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Joint statement on occasion of
the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

Delivered by Ambassador Anne- Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 19 May 2022

Mr Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and my own country Norway.

We welcome May 17 as the International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), 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 genders and to make their own choices concerning their bodies, without harassment, violence, discrimination, or reprisal.

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 LGBTI persons and human rights violations they may face.

We have all – as OSCE participating States – recognized that human rights are universal and indivisible. From this recognition stems the incontrovertible understanding that LGBTI persons are entitled to the same respect as all people everywhere. We commend the efforts of those participating States who are upholding these values and have made progress in recognizing the human rights of LGBTI people this past year. Yet same sex conduct is still criminalized in two OSCE participating States, a number of participating

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States fail to protect the full rights of their LGBTI citizens, while other participating States are increasingly restricting educational, health, and other rights of LGBTI persons. Furthermore, the efforts of ODIHR to assist in combatting discrimination and hate crimes against LGBTI persons are criticized by some participating States.

Mr. Chairperson,

IDAHOBIT takes place this year as Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine continues, and we are gravely concerned about the particular and severe impact of the war on persons in vulnerable situations, including LGBTI persons, as documented by the recent Moscow Mechanism report. The experts' report describes how the Russian attack on Ukraine has put the Ukrainian LGBTI community on alert. In fact, in his sermon held on 6 March 2022, the Moscow Patriarch Kirill cited gay parades among the main "sins" that have forced Russia to conduct their so-called special military operation in Ukraine.

In Ukraine, the legal status of LGBTI has been gradually improving, while Russia has been toughening restrictions and implementing discriminatory laws. Since 2014, the application of Russian anti-LGBTI legislation has been extended to the territories under the effective control of Russia and to the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics". The report refers to a rise in violent acts motivated by homophobia throughout all areas under Russian control. It describes how rumours that LGBTI persons figure on Russian list of persons to be killed or sent to detention camps are being spread.

Mr. Chairperson,

We call again on all participating States to eliminate laws and policies that discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, and to combat all acts of violence targeting LGBTI people. We must stand united in celebrating diversity and the resilience of the LGBTI community and in defending human rights, inclusiveness, and justice.

Thank you.