

A GUIDE FOR LGBT TRAVELERS IN EUROPE



Northern and Western Europe remain at the forefront of LGBT rights, and same-sex relationships are generally well-accepted.

Public displays of affection or involvement in groups associated with the perceived promotion of LGBT lifestyles may elicit hostility among more conservative – and religiously observant – societies of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans.



DID YOU KNOW?

Western Europe

Both the legislation and attitudes toward homosexuality are liberal in western and northern European Union member states.

During the past few years, thirteen Western European countries have legalized same-sex marriage, with some also permitting weddings in Protestant churches; discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation is generally prohibited.

Those traveling to Malta, Belgium, the UK, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Norway and Finland reportedly experience the fewest difficulties,

In Hungary, parliament adopted a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage in January 2012

Russia & Central Asia

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the only countries where male same-sex relationships are illegal and punishable by imprisonment, though female same-sex relationships are allowed. While legal in the rest of Central Asia, society remains conservative and generally opposes homosexuality, which is labeled as 'non-normative' behavior.



LEGAL STATUS AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES

Countries in Western, Northern and parts of Central Europe have a generally tolerant attitude toward homosexuality. Many major urban centres host annual LGBT-related events and have distinct LGBT-friendly venues. Homosexuality is legal in all countries, while many have put into place a range of anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. There is also legal recognition of same-sex marriage.



BE AWARE

Even in countries which are generally accepting of LGBT rights, LGBT individuals face a statistically higher level of risk of violent assault. This increased risk profile should be factored into profile-specific advice.

The first step to mitigating risks is to be informed.

Expressing public displays of affection (holding hands, kissing in public, and insisting on double beds in a hotel), makes LGBT individuals more vulnerable to hostile attitudes. It is recommended that LGBT travelers remain discreet and keep a low profile, particularly in Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

In addition, rural areas tend to be more conservative than major urban centres; LGBT travelers should adapt their behavior accordingly. As a general rule, LGBT travelers are advised to remain vigilant to their surroundings.



LEGAL AND ACCEPTED



LEGAL BUT NOT ACCEPTED



ILLEGAL AND NOT ACCEPTED