

SOCIETAL & REPUTATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

# The State of Global DEI

MAY 2025

**GRAVITY**  
RESEARCH



**Multinational corporations are balancing new U.S. DEI pressures with evolving expectations in other countries. Gravity Research analyzed the global state of DEI, region by region, to unpack risk.**

- 1 Changes in U.S. policy complicate U.S. corporate DEI leadership.** Companies with global operations balance changing U.S. and foreign status quos, muddying DEI stances
- 2 Immigration, racial equity, LGBTQ+ drive reputational risk.** High U.S.-global tensions amid country-specific developments in these areas pose biggest risk to corporate engagement
- 3 Pride, immigration reform.** Pride Month and evolving migrant policies may place pressure on corporations to engage publicly on hot-button societal issues to support employees and retain talent

# Immigration, racial equity drive corporate DEI reputational risks

Changes in U.S. immigration and DEI policies increase risks for multinationals navigating varied employee expectations across local contexts. In Asia Pacific, growing support for LGBTQ+ rights is pressuring companies to expand related policies and engagement

REGION	DEI ISSUE IN FOCUS
Latin America	IMMIGRATION*
Western Europe	RACIAL EQUITY
Eastern Europe	LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
Middle East & North Africa	LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
Asia Pacific	LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Risk: ■ Low ■ Moderate ■ High

## CORPORATE TAKEAWAYS

**Increased rhetoric, policymaking on migration between the U.S. and Latin America heightened anti-U.S. sentiment** that may translate to U.S.-based employers in the region. Employees may fear employers will not adequately facilitate safe travel to the U.S.

**Companies with EU operations may face pressure to promote DEI efforts to counter Trump admin, reaffirm employee support.** High policymaker response to the Trump admin request for foreign firms doing business with the U.S. gov to remove DEI may translate to employee, policymaker pressure on EU companies to publicly engage with EU Diversity Month and Pride Month

**Advancing LGBTQ+ rights may boost employee demand for inclusive policies, despite regional challenges.** Japan's high court rulings that a ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional is indicative of LGBTQ+ changes in Asia Pacific. However, restrictions on LGBTQ+ expression remain throughout the region including in SE Asia and the Republic of Korea

\*Gravity Research evaluated **Immigration** as part of our DEI analysis due to its high reputational risk, employee impact and intersection with core DEI issues



## Immigration tensions with the U.S. dominate media narratives



Policymaker responses to U.S. deportation efforts pose the highest corporate risk should employees face deportation, express fears of U.S. travel. Advancements in gender equity contrast with declining LGBTQ+ rights across LATAM

### IMMIGRATION

Multinational corporations may face pressure to provide legal resources for employees traveling to and from the U.S.

#### U.S. deportations ramp up

- Initial [focus](#) on alleged illegal/criminal

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, violence against transgender people increases employee safety concerns, polarization of LGBTQ+ rights

#### Argentinian protests

- The Federal Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist

### GENDER EQUITY

Advancing legal protections may spur corporate engagement on gender pay equity and career progression programs for women

#### Mexico President prioritizes gender equity

- President Claudia Sheinbaum introduced

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## Conservative gains spur stricter immigration, social tensions



Growing support for far-right political parties had led several EU countries and the EC to take stricter stances on immigration and asylum. Contentious political campaigns have also seen rises in anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and Islamophobia

### RACIAL EQUITY

Challenges to European corporate DEI commitments, norms, may spark increased employee and consumer scrutiny of policies

#### EU DEI defense

- EU leaders [called](#) the Trump admin's request for global firms with U.S. gov

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Growing politicization of LGBTQ+ issues may spur employees to look to leaders for support and clarity on inclusion policies, values

#### U.K. transgender rights

- Supreme Court [ruled](#) definition of "woman" is based on sex, excluding transgender

### IMMIGRATION

Corporate recruitment and retention goals are challenged by increased support for stricter immigration controls

#### EU to boost deportations

- EC [introduced](#) a migration plan featuring EU-wide deportation orders, "return hubs"

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## Nationalist rhetoric, anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment drive restrictions



Governments tighten immigration laws and roll back gender/LGBTQ+ protections, increasing operational and reputational risks for global companies

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Measures taken against LGBTQ+ protections, events may harm inclusive workplaces, human rights partnerships

#### Hungary

- [Outlawed](#) Pride events, allowing authorities to use facial recognition to identify

### IMMIGRATION

Stricter immigration laws and nationalist narratives threaten talent pipelines, workforce protections, and regional reputations

#### Anti-immigration sentiment in Russia

- Nationalist rhetoric [intensified](#) since 2022 Ukraine invasion

### GENDER EQUITY

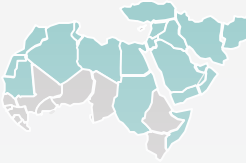
Pushback against gender equity rights, linked to more traditionalist movements, may create reputational risks and employee scrutiny

#### Poland

- U.N. [condemned](#) abortion restrictions as “gender-based violence” and “torture”

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## Migrant labor, LGBTQ+ crackdowns drive narratives



Rising female labor force participation in the Gulf contrasts with MENA's equity gaps, ongoing LGBTQ+ tensions, and increased human rights scrutiny surrounding migrant labor. Religious tension in Israel-Gaza remain a key reputational risk

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Companies publicly supporting LGBTQ+ rights throughout the region may face scrutiny over perceived alignment with state narratives

#### Criminalization of LGBTQ+

- Laws across the region prohibit and/or criminalize homosexuality

### IMMIGRATION

Heightened migration scrutiny and abuse allegations may pose reputational risks for companies operating in Gulf and NA countries

