



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail UN.Geneva@dfat.gov.au

Chemin des Fins 2, Petit Saconnex, 1211 Geneva 19 Ph +41 22 799 9100 Fax +41 22 799 9175 www.geneva.mission.gov.au

Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 15th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Montenegro

Statement by Australia

The Government of Australia welcomes the continued efforts of Montenegro to improve human rights, transparency, accountability and the welfare of displaced persons and minorities.

Australia acknowledges the positive steps taken toward the documentation of displaced and internally displaced persons and notes the benefits of this process in granting them access to employment and health care. **We recommend Montenegro continue to expand efforts to register, document and subsequently integrate displaced and internally displaced persons into Montenegro society.**

Australia notes with concern the reports of significant shortfalls in access to healthcare, employment and education for some of Montenegro’s Roma communities.

Whilst acknowledging the important work of the Montenegro Antidiscrimination Council, **Australia recommends Montenegro take additional concrete steps to combat societal discrimination on the basis of race, sexual orientation, disability or gender identification.**

Australia welcomes the efforts of Montenegro to strengthen the legislative framework regarding freedom of expression, including the decriminalization of defamation. Australia looks to the Montenegro authorities to continue to pursue reforms intended to make judicial processes more transparent and efficient, especially in investigating alleged corruption by senior public figures and violence against journalists. **Australia recommends Montenegro pursue reforms aimed at further protecting the media and judiciary from undue political interference and ensuring open, transparent and fair trial processes.**

Ms Lauren Stasinowsky