

Universal Periodic Review 15 – Serbia

Intervention by the Netherlands

Madam President,

The Netherlands would like to thank mr/mrs for his/her presentation on the basis of the national report here today and the extensive and clear elaboration on the human rights situation in Serbia.

During the last review of Serbia in 2008, the Netherlands recommended that the government of Serbia adopt a national plan for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists. Insufficient progress in this field has been made over this period of four years, as can be seen in the recommendations made by CAT and shown by the recent EU Progress Report, stressing the protection of journalists including the investigation of attacks and murders in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

The Serbian government has agreed to form an International Commission for Investigation of Murders of Journalists; however no concrete measures in this area have been taken. We recommend the government of Serbia to follow-up on the forming of this commission and make sure the commission will have a mandate appropriate to investigate the alleged cases of murder of journalists.

Secondly, the Netherlands would like to emphasize the importance of human rights for EVERYONE, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Freedom of expression and association is enshrined within the Serbian constitution but it cannot be fully exercised by LGBT people, as is shown by the prohibition of the Belgrade Pride in 2011 and 2012. We therefore recommend the government of Serbia to ensure the proceeding of the Belgrade Pride in 2013.

Thank you, Madam President.