

The Bulletin

Read about Europe's journey with LGBTQ rights from Annika Pietrus in this week's top story.

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Credit: Pixabay, Creative Commons

THE RIGHT TO LOVE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF LGBTQ RIGHTS IN EUROPE

BY ANNIKA PIETRUS

FEBRUARY IS LGBT HISTORY MONTH IN THE UK. IT PROVIDES A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL THROUGH TIME TO DISCOVER THE HISTORY BEHIND THE RAINBOW IN EUROPE. FROM PERSECUTION TO RECOGNITION, FROM PUSHED TO THE MARGINS, TO AGENTS OF CHANGE: THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY HAS A RICH STORY TO TELL.

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From Ancient Greece to Nazi Germany

In ancient Greece, amorous relationships between men were no secret, and were often colourfully described. The Romans were surprised to read what ancient Greek men had written about their lovers, and then blamed their relationships on too much exercise and not enough clothing. During the medieval to modern ages, European countries introduced laws against homosexual relationships that were driven by religious dogma and nationalist traditionalism. The Catholic Inquisition prosecuted people engaging in same-sex relationships and punished them with the death penalty. After 1800, pseudo-scientific studies added further stigma to the already stigmatized and did not improve the possibility of recognition and equal rights. One exception to this rule, which was way ahead of its European neighbours, is France. In 1791, during the French Revolution, the French Penal Code was rewritten. With it, came the decriminalization of homosexual relationships. However, this was not the impact of drastic societal change that suddenly accepted same-sex relationships; it was rather the passive result of a new penal code that ignored victimless crimes. Other countries eventually followed suit, as Italy decriminalized same-sex relationships in 1890, Poland in 1932 and Denmark in 1933.

Another important development took place in Germany, a mere four months after the country's unification. Paragraph 175 was brought into being, a division of the German criminal code which punished male homosexuals with prison terms. Voicing strong objection against this treatment was physician Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who collected around six thousand signatures in an attempt to revoke it. Fighting against further criminalization of female homosexual acts, Dr. Hirschfeld set up the Institute for Sex Research with Arthur Kronfeld, a German psychiatrist, in the aftermath of World War I. One of the Institute's famous works consisted of the first successful sex reassignment surgery. Lili Elbe, now known to many as the protagonist of the movie the 'Danish Girl', was the first person who underwent this surgery successfully.

However, advancements in the work of the Institute and the progress of decriminalization were brought to a stark halt by the political events of the 20th century. As dictatorships under Hitler, Franco and Stalin gripped the European continent, members of the LGBTQ+ community were once more in danger of prosecution and abandoned without equal rights. Homosexual men and women were seen as "a-social" by the Nazis, enemies of the 'Aryan' master race due to the fact that the attraction to the same sex meant they were not producing children for the Third Reich.

Read the full article on our [website](#).



EU Institutions

BORRELL IN MOSCOW

BY NICHOLAS KULAWIAK

Next time you find yourself making a great point in a Zoom meeting while your microphone is muted or spending another Valentine's Day alone, and think your week has hit rock bottom, take heart! It could always be worse, as Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, demonstrated with his ill-advised and counterproductive visit to Russia earlier this month.

Prior to flying to Moscow, Borrell himself acknowledged that his trip, the first of any EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs to the Russian capital in over three years, was "controversial" and opposed by several EU members.

Read the full article on our [website](#).



ULTIMATELY -
FOREIGN POLICY
IS ABOUT "TRYING
TO GET SOME
COUNTRY TO DO
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PRESS
CONFERENCES.

