



PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON LGBTI RIGHTS IN NORWAY

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council, Vienna, 12
May 2016

Mr Chairman,

The statement just made by my Canadian colleague was also on my behalf. Allow me in addition to add a point specifically on LGBTI rights in my own country.

Mr Chairman,

In a statement in October 2013 I informed the Council about discussions among the 12 bishops of the Church of Norway about allowing same-sex weddings in a Church ceremony. At the episcopal conference earlier the same month 8 out of the 12 bishops argued that there is a doctrinal foundation for same-sex marriage in the Bible.

As the bishops in question noted themselves: “When two people wish to spend the rest of their lives together on the basis of mutual love, there is fundamentally no difference between homosexual and heterosexual love, even though there is a difference between homosexuality and heterosexuality (...).” They went on to state that “the Church’s historical condemnation and rejection of homosexual relationships has caused suffering and heavy burdens for those affected. This kind of condemnation has proven to be in conflict with Jesus’ emphasis on the precedence of the commandment of love.”

Mr Chairman,

A long history of conflict within the Church itself between supporters and opponents of marriage for same-sex couples, was brought to a conclusion last

month, when the Synod of the Church of Norway decided to create a liturgy for church weddings of same-sex couples.

Mr Chairman,

The Church of Norway holds a prominent position in the Norwegian society. 74 per cent of Norway's citizens are members. The decision made by the synod last month is therefore an important step towards full recognition of the rights of LGBTI persons in my country.

Thank you.