**Universal Periodic Review 26 –Republic of Lithuania**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands thanks the Republic of Lithuania for its comprehensive report and for addressing our advance questions. We congratulate Lithuania on its overall high standard of human rights protection.

Mr President, the Netherlands recommends Lithuania:

1. To step up efforts to investigate and act upon instances of hate speech and hate crime and to ensure effective access to justice for victims, including LGBTI persons and members of religious or ethnic minority communities[[1]](#footnote-1).
2. To take additional measures to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders without fear of reprisals, intimidation, violence or discrimination.

Mr President,

We share the concern of the Human Rights Committee at the increasing negative attitudes against and stigmatization of LGBTI persons in society, including in public debates around legislative initiatives. This has manifested itself in instances of discrimination and violence that need to be investigated[[2]](#footnote-2).

Finally, the Netherlands welcomes the creation of an inter-institutional cooperation mechanism to improve the protection of personal and financial information of international human rights defenders following the previous UPR session. We believe, however, that further policies and measures could be put in place to ensure a free, safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders.

Thank you, Mr. President.

1. Previous recommendation: ‘To take the necessary measures and implement policies that recognise the diversity of families and provide same sex couples with the same rights as heterosexual couples’. - In Lithuania, same-sex couples do not enjoy the same rights and social security benefits as heterosexual couples. The legal definition of ‘family life’ as emanating from marriage between a man and a woman has been redefined constitutionally. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UN Compilation of information on Lithuania (para 21) <https://247.plaza.buzaservices.nl/sites/3commrr/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/sites/3commrr/Shared%20Documents/UPR/UPR26/Litouwen/NGO%20info/Lithuania%20Compilation%20of%20UN%20information.pdf&action=default> Mogelijke toevoeging: CERD has also expressed concern about reports of incicents of hate crime targeting individuals belonging to ethnic minorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)