Slovenia about to make a crucial step towards equality for LGBTIQ+ people

Press Release, Inclusion and Equality, Slovenia

> Today at a conference in Ljubljana, organised by Europe's leading LGBTI organisation, ILGA-Europe, Slovenia's State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Dan Juvan, committed to the next steps in preparing the National Strategy for the Equality of LGBTIQ+ Persons.

Today, October 27, marks a significant step forward in the journey toward equality and inclusion for the LGBTIQ+ community in Slovenia.

At a press conference during the ILGA-Europe Annual Conference in Ljubljana, which brings together hundreds of LGBTI activists from 54 countries in Europe and Central Asia, Slovenia's State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Dan Juvan (MDDSZEM), further committed to the preparation and publication of the country's first national strategy for LGBTIQ+ persons.

"Homophobic and transphobic violence exists and remains; individuals do not feel safe. That is why I am here, representing the ministry and the Levica party, to commit ourselves to addressing this issue. In the end, it is crucial that we discuss specific policies and measures to identify problems and find solutions," **State Secretary Juvan said.**

This further commitment comes after the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities was directed by the Parliamentary Commission for Petitions, Human Rights, and Equal Opportunities last July to prepare and adopt the National Strategy for the Equality of LGBTIQ+ Persons in Slovenia in 2024.

Slovenia has made progress in safeguarding LGBTI rights, but challenges persist, particularly in areas concerning legal protection, education, healthcare, and overall social security. The urgent need for a comprehensive National Strategy for the Equality of LGBTIQ+ Persons in Slovenia is underscored by the rise in anti-LGBTIQ+ rhetoric and physical violence against LGBTIQ+ people in the country.

Over the next 14 months, the Slovenian government has committed to engaging in extensive consultations with civil society representatives and relevant institutions across various sectors. These consultations will form the foundation of our National LGBTIQ+ strategy and action plan, ensuring that it is effective and reflective of the diverse needs of the community.

Also in attendance at the press conference was **Head of the Slovenian Equality Body, Miha Lobnik.**

"In Slovenia, we have committed to implementing systematic anti-discrimination policies," Lobnik said. "However, we lack a central focal point that systematically addresses minority issues, aligning with both national and EU commissions' expectations.

"The government must take responsibility for systematically and effectively addressing minority concerns. Today's discussion was a chance to focus on this area. I have called on governments twice before, and now this

government faces the challenge of actually following through. A clear plan and concrete steps are crucial.

According to Katja Štefanec of Ljubljana Pride Association: “We recognise the crucial roles of both our Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour in this process and are actively seeking cross-sectoral cooperation with various stakeholders, as we aim to enhance the impact of the strategy across diverse areas of influence and change-making efforts.

“We look ahead to 2024 with big expectations and will work closely with those responsible for the creation of a create a strategy that will enhance the protection of LGBTIQ people’s human rights in Slovenia and create a more inclusive, accepting society for all.”

ILGA-Europe’s Advocacy Director, Katrin Hugendubel added: “Over the past few years, we have seen a stark rise in the levels and severity of anti-LGBTI hate and violence across Europe. In this context and at this moment in time, we very much welcome the political commitment of the Slovenian government to develop a national action plan to tackle LGBTIQ+ discrimination by the end of 2024. We echo the call of national LGBTIQ+ organisations that they are involved in the development of the plan over the next 12 months. Their close involvement is essential, as they know the realities of the needs of the community this plan will address.”