**Universal Periodic Review 24 – Belgium**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr President,

The Netherlands thanks Belgium for its report [and for addressing our advance questions]. We value the excellent relations with Belgium in many areas, including on human rights. We commend Belgium’s efforts to further advance its human rights record, which is already impressive across the board, and welcome Belgium back to the Human Rights Council.

Mr President,

We recommend Belgium:

1. Firstly, to expedite the establishment of the National Human Rights Institution and make it fully compliant with the Paris Principles.
2. Secondly, to carry out an evaluation on ethnic profiling within the police organisation. The Netherlands is willing to share experiences in this regard.

Mr President, we believe a fully compliant National Human Rights Institution could contribute to the independent oversight of Belgium’s policies. Secondly, while acknowledging the challenging work environment in the context of terrorist threats, it remains important to ensure respect for human rights standards within the police.

Finally, Mr President, we commend Belgium on the two inter-federal action plans against homophobia and transphobia, but remain concerned on sterilization and gender reassignment surgery requirements, as well as mandatory psychiatric assessment, as preconditions for legal gender recognition of transgender persons.

Thank you Mr. President.