



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013
Statement under Working Session 3 – Tolerance and non-discrimination
by COC Netherlands, as delivered by Nori Spauwen on 24-09-2013

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

This statement is made on behalf of COC Netherlands. I would like to draw your attention to the position of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women in the OSCE region.

LBT women face multiple forms of discrimination: they are discriminated against because they are women, but also because they are lesbian, bisexual or transgender (LBT), on top of any other grounds such as religion or ethnicity. Intersecting forms of discrimination dramatically marginalize LBT women throughout the whole region.

The economic, social and cultural position of LBT is a point of grave concern. Women who are not married to men face social exclusion in many member states. It is harder for them to find work and they face serious barriers in participating actively in political and public life. Harassment in public life limits their chances of participating fully in society.

Women who do not conform to gender norms frequently face grave forms of violence, including sexual violence and sexual harassment. Practices such as 'punitive or curative rape', when lesbian or bisexual women are raped with the pretext to 'turn them heterosexual', harm victims as well as the LBT-community as a whole, by making them feel unsafe and extremely vulnerable.

Girls and young women who are lesbian, bisexual or transgender do not get the support and protection that they need. In the Russian Federation, the so-called anti-propaganda legislation bans teachers, health workers, support groups and psychologists to give any kind of positive information on sexual orientation or gender identity to young LBT.

In Central Asia, LBT women are often forced into marriage, where they face domestic violence and rape. There is no protection from punitive or curative rape, discrimination in the work place or in schools. When LBT women seek justice after acts of violence or abuse against them, they are at risk of being abused or raped by law enforcement personnel.

We recommend OSCE member states:

- 1) To prevent, investigate, and punish the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence against LBT women (in compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women);
- 2) To protect LBT-girls against discrimination and violence; and to ensure education on sexual orientation and gender identity (in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child), including to repeal the anti-propaganda legislation in the Russian Federation.

We recommend the OSCE:

- 1) To ensure that discrimination and violence against LBT women are properly and explicitly addressed in the OSCE trainings for law enforcement and prosecutors.

Thank you for your attention.