#### Migrant labor in the Gulf

- Ongoing "Kafala" migrant labor system served as a flashpoint during Qatar World

### CORP. ENGAGEMENT

Companies with operations in Israel responded quickly, provided humanitarian aid. Engagement did not garner notable backlash

Corporate responses to Oct. 7, 2023, condemned antisemitism and violence against civilians, supported employees

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## Polarized LGBTQ+, gender equity landscapes drive risk

Regional divergence on approach to LGBTQ+ rights requires market-by-market approach for corporate engagement strategies, while historical barriers for women see ESG efforts focused on workforce pay and representation goals

### RACIAL EQUITY

Tensions around racial/ethnic identities pose risks for hiring practices, anti-discrimination policies, and community engagement strategy

#### India-Pakistan

- Uptick in tensions following April terror attack has led to mutual expulsions of

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

LGBTQ+ issues remain polarized across the region despite progress on spousal benefits, marriage equality

#### Thailand

- In January, Thailand legalized same-sex marriage, granting full legal, financial and

### GENDER EQUITY

Region faces historical issues of sexism, discrimination, with recent corporate social impact focused on pay gap and representation

#### India gender violence

- High Court overturned a rape conviction on basis of "prolonged consensual

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## LOOKING AHEAD

# Immigration, Pride celebrations dominate global reputational risks

The U.S. agency report on Mexico border conditions and sustained deportation efforts will likely drive employee concerns, investor questions. Upcoming Pride celebrations will also pose notable risk to corporate engagement on LGBTQ+ issues



## UPCOMING DATES

### MAY

- Deadline for Agency Report on Mexico Border Conditions, Insurrection Act Use
- Japan Supreme Court May Take Up Same-Sex Marriage Constitutionality



## LGBTQ+ celebrations + travel advisories

**Pride Month celebrations** may increase LGBTQ+ pressure on corporations to reaffirm support, or hold Pride-based events globally amid travel advisories to the U.S.

Travel advisories in Canada, Germany



## EU immigration reform

The European Commission's proposed migration plan [aims to](#) strengthen deportation enforcement with...




- EU-wide return orders
- Expanded detention powers
- Controversial "return hubs"

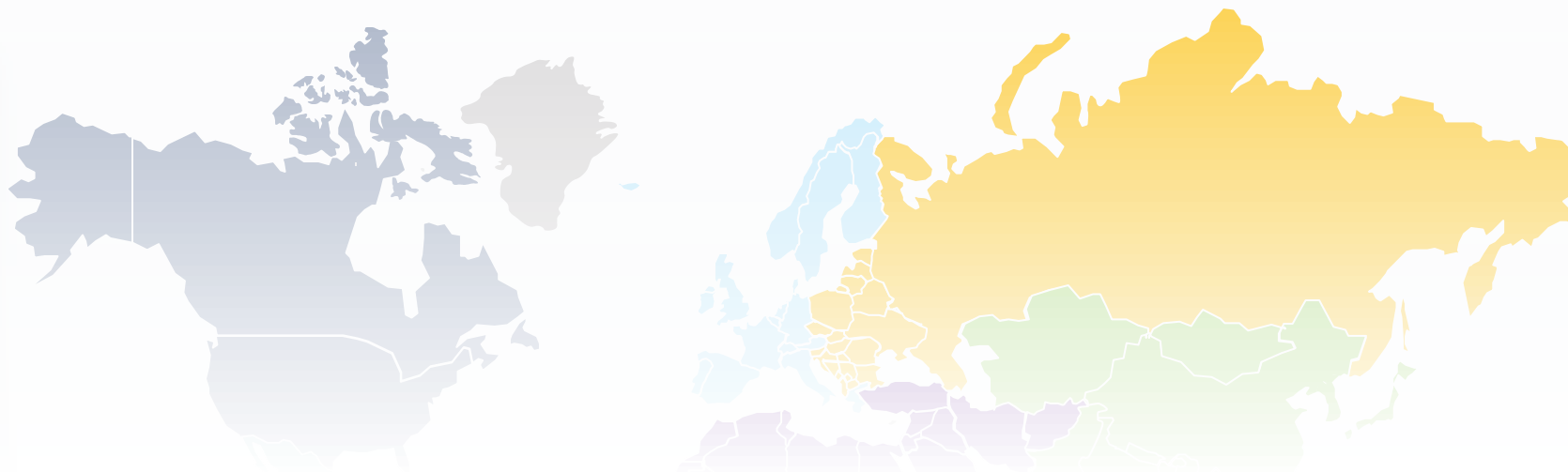
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## WORLD REGIONS KEY

Gravity Research monitors key Global Regions to capture events and conversations that could impact corporate reputations or operations

### Region Key

-  **North America**  
(US & Canada)
-  **LATAM**  
(Latin America)
-  **Western Europe**



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## Methodology: Latest developments and risks

Each report period, Gravity tracks and assigns reputational risk levels of **High**, **Moderate** or **Low** for societal issues. We consider four factors each monitoring period:

### BUSINESS IMPACT

The direct reputational relevance of an issue for corporate programs, policies, and operations

- **High:** Significant corporate relevance, pressure, operational intersections, and/or historical impact in the country or region

### POLARIZATION

The divisiveness of a societal issue, including

Considers country/regional perspective versus domestic views

### STAYING POWER

The impact of current and upcoming events on risk levels and sustained issue relevance

- **High:** Significant or multiple events, litigation, or legislation driving sustained corporate risk

### VOLUME

The conversation volume of each issue, highlighting how public attention evolves

Forward looking factors

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