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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 18th Session

Universal Periodic Review of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Statement by Australia

Australia commends the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the progress made on human rights since its last review in 2009.

Australia acknowledges efforts of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to address discrimination, including through the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation. However, we note that the legislation does not include sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds of discrimination. **Australia recommends that anti-discrimination legislation be strengthened to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and that effective measures be taken to combat violence and discrimination against LGBTI people.**

Australia also notes reports of societal discrimination against Roma, including in education, employment and healthcare. **Australia recommends that further concrete and effective steps be taken towards social inclusion for Roma people.**

Australia views with concern recent reports of significant limitations on media freedom in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. **Australia recommends that media policy and regulations be improved in order to ensure freedom of the press and of expression, and to facilitate a more diverse media market.**

Australia acknowledges efforts to improve the penitentiary system; however, we note that reports of poor conditions persist. **Australia recommends that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue efforts to ameliorate prison conditions, including steps to address overcrowding and violence, as well as improving access to healthcare, education and recreational activities.**