
Chairmanship: Sweden**1321st PLENARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Date: Thursday, 24 June 2021 (in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference)

Opened: 10.05 a.m.
Suspended: 1.20 p.m.
Resumed: 3 p.m.
Closed: 5.45 p.m.

2. Chairperson: Ambassador U. Funered
Ambassador T. Lorentzson

3. Subjects discussed – Statements – Decisions/documents adopted:

Agenda item 1: REPORT BY THE HEAD OF THE OSCE PROGRAMME OFFICE IN NUR-SULTAN

Chairperson, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan (PC.FR/23/21 OSCE+) (PC.FR/27/21 OSCE+), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1020/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/983/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/982/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1014/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Kyrgyzstan, Norway (PC.DEL/1007/21), Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan (PC.DEL/1006/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 2: REPORT BY THE OSCE PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR IN UKRAINE

Chairperson, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (SEC.FR/407/21 Restr.), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as

Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1023/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/985/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/984/21), Turkey (PC.DEL/1013/21 OSCE+), United Kingdom, Norway (PC.DEL/1001/21), Iceland (PC.DEL/989/2 OSCE+), Ukraine (PC.DEL/1030/21/Corr.1), Romania (PC.DEL/1028/21)

Agenda item 3: REVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

Chairperson

- (a) *Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine and illegal occupation of Crimea*: Ukraine (PC.DEL/1005/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1019/21), Switzerland (PC.DEL/1015/21 OSCE+), Turkey (PC.DEL/1012/21 OSCE+), United States of America (PC.DEL/986/21), United Kingdom, Canada (PC.DEL/1061/21 OSCE+), Norway (PC.DEL/1000/21)
- (b) *Deteriorating situation in Ukraine and continued non-implementation by the Ukrainian authorities of the Minsk agreements*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/993/21), Ukraine
- (c) *Aggression of Azerbaijan against Artsakh and Armenia with the direct involvement of Turkey and foreign terrorist fighters*: Armenia (Annex 1)
- (d) *International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict*: Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1022/21), United Kingdom, Norway (also on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia and Switzerland) (PC.DEL/1004/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/999/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/991/21), Azerbaijan, Turkey (PC.DEL/1016/21 OSCE+)
- (e) *World Refugee Day*: Turkey (Annex 2), Azerbaijan (PC.DEL/1011/21 OSCE+), Canada (also on behalf of Andorra, Iceland, Mongolia, Norway, San Marino and the United Kingdom) (PC.DEL/1062/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/992/21)
- (f) *Serious human rights violations in Lithuania*: Russian Federation (PC.DEL/998/21), Belarus (PC.DEL/1009/21 OSCE+), Lithuania (Annex 3)
- (g) *In observance of Pride Month 2021*: United States of America (PC.DEL/994/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Andorra, Georgia, Moldova and San Marino, in

alignment) (PC.DEL/1024/21), Denmark (Annex 4), Canada (also on behalf of Iceland and Norway) (PC.DEL/1060/21), United Kingdom, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Poland (PC.DEL/997/21 OSCE+), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1003/21 OSCE+), Hungary (Annex 5), Turkey (PC.DEL/1018/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 4: REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
 CHAIRPERSON-IN-OFFICE

- (a) *Visit of the Chairperson-in-Office to North Macedonia on 21 and 22 June 2021*: Chairperson
- (b) *High-level conference on “Promoting Economic and Environmental Co-operation, Security and Growth in the OSCE Region: Marking 30 years of the 1990 Bonn Document”, to be held on 5 July 2021*: Chairperson
- (c) *Ambassadorial retreat to be held near Vienna on 13 July 2021*: Chairperson

Agenda item 5: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- (a) *Visit of the Secretary General to the Russian Federation from 21 to 24 June 2021*: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/88/21 OSCE+)
- (b) *Announcement of the distribution of the Secretary General’s weekly report (SEC.GAL/88/21 OSCE+)*: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre
- (c) *Update on the COVID-19 situation in the OSCE Secretariat*: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/88/21 OSCE+), Italy
- (d) *Video address by the Secretary General at the inaugural plenary meeting of the Conference on the Future of Europe, held in Strasbourg on 19 June 2021*: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/88/21 OSCE+)
- (e) *Visit to Bulgaria by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings from 22 to 24 June 2021*: Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre (SEC.GAL/88/21 OSCE+)

