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## PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

### STATEMENT

**Universal Periodic Review of Georgia, 10 November 2015.**

#### **Statement by Norway.**

Norway welcomes the Georgian delegation. We commend Georgia for implementing important reforms in areas that are crucial to a stable and sustainable society.

We are, however, concerned about the safeguarding of rule of law in Georgia. Although several important steps have been taken and important reforms initiated, parts of the judiciary remain vulnerable to political pressure. We urge the government to ensure that ongoing reforms lead to real and lasting institutional guarantees for the independence of the judiciary. More specifically, **we recommend implementing the Venice Commission's recommendations related to reforms in the system of appointments and probation periods of judges.**

Although clear improvements have been made in the penitentiary system over the last few years, Georgia is still plagued by low-standard prison conditions and insufficient and ineffective investigation of alleged abuse and ill-treatment by law enforcement bodies. Many cases against Georgia in the European Court of Human Rights are related to such problems. **We recommend to establish an independent investigation mechanism with the mandate to investigate alleged human rights violations committed by law enforcement officials.**

The Georgian Parliament adopted a progressive anti-discrimination law in 2014. This is an important step towards safeguarding the rights of the country's minorities, be they ethnic, sexual, or religious. However, attitudes in Georgian society towards minority groups is an issue that requires continuous attention. **Norway recommends that the proposed Civic Equality and Integration Strategy and Action Plan for 2015-2020 be adopted and implemented in due course, with a sound financial and political backing.**

Finally, **we recommend to develop prevention strategies on gender based violence and establish rehabilitation services for victims of violence.**