

I am happy to join forces with the ADHEOS team for this new Diversity Comic Book to reaffirm, in 2024, the obligation shared by the United States and France to put everything in place for an inclusive and more equitable future. Every person has the right to be treated with dignity, equality and to live freely and securely as it is. This diversity of our societies is one of the greatest strengths of our democracies.

Significant progress has been made, in particular in the liberation of LGBTQI+ speech and by the implementation of laws protecting the rights of LGBTQI+ people.

however, and unfortunately, current events too often remind us of the scale of the task that remains to be accomplished: homosexuality is still criminalized in more than 60 countries and some are even considering even more repressive anti-LGBTQI+ legislation. This is why President Biden signed in his first month in the White House a Presidential Memorandum to Promote the Human Rights of Vulnerable LGBTQI+ People and build international coalitions to combat discrimination.

The United States, my country, is unfortunately not spared from this sad phenomenon: Violent attacks against LGBTQI+ people or centers are on the rise, and more than 600 local laws hostile to the LGBTQI+ community, particularly younger trans people, have been presented.

Since taking office as United States Consul for the South West of France, I have taken every opportunity to work with public actors and LGBTQI+ associations in the region to reaffirm the United States' commitment to favor of this fundamental question. From Bordeaux to Limoges, from Biarritz to Chenevelles and during other pride marches in your beautiful region, I was able to personally assure you of this unfailing support.

We all bear the responsibility to denounce and oppose hatred and violence, in all its forms. When the rights of a group or an individual are violated, it is our own freedom, the freedom of all that is threatened. For this new year, let us unite our two nations to support the LGBTQI+ community around the world.

Hector Brown
Consul of the United States of America