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Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ ON INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA, AND BIPHOBIA (IDAHOBIT) – RIGHT OF REPLY
1268TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
21 MAY 2020**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am delivering this reply on behalf of the delegations of Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Canada.

In celebrating this international day, some participating States have questioned whether discrimination and violence targeting LGBTI persons are matters for the OSCE, often arguing that we have no commitments specifically related to LGBTI individuals. We resolutely assert that discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals are indeed OSCE issues for two principal reasons:

- 1) Human rights and the Human Dimension are part of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. The Helsinki Final Act recognized "the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for...peace, justice, and well-being". This has been reaffirmed by participating States at OSCE Summits in Budapest 1994, Istanbul 1999, Maastricht 2003, and Astana 2010.
- 2) Human rights are universal and indivisible, and all human beings have the inherent right to live free from discrimination. Our commitments are not predicated on particular targets of discrimination, but on the fact that the discrimination itself is targeted upon a person or group of persons based on their characteristics or status; and we, as participating States, have recognized the importance of combatting all forms of discrimination.

It follows that discrimination and violence directed against LGBTI persons constitute threats to comprehensive security, and are serious concerns to be addressed by this organization. As a leading regional organisation in tackling hate crime, intolerance and discrimination, we believe that the OSCE is a forum in which discussions on these issues must take place. This is about the credibility of our affirmation of the importance of human rights, and about having a comprehensive security approach to the challenges faced by our region and all its people, without exceptions.

Thank you.