



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON LGBT¹

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
19th April, 2012

Mr. Chairman

I would like to use this opportunity to align myself with the statement just made by my distinguished US colleague on the recent arrest of two LGBT activists in St. Petersburg. I share his views, including his assessment of the possible consequences of the recently adopted laws related to LGBT rights in St. Petersburg and certain other Russian cities.

Let me in addition make the following two points:

First, this morning we heard the Commissioner on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador-at-large Konstantin Dolgov, underline that Russian laws ban any form of discrimination, including against LGBT persons. This is an important clarification.

But Ambassador Dolgov went on to say that the recently adopted laws in St. Petersburg and other Russian cities are fully in line with the international Human Rights commitments of the Russian Federation. I disagree with him on this point, as you know from my previous interventions on the LGBT issue in the Permanent Council.

I was, Mr. Chairman, surprised by Ambassador Dolgov's argument that it is necessary to protect children against values not shared by the majority of the population. If I understood him correctly, this would in my opinion imply that it – at least sometimes – is necessary to protect children against knowledge of certain minorities and what characterizes them. I would believe that such a view would imply turning the very purpose of human rights upside down.

My second point, Mr. Chairman, is related to the point concerning “values not shared by the majority of the population”.

¹ The following is the full text of ambassador Kvile's intervention.

I am fully aware of the sensitivity of the LGBT issue. I believe that most of those among us who speak up for the rights of LGBT persons represent countries in which these persons not too long ago would meet little respect. In some of our countries they could even be treated as criminals.

I do not expect societies, for example the Russian, to change attitude overnight. But I do expect that governments do two things. I expect that they make sure that local authorities contemplating the introduction of anti LGBT legislation are properly informed about the obligations the central government has under international law on protecting any groups from discrimination. I also expect from political authorities and political leaders that they contribute towards greater tolerance in their societies and not, through the introduction of laws or in any other way, contribute to cementing, or even worse, reinforcing intolerance against LGBT persons or any other minority group.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman