic increase in the number of cases of discrimination and violence against LGBT+ people and calling 2018 a dark year for the community.

EDUCATION

On 28 January, the Ministry for Education and Youth launched the All Equal, All Allies campaign, as part of which middle and high schools will issue guides and put up posters about LGBT+ rights. The campaign comes as a response to a stark increase in anti-LGBT+ bullying in schools last year.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

SOS Homophobie's report (see under **Bias-motivated violence** and **Data collection**) documented almost 2,000 cases of harassment and discrimination against LGBT+ people, which was largely echoed by the police. The Ministry of Interior announced a new plan to combat discrimination against LGBT+ people.

FAMILY

In February, the National Assembly amended the School of Trust Bill, making it mandatory for schools to use forms featuring the terms "parent one" and "parent two" instead of "mother" and "father". Several opposition parties criticised the amendment.

In May, the Court of Appeal in Paris legally recognised a foreign birth certificate featuring two fathers, for the first time. Their twins, born through surrogacy in Canada in 2014, were granted French nationality automatically. In December, the Court of Cassation ruled that foreign birth certificates that recognise same-sex parents, must be fully recognised in France.



On 24 July, the government launched the new draft law on bioethics, which was one of President Macron's campaign promises. The envisioned law will make assisted reproductive technology (ART) available for female same-sex couples and single women, scrap the requirement of pathological infertility, and recognise two women as parents. However, the draft was harshly criticised by civil society for its shortcomings. It fails to extend access to ART to intersex and trans people. It sets out different rules for same-sex and different-sex couples, including the need to have an advanced directive in place. It requires a note on the birth certificate saying how the child was conceived.

HEALTH

In July, the Minister of Solidarity and Health announced that the time referral for men who have sex with men who want to donate blood will be lowered from one year to four months. Civil society called on the Ministry to suspend the ban entirely and to focus on risky behavior instead of risk groups, the latter being stigmatising and outdated practice.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In March, Minister of Higher Education Frédérique Vidal announced that he wanted all higher education institutions to use trans people's names as opposed to those on their documents. Roughly 15 universities had already introduced this practice.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In March and April, several football games were disturbed by homophobic chants. In May, the Ligue de Football Professionnel (LFP) announced its new action plan against homophobic slurs during games, highlighting that fines and a possible prison term as punishment. In July, President Macron stated that sports games should be immediately stopped if the crowd uses homophobic or racist language.