

Sweden ends forced sterilisation of sex change patients

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Sweden will no longer require sex change patients to be sterilised after a law banning the practice entered into force on Thursday.

The Stockholm administrative court of appeal recently ruled that the practice of forced sterilisations, which dated back to a 1972 law on [sexual identity](#), was unconstitutional and in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In its December 19 decision, the court said the law did not respect [civil liberties](#) as guaranteed by the constitution, and was discriminatory since it solely targeted transgender people.

The ban on the practice entered into force on Thursday after an appeal period ended, judge Helen Lidoe told AFP.

The head of the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights (RFSL), Ulrika Westerlund, hailed the change, noting that many of those who were sterilised under the old law now hope to be compensated by the state.

"If [lawmakers](#) take the initiative to adopt a law outlining damages, we will not file a lawsuit," she said.

She said 200,000 kronor (23,500 euros, \$31,000) per person would be a "fair sum."

In 1999, the Swedish parliament adopted a law granting damages of 175,000 kronor to victims of forced sterilisations under a eugenics programme that existed from 1935 until 1996.

Between 80 and 90 [sex change](#) patients who underwent forced sterilisations have turned to RFSL in a bid to possibly seek damages from the state.

The administrative court's ruling came after an unidentified plaintiff who wanted to undergo a sex change but refused to be sterilised took his case to the Swedish board of health which then took it to the court on his behalf.

The Swedish parliament had actually adopted a [law](#) last autumn banning the forced sterilisation of transgender people which was to enter into force on July 1, but the administrative court's decision entered into force first.

Between 1972 and 2011, 865 people officially requested a sex change, according to statistics. Some 500 went through with the operation.

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