

Statement by Hungary on Belgium
24th Session of the UPR Working Group

20 January 2016

Mr. President,

Hungary welcomes the delegation of Belgium. We thank for the comprehensive national report and the update.

Hungary considers Belgium to be a key partner in the human rights field, and welcomes Belgium's election to the Human Rights Council, where it will surely play a traditionally active, constructive and consensus-building role.

We appreciate the progress achieved in the implementation of accepted UPR recommendations, as well as in the promotion and protection of human rights in general in Belgium. We took note of the remaining gaps, however, and wish to recommend the ratification of the Optional Protocol to CAT, as well as the swift conclusion of the process of the creation of a National Human Rights Institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, also taking positive note of the Belgian federal government's encouraging intentions in this regard.

We deem that best practices and highest standards of national minority protection, both in their individual and collective dimensions, exist in Belgium, providing also a sound basis for further enhancement of minority protection in the country. In this context and respectful of the particularities of the federal setup of the Belgian State, we recommend intensifying the work aimed at the ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, signed by Belgium in 2002. We also recommend the consideration of its accession to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Finally, Hungary takes note with concern of the high rate of anti-Semitic incidents in Belgium. While important measures have been introduced, in particular with regard to law enforcement officials and the judiciary, as well as in education, we would like to kindly ask the delegation what further, concrete steps are foreseen to tackle this disturbing phenomenon.

Thank you, Mr. President!