

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**53rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**

Geneva, 21 June 2023

Mr. President,

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement.

This year we mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which conveys an important message that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." However, despite efforts in many countries to ensure universal human rights for LGBTI persons, we observe with concern diverse prejudices, stigma, discrimination, hate speech and even violence, criminalization and deprivation of liberty.

Mr Independent Expert,

We thank you for your work as Independent Expert on SOGI and we also thank you for your report examining the compatibility of freedom of religion and belief and freedom from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under international human rights law. Slovenia is a firm supporter of FORB and condemns any invocation of FORB to justify violations against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

As your report focuses on the spaces where freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief and protection from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity intersect, allow me to announce that Slovenia achieved an important mile-stone – this February, legislative amendment establishing **full marriage equality** came into effect.

Thank you.