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20 September 2019 (as amended on 20 June 2020)

## Statement on the use of the abbreviation "LGBTI."

This statement outlines the views of intersex activists regarding the use of the abbreviation "LGBTI" in communities with widespread prejudice and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity at the present stage of the struggle for the recognition, implementation, and protection of human rights of intersex people.

In societies with widespread prejudice and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, perceiving intersex people as part of the LGBT community puts them at additional risk and complicates the promotion and protection of intersex people's rights. In particular, the association of intersex people's sex characteristics with their sexual orientation and gender identity might:

- convince parents of intersex children with prejudices against certain sexual orientations and gender identities to provide consent for the "normalizing" surgery on intersex children;<sup>1</sup>
- lead to hate crimes against intersex people based on association with LGBT+ community;
- hamper the work of intersex activists in connection with the existence and practice of applying legislation regarding people with a specific sexual orientation and gender identity (for example, "gay propaganda" laws);
- obstruct dissemination of correct information among intersex people and their parents with prejudices against certain sexual orientations and gender identities;
- make it challenging to inform an untrained audience about the nature of intersex variations and the lack of a direct connection between intersex variations and sexual orientation or gender identity;
- impede the promotion and advocacy of human rights for intersex people framing and hiding intersex people's specific problems and needs by the agenda of sexuality and gender;
- lead to the provision of false information about intersex people including at the official level;<sup>2</sup>
- complicate the work and access to the resources of young intersex initiatives through the appropriation of intersex agenda by developed LGBT organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Dayner, J.E., Lee, P.A., Houk, C.P. Medical Treatment of Intersex: Parental Perspectives. The Journal of Urology, 2004. No. 172(4). P. 1762.

<sup>2</sup> E.g.: Association of Russian Speaking Intersex, Statement on the use of the abbreviation "LGBTI" in relation to events in the Chechen Republic, 22 December 2018, available at: <https://bit.ly/392g90K>



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Therefore, we urge intersex friendly bodies, organizations, initiatives, and activists **to abstain from using the abbreviation "LGBTI" in countries and with regard to countries with widespread prejudice and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.** To name a group that includes people besides the LGBT community in the narrow sense of the word, use options that do not include the letter "I," for example, "LGBT +," "LGBTQ +," "LGBTQA+."

We are aware that adding "I" to the abbreviation "LGBT" increases the visibility of intersex people. We recognize the common causes of some of the problems of intersex and LGBT people. However, the position declared in the statement is tactical and does not affect the acceptability of the abbreviation "LGBTI" as such in other contexts and at other times.

We are aware that public attitudes and awareness about sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics improve over time. However, one of the most critical considerations in this position is the fact that operations motivated by the association of intersex traits of a child and sexual orientation and gender identity might bring lifelong and irreversible harm to intersex people. Unlike the other factors listed, the harm from the "normalizing" surgery on the bodies of intersex people will not decrease with the progress of public views regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. We consider it essential to reduce or eliminate any possible factors contributing to irreversible harm.

The statement is open for signature by e-mail notification to [arsintersex@gmail.com](mailto:arsintersex@gmail.com)

The statement signed by:

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