



JOINT STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF PRIDE MONTH

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 23 July 2022

Mr Chair,

I give this statement on behalf of Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and my own country Norway.

We thank the delegation of the United States of America for raising the issue of Pride Month. Promotion of human rights for all, and efforts to end discrimination and violence against LGBTI, is a priority for us.

Throughout the month of June, Pride festivals are taking place in many countries around the world in celebration of sexual and gender diversity. People are coming together to celebrate love and diversity. Just as importantly, we come together to talk about how we can ensure inclusion and equality for LGBTI people in our societies.

We have all – as OSCE participating States – recognized that human rights are universal and indivisible. We have committed to combatting all forms of discrimination and intolerance, and to addressing and combatting hate crimes, acknowledging that hate crimes are criminal offences committed with a bias motive. Progress has been made in many states in the OSCE region, including reforms happening in the past couple of years in some States. More LGBTI persons are now able to live with less discrimination and intolerance.

However, in several participating States across our region, we have seen continued, or even worsening, discrimination and hostility against LGBTI persons. There is an increase in discriminatory rhetoric targeting LGBTI communities, also at the highest levels of politics and society. LGBTI representatives and human rights defenders are harassed, attacked, arrested, and persecuted, and their organizations silenced.

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Governments have supported or silently agreed to prejudiced court rulings and discriminatory laws, so-called “LGBT-free zones”, and censorship. As has already been pointed out, the Russian state’s attitude to their LGBTI population is particularly alarming, and even more so in Chechnya.

Mr. Chair,

The very first article of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights from 1948 states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.

We must resist the notion that sexual or gender non-conformity is against nature, culture, or religion. And (as my American colleague just stated), there is no East-West divide, or a war between value sets. Sexual and gender diversity exists in all countries and communities.

As OSCE participating States we have committed ourselves to the principle of equality. We therefore call on all participating States to eliminate laws and policies that discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, and to combat all acts of violence targeting LGBTI people.

Thank you.