

PC.DEL/264/12  
26 March 2012

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

**STATEMENT BY MR. YANN HWANG,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE  
OSCE (ALSO ON BEHALF OF AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA,  
CROATIA, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, ESTONIA,  
FINLAND, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, IRELAND, ITALY,  
LATVIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALTA, THE  
NETHERLANDS, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA,  
SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM), AT  
THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 March 2012

**Regarding tolerance and non-discrimination in Russia**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am making this statement on behalf of the following States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

We are concerned by manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the OSCE area.

We call on all participating States to ensure respect for the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of which human rights apply in the same way to all human beings irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We reject and condemn all manifestations of homophobia or transphobia as unacceptable attacks on human dignity. Moreover, sexual orientation and gender identity should by no means be grounds for restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly or association.

In this regard, we deplore the adoption on 29 February by the parliament of St. Petersburg of a law providing for administrative and financial sanctions against “all public action intended to encourage among minors male or female homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism and paedophilia.” This law was signed on 7 March by the Governor of St. Petersburg and entered into force recently.

We believe that the law adopted in St. Petersburg constitutes an infringement of human rights and discriminates against LGBT individuals by stigmatizing them and restricting their freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly. We believe that this text does not respect the international legal commitments entered into by Russia, especially in the context of the Council of Europe and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We firmly believe that no effort must be spared in combating the crime of paedophilia. However, the law approved in St. Petersburg creates an unacceptable confusion by equating homosexuality, which has been decriminalized in Russia since 1993, with the crime of paedophilia.

We are of the view that the law adopted in St. Petersburg and similar laws approved in the Russian regions of Ryazan, Arkhangelsk and Kostroma, must be amended.

The adoption of such texts bears witness to the persistence of discrimination in OSCE participating States, a situation that highlights the need for the OSCE to combat all forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Thank you.