

The Bulletin

The end of 2020 spells the end of the UK's time in the EU. Elsie Haldane covers what that might mean for social equality in this week's top story.

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THE EFFECT OF BREXIT ON SOCIAL EQUALITY

BY ELSIE HALDANE

ONCE THE UK OFFICIALLY LEAVES THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE 1ST OF JANUARY, THE UK WILL NO LONGER BE OBLIGED TO INCORPORATE EU LAW INTO ITS LEGISLATION. HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY IS ONE AREA OF BRITISH LAW THAT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY INFLUENCED BY THE EU, AS MOST OF THE UK'S EQUALITY LEGISLATION COMES FROM EU LAW.

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CHANGES IN LEGISLATION COULD MEAN THAT MANY OF THE COUNTRY'S GAPS IN EQUALITY MAY BE AUGMENTED, PUSHING MARGINALISED PEOPLE AT FURTHER RISK OF HATE CRIME, ECONOMIC SUFFERING OR INCREASED INEQUALITY.



While much of EU law is set to remain British law after the transition period ends, this does not include the Charter. After the UK officially leaves the EU, the government will be free to change existing equality legislation however they choose to. Pressure from external groups is often what influences change, so without the threat of judgement or expulsion from the EU, the UK will be much freer to put equality legislation on the backburner. This could have potentially devastating consequences on social equality in the UK.

The country does not need to have left the EU to see the effects that Brexit has already had on increasing intolerance in the UK. After the Brexit referendum, a surge of xenophobic, racist or religious hate crime was reported across the country. According to Stop Hate UK, 3 months after the EU referendum more than 14,000 Hate Crimes were reported by police, more than a 50% increase on the previous 3 months. The charity itself reported an increase of 32% in reported incidents overall, with incidents motivated by race increasing by 55% and those motivated by religion increasing by 80%. It is clear that inequality and discrimination aren't just potential consequences of Brexit: they are inherently woven into it.

Without the EU Charter and ECHR, marginalised groups and authorities in the UK would have the 2010 Equality Act as their principal reference against discrimination. However, under the The EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, the government may have the power to change some legislation without full Parliamentary scrutiny, including the Equality Act. For some this represents a frightening step away from democracy and a threat to the voices of marginalised groups.

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



Social Fabric

UNITED IN DIVERSITY: COMMISSION ACTS IN FAVOUR OF EQUALITY FOR LGBTQ+ PEOPLE



Image source: Pixabay

BY HANNAH BIEBER

In a somewhat mixed assessment of the LGBTQ+ rights situation, the European Commission is proposing a strategy for equality. Between pretty words and concrete actions, what should we take away from this valuable initiative? Let's revisit some aspects of the strategy that deserve to be highlighted.

Although the EU is one of the most protective spaces for minorities, including LGBTQ+ people, the reality of their lives is far from perfect. As is often the case at EU level, there are huge disparities [1]. In its annual review, ILGA-Europe provides a ranking of 49 European countries according to their legal framework for LGBTQ+ people. Malta achieved the highest score with almost 90% whilst Poland is the last EU member state — ranked 42nd with a score of 15.84% (on a scale ranging from 0% —flagrant violation of human rights, discrimination— to 100%).

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



History and Culture

THE FRENCH LAÏCITÉ : FROM A CORE VALUE TO AN EXCUSE FOR STIGMATIZATION

BY HANNAH BIEBER

Hannah Bieber provides us with some of her French insights of the heated debates which have been tearing apart laïcité and Islam for the last few years in the country. In today's France, what are the collateral effects of a chase for religious neutrality.

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



HAVING BEEN BORN
AND RAISED IN
FRANCE, I GREW UP
WITH THE FIRM BELIEF
THAT RELIGION AND
THE STATE HAD TO BE
SEPARATED.



Young lady demonstrating against a law forbidding to wear visible religious signs in state owned services in 2004. CHARLES PLATIAU/ARCHIVES REUTERS.



THE NEW FEDERALIST

No matter how hard it was, we can start again

HAPPY NEW YEAR

May the gift of 2021 be filled with hope,
happiness, and health.



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