



# IDAHO FORUM

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA,  
TRANSPHOBIA & BIPHOBIA 2016

*May 10, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Declaration of Intent*

Human rights are universal and neither culture, tradition nor religion can be invoked to justify any form of discrimination or violation of these rights.

*We confirm* our commitments to promote action in order to combat discrimination and ensure LGBTI persons' full enjoyment of their human rights and equal participation in society. On the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive IDAHO Forum we confirm previous commitments to further progress equal rights and opportunities for all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

*We acknowledge* that social inclusion of LGBTI persons and diversity is an important asset to societies and a prerequisite for true equality and sustainable development and we welcome that a majority of European citizens support social acceptance of LGBTI persons, that attitudes towards same sex marriages in Europe have generally become more tolerant, and that future generations are more likely to accept LGBTI persons<sup>1</sup>. However, we are concerned that some LGBTI persons<sup>2</sup> continuously need to hide or disguise their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

*We welcome* international initiatives to promote equal enjoyment of human rights and opportunities for LGBTI persons, including the European Commission's list of actions and the Council of Europe Ministers' recommendations 2010/05, and reaffirm that this declaration does not substitute any of these activities and recommendations.

*We acknowledge* that a diverse work force promotes innovation and economic growth<sup>3</sup>, as well as the important role of changing attitudes in order to create inclusive societies for all. We welcome that a majority of European citizens support workplace inclusion of LGBTI persons and are in favor of anti-discriminatory mechanisms<sup>4</sup>, but we are concerned that one in five European LGBT employees have felt discriminated at work or when applying for jobs.<sup>5</sup>

*We recognize* that further action is needed in all spheres of society and at all relevant levels to advance LGBTI equality, including specific action to promote social acceptance and equal participation at the labour market regardless sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

*In view of the above and building upon the previous Declaration of Intent, we the signatories intend to:*

1. Ensure appropriate legislation and other measures to combat discrimination in society and at the workplace, including access to independent complaints mechanisms, in order to promote LGBTI persons access to employment and promotion as well as equal pay.
2. Promote and conduct awareness-raising activities about LGBTI persons legal rights and equal opportunities on the labour market and in society in order to empower LGBTI people to take action against any form of discrimination and to report discrimination and harassment incidents as well as to ensure visibility of the benefits of promoting diversity at the work place.
3. Strive for a safe working environment and prevent harassment based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity at the work place, and ensure effective prompt and impartial investigations into alleged cases of harassment.
4. Develop further reviews and statistics on the living situation of LGBTI people and on the advancement of LGBTI equality and social acceptance.
5. Take further action to combat stereotypes that continue to stigmatize LGBTI persons and to promote a more inclusive and tolerant society, including by combatting homophobia, transphobia and biphobia from an early age in for instance schools and educational systems.
6. Invite companies to include LGBTI issues in their diversity strategies and in Corporate Social Responsibility activities in order to promote a more diverse staff and inclusive work culture, and ensure visibility of the benefits of promoting diversity at the work place.
7. Re-iterate that equal rights for LGBTI persons is a fundamental value in democratic societies and that neither culture, tradition nor religion can be invoked to justify any form of discrimination or violation of these rights. Hence, information about human rights should be part of societal information and general education on human rights.
8. Build bridges and create partnerships between all stakeholders at national and international level in the advancement of LGBTI equality, including by integrating the human rights and development concerns of LGBTI persons in international development assistance ,inviting Governments, international and national companies, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, International and national human rights organizations, educational institutions, social partners, academia and research institutions, public authorities and religious leaders to work together to eliminate homophobia, transphobia and biphobia nationally and across borders and to exchange best practices at national, regional and international levels on the promotion of LGBTI persons equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Source: European Commission (2015): Discrimination in the EU, Special Eurobarometer 437

<sup>2</sup> Source: FRA – European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2013): EU LGBT Survey

<sup>3</sup> Source: Open for Business (2015): The Economic and Business case for Global LGB&T Inclusion

<sup>4</sup> Source: European Commission (2015): Discrimination in the EU, Special Eurobarometer 437

<sup>5</sup> Source: FRA – European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2013): EU LGBT Survey