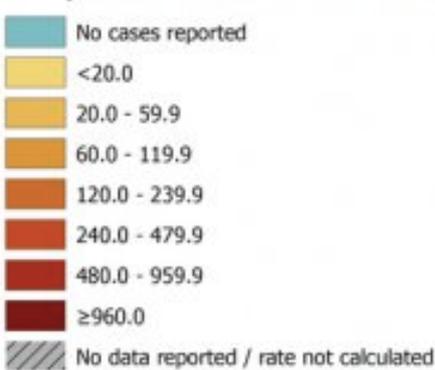




YELLOW, ORANGE, AND RED

THE COLOURS OF THE EU'S BORDER CONTROL PROBLEM

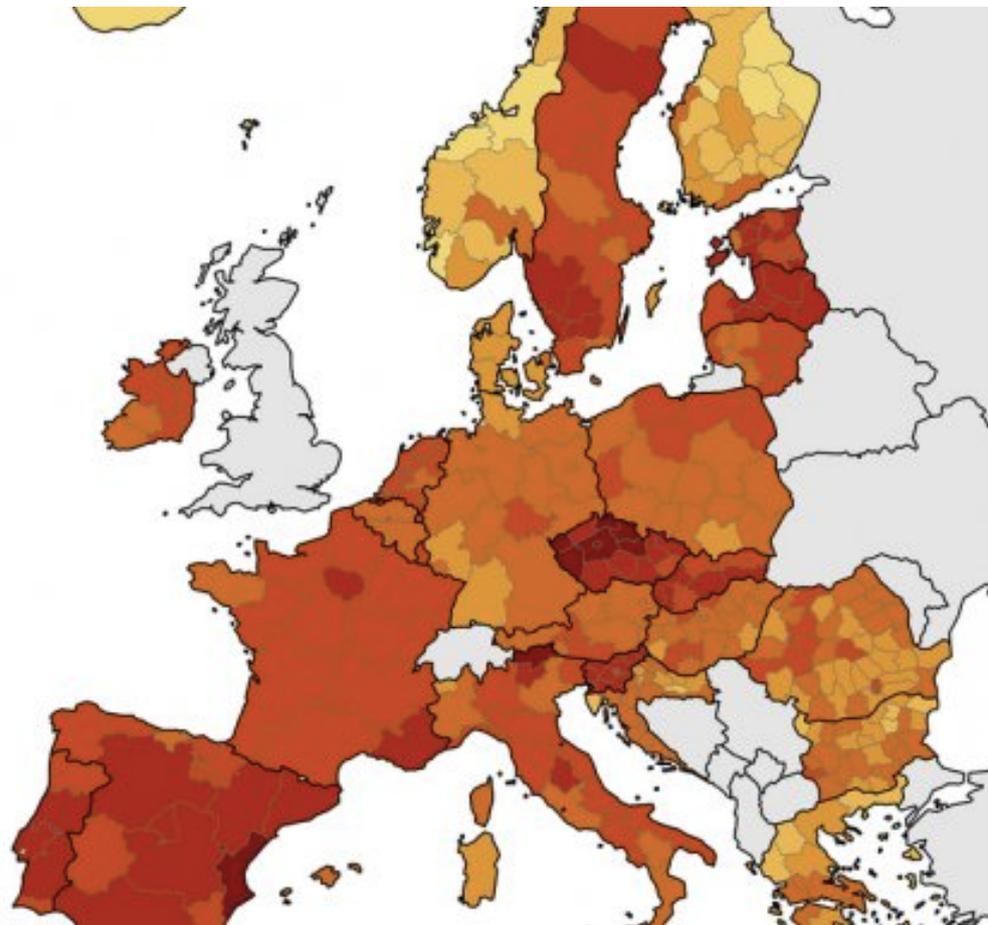
14-day COVID-19 case notification rate per 100 000 2021-w05 to 2021-w06



Regions not visible in the main map extent



Countries not visible in the main map extent



BY MASSIMO SPINELLI

Considering border closures across Europe merely as a way to combat the pandemic spread does not show the big picture. When zooming out – so to speak –, it is possible to note how closures also constitute a valuable tool in international relations' greater schemes. In this sense, discrepancies between decisions on sealing -or not- one nation's border, and regional numbers concerning COVID-19 infections may not be so surprising. Since the pandemic's breakout, communitarian institutions and the European Commission have tried to stop governments from shutting down their borders, at least unilaterally speaking, with a particular focus on preserving the openness of the single market.

Read the full article on our [website](#).



