

**Commission:** Court of Justice

**Issue:** How to eradicate gender, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and anti-Semitic conflicts on a European scale?

**Author:** Estonia

Estonia is a parliamentary democracy, where the prime minister Kaja Kallas is the head of government, and the president Alar Karis, is the head of state. The government is formed from a coalition between two centrist parties and social democrats. Member of the European Union since 2004, Estonia has progressively developed since its independence in 1991 after the URSS split, and considers its affiliations in the UE as a promise of development and stability for its country. For quite some time, advancing equality and safeguarding citizens' rights has remained a significant challenge and goal for the UE. Common laws and regulations have to be applied within European countries in order to eradicate social discrimination.

Discrimination remains prevalent in Europe in many social aspects including homophobia, sexism, racism or anti semitism. Several contexts such as the Covid period have notably led to an increase of racism toward the Asian community. Estonia is particularly concerned in this field, since the country has a diverse population with various ethnic groups, and can lead to conflicts between them. Tensions have existed between the Estonian majority and the Russian-speaking minority, particularly following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the regaining of independence by Estonia in 1991. Other discrimination issues still endure concerning gender or LGBTQ+ community. As we have created several legislations which aim for social openness and inclusion within our country, Estonia is ready to contribute to the eradication of discrimination which targets this specific field in European scale.

Estonia is a country that has made a progressive commitment toward social openness. The law prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation, based on race, religion, national origin, sex, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, and refugee or stateless status. The government generally enforced the law, and penalties were commensurate with those under laws related to civil rights. On a European scale, Estonia signed the European Social Charter in 1994, and ratified it in 2000. This charter establishes European standards for the protection of social rights, including the right to equal opportunities and non-discrimination in matters of employment. The country is also a signatory of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) since 1996, which aims to eradicate any discrimination toward women in the politic, social or cultural sphere.

Citizens in Estonia own many rights promoting gender-based equality, LGBTQ+ community. Both male and female forms of same-sex sexual activity are legal in Estonia, with the age of consent having been equalized in 2002. Transgender people have been allowed to change their legal gender since 1992. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited by law in all areas. As for women rights, the legal framework for gender equality is enshrined in the Estonian Constitution, which states in Article 12 that everyone is equal before the law, and no one shall be discriminated against on the grounds of sex. Our country is also one of the first European countries that has legalized abortion in 1955. In June 2016, Estonia adopted the Welfare Development Plan for 2016–2023, with a gender equality sub-goal that targets issues of equal economic independence of women and men, gender pay gap, balanced participation, negative impact of gender stereotypes, rights protection and institutional capacity. Measures planned vary from awareness raising to legislative initiatives and are expected to decrease gender pay gap. Concerning the insertion of refugees, Estonia has faced difficulties finding housing for resettled refugees, which refugee advocates attributed to societal

discrimination. We took steps, however, to mitigate conditions that could contribute to racial or ethnic violence and discrimination. The “Settle in Estonia Program” is a free educational program provided by the government to help new immigrants better adapt to life in the country.

In conclusion, Estonia is a European country which has given many rights to its citizens on the social aspect including gender-based equality, sexual orientation freeness or refugees rights. As conflicts remain present in this domain, the government adopted many laws and contributed to several actions in order to eradicate discrimination.