



Country report 2024 on anti-discrimination: highlights



Lithuania



Constitution and EU Integration:

Lithuania regained independence in 1990 and approved its current Constitution in 1992. Joining the EU in 2004 required significant legal changes, although these were implemented quickly and without extensive public discussion.



Population Demographics:

Lithuania is a relatively homogenous country, with Lithuanians making up 84.6% of the population. Minority groups include Poles (6.5%) and Russians (5%). The country is predominantly Roman Catholic, with 74.2% identifying with the religion.



Discrimination Perceptions:

The 2023 Eurobarometer survey revealed that residents believe discrimination is most prevalent against Roma, based on sexual orientation, and related to age, disability, and gender identity.



Anti-Discrimination Legislation:

The Law on Equal Treatment, adopted in 2003, and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted in 1998, form the core of Lithuania's anti-discrimination legal framework.



Key Legislative Amendments

Amendments in 2022 to the Law on Equal Treatment introduced new protections against harassment, extended reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, and added family status as a protected category under social status.



Material Scope:

While anti-discrimination laws apply broadly across public and private sectors, areas such as social protection, social security, and healthcare are not explicitly mentioned under the law's scope.



Enforcement Mechanisms:

Victims of discrimination can seek redress through the courts, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, or labor dispute commissions. However, compensation is only available through court action. The national NGO sector, which could assist victims, remains weak and fragmented.



Equality Body:

The Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, established to meet EU directives, has expanded its role and now covers multiple discrimination grounds. However, it does not explicitly provide independent assistance to victims in legal cases, focusing more on mediation and recommendations.



Challenges in Legislation:

Some aspects of Lithuania's anti-discrimination law need improvement, such as stronger sanctions, clearer definitions of social protection, and better mechanisms for associations to engage in legal proceedings.



Recent Developments and Issues:

Despite some positive legislative changes, such as disability reforms, there has been no progress on LGBTIQ rights. Controversial amendments to the Law on Education that might reverse inclusive education are also pending, reflecting ongoing societal resistance to expanding equality protections.