

**United States Mission to the OSCE**



**International Day Against Homophobia,  
Transphobia and Biphobia**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 20, 2021

This past Monday marked 16 years since the first *International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia*. In the intervening period, the United States has endeavored to reaffirm the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons. To be sure, we have encountered challenges and setbacks in our path toward inclusion, and our work is not yet complete.

The message of “Together: Resisting, Supporting, Healing!” is especially poignant as this year’s theme for this special day. Ending hatred and violence against LGBTQI+ persons requires collaborative action from us all. The United States is doing its part. In one of his first executive orders, President Biden made it clear that, “Every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love.”

President Biden followed this up with a *Memorandum* instructing all U.S. Federal agencies working abroad to “ensure that U.S. diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance promote and protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.” And that important work is well underway.

As Secretary Blinken noted earlier this week, the United States is prioritizing efforts in several key areas: combatting criminalization of LGBTQI+ status or conduct; protecting vulnerable LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers; providing funding to protect human rights and advance nondiscrimination; responding to human rights abuses of LGBTQI+ persons; and building coalitions and engaging international organizations in the fight against LGBTQI+ discrimination. Working together, we can create a world that respects and celebrates the dignity of all individuals. It is in partnership that we will achieve our goal of a rights-respecting, inclusive society where no one lives in fear because of who they are or whom they love.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights. We call on all participating States to uphold this commitment.

Appallingly, LGBTQI+ persons continue to be subjected to discrimination and violence in the OSCE region.

In celebrating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons worldwide, the United States re-affirms this shared value: Everyone deserves to live in dignity and have their human rights and fundamental freedoms respected.

Thank you, Madam Chair.