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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1321st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

24 June 2021

In response to the current issue raised by the United States of America

The European Union pays tribute to human diversity in all its richness and to the right of every individual to be proud of who they are, to define their own identity and to love the person they choose. It condemns all persecution, discrimination, brutality and extreme forms of violence, including murder and torture, committed on the basis of a person's sexual orientation or real or presumed gender identity. In that spirit, tens of thousands of participants joined in the 2021 Regenbogenparade (Pride parade) in Vienna on 19 June.

The European Union stresses that there can be no hierarchy between the different grounds for discrimination, all of which are equally reprehensible and run counter to the universality of human rights, to the fundamental values of the European Union and to the commitments undertaken by all OSCE participating States. As long as such discrimination persists, the European Union will continue to work to end it. Equality and non-discrimination are core values and fundamental rights in the European Union, enshrined in its treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Commission, the Parliament and the Council, as well as the Member States, all share responsibility for protecting fundamental rights and ensuring equal treatment and equality for all.

On 12 November 2020, the European Commission adopted its first LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, covering the period 2020–2025, which is an important step forward in the fight against discrimination. It aims to build a Union of equality, where diversity is celebrated as part of our collective wealth, where everyone can be themselves without risk of discrimination, exclusion or violence.

The struggle for the respect of human rights could not take place without the courageous commitment of human rights defenders, activists, journalists and other media actors, and civil society organizations. We recognize the contribution of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in support of civil society organizations working to promote mutual respect and to combat intolerance and discrimination, including hate crimes, and in enabling them to form partnerships among themselves. We urge the ODIHR, the other autonomous institutions, the field operations and the Secretariat to step up their co-operation in this regard and to intensify their relations with civil society organizations. It is our joint responsibility to create conditions conducive to safer and more tolerant societies within the framework of our comprehensive approach to security.

In conclusion, we emphatically reaffirm that LGBTIQ persons have the same human rights as all other individuals and that no right may be denied them.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

1 The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.