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PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

15th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group Geneva, 21 January to 1 February 2013

Statement by Norway:

UPR on Serbia

Thank you Mr. President,

Norway welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Serbia and would like to thank for the report submitted.

Our overall impression is that the human rights situation in Serbia has improved since the previous review. We note that Serbia has established a range of institutions in the recent years, contributing to this improvement.

Despite an overall positive trend, there is still a need for increased and sustained efforts in several areas.

Some minority groups are vulnerable to threats and continue to face challenges in exercising their rights, especially the Roma population, as well as sexual minorities.

Attempts to organize a Gay Pride parade were canceled by the Government both in 2011 and 2012, without anyone being prosecuted for representing the security threat which the Government used to justify this decision. We **recommend** that the Serbian Government enhance efforts to enable the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community to exercise their fundamental freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

We also recall the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and **recommend** that the Serbian Government denounce more forcefully all verbal and physical attacks on human rights defenders.

Finally, Norway values the achievements made, including through our cooperation with and the engagement by the Serbian Gender Directorate and UN Women, to reduce the prevalence of violence against women. We **recommend** that Serbia fully implements the national strategy to prevent domestic violence, and conducts awareness raising campaigns and training on domestic violence for officials.

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