



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**JOINT STATEMENT
DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
IN OBSERVANCE OF PRIDE MONTH
1321ST MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
24 JUNE 2021**

Madam Chairperson,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Iceland, Norway, and Canada.

We thank the US delegation for raising Pride Month today at the Permanent Council. Pride Month, and the Pride Parades that now take place throughout the world and the OSCE region, including in Vienna this past weekend, are powerful symbols of the progress that we have made over the past two decades in the advancement of the dignity of LGBTI people. At the turn of the 21st century same-sex marriage was not legal in any OSCE participating State, while today it is legal in eighteen participating States, with another twelve participating States recognizing same-sex unions, and a further eleven having anti-discrimination laws in place to protect LGBTI persons. More needs to be done, but this is significant and important progress. This progress represents the realization that LGBTI people enjoy the same rights as everyone else, and that these rights are now beginning to be properly respected. LGBTI people are free to love who they want to love, be who they are, and to live a life free from intolerance and discrimination; LGBTI people have the same inherent dignity as any other person. We have made the case many times in this Council that our OSCE commitments are clear: LGBTI people do enjoy the same rights that any other person enjoys, and we, as participating States, have committed to address and combat hate crimes committed against LGBTI people.

Unfortunately, while great strides have been made in advancing the equality of LGBTI people, we have also seen a regressive response in some parts of the OSCE region that aims to reverse some of the gains that have been made. We are very concerned about the adoption by the Hungarian Parliament on June 15 of legislation linking LGBTI images and education with child protection, as part of legislation on pedophilia. Such conflation of pedophilia with homosexuality is spurious and unacceptable, and the vaguely worded restrictions and bans will have a negative effect on the LGBTI community in Hungary. We are worried that this law will lead to reinforced prejudice against LGBTI people. The idea that hiding the existence of homosexuality from children will “protect” them from purported negative effects that awareness of homosexuality will have on their development has no basis in truth or reality, and demeans the dignity of an entire group of people.

Madam Chairperson,

Pride month is about celebrating diversity and LGBTI communities, and about acknowledging their history, the hardships and discrimination they have faced and continue to face, and the progress that has been made. Tremendous progress, indeed, has been made, but much remains to be done so that LGBTI people throughout the OSCE region, and the world, enjoy the same rights as everyone else. Our countries are committed to tirelessly pursuing this objective.

Thank you.