



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

**JOINT STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA,
BIPHOBIA, INTERSEX DISCRIMINATION AND TRANSPHOBIA**

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 21
May 2026.

1. Thank you, Mr Chair.
2. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, the United Kingdom, and my own country, Norway.
3. May 17th marks the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersex Discrimination and Transphobia – IDAHOBIT. This day is an important moment to reaffirm our shared commitment to the equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people, without discrimination. As we look ahead to Pride Month in June, this commitment must be sustained and translated into action, both within the OSCE and beyond.
4. This year’s global IDAHOBIT theme, ‘At the heart of democracy’, underlines a fundamental truth: that respect for human rights, equality and non-discrimination is essential to strong, inclusive and resilient democratic societies.
5. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. Yet for many people across the OSCE region and beyond, this promise remains unfulfilled due to their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. Discrimination, harassment and violence persist in education, employment, healthcare and public life.

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6. In some participating States, laws and policies continue to criminalise consensual same-sex relationships, restrict freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, or deny legal recognition and protection to trans and gender-diverse people. Regrettably, over the past twelve months, the situation for many LGBT+ people in the OSCE region has further deteriorated.
 7. In many of our societies, transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse people still face stigma, harassment, and violence. Intersex people can also face the possibility of medically unnecessary or deferrable interventions. These trends are often exacerbated by disinformation, hostile rhetoric and the shrinking of civic space, which together undermine social cohesion and the security of individuals and communities.
 8. Human rights defenders and civil society organisations play a vital role in responding to these challenges. Across the OSCE region, they provide support to victims, document abuses, and advocate for inclusive, human rights-compliant policies. Their work strengthens our societies and contributes directly to comprehensive security. We therefore reiterate the importance of protecting civic space and ensuring that human rights defenders can operate freely and safely, including through full respect for the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association.
1. Mr Chair, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a core OSCE commitment. Participating States have freely undertaken commitments to respect and promote these rights, to combat discrimination, and to protect individuals from violence. Full implementation of these commitments is essential to comprehensive security, and to the credibility of this Organisation.
 2. On this IDAHOBIT, we reaffirm our solidarity with LGBT+ communities and human rights defenders across the OSCE region and worldwide. We call on all participating States to uphold their commitments, to repeal discriminatory laws and practices, and to promote policies that ensure all people can live free from fear, violence and discrimination.
 3. We remain steadfast in our commitment to a world in which all people are equal, safe and free to live their lives with dignity and respect.
 4. Thank you.