
LGBTI+ Rights in the Republic of Cyprus



Erman Dolmacı

Queer Cyprus & Human Rights Platform

LGBTI+ Rights Programme Coordinator

erman@ihpcy.eu

Previous Recommendations

1. Legal Protection and Anti-Discrimination Measures:

- "Take steps to protect and enforce the rights of its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community." (Australia)
- "Take measures to combat discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community and consider legal measures that would punish incitement to hatred on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity." (Canada)
- "Continue efforts to prohibit discriminatory practices, defamation, incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence against persons because of their sexual orientation." (France)
- "Criminalize incitement to hatred for reasons of sexual orientation or gender identity." (Spain)

2. Inclusion, Equality, and Social Action:

- "Include gender identity as a prohibited ground for discrimination in equal treatment legislation and adopt an action plan to combat homophobia and transphobia in all areas of everyday life." (Iceland)

3. Support Services, Legislation, and Public Awareness:

- "Provide further assistance to victims of discrimination or violence based on gender identity and sexual orientation." (Malta)
- "Step up efforts to enact the new legislation on transgender persons." (Malta)
- "Increase awareness-raising programmes and campaigns aimed at deterring public incitement of acts against persons on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity." (Malta)

Developments

The Criminal Code Amended:

- Law (No. 87(I)/2015), by which public incitement to violence or hatred against a group of persons or a member of such a group on the basis of their sexual orientation or their gender identity constitutes a criminal offence.
- Law (No. 31(I)/2017), the motivation of prejudice against a group of persons or a member of such a group of persons on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or other belief, descent, sexual orientation or gender identity may be taken as an aggravating factor by the court at the sentencing stage.
- Law (No. 39(I)/2023), conversion practices and any form of conversion 'therapies' aimed at changing or suppressing a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression is banned and criminalised.

ISSUE 1: TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE RIGHTS

Implementation of previous recommendation

- *Step up efforts to enact the new legislation on transgender persons.* (Malta)

New developments

- In September 2022, the Minister of Justice announced that the legal gender recognition bill was approved by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the House of Representatives for discussion and voting.
- The Parliamentary Committee held the first reading of the bill in November 2022 and was presented by the Minister of Justice.

Recommendations Issue 1: TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE RIGHTS

We recommended that the Cyprus parliament to:

- Adopt the legal gender recognition law based on self determination.

We recommended that the Ministry of Health to:

- Take immediate action to ensure that it's all citizens have equal access to the healthcare system.
- Guarantee that transgenders can access free gender-affirming healthcare without discrimination or barriers, including hormone treatments and surgeries, in line with international human rights standards.

ISSUE 2: PREVENT HATE SPEECH AND CRIME

Implementation of previous recommendations

- 5 countries: *Combating Discrimination and Hate Crimes.*

(Canada, France, Iceland, Malta and Spain)

New developments

- In April 2023, a two-day LGBTI+ training session took place at the Cyprus Central Prison for newly recruited prison guards.
- Following complaints about anti-LGBTI harassment by police, the Ombudswoman called for mandatory training for all police officers.
- In October 2023, two LGBTI+ training sessions took place at the Cyprus Police Academy, for newly recruited and existing police officers.

Recommendations

Issue 2: PREVENT HATE SPEECH AND CRIME

We recommended that the Ministry of Justice and Public Order to:

- Create a unit in the Police, which is specialized in the investigation of cases of hate speech and hate crimes.
- Create and implement specialized training and education programs on hate speech and hate crimes in officials of the Judicial Service.

ISSUE 3: FAMILY RIGHTS & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Implementation of previous recommendation

- "Include gender identity as a prohibited ground for discrimination in equal treatment legislation and adopt an action plan to combat homophobia and transphobia in all areas of everyday life." (Iceland)

New developments

- In February 2023, Cyprus and the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Protection and Promotion of the rights of LGBTI+ people in Europe and the Commonwealth.

Recommendations

Issue 3: FAMILY RIGHTS & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

We recommended that the Cyprus Parliament and Council of Ministers to:

- Adopt an action plan to combat homophobia and transphobia in all areas of everyday life.
- Remove the statutory restriction on adoption, surrogacy and IVF rights for same-sex couples.
- Ensure the accessibility of all the legal texts by translating them into Turkish language which is one of the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus.

Recommendations

Issue 3: FAMILY RIGHTS & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

We recommended that the Ministry of Interior & Law Office to:

- Recognize the marriages of same-sex couples that have been legally performed abroad.
- Introduce legal regulations for the transnational recognition of rainbow families.

We recommended that the Leaders of the Both Communities and the Technical Committee on Gender Equality to:

- Mainstream and include the LGBTI+ perspective in the peace process.



Thank you!