**Universal Periodical Review of Georgia**

**26 January 2021**

**Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia warmly welcomes the delegation of Georgia to the UPR’s 37th session.

Estonia commends the steps taken by Georgia to reform its legislation and judicial system and to implement the recommendations of the previous UPR processes. We welcome the adoption of the Child Rights Code, the adoption of the new law on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

While Georgia has shown significant improvements in the field of human rights, we regret that the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia deteriorate gradually. The violations of human rights in these regions should be adequately addressed as Georgia unfortunately is not able to practice effective control over these regions. As the European Court of Human Rights **(**ECHR) has recently delivered its judgment - the events occurring after the cessation of hostilities (following the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008) had fallen within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.

Estonia calls on Russian Federation and the *de facto* authorities of the occupied territories to guarantee free and unhindered access for international human rights organizations to observe the situation in the occupied territories. We encourage Georgia to continue and strengthen cooperation with the international community to maintain the grave human rights violations and humanitarian situation in the Russian occupied territories of Georgia as well as the necessity of safe and dignified return of all IDPs and refugees to their homes, high on international agenda.

We would like to note that Estonian-Georgian development cooperation projects have contributed to develop education system, civil society and thus human rights in its broad meaning in Georgia. Estonia looks forward to continue this cooperation.

Estonia would like to recommendto the Government of Georgia:

* Ensure that all cases of gender-based violence are thoroughly investigated and that victims have access to medical, social, legal and other support services;
* Ratify the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
* Address the issue of digital divide present in the country, highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We would like to wish the delegation of Georgia a successful review meeting.

Thank you!