Agenda item 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) *Farewell to the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the OSCE, Ambassador G. Israfilov*: Chairperson, Dean of the Permanent Council (Liechtenstein), Azerbaijan
- (b) *Early parliamentary elections in Armenia, held on 20 June 2021*: Armenia (PC.DEL/1032/21), United States of America (PC.DEL/996/21), Russian Federation (PC.DEL/1002/21), Portugal-European Union (with the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association countries

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, in alignment) (PC.DEL/1021/21), United Kingdom

4. Next meeting:

Thursday, 8 July 2021, at 10 a.m., in the Neuer Saal and via video teleconference



1321st Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1321, Agenda item 3(c)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF ARMENIA**

Madam Chairperson,

The trilateral ceasefire statement signed between the leaders of the Russian Federation, Armenia and Azerbaijan on 9 November 2020 put an end to the fighting and the war of aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh with the direct and active involvement of Turkey and Turkish-backed foreign terrorist fighters. However, Azerbaijan continues its gross violation of, among other key provisions of the trilateral statement, paragraph 8 on the exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons.

For its part, Armenia has fulfilled all of its obligations both under the trilateral statement on ceasefire and under international humanitarian law. Moreover, Armenia has shown gestures of goodwill, such as the release of two Azerbaijani servicemen who were recently detained on the territory of the Republic of Armenia. Another twelve Azerbaijani servicemen were released after the well-known incursion by Azerbaijani armed forces into the sovereign territory of Armenia on 12 May, which took place in the province of Syunik. Therefore, we reiterate once again that generalized calls addressed to both Azerbaijan and Armenia to release all prisoners of war are unjustified and provide Azerbaijan with an opportunity to evade its commitments and obligations. We call on our partners to stop the unjust and misleading practice of spreading the blame indiscriminately and laying it on Armenia as well.

Madam Chairperson,

As we have noted on numerous occasions, on 11 December 2020, just a month after the signing of the ceasefire declaration, the Azerbaijani armed forces, in flagrant violation of Azerbaijan's commitments under the trilateral statement, attacked the positions of the Armenian self-defence forces in the area of the villages of Hin Tagher and Khtsaberd of the Hadrut region of Artsakh, occupying the two villages and adjacent territories. We have already expressed our readiness to share with all interested delegations the maps released by the peacekeepers on 13 and 14 December 2020, which clearly confirm the violation of the ceasefire and the occupation of the two villages by Azerbaijan. The maps also confirm that the Armenian forces were in the positions they held at the time of the signing of the trilateral statement, thereby dispelling the false Azerbaijani propaganda about so-called sabotage groups. However, this did not prevent Azerbaijan, not least on account of the lack of a clear

assessment of what happened, from presenting the 64 Armenian servicemen as “terrorists” and prosecuting them on trumped-up charges and on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, which is a clear and serious violation of international humanitarian law. In particular, as Article 118 of the III Geneva Convention stipulates, “Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities.”

Dear colleagues,

I would like to draw your attention to a video posted in the Azerbaijani segment of social media that was made during the recent joint visit of the presidents of Turkey and Azerbaijan to the occupied and ethnically cleansed city of Shushi. The video attests to the fact that the Azerbaijani regime is illegally detaining the Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives as hostages with a view to using them in political bargaining. It also confirms the false and fabricated nature of the mock trials of the Armenian prisoners of war. In this video, during a conversation between the President of Azerbaijan and the First Lady of Turkey, the latter advises the Azerbaijani president to release the Armenian prisoners of war in stages, in exchange for Armenian fulfilment of Azerbaijani requirements. This latest episode confirms once again that the mock trials staged by Baku are only intended to prolong the illegal detention of the Armenian prisoners of war and their exploitation as hostages and bargaining chips for Baku.

