

Hungary's Statement on Serbia, UPR 15th Session, 30 January 2013

Mr. President,

Hungary welcomes the delegation of Serbia to this UPR session and would like to thank them for their comprehensive summary of the human rights situation in the country. It is commendable that national consultations were held with civil society organizations and independent national human rights authorities for the preparation of the report.

Hungary notes with satisfaction that in order to address the different forms of discrimination within the country an Anti-discrimination Law was adopted in 2009 and the Office of Commissioner for the Protection of Equality was set up in 2010. However, we are concerned that violent acts against persons belonging to national minorities still frequently occur. We urge the relevant Serbian authorities to properly investigate and prosecute these cases with special attention to possible ethnic motivation. Ethnically motivated violence should be sanctioned severely. In this context, **we recommend the Government to establish an independent and external oversight mechanism for alleged unlawful acts by police and that the Ombudsman monitors and investigates these cases independently and impartially.**

Mr. President,

We highly appreciate that the Constitution of 2006 protects the rights of minorities and that in 2009 an important Law has been adopted in this field, on National Councils of National Minorities. **My delegation would be interested to learn more about the experiences of the functioning of Minority Councils and to receive information on the reasons behind the transfer of human and minority rights from a ministerial level to a government office.**

Hungary is pleased that a conference was held in Belgrade in November 2011, with the aim to improve the implementation of the UN Declaration on HRD in Serbia. **We recommend the Government to adopt a national strategy for the protection of human rights defenders and as part of it, to form a network of independent and specialised lawyers to provide legal aid for them.**

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by expressing our appreciation for the fact that in 2010, the ombudsman of Serbia was given an A status, confirming that this is an independent institution established in accordance with the Paris Principles.

Thank you Mr. President.