

**Letter to the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG),  
the Japanese Olympic Committee, and the Japanese Paralympic Committee from  
the TOCOG Human Rights, Labour, and Participation Committee members**

February 26, 2021

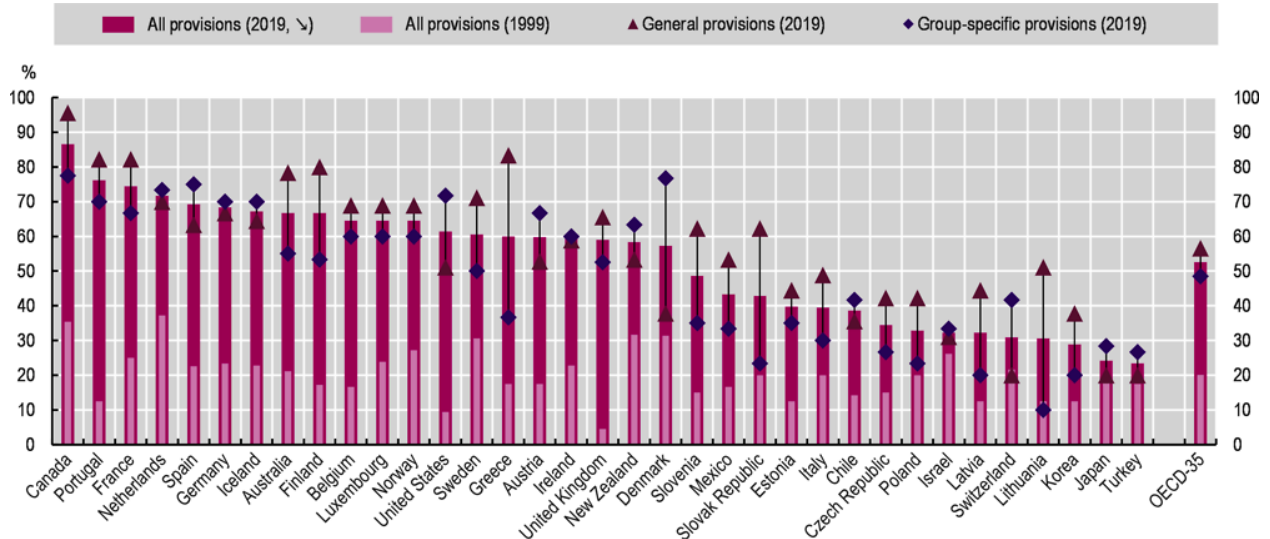
President Seiko Hashimoto  
Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (TOCOG)

**Re: Supporting a national “LGBT Equality Law” to Protect against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity**

Dear President Seiko Hashimoto,

We are writing to you as Organizing Committee President, together with the Japanese Olympic Committee, and the Japanese Paralympic Committee to urge you to support LGBT Equality legislation that would protect all people in Japan from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. With the opening of the Pride House in October and International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Bach’s visit in November, the eyes of the world are on Japan. The Tokyo Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games represent a once-in-a generation opportunity for Japan to bring our laws into compliance with international standards and the expectations of IOC and thousands of visiting athletes and officials.

As you are aware, the Olympic Charter expressly bans “discrimination of any kind” including on the grounds of sexual orientation as a “Fundamental Principle of Olympism.” An [embarrassing new OECD study](#) puts our country, Japan, next to last (see graphic below) in a ranking of laws on LGBT Inclusiveness for developed countries, saying: “LGBTI-inclusive laws are particularly critical for creating a culture of equal treatment of LGBTI individuals. One cannot expect to improve the situation of sexual and gender minorities if, to begin with, the law does not protect them against abuses or excludes them from social institutions.”



The OECD study compares Japan (#34) unfavorably with other recent or future Olympic hosts, including Canada (#1), France (#3), Australia (#8), and the US (#13). The current lack of legal protections in Japan for LGBT people does not meet the requirements of the [Olympic Charter](#), Olympic Agenda 2020, or international human rights standards.

Nearly two and a half years ago, in October 2018, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government adopted [an ordinance that protects LGBT people from discrimination in line with the Olympic Charter](#). This law has been hailed around the world as a first step, and clearly it is expected Japan will follow with [national LGBT Equality Law](#) that protects LGBT people.

While many Tokyo Olympics competitions, including marathon and race walk, golf, fencing, and surfing, will take place outside of Tokyo in Hokkaido, Saitama, Chiba, Shizuoka, Kanagawa, Miyagi, Fukushima, and Ibaraki prefectures, LGBT Japanese fans, athletes, and foreign visitors will expect to be protected by law and policy.

In his October 2020 message for the opening of Pride House, Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, said in a message that he hoped the activities at the facility "will be successful and [become a legacy of the Tokyo Games](#)."

As the sustainability and human rights experts advising TOCOG, we urge the government to follow the footsteps of other recent Olympic host countries and enact an LGBT Equality Law that ban SOGI (sexual orientation or gender identity) discrimination to uphold the Olympic Charter and bring domestic law in line with international human rights standards.

We support and encourage the passage of such a historic law at the National Diet session started in January 2021, in advance of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Thank you in advance for your reply and support.

Sincerely,

**TOCOG Human Rights, Labour, and Participation Committee members (Japanese Alphabetical order)**

Yuko Sakita, Journalist/Environmental counselor

Masao Seki, Professor, School of Business Administration, Meiji University

Gon Matsunaka, Chair, Stop SOGI harassment Campaign

Hironobu Chin, Assistant Director, Planning Division, Department of General Planning, Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO)

Kanae Doi, Japan Director, Human Rights Watch

Patricia Bader-Johnston, CEO, Silverbirch Associates KK

Takuya Yamazaki, Founder, Managing Partner at Field-R Law Offices

Copy to:

Yasuhiro Yamashita, President, Japanese Olympic Committee

Mitsunori Torihara, Chairman, Japanese Paralympic Committee

As reference:

Thomas Bach, President, International Olympic Committee

Diet Members