



November 2, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Madam Secretary:

Over the past two years, we have witnessed a positive shift in how U.S. government representatives have addressed the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals in a variety of multilateral fora. These include the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the human dimension activities of which are of great interest to our organizations. As you prepare to lead the U.S. delegation to the OSCE Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, we write to seek your specific support for two important policy goals.

First, we urge that the U.S. delegation insist strongly that civil society and its component non-governmental organizations (NGOs) remain central to OSCE and to the Helsinki process. We are aware that the Government of Kazakhstan has now expressed support for a civil society parallel conference organized by NGOs, and hope there will be no efforts to restrict the ability of legitimate civil society representatives to intersect with official Summit attendees. Similarly, in view of efforts in Warsaw by the Government of Turkmenistan to block independent NGO participation in OSCE review conference activities, we urge that the U.S. insist on expedited decision-making on NGO applications, in order that they not be deprived of their legitimate role within the OSCE.

Second, we ask that you include in your formal interventions and in your bilateral meetings clear reference to the need for OSCE participating states to address violations of the human dignity and fundamental freedoms that LGBT citizens of the OSCE community should enjoy. We are encouraged that, after many years of silence, and despite continued opposition from a number of states, these issues increasingly have been addressed within the OSCE framework, including by OSCE institutions like the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and its Tolerance and Nondiscrimination Program. We urge the U.S. to voice support for these efforts and to ensure that the rights of LGBT persons be included specifically on the agenda of the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on racism and discrimination, which the U.S. has requested be conducted in 2011.

We are grateful for your continued leadership on behalf of LGBT fairness goals within U.S. foreign policy, as well as for your voice and support for human rights more broadly.

Sincerely,



Mark Bromley  
Council Chair



The Council for Global Equality



Center for American Progress



Heartland Alliance



Human Rights Campaign



Human Rights First



Human Rights Watch



International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission



Immigration Equality



National Center for Lesbian Rights



Metropolitan Community Churches



National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce



National Center for Transgender Equality



Open Society Foundations



National Gay and Lesbian Task Force



Out and Equal Workplace Advocates