



Statement by  
**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the  
**38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council -  
Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on protection against  
violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**

Geneva, 18 June 2018

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Mr. President,

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement. We thank the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity for his report and presentation today.

This year marks the 70th 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." Nevertheless, despite efforts in many countries to improve the legislative framework, the LGBTI persons continue to face prejudice, stigma, discrimination, hate speech and some parts of the world even violence, criminalization and deprivation of liberty. It consequently results in social and economic exclusion, poverty and personal distress. Sadly, in many parts of the world sexual orientation and gender identity continue to be used to justify human rights violations and the perpetrators are often not held accountable for their acts.

Awareness-raising and human rights education already in the domestic environment and in educational settings, are essential to provide the basis for understanding, tolerance and non-discrimination. Human rights defenders have an important role in advocating for respect for, and non-discrimination of the rights of LGBTI persons. It is important to address the root causes of homophobic and transphobic behavior in societies and combating any form of hate speech which can trigger violence and hatred.

In your report you touched upon the issue of hate speech which is extremely important as it is a wide spread phenomenon, and not only related to sexual orientation and gender identity. We would be interested to learn how can we best approach the issue of hate speech which is often hard to tackle given often deeply rooted social stigmatization or in some countries cultural norms and beliefs about the gender roles?

In conclusion, the fight against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is not merely an individual fight, but a collective effort to eliminate widespread discrimination and preserve human dignity. Slovenia remains a strong supporter of your mandate and your work.

Thank you.