Despite the repeated calls from the international community, the Azerbaijani authorities continue their cynical manipulations with regard to the Armenian prisoners of war without any consequences and in an atmosphere of complete impunity. As of today, illegal criminal cases have been initiated in Azerbaijan against 56 Armenian prisoners of war, 53 of whom were captured during the occupation of the villages of Hin Tager and Khitsaberd mentioned earlier, two of them, Mr. Ludwig Mkrtychyan and Mr. Alyosha Khosrovyan, being reservists, and another one, Mr. Vicken Euljekjian, being a civilian with dual Lebanese and Armenian citizenship. According to Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention, on the treatment of prisoners of war, the aforementioned persons are indisputably prisoners of war and they must enjoy all the rights arising from their status as prisoners of war, in accordance with the Convention and customary international law.

Another mock trial of 14 Armenian prisoners of war started in a Baku court last week. Trumped-up criminal charges were brought against the Armenian prisoners of war Gegham Serobyan, Hrach Avagyan, Armen Baghasyan, Gor Gasparyan, Kamo Sefilyan, Volodya Hakobyan, Gevorg Asertyan, Sisak Yenokyan, Albert Petrosyan, Romik Sedrakyan, Aram Minasyan, Mkrtych Minasyan, Edgar Matesyan and Turi Karapetyan.

A further mock trial of 13 other Armenian prisoners of war on trumped-up charges is also in progress at present.

Moreover, Baku is currently actively engaged in hunting for foreign nationals sympathetic to Armenia or Artsakh with a view to accusing them of terrorism and mercenarism, fabricating criminal cases and organizing show trials. With such tactics, Azerbaijan is obviously trying to create the impression that Armenia was also engaged in the recruitment of terrorists and mercenaries, like Azerbaijan and Turkey. In addition to the aforementioned case of Mr. Vicken Euljekjian, similar charges were also brought against Mr. Eduard Dubakov, who is a Russian citizen.

Established customary international humanitarian law has long since as a matter of principle prohibited the prosecution of prisoners of war for participation in hostilities and for their actions during those hostilities. Not only is the trial of 56 Armenian prisoners of war illegal in itself, constituting a flagrant violation of international law, but all of the above individuals were charged with serious crimes, including terrorism and illegal border-crossing. In addition, it should be noted that the trials of the Armenian prisoners of war are held behind closed doors and none of them is represented by a lawyer of their choice, which precludes the possibility of a fair trial.

Madam Chairperson,

We have repeatedly stressed that the Armenian prisoners of war are clearly deprived of their right to a fair trial. They are also subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as is evidenced in particular by a number of video and photo materials disseminated in the Azerbaijani social media. Given the Armenophobic policy of the powers in Baku, it is impossible to count on a fair trial without pressure from the Azerbaijani government.

It is worth recalling that the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment stated that in Azerbaijan, “torture and other forms of physical ill-treatment by the police and other law enforcement agencies, corruption in the whole law enforcement system and impunity remain systemic and endemic.”

In this connection, we reiterate our strong appeal to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to demonstrate consistency in the application of the principles of international law and OSCE commitments and to condemn the deprivation of the Armenian prisoners of war of their right to a fair trial. Apparently, the ODIHR has become inured to the dire situation with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, whatever the reason for the ODIHR’s silence, be it political motives or selective approach, it does not bode well for its reputation.

It may be useful to recall that such behaviour on the part of Azerbaijan also grossly violates Article 99 of the Third Geneva Convention, which reads in particular: “No moral or physical coercion may be exerted on a prisoner of war in order to induce him to admit himself guilty of the act of which he is accused. No prisoner of war may be convicted without having had an opportunity to present his defence and the assistance of a qualified advocate or counsel.”

Particular attention is due to the case of the aforementioned Mr. Vicken Euljekjian, as he has already been illegally convicted to 20 years’ imprisonment. Kidnapped by the armed forces of Azerbaijan the day after the signing of the trilateral statement, Azerbaijan tries to present him as a “mercenary” or a “terrorist” on the basis of evidence obtained through torture.

