**Presentation of the National Report of Montenegro**

**Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

**Geneva, 22 January 2018**

**Introductory remarks**

**Deputy Prime Minister for Political System, Internal and Foreign Policy and Minister of Justice of Montenegro, Mr. Zoran Pažin**

Mister President,

Distinguished representatives of the member states,

Representatives of the international organizations and civil society organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address you today on behalf of the Government of Montenegro and present the national report on the state of human rights within the third UPR cycle.

The report before you provides an overview of the progress made, but also the challenges and commitments to further strengthen the system of protection and respect for human rights and freedoms. This report represents also a clear indication of Montenegro's unequivocal commitment to the highest values ​​of democracy and the principles and standards contained in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international legal documents in the field of human rights.

Montenegro is a contracting party to almost all international legal instruments in the field of human rights and, despite a small administration, it regularly reports on their implementation.

At the national level, we aim to strengthen the political, social and economic environment that provides and guarantees all the prerequisites for the free enjoyment of human rights without discrimination on any ground. As a result of the implementation of comprehensive reforms in the country and the adoption of standards in relevant areas, in 2017 Montenegro joined NATO. At the same time, it has achieved a good result in the field of European integration, and the continuation of reforms will be crucial for the gradual completion of the negotiation process and the fulfillment of the EU and UN standards on the road to fully fledged EU membership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Report, as well as the Mid-Term Report of 2015, placed a special focus on the results achieved in the implementation of the recommendations obtained within the second cycle. This report is the result of inclusive national consultations, with the participation of the national human rights institution, non-governmental organizations and the UN system in the country.

Since the last review process, satisfactory results have been achieved in the field of judicial reform and fight against corruption, important legal reforms have been carried out regarding the establishment of a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework, through further empowerment of women and girls, fight against trafficking in human beings, improvement of the position of persons with disabilities, rights of children, creation of a more tolerant environment for diversity, especially with regard to the members of the LGBTI community.

The institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms has been enhanced. Several working bodies have been set up to monitor and control the implementation of protection policies, such as: Social Council, Rule of Law Council, Gender Equality Council, Anti-Discrimination Council, Council for the care of the disabled, Council on the Rights of the Child and Council for cooperation with NGOs. Through the creation of institutions dealing with these issues, provision of national and institutional level monitoring, and establishment of the Rule of Law Council, the conditions have been created for the termination of work of the Anti-Discrimination Council.

Bearing in mind the importance of existence of independent institutions and effective mechanisms to verify compliance with law and practice, with the adoption of improved legislation, Montenegro met its obligations in terms of strengthening the capacity of the Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, envisaged by the Government's work program and the Action Plan for Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. A normative-legal and institutional framework that regulates the functioning of the Ombudsman institution as an institutional mechanism for the protection against discrimination and the national preventive mechanism (NPM) is completed. In 2016, the Ombudsman Institution was accredited with B status by the International Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Aware of the fact that an independent and efficient judiciary is considered to be the ultimate and most important guarantor of the democratic functioning of institutions and legal security, a thorough reform was carried out in the reporting period to strengthen the independence of the judiciary.

In addition to the adoption of the Judicial Reform Strategy 2014-2018 and accompanying action plans, reform activities included also amendments to the Constitution in 2013 and, accordingly, changes to key laws on courts, the Judicial Council, the Constitutional Court and the State Prosecutor's Office. In line with the novelties, the Judicial Council, the Prosecutorial Council, the President of the Supreme Court and the Supreme State Prosecutor were selected, and a state prosecutor was appointed to liaise with the European Judicial Cooperation Unit in The Hague. The reform process continued in 2015, when, in order to create the conditions for development of a system of an integrated, transparent and merit-based selection of judges and prosecutors, and the criteria for their permanent voluntary transfer, as well as the system for periodic assessment as a basis for promotion, the new laws in the field of judiciary were adopted, as follows: the Law on Courts, the Law on Judicial Council and Judges, the Law on the Constitutional Court, the Law on the State Prosecutor's Office, the Law on the Special State Prosecutor's Office and the Law on the Center for Training in Judiciary and State Prosecution Service. A set of organizational laws in the area of judiciary have been the final step in the normative change of the judicial system.

Activities on strengthening the institutions, especially improvement of administrative-technical and institutional capacities of the state prosecutor's office, the courts, as well as the law enforcement agencies, were realized. We strive to ensure continuous education and the provision of adequate equipment for work, in order to improve the results in the field of effective investigations, indictments and adjudications, especially in the organized crime and corruption cases.

In line with the strategic guidelines for improvement of efficiency in conducting criminal proceedings for the most serious crimes and increasing the specialization of judges, the Law on Courts has centralized the jurisdiction for the criminal offenses of organized crime, corruption, war crimes and terrorism into one special department in the High Court. Based on the Law on Special State Prosecutor's Office, the Special State Prosecutor’s Office for the territory of Montenegro was established in the State Prosecutor's Office, as a single and independent body.

In order to increase efficiency and achieve track record in the field of fight against corruption, a centralized preventive anti-corruption institutional framework was built, with the establishment of the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, as an autonomous and independent state institution. The work of the Agency is regulated by three laws: the Law on Prevention of Corruption, the Law on Financing of Political Entities and Election Campaigns, and the Law on Lobbying. Following the completion of the institutional and legislative framework, the compliance with legal obligations by law enforcement agencies has increased, as well as the number of instigated misdemeanor procedures and the number of fines imposed.

The effectiveness of the institute of free legal aid has improved, and access to justice has been enhanced through the adoption of the *Law on Amendments to the Law on Free Legal Aid* in 2015.

