



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

JOINT STATEMENT IN OBSERVANCE OF PRIDE MONTH

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 13
June 2024

Madam Chair,

I give this statement on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Danmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, San Marino, Sweden, the UK, and my own country Norway.

We thank the delegation of the United States for raising the issue of Pride Month.

Promotion of human rights for all, and efforts to end discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ persons, is a priority for us. As OSCE participating States we have committed ourselves to the principle of equality, to combatting all forms of discrimination and intolerance, and to addressing and combatting hate crimes.

Last Saturday, our delegations joined others in proudly participating in the Vienna Pride Parade, where people came together to celebrate love and diversity, inclusion, equality and human rights. Pride continues to be an important annual event that celebrates LGBTIQ people and highlights the challenges they continue to face on the realization of human rights and equality.

All States, regardless of their political, economic, and cultural systems, have a legal obligation under international law to protect the human rights of all persons without discrimination.

Protection should include tackling a deeply concerning rise in anti-LGBTIQ sentiment across the OSCE region, often fueled by mis- and disinformation. Some governments instrumentalize anti-LGBTIQ sentiments for domestic policy gains. Russia's efforts in this area are particularly alarming.

Such anti-LGBTIQ sentiment has already led to a rise in reported hate crime, including violent attacks.

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In my own country Norway two people were killed and twenty-one wounded in a mass shooting attack in 2022 that the police believe could have been motivated by anti-LGBTIQ hate and intended to target Oslo Pride. The suspect is currently on trial.

Madam chair,

Let me mention two issues of special concern.

Firstly, we know that LGBTIQ persons face specific risks during armed conflict, and Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion is endangering LGBTIQ persons in Ukraine. We encourage the OSCE Support Program Ukraine to strengthen LGBTIQ aspects within its ongoing activities.

Secondly, The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA) is in its 2024 Annual Review concerned about the backsliding in the promotion of rights for LGBTIQ people in the OSCE region, both east and west of Vienna. Cases of criminalization, lack of anti-discrimination legislation, and a rise in the introduction of legislation restricting the human rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ people are all deeply worrying. These undermine the robust, pluralistic democracies that allow for safe civic engagement from all persons.

Madam Chair,

We call on governments around the world to repeal discriminatory legislation, take action to tackle and eliminate hate crimes and hate speech, prevent all forms of violence against LGBTIQ persons, and tackle structural and institutional barriers and biases that still limit the participation of LGBTIQ persons in all parts of the society.

The OSCE participating states agree on the importance of combating intolerance and discrimination against Jews, Muslims, Christians, and members of other religions and national minorities.

In April we stood united at the Malta Conference in the fight against antisemitism. Recommendations from the conference included the need for action plans, national coordinators responsible for implementation, police registration of hate crime, education, dialog, and the need to tackle hate crime on the internet.

These recommendations could work as a source of inspiration for the next step in the fight against intolerance and antidiscrimination against LGBTIQ persons in the OSCE area.

It's time to take our fight one step further.

Madam Chair,

Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics should never be used as bases for discrimination or abuse.

It is not about special rights, and celebrating pride is not an ideology. It is about having the same rights as others.

We must work together to create a world where everyone can live freely, without fear or discrimination, and have the freedom to love who they love and be who they are.

Thank you.