Dear colleagues,

Despite the numerous calls from the international community, Azerbaijan also continues to conceal the real number of Armenians detained, denying the capture of dozens of Armenian servicemen and civilians. Moreover, Azerbaijan denies the detention of those whose capture by Azerbaijani forces was confirmed both by video evidence and testimonies of repatriated Armenians. This raises legitimate concerns about a number of possible war crimes, in particular enforced disappearances of Armenian prisoners of war. In addition to gross violations of international humanitarian law and of the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020, the Azerbaijani regime also continues to defy the relevant decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on providing relevant information on Armenian military personnel and civilians held captive in Azerbaijan.

Madam Chairperson,

The OSCE participating States should continue to put pressure on Azerbaijan for the immediate and unconditional release of all Armenian prisoners of war and civilian captives. The international community should not tolerate the holding of fabricated mock trials and should consider imposing sanctions on Azerbaijan for a number of serious violations of international humanitarian law and for its blatant disregard of decisions of the ECHR and principles and commitments of the OSCE.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

Thank you.



1321st Plenary Meeting
PC Journal No. 1321, Agenda item 3(e)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The Twentieth of June was proclaimed World Refugee Day by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2000 and first observed as such in 2001.

Twenty years later, in 2021, there are over 82 million displaced people and over 26 million refugees across the world. These numbers have been constantly growing over the past decade and the latest figures clearly indicate that the world today is faced with a global refugee crisis.

We have to keep in mind that each number represents a human being – a woman, a man, a girl or a boy – whose life has been torn apart or broken for different reasons, and who in spite of everything are individuals with an inherent dignity. As long as we do not forget this, then we may be able to grasp the magnitude of the ongoing suffering and the humanitarian tragedy experienced by millions of currently displaced persons and refugees.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the already dire humanitarian situation more complex by creating additional challenges and exacerbating current vulnerabilities – both among refugees and host communities.

Throughout its history, Turkey has always welcomed with open arms, and without any discrimination, all those who have sought refuge – irrespective of their religion, language, race or origin. Today, my country hosts the largest refugee population in the world. Turkey is currently sheltering nearly 4 million forcibly displaced persons from different parts of the world, including 3.7 million Syrians under temporary protection.

These striking figures also reflect a great deal of sacrifice and hardship on the part of the Turkish nation, which makes available to refugees various key services including health and education, alongside providing for their many other social needs. Supporting women and children is a special focus of the Turkish authorities' efforts in that regard.

We attach particular importance to the education of the Syrian youth, never forgetting the fact that they are and will be the future of their country. Currently close to 800,000 Syrian children in Turkey are attending schools. The fact that the number of Syrian babies born in

Turkey over the past decade has reached almost 700,000 is a testimony to the dimension of the humanitarian crisis that my country is trying to cope with.

We should also remember on this occasion some other countries and their praiseworthy nations like Jordan, Lebanon or Germany, among others – who are hosting and caring for millions of refugees.

Madam Chairperson,

This year, we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. However, 70 years on, an environment of global co-operation and solidarity has yet to be established.

Regrettably, we see policies and practices that restrict the rights of asylum seekers and refugees and cut down resettlement quotas. We see attitudes that remain indifferent to refugees' tragedies. Some countries not only reject a fair sharing of burden and responsibility, but they also try to transfer their international responsibilities to third countries. Whatever the reasons behind national policies, responses to irregular migration should always be in line with international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law. Refugees are humans struggling to hold onto life. In our opinion, there is no room for ifs and buts when it comes to any human being's desire to have a decent life like all of us.

Providing humanitarian aid is certainly vital. Yet, on its own this is not a solution to the ongoing global humanitarian refugee crisis. The root causes that compel refugees and asylum seekers to flee their homeland and seek refuge in other countries can only be addressed by the international community which acts in solidarity and in the spirit of the universal values that we all believe in and that we all fight for to uphold.

In closing, I would like to recall the OSCE Istanbul Document 1999.

In the Istanbul Document, we the participating States reaffirmed “our commitment to respect the right to seek asylum and to ensure the international protection of refugees as set out in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons in dignity and safety”.

