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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MAXIME LEFEBVRE,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OSCE, AT
THE 1061st MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 July 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

I thank my distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of the United States of America, for his statement, and align myself with the statement made by my distinguished colleague, the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

The march towards equal rights has always been a difficult and laborious one. Advances that seemed progressive yesterday are no longer exceptional today and will be seen as commonplace tomorrow.

France welcomes the decision of the United States Supreme Court, which has just legalized same-sex marriage throughout the country, as well as the recent decision of the Irish people along similar lines.

The Netherlands was the first country to legalize same-sex marriage, in 2001. France authorized same-sex marriage in the law of 18 May 2013, which opened up new rights for marriage, adoption and inheritance based on the principles of equality and shared freedoms. Marriage for same-sex couples is now permitted in 20 countries.

As part of its struggle for equal rights for all, France recalls its firm opposition to all forms of intolerance and discrimination, including against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.