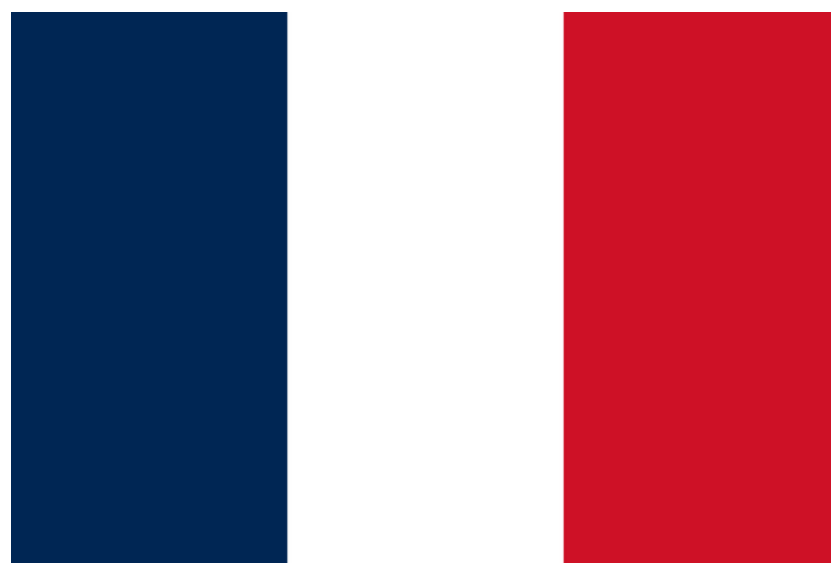




Country report 2024 on anti-discrimination: highlights



France



Legal Approach to Equality:

French law focuses on universal equality and refuses to recognise ethnic origin or race as legal categories, while condemning inequality based on 'origin'. This approach has been endorsed by the Constitutional Council and affects policy and administrative purposes.



Secular Identity and Religious Challenges:

France maintains a strong secular identity, with ongoing challenges related to the expression of religious beliefs, especially within the Islamic faith



Roma Population and Legal Status:

French Roma, often designated as Travellers, face different issues from foreign Roma. Legal parking and school access remain hindered by local resistance, despite national strategies for equality.



Main Legislation:

Key anti-discrimination laws include the Labour Code, Penal Code, and Civil Code, covering more than 25 grounds of discrimination.



Principles and Definitions:

French law includes assumed characteristics in discrimination definitions. There are exceptions for nationality, age, and disability, but not for religious ethos.



Material Scope:

The protection against discrimination applies broadly to both private and public sectors, with specific conditions for non-nationals and legal residents.



Enforcement of Anti-Discrimination Law:

France allows for evidence such as statistics and situation testing. The shift in the burden of proof is recognised, but inconsistent application by lower courts remains an issue. Compensation and remedies are provided through civil courts, with low non-pecuniary damages reducing the dissuasive impact.



Equality Body - Defender of Rights:

The Defender of Rights is the national human rights institution, merging various previous bodies. It handles complaints, proposes reforms, and conducts research across all discrimination grounds. However, its visibility and effectiveness in discrimination matters have declined since 2020.



Key Issues and Challenges:

Despite legal protections, claimants often need to appeal to higher courts for discrimination findings. Resistance persists within Parliament and some public sectors to fully integrate specific anti-discrimination protections, maintaining a preference for 'neutral', universal equality.