

# Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, 17 May 2018

On the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, the European Union reaffirms its commitment to combat all forms of discrimination and hate crime, on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, and to continue to actively promote and protect the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.

Inside and outside the European Union, LGBTI **persons** are too often targets of violence and hate crime. They are still the frequent subject of discrimination and maltreatment on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. In many countries having a partner of the same sex remains a crime. People are arrested, imprisoned, and in some cases executed, just because of the relationship they are in. Even in countries with legal protection of sexual orientation, **stigmatisation due to** homophobia, transphobia and biphobia remains high, leading to social exclusion with economic and health-related costs on societies.

2018 is an important year for human rights, as we mark the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its first article reads “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. LGBTI **persons** are no exception, and the EU will therefore continue to fight for “equal rights for all” regardless of sexual orientation.

Through a combination of political and human rights dialogues, awareness-raising activities, financial assistance and specific policy tools such as the “European Commission’s List of actions to advance LGBTI equality” and the EU “Guidelines to promote and protect the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons” the European Union will continue to address discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and show the European Union’s commitment to advance LGBTI equality in the European Union and beyond.

The European Union pays tribute today to all those working to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTI persons. Allow us to reiterate that “Human rights Defenders, you are not alone and the European Union will always be with you”.

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