

22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UPR working group

Questions and recommendations by Finland to Belarus

4<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Chair,

Finland welcomes the dialogue with Belarus and appreciates its engagement in the UPR process. Finland wishes to make the following two recommendations concerning the use of death penalty and the situation of the Roma community, which are of concern to us.

- 1) Finland recommends Belarus to ratify the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the 6th and 13th Protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights with the aim to abolish the death penalty.
- 2) Finland recommends to Belarus to step up its efforts to combat and prevent discrimination faced by persons belonging to Roma communities, including ensuring the right to education on a non-discriminatory basis for all Roma children.

Finland wishes to underscore that capital punishment is a cruel and inhuman form of punishment. No compelling evidence exists to show that the death penalty serves as a deterrent to crime.

It is of concern that there have been reports of discrimination and racial profiling of persons belonging to the Roma communities by law enforcement agencies in Belarus. Moreover, persons belonging to Roma communities face challenges in, for example realizing their right to education. We note, however, the positive practice of working with Roma parents in order to encourage them to send their children to school at the age of six. Roma children must be ensured equal access to all levels of education.

Thank you.