**Universal Periodic Review – Malta**

**Intervention by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Mr. President,

The Netherlands commends Malta for the role it plays in picking up destitute migrants from often rickety boats at open sea that are traversing from Africa to Europe. The Netherlands cooperates closely with Malta in the coordination of the flow of refugees and asylum seekers to Europe, for example through the European Asylum Support Office which is located in Valetta. Unaccompanied minors are a particular vulnerable group among these people on the move.

The Netherlands compliments Malta on the great strides it has made in the recent year in the fight against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The introduction to Parliament of a Civil Unions Bill, that will recognise same-sex partnerships and give them the same rights and duties as married heterosexual couples, is a welcome next step.

Regarding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the Netherlands is concerned about the criminalization of abortion under all circumstances.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands would therefore like to recommend the Republic of Malta the following:

One: To adapt the practice in which unaccompanied minors are being held in migrant detention together with unrelated adults, and to give them the benefit of the doubt until their age has been determined.

Two: To decriminalise abortion, if not completely, at least when the life or health of the mother is in danger, by bringing the law in line with obligations deriving from several human rights conventions.

I thank you, Mr. President.