As I said at the beginning, there is a story behind each refugee. We must all collectively ensure that their human rights and dignity are upheld. World Refugee Day is an important opportunity to raise awareness in this regard.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I kindly ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1321st Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1321, Agenda item 3(f)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF LITHUANIA**

Madam Chairperson,

I should like to exercise my right of reply to the statements just delivered by the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation and the distinguished representative of Belarus.

Allow me to start by pointing out that, only yesterday, our Prime Minister, Ingrida Šimonytė, led a ceremony entitled “The Road of Memory – the Road of Sadness”, which was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Holocaust in Lithuania. The Holocaust was not only a tragedy for the Jewish people: it was a colossal disaster that impoverished humanity as a whole.

The Government of Lithuania is committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards anti-Semitism. The legal basis has been created to combat any form of discrimination based on ethnic or religious grounds. Lithuania was among the first countries to endorse the working definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). We take all the necessary measures to systematically combat racism, intolerance, xenophobia and other manifestations of hatred. We have developed educational programmes and projects aimed at promoting tolerance.

We co-operate in this field with relevant international bodies and mechanisms established under the auspices of the United Nations, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the IHRA and others. Lithuania stands ready to share its best practices and lessons learned in countering the threat of extremist ideologies. On this note, we would appreciate it if our Russian partners could share their own experience in tackling racism and xenophobia in their country.

Last week at the Permanent Council we spoke on how it is crucial to adhere to an objective historical narrative. History must be understood and accepted for what it is. After the Second World War, resistance to the Soviet occupation of Lithuania lasted for 10 years. Lithuanian partisans and freedom fighters, often referred to as the Forest Brothers, fought for Lithuania’s independence, democracy and Western values. And it is only natural that we should seek to preserve their memory. This obviously does not chime with the narrative that Russia itself wants to pursue.

In particular, Russia is consistently advancing its own (distorted) narrative of the events of 13 January 1991, portraying the former Soviet officers Yuri Mell and Gennady Ivanov as “innocent” victims. Both men were found guilty and sentenced for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Vilnius Regional Court for their involvement in acts of aggression against the civilian population committed by Soviet troops in 1991.

Russia routinely attempts to discredit Lithuania’s judicial system, blaming it for politically motivated persecutions, and often questions the very fact of Lithuania’s statehood and the Soviet occupation. These provocations by Russia are reflected in the joint assessment of threats to the national security of Lithuania that is prepared annually by the State Security Department and the Second Investigation Department under the Ministry of National Defence and is publicly available.

The rights of national minorities in Lithuania are guaranteed by the Constitution and laws that fully conform with our international commitments. All members of our national minorities have the right to promote their language, culture and customs. They are also encouraged to participate in public life. Approximately 300 non-governmental organizations representing national minorities are engaged in cultural activities in Lithuania. The party representing Lithuanian Poles and Russians was a member of the ruling coalition up to the most recent parliamentary elections, held in October 2020.

We already informed the Permanent Council about media freedom in Lithuania on 29 April (see PC.JOUR/1311, annex 1) and 13 May (see PC.JOUR/1313, annex 2). Lithuania promotes media freedom and freedom of expression, and I wish to reassure you that we strictly adhere to international commitments in this area.

Lithuania does not censor the content of television programmes, but it can decide to temporarily ban some if they are spreading hate speech and incitement to hatred and violence. The Government encourages a pluralistic media environment. National minorities in Lithuania can access a wide range of media available in their language.

In response to the statement by the distinguished representative of Belarus, I should like to observe that the human rights situation differs from one participating State to another. The perceived imbalance in debates at the Permanent Council merely reflects reality – that is, the gross and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms taking place in some participating States. Lithuania is a democratic State governed by the rule of law and fully prepared for dialogue. But can that be said of certain other countries represented here?

In conclusion, it is disappointing that instead of rallying behind the OSCE’s efforts to respond to real threats to common security, some partners prefer to target individual States in a selective and politicized manner.

Political dialogue and the building of trust and co-operation within and among States cannot be achieved through the distortion of historical facts and the sowing of doubt and division. Such actions merely incite hatred and create tensions that may well endanger peace, security and stability.

