



Hello, and welcome to Trans Bites, the newsletter that alerts you to the big stories affecting trans people in the UK today that the UK national media don't want to tell you about. If you want to know more, just follow the links – or drop us a line.

UN Expert condemns UK for trans rights failings

In April, Victor Madrigal, the UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity visited the UK to look at how we are doing on LGBT rights. Such visits are not usual – and this one seems prompted by concerns voiced at the highest levels within the UN.

His initial report, published in May, [did not mince its words](#). Of the UK's EHRC, [he said](#): "this action of the EHRC [see below] is wholly unbecoming of an institution created to "stand up for those in need of protection and hold governments to account for their human rights obligations"

Prestigious International LGBT body downgrades UK in Euro-rankings – again!

Each May, independent international monitoring body ILGA publishes the [Rainbow Europe Map](#), rating some 49 countries across Europe on their LGBT rights record. In 2015, the UK was ranked no.1. This year, they placed us at 17 – and falling.

Oddly, there was barely a squeak about this achievement in the UK national press.

EHRC in turmoil...

In April, the EHRC, a body tasked with standing up for the rights of all minorities wrote to Equalities Minister, Kemi Badenoch. They suggested that "issues" with the Equality Act could be fixed by separating out "biological sex" and "gender". (This, specifically, was the statement to which Victor Madrigal took exception).

Such a move would open the door to discriminating against trans people. Many fear it would lead to the mass exclusion of trans people from public life.

Shortly after this letter was published, EHRC chair, [Kishwer Falkner admitted](#) it would be fair to say that their advice to the Minister constituted "a rollback of trans people's rights"

Reacting to this, the EHRC has seen [mass resignations amongst its legal staff](#). At least three of their legal directors have resigned, as well as others with expertise in the area.

...bullying abounds (not that the Lords want you to know!) ...

One reason for this turmoil could be a toxic culture within the organisation. In May, Channel 4 reported widespread allegations of bullying and harassment within the EHRC. A senior barrister (KC) was appointed to investigate these claims and the role of the EHRC chair in fomenting this.

This, though, [was put on hold](#) after a broad coalition, including several Lords, and prominent anti-trans media condemned the investigation as a “witch hunt”. This aligns with a wider trend in government to counter bullying allegations with claims that they are politically motivated.

...but it’s all about piss in a bottle!

Concern over the EHRC’s motivations was not lessened by its refusal to elaborate on its thinking or the evidence behind the letter to Kemi Badenoch. FOIs were submitted, and last week the EHRC responded...by saying it would not respond!

Why not? [Police had found – and subjected to controlled explosion - a bottle of piss in the vicinity of EHRC HQ](#). This might be terrorism! So, for reasons of staff safety, they would not be making information available.

Coincidence? Perhaps. However, meeting with trans community leaders almost two months ago (long before the pee peril materialised), EHRC CEO, Marcial Boo was asked the same question. [Answer then \(even in April\) came there none...](#)

If you have found this newsletter useful in alerting you to topics not to be found in the entirely balanced UK media, do feel free to let us know. Better still, introduce it to friends and colleagues who are welcome to drop us a line at press.transactualuk@gmail.com or info@transmediawatch.org.

Or if you would rather not receive it in future and wish us no longer to contact you, please let us know and we will amend your contact details accordingly.

Transbites is a joint publication, produced by [TransActual UK](#), [Trans Writes](#), and [Trans Media Watch](#).

