



EUROPEAN UNION  
Delegation to the Council of Europe

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### **EU statement on drawing attention to the need for improvement of human rights of LGBTI persons in Europe**

The European Union would like to draw attention to a statement it issued in support of the Pride Parade held in Strasbourg on 13 June 2015 which noted that, despite some progress, the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity continue to be used as a pretext for serious human rights violations of LGBTI persons in Europe. Regrettably, LGBTI persons are still subject to persecution, discrimination and ill-treatment on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the "State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe (2015)" identifies intolerant attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people in all member States, though attitudes vary significantly among and within countries. Whereas several member States already have sufficient anti-discrimination-related legislation or implement measures to combat different types of discrimination, there are still notable gaps in anti-discrimination legislation with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Regrettably, "pride" marches continue to be banned in some member States, while at the local level many municipalities restrict freedom of expression and assembly of LGBTI persons.

We also note that, according to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights' recent "Research paper on Human Rights and Intersex People", European countries have been slow to recognise and uphold the human rights of intersex people and gender diversity they represent, disregarding their right to self-determination and physical integrity.

The Secretary General recommends bringing forward relevant national legislation, policies and measures on anti-discrimination, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, in line with relevant Council of Europe standards, the European Convention on Human Rights and relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

The EU welcomes these recommendations. The EU reaffirms its commitment to supporting Council of Europe activities designed to combat all forms of discrimination on any ground, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The EU will continue to advocate measures to combat discrimination and violence against LGBTI persons, and to actively promote their human rights.

As stated on 17 May 2015 in the Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the European Union on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia "all human beings are equal in dignity and all are entitled to enjoy their rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, and Turkey align themselves with this statement.