

**OSCE High Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination
Astana, 29 – 30 June 2010**

Plenary Session 4

Intervention by Ireland

**Delivered by Ambassador Eoin O’Leary,
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the OSCE**

As this is the first time Ireland is taking the floor, I would like to thank the Kazakh Chairmanship for their excellent hospitality

Ireland is committed to promoting tolerance and non-discrimination for all its residents.

We will work with the incoming Lithuanian Chairmanship to identify how the Tolerance and Non-discrimination agenda can be progressed over 2011 and 2012.

This is a moving agenda. As the world becomes more complex and our societies more open, new challenges arise. For instance, economic progress has transformed Ireland from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. New members of society have come from all corners of the world. This has brought great benefits to Irish society but has also obliged us to develop new policies to combat racism and xenophobia.

Ireland has also over the last decade come to recognise the rights of those of different gender orientations. Ireland along with our EU partners supports the advancement of the human rights of LGBT people internationally. The work of Ireland and the EU in this regard focuses on individual human rights and non-discrimination in respect of all human rights, including on the basis of sexual orientation.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his address to the 13th session of the Human Rights Council in March this year, expressed his concern that violence, discrimination and stigmatisation continue against persons in all countries of the world because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Recently on 21 June, the Irish Government withdrew its appeal against a landmark ruling by the Irish High Court that Irish law on transgender rights was in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case was taken by a person who had undergone gender reassignment surgery and wished to have a birth certificate issued showing their current gender.