



Permanent Council of 7 June 2012

### **LGBT rights in Russia**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson

I deliver this statement on behalf of Norway, Canada, Iceland, and Switzerland.

I refer to our statement given on February 16, where we raised our concerns over proposed new legislation in the St. Petersburg region in the Russian Federation banning the promotion of homosexuality. I bring the case up again today, since we have now seen the very first conviction due to the new legislation. LGBT rights activist Nikolay Alexeyev was given a 5.000 rubles fine for holding a banner with the words: "Homosexuality is not a perversion, field hockey and ballet on ice are". This has caused concerns within the NGOs community, as there is a fear that similar cases could follow. Alexeyev, the founder of the Moscow gay Pride movement, will appeal the fine, take the case to the Constitutional Court and, if necessary, to the European Court of Human Rights.

The fundamental freedom of expression should be guaranteed for all, including LGBT. Moreover, all participating States have an obligation to ensure that the sexual life and sexual integrity of each person is

protected as part of the right of privacy which says that all persons have the right not to be subjected to arbitrary interference with their privacy. Although sexual orientation and gender identity are not explicitly mentioned as prohibited grounds of discrimination in international human rights law, practice from the UN shows that the respective treaty bodies have interpreted sexual orientation and gender identity within the scope of the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Necessary legislation must therefore be in place, and go hand in hand with social change to enable LGBT persons to fully enjoy universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We urge the Russian delegation to convey our concerns to the relevant authorities of Saint Petersburg regarding the case of Mr. Alexeyev and in general the situation of LGBTs in the region.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson