Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality

Nordic Council of Ministers

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European IDAHOT+ Forum - Pushing for Progress

Upholding the Dignity, Equality, and Human Rights of LGBTI Persons

Joint Ministerial Declaration on the occasion of the International Day Against Lesbophobia, Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia, and Intersexphobia

19 May 2026, Copenhagen, Denmark

On the occasion of the 2026 European IDAHOT+ Forum in Copenhagen, we reaffirm our shared commitment to building and supporting societies in which every person - no matter who they are or who they love - is safe and free.

We want a world grounded in respect, dignity, non-discrimination, and equality, where everyone - regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics - can enjoy their human rights and benefit from equal opportunities in society.

Equality and non-discrimination are foundational to democratic societies and to the integrity of a rules-based international order. These rights are enshrined clearly in the United Nations Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights, among other international instruments. Equality and non-discrimination are also core values of the Council of Europe.

We stand with LGBTI persons and communities in Europe and across the world. We do so because we believe that standing up for the well-being and equal opportunities for LGBTI persons is standing up for human rights. Despite the progress we have made, challenges persist. LGBTI persons continue to be victims of hate-motivated violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination, and hate speech - both online and offline. Transgender and intersex persons remain disproportionately impacted.

We are deeply concerned about the effect of misinformation and disinformation which can limit the freedom and violate the human rights of LGBTI persons by fueling polarisation and myths as well as by undermining democratic values and social cohesion. We commit to address misinformation and disinformation to fight its harmful effects on democracies and human rights.

To achieve further progress, we must act to address discrimination, hate, and violence and promote equal opportunities in all spheres of society. We welcome the upcoming Council of Europe Strategy for Equal Rights for LGBTI People (2027-2032) which will serve as one of the important tools for this work.

We commit to push for progress, and we invite all governments, organisations, and allies to stand with us - and to act with us.

1. Violence and hate speech

We want societies where everyone is free and safe and no one is subject to violence or hate because of who they are or who they love. Despite this, LGBTI persons remain targets of hate crimes and hate speech due to intolerance and a lack of legal protection. Neither culture, tradition, nor religion can be invoked to justify any form of discrimination, act of violence, or other violations of human rights.

- We commit to protecting the safety, well-being, and freedom of all LGBTI persons by preventing and combatting violence, hate crimes, and hate speech - both online and offline.

2. Education and the labour market

We want an education system and a labour market where everyone has the opportunity to learn, thrive, and contribute. Despite this, harassment, bullying, and discrimination in schools and at work limit the ability of LGBTI persons to participate and contribute to society.

- We commit to promoting safe and inclusive learning environments, as well as labour markets free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and violence, including through policies, guidance, and cooperation with relevant partners enabling all persons to contribute fully to society.

3. Health

We want to safeguard the physical and mental health of LGBTI persons, as health is fundamental for a person's well-being and ability to participate in society. Despite this, many LGBTI persons continue to experience both direct and indirect discrimination in health systems, which can have far-reaching consequences for both their health and quality of life.

- We commit to ensuring equal access for all LGBTI persons to quality physical and mental health care and services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, while respecting human dignity, self-determination, personal integrity, and the principles of informed consent in line with ethical standards and human rights principles.

4. Families

We want societies where every person has the opportunity and possibility to build a family and care for it. Despite this, LGBTI families still face barriers in terms of legal recognition of their marriage or civil partnership, as well as obstacles to creating a family, and to living their family life free from discrimination.

- We commit to advancing inclusive family policies that support and acknowledge families in all their diversity.

5. Civic space

We want societies with safe public spaces and freedom to engage in debates and peaceful assemblies. Where civil society organisations can operate freely and openly and fulfil their crucial role in promoting, protecting, and advancing LGBTI persons' enjoyment of their human rights. Despite this, civic space is under pressure and civil society actors are facing restrictions affecting their ability to contribute effectively to democratic processes.

- We commit to safeguarding and strengthening civic space, including through removing legal, administrative, or financial barriers, and to protecting, supporting, cooperating with, and listening to civil society actors.

On the occasion of the 2026 European IDAHOT+ Forum in Copenhagen we stand united in turning these shared principles into meaningful action. We commit to working collaboratively at national, European, and international level to uphold and advance the rights and opportunities of LGBTI persons. We must push forward – for progress, for democracy, the rule of law, and for the equal rights and opportunities for all LGBTI persons.

List of supporting countries: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Åland.