# Far-right exploitation of LGBTQ+ rights fuels surge in hate crimes across Europe



Far-right politicians across Europe are increasingly exploiting LGBTQ+ rights as a means to create discord within communities, resulting in a worrying surge in hate crimes, as highlighted by activists. With Pride month around the corner, this disturbing trend serves as a stark reminder of how quickly hard-won societal progress can be jeopardised. Katrin Hugendubel from ILGA-Europe, the alliance of over 700 LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, warned that after years of advancement, a dire reversal is taking place. This regression isn't merely about stalling legal protections; it represents an active effort to revoke established rights. “These laws are not designed to protect fundamental rights or respond to genuine societal needs, but to systematically marginalise the LGBTQ+ community,” she asserted.

This alarming shift is reflected in legislative actions across several European nations. In Hungary and Slovakia, populist governments are advancing constitutional amendments aimed at entrenching binary gender definitions, an agenda echoed by Austria’s far-right party after its recent electoral victory. Additionally, countries like Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania are moving to enact laws that ban LGBTQ+ themes from educational settings, thus hindering crucial discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity in schools.

A recent report from the Council of Europe signalled a troubling increase in transphobic hate speech across the continent. The alarming rise of “protecting children against gender ideology” as a rallying cry mirrors a larger strategy designed to incite fear and resentment towards the LGBTQ+ community. Hungary, notably, was the first EU nation to enact a ban on events linked to LGBTQ+ individuals, a devastating blow as Budapest Pride commemorates its 30th anniversary this year. This climate of hostility has been exacerbated by politicians leveraging various platforms—parliamentary speeches, political rallies, and media interviews—to directly attack LGBTQ+ identities, fostering an environment where discrimination is increasingly deemed acceptable.

The consequences are severe. A 2024 survey of over 100,000 LGBTQ+ individuals across 30 European nations revealed staggering incidents of violence and harassment: 14% reported being physically or sexually attacked in the last five years. Sirpa Rautio, director of the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency, underscored the urgent necessity for society to tackle bullying, harassment, and violence against LGBTQ+ individuals, proclaiming, “Being openly LGBTIQ in Europe should not be a struggle.”

The most extreme regression of rights has primarily unfolded in central and eastern Europe, though the increase in violence is also affecting Western countries such as France, Germany, Belgium, and Spain. The rise in discrimination is further compounded by harrowing suicide rates within the transgender community. “The ongoing war waged against trans people significantly impacts vulnerable youth… This incessant hostility can have tragic consequences on mental health,” Hugendubel remarked, highlighting the extensive damage caused by pervasive intolerance.

The political misuse of the LGBTQ+ community functions as a “canary in the mine,” indicating a broader authoritarian drift. The tactics employed by far-right governments extend beyond LGBTQ+ issues to infringe on the rights of academics and journalists alike. Hugendubel noted that societal indifference towards LGBTQ+ rights has made it an easy target for division, stating, “It served as a straightforward means to instill fear and create discord.” By capitalising on societal ignorance, these leaders enhance existing resentments to fortify their political leverage, crafting an “us-versus-them” narrative that energises their base.

As campaigns to counter legislative assaults gain momentum, particularly regarding Hungary’s Pride ban, a burgeoning coalition of EU member states is demanding urgent action from European institutions. Seventeen EU nations have called for immediate revisions to Hungary's laws, citing their violations of the EU's core principles of human dignity and equality. Yet, the European Commission's tepid response has left activists and community leaders exasperated.

