



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT ON LEGISLATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
ON PROPAGANDA ON NON-TRADITIONAL SEXUAL RELATIONS
AMONG MINORS**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 13 June 2013

Madam Chair,

The Russian State Duma earlier this week unanimously passed a law banning so-called propaganda on non-traditional sexual relations among minors. Violators will face strict punishment.

We understand that the law still has to be confirmed by the upper house and then signed by the President before it becomes effective. We also understand that it is unlikely that this will not happen.

This Federal Law comes on top of similar laws already adopted in 10 Russian cities and regions. It comes on top of a bill passed by the Duma the same day that makes offending religious feelings a crime.

We regard them as part of a wider crack down on the Russian civil society.

Madam Chair,

We regret the decision made by the Duma on Tuesday. It is in clear violation of several human rights principles, such as the rights of minorities, the right to assembly and the right of expression.

It shows that prejudices towards sexual minorities are widespread in the Russian Federation. I know from my own country that it takes time to fight intolerance against LGBT persons. Nobody expects any society to change attitude overnight. But we expect from political leaders that they help fight this intolerance and not adopt legislation that will reinforce it.

On the day of adoption of the law we heard members of the Duma speaking to the media about LGBT using the Russian word for “illness”: БОЛЕЗНЬ. We expect from political leaders that they remind members of the Russian Duma that the World Health Organization in May 1990 removed homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases.

We do not develop our gender identity, we have it. No child needs to be protected against learning about different forms of such identity.

We expect from political leaders that they understand that legislation implying that LGBT is unnatural make this group even more vulnerable to harassment and physical attacks. When we debated the LGBT issue in this room in January this year, the Russian delegation said – and I quote – that we will also in the future base ourselves on the cultural and moral values prevailing not only in the Russian society, but in many countries of the world. End of quote.

But we expect political leadership. In Norway we say that only dead fish always swim with the stream.

Madam Chair,

I understand that the Russian Orthodox Church has been a strong advocate in favour of the law that was adopted on Tuesday.

Also in this room religion has been used to justify that one particular group shall not enjoy the rights and protection given to other groups by the universal human rights.

In my bible I find only a message about compassion, understanding and tolerance.

To me the belief in God is closely linked with accepting his Creation. He created some of us black, some white, some gay but most of us straight. He gave us different languages. He wanted it this way. Only those seeking power and control want a uniform society.

I want – once again – to make Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu’s words mine when he says that “no one shall 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 created in my God’s image. Hate has no place in the house of God”.

Thank you.