



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON ALLEGED ANTI LGBT RIGHTS DEMONSTRATIONS IN
NORWAY**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 11 July 2013

Mr. Chairman,

In its response in the Council last week to statements by the European Union and the US on legislation in the Russian Federation affecting LGBT rights, the Russian delegation also referred to my country. Since the information provided about Norway was incorrect, I exercise my right of reply.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to say the following: In the Russian response the point was made that it would be wrong to believe that scepticism towards LGBT people is not widespread also in European Union countries. I agree with this point and may add that there is homophobia also in Norway. In several of my interventions on the LGBT issue I have in fact underscored this point, but added that it rests a responsibility on political leaders to help fight intolerance against LGBT people, and not reinforce it by adopting anti LGBT legislation.

Mr. Chairman,

In his response last week the Russian delegate said, and – since we have not yet received the authoritative translation of the statement into English – I will first quote in Russian:

(He said:)

«Не все однозначно и в скандинавских странах. Как показывают последние демонстрации перед зданием местной опеки детей в норвежском городе Тронхейме, тысячи граждан выступают против новой правительственной программы, предусматривающей, в том числе, возможность усыновления детей однополыми парами.»

This may, I believe, be translated into English the following way:

«The picture is not unambiguous in the Scandinavian countries either. As can be seen from the last demonstrations in front of the Child Protection Agency in the Norwegian city of Trondheim, thousands of citizens stand up against a new government program that, inter alia, includes adoption rights to same-sex couples».

Mr. Chairman,

Such demonstrations in Trondheim, with the support of thousands of people, were unknown to me and the other members of my delegation. We therefore contacted the police authorities in Trondheim to obtain accurate information about these demonstrations. The Trondheim police assured us that no such demonstrations have taken place.

It seems to us that the Russian Federation misinterpreted a demonstration in front of the Trondheim Child Protection Agency on the 3rd of May this year. That manifestation gathered around 150 people who exercised their right to express their view on a matter completely unrelated to the LGBT issue.

Mr. Chairman,

My country was mentioned once more in last week's statement by the Russian Federation, in relation to examples where a Child Protection Agency has taken a child away from its parents. To take a child away from its family is a radical measure and painful for those affected. And it does not happen often. I would like to underline that such measures are taken only when the welfare of the child demands it. There is no reason to believe that children are taken away from their families because one or both of the parents are foreigners, as alluded to by the delegation of the Russian Federation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman