



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT BY NORWAY ON DENIAL OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY
AND VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBT INDIVIDUALS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
24th of May, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

First, I would like to align myself with the statement just made by my distinguished US colleague.

Secondly, I would like to offer one or two observations on the arguments expressed by my distinguished Russian colleague, and on earlier occasions by the Holy See as well.

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian Federation does not argue that human rights and fundamental freedoms fall outside the scope of our organization. On the contrary, they also underline that our comprehensive approach to security is what makes the OSCE unique.

Therefore, when they argue that the LGBT issue falls outside the scope of our work and attention, they implicitly, in my opinion, argue that there are certain groups of human beings that shall not enjoy the rights and protection given to other groups by the universal human rights instruments.

Such a position undermines the important principle of universality. And if we argue that certain groups, because of the specific characteristics with which they are born, fall outside, what kind of arguments can we use against those who argue that black people fall outside, or Roma and Sinti, or disabled people for that matter?

We are not talking about new rights for new groups. Universality means that the same human rights apply to everybody. This has been beautifully expressed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Bishop Desmond Tutu, who said, and I quote:

No one should be excluded from our love, our compassion or our concern because of race or gender, faith or ethnicity – or because of their sexual orientation. Gay people, too, are made in my God's image.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman