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Ireland drops to 22nd place in Europe in legal equality for LGBTI people

Annual map of legal status of LGBTI people in Europe shows Ireland slipping and the continuing struggle for basic legal rights across much of Europe.

Minister Kathleen Lynch signs 'Declaration of Intent' to advance LGBTI Equality at IDAHOT conference in Malta.

The annual European Rainbow Map showing the legal situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people shows that **Ireland is 22nd in Europe, dropping from 17th last year**. Ireland has been passed out by countries like Malta and Montenegro who are making significant strides in achieving legal equality for LGBTI people.

The annual ILGA-Europe (the International Lesbian and Gay Association-Europe) map was published today at a joint Maltese and Swedish Government forum in Malta to mark IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia). The rainbow map shows the legal status of LGBTI people in the 49 countries of Europe.

"While Ireland has made very significant legal progress over the last 20 years for LGBTI people, other countries are moving at a quicker pace than Ireland towards equality. It is clear from the analysis in the Rainbow Map that we still have some way to go to provide full legal protection and equality for LGBTI people in Ireland, in particular for transgender people." said Brian Sheehan, Director of GLEN, speaking from the IDAHO Forum in Malta.

"Two of the critically important areas highlighted by ILGA-Europe where Ireland needs to make progress are the legal recognition and support of lesbian and gay families and gender recognition legislation" said Sheehan.

"We would encourage the Government and the new Minister for Justice and Equality Frances Fitzgerald TD, to keep the momentum going on legislative reform through the Children and Families Bill and in the forthcoming referendum on marriage. Both of these, along with strong Gender Recognition legislation would place Ireland in the top tier of European countries in legal equality for LGBTI people" continued Sheehan.

Meanwhile, at the intergovernmental IDAHOT forum in Malta, Minister of State with responsibility for Equality, **Kathleen Lynch TD, signed an intergovernmental 'Declaration of Intent' on behalf of Ireland which pledges the Government to progress equality for LGBTI people.**

The 'Declaration of Intent' prioritises key areas of LGBTI equality, including tackling hate crimes; ensuring schools are free from bullying and stereotyping of LGBTI people; guaranteeing the fully legal recognition of a person's gender identity; and supporting LGBTI equality at an European and International level.

"There is a strong momentum for further progress in Ireland. Ireland is generally a good place to be LGBTI and Irish people are supportive of LGBTI people. However, it could be much better, and there are still serious issues to address to ensure that Ireland is one of the best countries in the world to be LGBTI" continued Sheehan.

At a European level the ILGA-Europe Map shows that while many countries are progressing towards legal equality for LGBTI people, some other countries are introducing restrictive and discriminatory provisions such as laws restricting freedom of assembly and expression for LGBTI people and organisations.

"In many countries in Europe, LGBTI people continue to struggle for the fundamental civil and political rights that most of us living in democratic societies take for granted" concluded Sheehan.

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Twitter feed on map launch: **#rainboweurope**

Editors Note

1. ILGA-Europe is the European Region of ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association and works for equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans & intersex people in Europe: www.ilga-europe.org
2. The ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map and Index package is available [here](#)
3. IDAHO2014forum.org is the website of the Maltese forum
4. LGBTI stands for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex

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