

CZECH REPUBLIC

17th UPR – STATEMENT ON MALTA

The Czech Republic welcomes the delegation of Malta, thanks for its detailed presentation and extends its appreciation for Malta's commitment to the UPR process.

We congratulate Malta on establishing new institutions relating to human rights, such as an Independent Living Centre providing advice to persons with a disability and their families. Concerning our previous recommendation of 2009 on the strengthening of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, we appreciate that Malta has made advances in the human rights protection, *inter alia* in securing equal treatment on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin.

We take positive note that in Malta, following a referendum, divorce legislation came into effect in October 2011 while upholding the rights of children. Nevertheless, we are concerned that Malta remains without a life-saving abortion law, considering abortion illegal under all circumstances and subject to imprisonment for a term of 18 months to three years. The same punishment will apply to any woman who procures her own miscarriage. We **recommend** that the Government of Malta incite open, cognizant, public and expert discussions in Malta on introducing abortion legislation even though only in limited cases where the mother's or child's life is at risk.

I thank you, Mr. President.