**UPR38**

**Belgium**

*5th May 2021*

**STATEMENT BY THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

The Czech Republic warmly welcomes the delegation of Belgium.

We acknowledge the high standard of human rights protection in Belgium and positive developments since the last UPR such as the progress made towards the application of the OP-CAT (Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment). In response to our previous recommendation, we also appreciate concrete measures improving conditions of detention and reducing prison overcrowding.

We **recommend** the following:

1. to ratify the OP-CAT (Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) without delay and any reservations,
2. to enhance efforts to alleviate prison overcrowding and ensure all prison facilities and detention conditions are in line with international standards,
3. to pursue efforts to combat racism, xenophobia and hate speech by inter alia adopting a comprehensive national action plan against racism by its next UPR review.
4. to ensure that all allegations of police violence are independently and thoroughly investigated.

Thank you.