**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Latvia**

**26 January 2016**

**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia very warmly welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Latviato its second UPR. We thank Latvia for the country report that was drafted in consultation with civil society, and also for the additional information provided today.

Estonia acknowledges Latvia’s progress in human rights areas, and in the implementation of recommendations from the previous review.

We commend Latvia for progress made in promoting gender equality. In particular, we note that Latvia has achieved a high rate of participation of women in political affairs, economic life and commercial decision-making.

Estonia welcomes the fact that the Government of Latvia has taken significant steps to tackle trafficking in human beings, which often is a trans-border issue. Improvements to legislation in recent years have made the legal framework for combating human trafficking even more efficient. In addition, the social protection of victims of human trafficking has been considerably strengthened.

We commend Latvia for their significant achievements in the naturalization process. The rights of all persons belonging to ethnic minorities are well protected in Latvia’s multi-ethnic society as a result of the implementation of the Government’s integration policy. Recent amendments to the legislation have led to a significant rise in the number of new-born who acquire Latvian citizenship. As of 2014, 99% of all children born in Latvia are citizens of Latvia.

Estonia would like **to recommend** to the Government of the Republic of Latvia:

* to continue taking steps to actively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence;
* to consider accession to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence(Istanbul Convention).

Finally, Estonia very warmly notes Latvia’s active participation in the Freedom Online Coalition in global fora. We value Latvia’s work as a member of the Human Rights Council, including on the initiative to strengthen cooperation of States with special procedures, including by issuing standing invitations.

Thank you!