

## Finland Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage



**Summary:** Finland became the 12<sup>th</sup> European country to fully legalize same-sex marriage.

Finland took a big step by becoming the 12<sup>th</sup> European country to legalize same-sex marriage. The country has allowed same-sex unions and partnerships with restrictions since 2002. The new legislation came into effect Wednesday allow same-sex couple to take each other's surnames and adopt children.

A petition of over 100,000 people to repeal the new law was rejected by lawmakers by 120 to 48. The petitioners included those of the Finn Party and Christian Democrats, arguing that registered partnerships were enough.

The country's Parliament narrowly passed a citizens' initiative for same-sex marriage in 2014 by 105-92. At least three bills before the successful one had failed. Opponents to same-sex marriage argued the right children have to a mother and a father. Mika Niikko of the Finns Party said, "This is a question of the future of our children and the whole society, and such changes should not be made without thorough evaluation of their impact."

Alexander Stubb, a former member of the European Parliament, countered, "Finland should strive to become a society where discrimination does not exist, human rights are respected and two adults can marry regardless of their sexual orientation."

The Finnish Lutheran church is still divided on same-sex marriage because there are old rules that do not allow same-sex couples to be married in their church. There are a few priests, known as "The Rainbow Priests" that defy clergy opposition to officiate same-sex marriage.

Same-sex marriage is now legal in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay, and the United States.

Around 41 couples are already scheduled to marry this week in Finland.

What countries are you surprised are not part of the list where same-sex marriage is legal? Tell us in the comments below.

**To learn more about same-sex marriage laws, read these articles:**

- [Panel Calls for Same-Sex Marriage in Nepal](#)
- [Same-Sex Divorce Just as Legal as the Marriage](#)
- [Ireland Celebrates Same-Sex Marriage Ruling](#)

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