



Country report 2024 on anti-discrimination: highlights



Poland



Low Legal Awareness and Reporting:

Discrimination in Poland is challenging to assess due to low legal awareness, societal passivity, and fear of seeking legal redress. A 2021 survey found that 87% of people who believed they were discriminated against did not report it, indicating a need for large-scale efforts to raise public awareness.



Governmental Inaction:

From 2015 to 2023, the Polish government showed limited political will to address discrimination, with limited activities related to equal treatment and political attacks on the Ombud's Office. The situation began to change after the October 2023 elections, with the appointment of a Minister for Equality in December 2023, signaling a potential shift in approach.



Age Discrimination:

Awareness of age discrimination, particularly against older people, is increasing. However, despite more research and recommendations, concrete measures to combat this form of discrimination are still lacking.



Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities:

Persons with disabilities make up 14.3% of the population, facing significant barriers, particularly in education. Poland ratified the UNCRPD in 2012, but implementation remains limited. In 2022, the Ombud appointed a coordinator for the Convention's implementation.



LGBTQI Discrimination:

LGBTQI individuals face severe discrimination and hostility in Poland, ranking 42nd out of 49 countries in ILGA Europe's 2023 review. Anti-LGBT rhetoric, bans on equality parades, and "LGBT-free zones" have exacerbated their difficulties, though some discriminatory resolutions have been overturned by courts.



Minority Rights:

National, ethnic, and religious minorities make up 3.7% of the population. While traditional minorities receive some positive action support, hate speech and crimes, especially against immigrants and Muslims, have escalated in recent years.



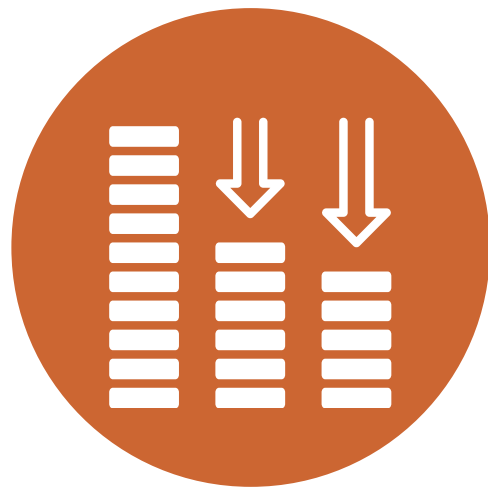
Anti-Discrimination Legislation:

Poland's Constitution includes a general anti-discrimination clause. The 2010 Equal Treatment Act (ETA) transposed EU equality directives but is underutilized. The Ombud's Office, designated as the equality body, faces limitations, particularly in private sector discrimination cases.



Limitations:

Concepts like multiple or assumed discrimination are not explicitly regulated, and the scope of the ETA is limited in areas like education and healthcare.



Underuse of Anti-Discrimination Law:

The ETA is rarely used, with only a few cases brought to court since its enactment. This underreporting is a significant issue, with only 50-100 cases involving employment discrimination being reported annually.



Rule of Law Concerns:

The "rule-of-law backsliding" crisis in Poland, characterised by challenges to judicial independence and politicisation of the Constitutional Tribunal, raises concerns about the effectiveness of anti-discrimination efforts and the broader judicial system.