

PUBLIC STATEMENT: IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE FIRST BALKANS TRANS INTERSEX MARCH IN ZAGREB, CROATIA

The first Balkans Trans Intersex Pride march in Zagreb, Croatia, gathering participants from across the region, is due to take place on 30 March – one day before Transgender Day of Visibility. Amnesty International supports trans and intersex people and their allies participating at the march and has called on the Croatian authorities to ensure the march can go ahead without hindrance, and that participants are protected from harassment, intimidation and violence.

Amnesty International has been pleased to note that Pride marches have taken place peacefully in Croatia in recent years. Since the publication of its 2012 report '[Inadequate Protection: Homophobic and Transphobic Hate Crimes in Croatia](#)' documenting hate crimes associated with Pride marches, Amnesty International has observed that the police has offered protection for Pride Marches in Croatia and has created an enabling environment for participants to exercise their right to freedom of peaceful assembly. However, Amnesty International has also noted with concern the rise in anti-LGBTI rhetoric from politicians and religious groups following the public debate in 2018 about Croatia's ratification of the Istanbul Convention aiming to prevent and combat gender-based violence, and organisers have expressed concerns that this could have a negative effect on the upcoming march.

A [2018 World Bank survey](#) of LGBTI people in South-eastern Europe found that 56 per cent of LGBTI respondents in Croatia, had experienced harassment in the past five years. A different [study](#) showed that over 90 per cent of LGBTI victims of hate crimes in Croatia chose not to report these crimes due to lack of trust in the legal system, including the police.

It is in this hostile context that trans and intersex people, as well as their allies, are bravely taking to the streets in pride and defiance. Now more than ever, the Croatian authorities need to step up and ensure protection of participants in the upcoming Balkan Trans Intersex March while they exercise their human rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. The right to peaceful assembly, guaranteed by international human rights law in treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, imposes positive obligations on the state, including to provide adequate protection and security measures.

Amnesty International is monitoring the situation and has urged Croatian authorities to ensure that police in Zagreb provide adequate protection for participants in the first Balkans Trans Intersex March on 30 March 2019. They must ensure that participants are not subjected to harassment, intimidation or violence on the grounds of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation at any time during, before or after the March.