Madam Chairperson, I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you.



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Permanent Council**

PC.JOUR/1321

24 June 2021

Annex 4

Original: ENGLISH

1321st Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1321, Agenda item 3(g)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF DENMARK**

Denmark fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, but I should like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Madam Chairperson,

Twenty-five years after the first Copenhagen Pride, Denmark is honoured to host WorldPride and EuroGames in Copenhagen from 12 to 22 August this year in a joint celebration of equality and diversity. Our hope is that thousands of people from near and far will come together to celebrate the LGBTI community and stand up for equality worldwide.

For more than five decades, Pride Month has been celebrated around the world as a testament to the extraordinary progress achieved in the fight against prejudice and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Pride Month is not only a collective celebration of equality, liberty and justice for all: it is also an individual celebration of self-worth, dignity and inclusion – no matter who you are, or whom you love.

At the same time, Pride Month is a vital reminder of the work that remains to be done to achieve full equality for LGBTI persons. Even though the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international human rights law protect the enjoyment of human rights by all persons, the situation of LGBTI persons is of great concern today. Too many LGBTI people are still faced with hate, violence, discrimination and degrading treatment, simply for being who they are. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated pre-existing inequalities, and LGBTI persons are among the most vulnerable and marginalized individuals in many societies.

For decades, Denmark has been committed to actively promoting equal rights, equal treatment and equal opportunities for LGBTI persons – both nationally and globally. We decriminalized homosexuality in 1933. We introduced anti-discrimination legislation in 1987, and two years later legalized same-sex partnerships. More recently, in 2014, we became the first country in the world to allow a legal change of gender without requiring prior medical approval, and in 2017 we were the first to remove “being transgender” from the official list of mental illnesses.

By these actions we have been reaffirming that everyone must be able to live in safety and enjoy the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Violations and abuses of the human rights of LGBTI persons must be resolutely combated and firmly condemned.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I kindly request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.



1321st Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 1321, Agenda item 3(g)

**STATEMENT BY
THE DELEGATION OF HUNGARY**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Since several colleagues under this agenda item have mentioned my country, I would like to make the following remarks. We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, however let me add some comments in our national capacity.

Hungary's Fundamental Law lays down the responsibility of the State to protect children by means of specific measures and every child has the right to the protection and care necessary for his or her proper physical, mental and moral development. Since 2010, the Government has adopted a number of provisions in the interest of the protection of children.

Last week, the Parliament of Hungary has adopted the law aimed at fighting against paedophilia in order to strengthen the protection of children.

In "The objectives and principles of the Act" of XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and guardianship administration, the following section (3/A) has been added: "In the child protection system, the State shall protect the right of children to a self-identity corresponding to their sex at birth."

In the aforementioned law, the following section (6/A) has been added: "For ensuring the fulfilment of the objectives set out in this Act and the implementation of the rights of the child, it is forbidden to make accessible to persons who have not attained the age of eighteen years content that is pornographic or that depicts sexuality in a gratuitous manner or that propagates or portrays divergence from self-identity corresponding to sex at birth, sex change or homosexuality."

Adjacent changes have been made to legislation on, among others, electronic commerce and information, advertising, media services and mass communication.

The bill is in fact based on Paragraph 3 of Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which reinforces "the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions".

The bill passed by the Hungarian Parliament states accordingly that the education of the child in relation to sexual orientation should be the sole right and responsibility of the parents until the age of 18, while clear rules and limits should be set for the dissemination to minors of any content portraying homosexuality or sex change. The aim of the new legislation is to protect children from access to information on any platform, including in school education programmes, or in films and advertisements aimed at anyone under 18 that would be contrary to the values and ideas held by their parents.

We emphasize, that the above-mentioned law is non-discriminatory and does not affect the fundamental rights of Hungarian citizens, including LGBTIQ people, and the self-determination of adults. The goal of this legislation is to protect children, it does in no way restrict or discriminate people above the age of 18 years old, as it does not address issues related to sexual orientation of adults.

I thank you for your kind attention and I respectfully request that our statement is added to the journal of the day.