Social Fabric



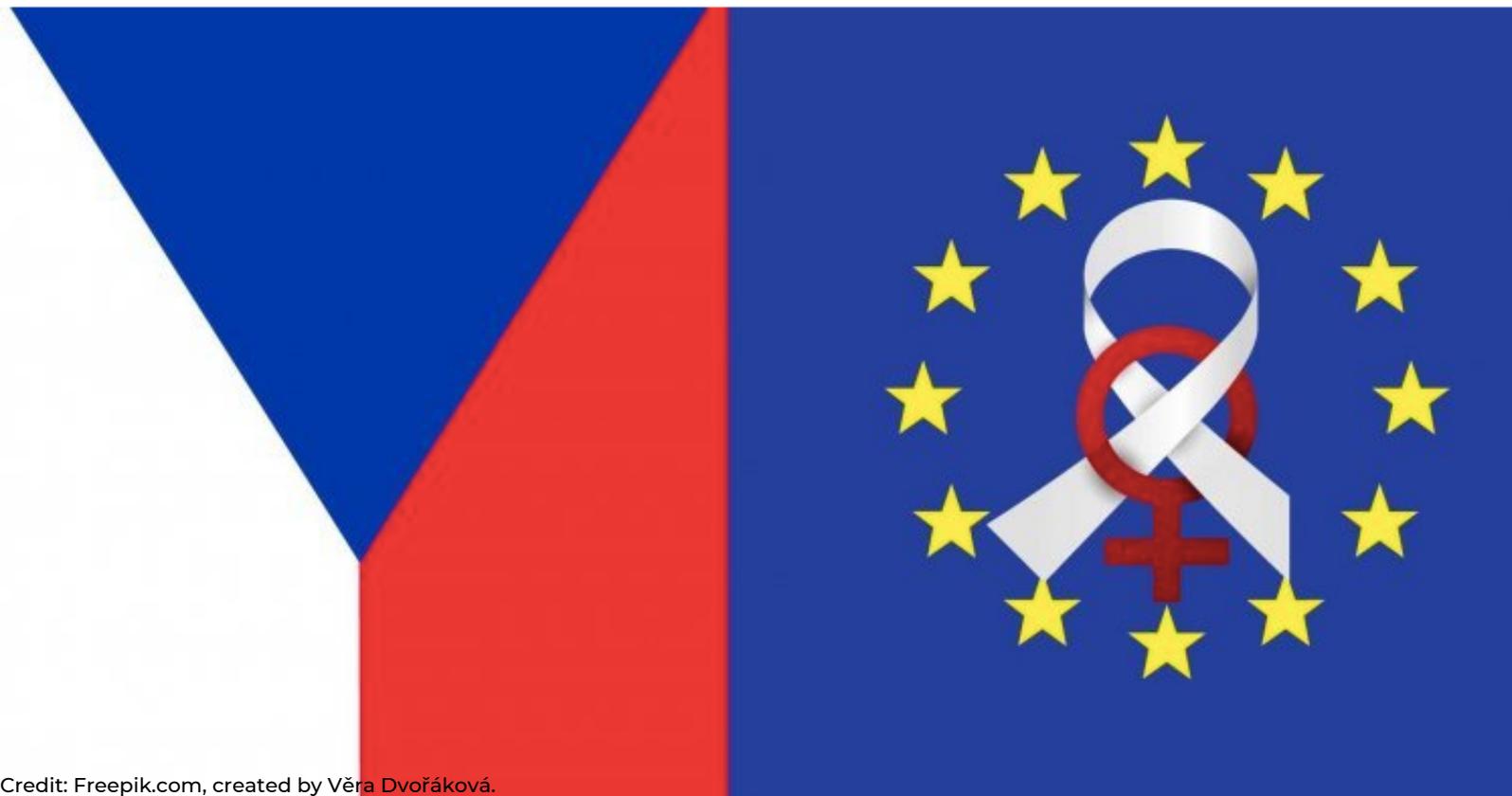
THE CZECH
DEFINITION OF
RAPE, BASED
ON THE
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OF FORCE OR
VIOLENCE, IS
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THE CZECH REPUBLIC, WHERE SEXUAL ASSAULT CAN BE A LAUGHING MATTER

BY VĚRA DVOŘÁKOVÁ

In the last week of January, Slovak police officers in Bratislava, Slovakia intervened in a robbery of a gas station. Upon their arrival, they discovered that a Czech woman, who was violently pressured into opening the safe, tried to stop the intoxicated robber by giving him oral sex. This presumably traumatising case of sexual assault was then shared by various different media outlets and social media users, laughing at the woman's unconventional 'act of bravery' which, in some minds, only reaffirmed the stereotype of Czech women being 'easy'.

Read the full article on our [website](#).





DEMOCRACY UNDER PRESSURE - 2021

A campaign turning 15 years old is already quite special to any NGO, but it is specifically special for a youth NGO as this means that even more generations of members have been involved: JEF Europe is organising the 15th anniversary of its annual action "Democracy under Pressure" (18-25 March 2021).

Read about it and get involved [here](#).



CONTACT

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