

Decriminalization of Homosexuality in Cyprus



May 21, 1998

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Homosexuality was decriminalized in Cyprus on May 21, 1998, when the House of Representatives passed a bill amending the Criminal Code to remove penalties for consensual same-sex relations between adults, aligning the country with European human rights standards following the 1993 *Modinos v. Cyprus* European Court ruling. The law abolished provisions like Articles 171 and 173 that imposed up to five years' imprisonment for male homosexual acts, amid fierce opposition from the Orthodox Church, which led protests and walkouts. Initially, the age of consent remained unequal (18 for homosexuals vs. 16 for heterosexuals) and "promoting" homosexuality was criminalized, but these were equalized to 17 in 2002 after further pressure, ending Cyprus's status as one of Europe's last holdouts on criminalizing homosexuality and paving the way for later LGBT advancements like civil unions in 2015

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