



Dear colleagues,

Today, the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, is the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT). It marks the day, only 26 years ago, on which the World Health Organisation (WHO) removed homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases.

Every 17 May, in over 130 countries worldwide, events are organized to highlight the discrimination and violence experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people each and every day.

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the equal treatment of all people, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, and we are committed to a strong role for the EU herein, both within and beyond the European borders. As rotating Presidency, we work actively towards this goal.

Today, we also express our support in a more symbolic way.

On the occasion of IDAHOT, we proudly fly the Rainbow Flag at our Permanent Representation and Embassy in Brussels, and at other government buildings in the Netherlands and abroad. Upon entering the Justus Lipsius building today, you may have noticed the interactive rainbow colours displayed on the screen. This visual artwork was designed exclusively by Alfons Hooikaas to mark IDAHOT during our Presidency of the Council.

And today we also share with you this compact, reusable bag with subtle rainbow colours.

We hope you will join us in expressing our collective commitment to non-discrimination and equality for all by using this bag inside and outside the Council premises, today and in the days to come!