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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 24th Session

Universal Periodic Review of Republic of Latvia

Statement by Australia

Australia welcomes the delegation from the Republic of Latvia and appreciates its continued constructive engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process.

Australia strongly commends Latvia's commitment to the abolition of the death penalty through accession to both Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Australia welcomes Latvia's efforts to facilitate naturalisation of non-citizens, including amendments to Latvia's Citizenship Law in 2013 to simplify citizenship acquisition and the naturalisation process. At around 12 per cent of the population, the number of non-citizens in Latvia in 2015 is a large minority. **We recommend Latvia to continue to take further steps to improve the environment for naturalisation as well as ensure the protection of social and political rights of non-citizens.**

Australia notes reports of societal discrimination against Romani communities, including education, employment and healthcare. **Australia recommends Latvia take further concrete and effective steps towards social inclusion for Romani people, such as strengthening Latvia's human rights framework and providing human rights training to law enforcement authorities in order to increase protections for Romani people against violations of their human rights.**