As Pride events draw near across Europe, the spectre of discrimination remains a significant backdrop. Although Pride celebrations are increasingly seen as expressions of diversity, their origins in protest against marginalisation retain profound importance. As Hugendubel pointed out, “Curtailing Pride is not merely a limitation on LGBTI visibility; it encroaches on the fundamental right to assembly that every citizen holds.” With rising violence, escalating hate speech, and persistent attempts to erode the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, this season’s Pride celebrations serve not only as a reflection on past struggles but as a resounding call to action against the injustices that continue to plague society.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/01/far-right-weaponising-lgbtq-rights-in-europe-to-sow-division-campaigners-say> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/human-rights-groups-challenge-hungarys-anti-pride-law-court-2025-05-30/> - Five human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, are legally challenging Hungary's recent legislation that enables police to ban LGBTQ+ Pride marches. The law, passed in March 2025, allows authorities to use facial recognition on march participants and prohibits assemblies deemed harmful to children, effectively targeting LGBTQ+ events. Critics argue these measures amount to a de facto ban on Pride events. Despite a police ban on a smaller march scheduled for June 1, activists plan to proceed with the main Pride march on June 28 in Budapest. The court verdict on the legality of the March ban is expected next week. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/human-rights-groups-challenge-hungarys-anti-pride-law-court-2025-05-30/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://apnews.com/article/5dca6225b455d8d27fc6946088be6aee> - A majority of European Union (EU) member states are urging Hungary to revise a controversial new law passed in April 2025 that could effectively ban Pride events and restrict LGBTQ+ freedoms. The law permits fines against organizers and participants of such events and allows the use of facial recognition to identify them. At least 20 of the 27 EU countries, including major powers like France, Germany, and Spain, signed a declaration expressing concern that the legislation violates core EU values of human dignity, freedom, and equality. The European Commission is analyzing the law and considering action under its rule-of-law mechanisms. Hungary insists the legislation is misunderstood, arguing it protects children’s rights and does not constitute a ban on Pride events. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/5dca6225b455d8d27fc6946088be6aee?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/17-eu-countries-sound-alarm-over-hungarian-lgbtq-laws-2025-05-27/> - Seventeen European Union countries have formally criticized Hungary for enacting laws perceived as discriminatory against LGBTQ+ individuals, escalating existing tensions between Budapest and other EU members. Hungary’s recent legislation includes a legal framework to potentially ban Pride marches and grants police the authority to use facial recognition to identify participants. Additionally, constitutional amendments now recognize only two sexes, male and female. The 17 nations, including France, Germany, and Spain, issued a joint statement condemning these measures as violations of EU values such as human dignity, freedom, equality, and human rights. They urged Hungary to revise the laws and called on the European Commission to consider legal action if Budapest fails to comply. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/17-eu-countries-sound-alarm-over-hungarian-lgbtq-laws-2025-05-27/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-countries-set-express-concern-about-hungary-legislation-targeting-lgbtq-2025-05-26/> - More than a dozen European Union countries, including the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Finland, and Sweden, plan to issue a joint declaration expressing deep concern over recent Hungarian legislation targeting LGBTQ+ individuals. Hungary's parliament recently passed laws banning the annual Pride march and approved constitutional amendments recognizing only two genders, male and female. The EU member states argue that these measures contravene core European values such as human dignity, equality, and respect for human rights. The statement is set to be presented ahead of a scheduled EU ministers' meeting addressing the potential breach of EU values by Hungary. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-countries-set-express-concern-about-hungary-legislation-targeting-lgbtq-2025-05-26/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://apnews.com/article/155ec12cbbde7cc6be0f96adb323de77> - On April 14, 2025, Hungary's parliament passed a controversial constitutional amendment allowing the government to ban public LGBTQ+ events, including the popular Budapest Pride. The amendment, supported by the ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, passed with a two-thirds majority and has been criticized as an authoritarian move undermining democratic freedoms. The government justified the change as protecting children's rights, citing its 'child protection' legislation that prohibits promoting homosexuality to minors. The amendment also constitutionally defines gender as strictly male or female, excluding recognition for transgender and intersex individuals. Critics, including legal experts and opposition lawmakers, argue the measures are propaganda tools to distract from deeper socio-political issues and solidify Orbán’s political power ahead of 2026 elections. Additionally, the law allows the use of facial recognition to identify attendees of banned events, raising concerns about the chilling effect on freedom of assembly. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/155ec12cbbde7cc6be0f96adb323de77?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarys-president-signs-law-banning-pride-parade-despite-protests-2025-03-19/> - Hungary's President, Tamas Sulyok, has signed a controversial law that bans LGBTQ+ communities from holding their annual Pride march, despite protests and criticism from human rights organizations. Proposed by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's ruling Fidesz party, the law suggests that Pride events could be harmful to children and allows police to use facial recognition cameras to identify and fine participants. The legislation has sparked protests, including a blockade of a bridge in central Budapest. Critics, including the EU commissioner for equality and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, have voiced concerns over the restriction of freedom of assembly. Budapest's mayor, Gergely Karacsony, declared that the city values freedom and that this year's Pride, set for June 28, would proceed as planned despite the ban. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarys-president-signs-law-banning-pride-parade-despite-protests-2025-03-19/?utm_source=openai))