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The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) hereby addresses you regarding Kyiv Pride Week, which will be organized June 9 to 18 2017. An important part of the program will be the KyivPride March on 18 June, a manifestation in support of fundamental human rights and freedom from violence for Lesbian, Gay, Bi- Trans- and Intersex persons (LGBTI) in Ukraine.

NHC encourages that the Ministry of Interior extends full support for the events and take all necessary measures to ensure that they can proceed in a safe manner.

The Organizing Committee's work to organize Kyiv Pride Week has for many years been challenging and even dangerous at times, due to the high level of public resistance against the LGBTI population and determination from hate groups to prevent LGBTI events.

There have been some reassuring examples of Ukrainian Authorities and Law Enforcement responding to such resistance in an adequate manner, for example in 2016 when The fifth International LGBT Forum KyivPride was organized with support from representatives of the political establishment and with protection from the police. This was an important proof that Ukrainian authorities have got both the ability and will to do so.

Unfortunately we have seen several exceptions as well, where LGBTI events have been canceled because the police have stated that they cannot safeguard the participants; politicians have asked that the organizers cancel events; people have been injured without the incidents being properly investigated and homophobic and transphobic slurs from public officials and hate groups have not been addressed.

Kyiv Pride Week provides an opportunity for Ukrainian Authorities to show their commitment to the human rights obligations and inherent values of the European Convention of Human Rights. This includes the obligation to safeguard the rights of LGBTI persons in conjunction with article 10, 11 and 14 of the Convention; namely freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and the right to be exempt from discrimination.

We commend all efforts to secure the forthcoming Kyiv Pride Week and the KyivPride March.

We ask that you:

1. Declare full support for the event and raise the issue publicly
2. Ensure that all events will be carried out in a peaceful and safe manner
3. Ensure that there will be no impunity for homophobic and transphobic acts

Respectfully,

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