



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ ON INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST  
HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA, AND BIPHOBIA (IDAHOBIT)  
1268th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
21 MAY 2020**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the delegations of Andorra, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Canada to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, Interphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT) on May 17th.

The OSCE's human dimension commitments refer to combatting all forms of discrimination and intolerance (Madrid 2007), and it is clear to our countries that can only mean that we are committed to combatting discrimination and intolerance targeting LGBTI persons. The theme of the 2020 International Day is "Breaking the Silence", whose goal is to create the conditions where LGBTI persons can feel free to express their true selves, without fear of reprisal, attacks, or other forms of hatred or discrimination. As OSCE participating States, we too have a duty to break the silence, and to positively affirm that our responsibilities extend to the protection of all LGBTI persons, and to take the necessary corresponding steps to demonstrate that commitment. We are not talking about affording LGBTI persons "special rights," but of the upholding of the fundamental human rights that all OSCE citizens enjoy. We must ensure that LGBTI persons enjoy the same state protection from discrimination that any other individual would enjoy.

Mr. Chairperson,

Our countries have been doing our utmost to ensure that our LGBTI citizens are able to exercise their full rights, and have repeatedly called on participating States to eliminate laws and policies that discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, and to combat all acts of violence targeting LGBTI persons. We reiterate that call and, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, underline its urgent need given that the threat to vulnerable and marginalized communities is being exacerbated by this pandemic. Recognition of the existing inequality and exclusion that many LGBTI persons face must factor into the measures and responses that participating States implement. It is imperative that all participating States ensure that their measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic take into account their potential impact on LGBTI persons.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I reiterate that our countries will continue to fight for justice and protection for LGBTI persons, both in our own countries and around the world. We commit ourselves to considering the impact of all COVID-19 measures on LGBTI persons, and will implement such measures in a non-discriminatory manner. We hope that all OSCE participating States will join us in this endeavour, live up to their commitments, and reject all discrimination and violence against LGBTI communities, both in word and in deed.

Thank you.