

Diplomats for Equality IDAHOBIT 2022

Joint Statement – May 17, 2022

We – The Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and the diplomatic missions of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, as well as the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the Delegation of the European Union to the International Organisations in Vienna – all welcome May 17 as the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), as a celebration of diversity and inclusion around the world.

We fully endorse the IDAHOBIT 2022 theme “Our Bodies, Our Lives, Our Rights”. As such, we pledge our support for the rights of people to freely express their sexual orientation and gender identities and to make their own choices concerning their bodies, without harassment, violence, discrimination or reprisal. Consequently, we support efforts aimed at decriminalising same sex relations and persons on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic crisis have exacerbated the vulnerable situation of LGBTIQ+ persons, particularly issues related to mental health, and have exposed existing gaps of equality, including bias and social stigma, discrimination, economic impact and the risk of violence.

LGBTIQ+ persons are disproportionately impacted by violence and discrimination during armed conflicts. We strongly condemn the war of aggression, in violation of international law and OSCE commitments. We are gravely concerned by the particular and severe impact on persons in vulnerable situations, including LGBTIQ+ persons, as documented by reports of the OSCE and the United Nations.

In many countries, LGBTIQ+ persons continue to suffer from violence, discrimination and bullying, often with deadly consequences. In 71 jurisdictions, consensual same sex relations are still criminalised. We remain alarmed at these severely inhumane measures. It is our belief that nobody should face violence and discrimination because of who they are or whom they love. We all benefit from living in more tolerant and inclusive societies.

Similarly, we remain fully committed to promoting and protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons, who must be accorded the same dignity, respect, and rights as all other persons. We recognize the value of diversity and empowering those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. We will continue to work through our Embassies and through International Organisations, including, where relevant, the UN, Council of

Europe, European Institutions, the OSCE, the Organization of American States (OAS), Mercosur (Reunion de Altas Autoridades sobre Derechos Humanos) and the Commonwealth, to promote tolerance and non-discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons and to address discriminatory laws, including those that criminalise homosexuality.

We also wish to pay homage to the courageous advocacy efforts carried out by human rights defenders, activists, journalists, media workers and civil society organisations to raise awareness about the issues affecting LGBTIQ+ persons and human rights violations they may face.

Finally, we will continue to shed light on these and other injustices and will continue advocating for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. We hope that you will join our efforts, on the occasion of IDAHOBIT 2022 and throughout the year, to make Vienna's diplomatic community a more inclusive community for all. We must stand united in celebrating diversity and the resilience of the LGBTIQ+ community and in defending human rights, inclusiveness and justice.