# EU forces Poland to get rid of its last LGBT-Free zone



Poland has officially - finally! - abolished its last remaining ‘LGBT-free’ zone, marking an end to a controversial chapter that saw around one-third of the country’s municipalities declare themselves as areas ostensibly free of LGBTQ+ influence. But don't think they came to that decision themselves: the end of that particular era came in the wake of financial sanctions imposed by the European Commission, which withheld funding from regions that upheld these exclusionary policies.

The decisive vote occurred this week in the municipality of Łańcut, which had been the final bastion of this discriminatory designation. The 'LGBT-free' declarations, which began to appear in over 100 Polish municipalities in 2020, were initially driven by the ruling Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), known for its conservative, right-wing populist stance and its opposition to LGBTQ+ rights. The policy was widely criticised internationally for its impact on human rights and social cohesion.

The European Union played a crucial role in prompting this reversal through legal and financial measures. In 2021, the EU filed complaints against Poland and Hungary over their respective anti-LGBTQ+ laws: Poland for the 'LGBT-free' zones and Hungary for prohibiting educational materials with LGBTQ+ themes. The EU described these laws as restrictive and discriminatory, infringing upon fundamental human rights.

Even Poland’s Supreme Administrative Court declared the ‘LGBT-free’ zones unconstitutional, stating they violated 'the dignity, honour, good name and closely related private life of a specific group of citizens.' This formal judicial intervention added a legal imperative to the growing resistance against such zones.

Despite the political establishment's stance, public opinion appears to be shifting in Poland. A survey conducted in 2024 revealed that 67% of Polish respondents now support same-sex marriage, indicating rising societal acceptance and increasing support for LGBTQ+ equality.

This political and social evolution contrasts starkly with some statements from Polish leadership, including the country’s president, Andrzej Duda, who in 2020 stated, 'LGBT are not people; they are an ideology,' comparing it unfavourably to communism.

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

## Bibliography

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58714658> - This article reports on three Polish regions—Podkarpackie, Lubelskie, and Małopolska—repealing their 'LGBT-free' declarations in response to European Commission threats to withhold funding.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56366750> - The European Parliament declared the entire EU an 'LGBTIQ Freedom Zone' in response to Poland's 'LGBT-free' zones, highlighting the EU's stance against such declarations.
* <https://www.euronews.com/2021/09/28/us-poland-lgbt> - This article discusses the European Commission's legal action against Poland and Hungary for violations of LGBTIQ rights, including Poland's 'LGBT-free' zones.
* <https://www.euractiv.com/section/non-discrimination/news/three-polish-regions-revoke-anti-lgbt-declarations/> - Euractiv reports on three Polish regions—Krakow, Rzeszow, and Lublin—revoking their 'LGBT-free' declarations after the EU launched legal action and threatened to withhold funding.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT-free_zone> - This Wikipedia page provides an overview of 'LGBT-free' zones in Poland, including their origins, legal challenges, and the European Commission's response.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBTQ_rights_in_Poland> - This Wikipedia article offers a comprehensive overview of LGBTQ+ rights in Poland, including the history and impact of 'LGBT-free' zones.