A significant step forward in the creation of systemic conditions for the fight against discrimination was made through the improvement of the legislative framework in the area of ​​anti-discrimination through the adoption of amendments to the laws on the prohibition of discrimination, the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms and Gender Equality, and the adoption of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disability. These novelties include, inter alia, extending the application of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination to the public and private sectors; introduction of a provision regulating hate speech, a new basis of discrimination (change of sex and inter-sexual characteristics); explicit prohibition of discrimination based on race, skin color, and national and ethnic background in the fields of education, labour, employment, career choice, vocational training, social protection, social benefits, health care and housing; definition of child discrimination and stricter penal policy. The amendments to the Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, among other things, further expand the Ombudsman's jurisdiction in the area of protection against discrimination.

Media campaigns on the prohibition of discrimination and the affirmation of anti-discriminatory behaviors are continuously being implemented.

The degree of discrimination in the Montenegrin society is monitored through continuous annual surveys. In accordance with the results, anti-discrimination policies for the most vulnerable social groups are being created. We are pleased to see the results of a regular survey of citizens' perception of discrimination in 2017 that continuously show an increase in the anti-discrimination awareness in the Montenegrin society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to legal improvements, a strategic framework in the field of human rights has been strengthened, with particular emphasis on the position of the most vulnerable groups.

The National Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 has been adopted, and it is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Strategy is expected to provide a framework for further strengthening of human rights in the future.

Special attention is paid to education and training in the area of human rights, through the regular education system and special training programs for employees in the public administration bodies.

The fight against domestic violence, violence against women and children represents one of the serious challenges in promoting and protecting the rights of women and children in Montenegro. Although data on cases of violence indicate a large number of reported, processed and resolved cases, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of domestic violence, there is a need to strengthen coordination between the different sectors, in order for the victims to receive timely and appropriate protection through the multidisciplinary response. Our main task now is to ensure an efficient response to the key challenges in applying the national legislative framework and international obligations in this area, namely the imposition of mild sentences, the need to change the penal policy and its full implementation, rare cases of adoption of protective measures to remove violent perpetrators from the place of residence, or to arrest the perpetrator.

Respect and promotion of children's rights are at the top of the Government's priorities. In this regard, the legislative and strategic framework for the protection of children's rights has been improved. Family law is consistent with relevant international documents. Amendments to the Criminal Code ensure further compliance with the standards of the Lanzarote Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, as well as with the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The first Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence was adopted. A legal framework is completed and it fully prohibits corporal punishment of children in all environments. The process of drafting a new National Action Plan for Children for the period 2018-2022 is underway. Montenegro joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

Implementation of the campaign on the promotion of the rights of the child records significant results in terms of inclusive education, development of foster care, deinstitutionalization, elimination of violence, abuse and neglect. In the realization of activities in the field of improvement of children's rights, the civil sector plays an important role.

Montenegro is working to establish a mechanism for determining statelessness by passing a new Law on Foreigners and recognizing the status of stateless persons. These persons will be given the possibility to exercise their rights in line with the ratified conventions.

Although the activities of the relevant institutions, in cooperation with NGOs dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities, contributed to the realization of activities important for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, through the provision of concrete social services on the accessibility of information, the practice shows that these persons are still exposed to social marginalization. This clearly indicates the need for further empowerment of persons with disabilities and further strengthening of capacities of institutions and their resources to ensure full enjoyment of rights and protection against discrimination.

Even though significant resources are allocated in the field of economic empowerment for the program of professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, the main challenge in ensuring the accessibility of state and local government facilities is precisely the lack of funds, which represents a risk for the implementation of relevant strategic documents.

Enhancing and protecting the rights of minority nations is a prerequisite for democracy and strengthening of multiculturalism and tolerance. Montenegro has made visible progress in designing and defining a stable legislative framework and institutional system for the realization, protection and promotion of human and minority rights and freedoms. Amendments to the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms have created the preconditions for improvement of the work of existing institutions in order to provide adequate support to the exercise of minority rights and freedoms, transparency and efficiency of procedures used to allocate funds for implementation of projects intended for activities important for the preservation and development of national and ethnic specificities of minority nations.

With regard to finding a permanent and final solution to the position of refugees and displaced persons from the period of disintegration of former Yugoslavia, a new Strategy for the period until 2019 was adopted and it should take further the positive results of the previous strategy, in terms of voluntary return to countries of origin, social inclusion and access to rights. Through the Regional housing program for Montenegro, so far a housing issues for 1080 persons have been resolved. At the same time, in the period 2009-2017, about 96% of the total number of applications submitted for granting permanent residence and temporary residence for up to three years were resolved.

Montenegro is committed to the protection and promotion of civil and political rights and freedoms. Although the legislative framework has been improved in this area, we are aware of the challenges that exist in the exercise of freedom of expression and media freedom. In this regard, we remain open to further revision of norms and practices in order to best address these challenges. During the reporting period, visits were made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the Working Group on Enforced or Involontary Disappearances.

At the international level, Montenegro provides full support to the work of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and achieves full cooperation with the Human Rights Council, the UPR mechanism, contracting authorities and special procedure mandate holders. In the period between the two cycles, Montenegro was a member of the Human Rights Council 2013-2015. Through continuous cooperation with the Council and its special procedures, as well as Member States, we contribute to the consideration of human rights issues and to timely response to the situations of their violation. We pay special attention to strengthening the position and role of women in society and preventing violence against them, as well as all vulnerable categories, primarily children, people with disabilities, LGBTI persons and the elderly. These long-term priorities, as well as the commitment to improving the work of the Human Rights Council, resulted in the candidacy of Montenegro for Council membership 2022-2024.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank you for the questions submitted in advance, a total of 27, which contributes to the openness and constructiveness of the dialogue, all with the aim to improve the state of human rights.

**Regarding the questions posed by Portugal about the process of monitoring the implementation of the UPR recommendations and the establishment of a national monitoring and reporting mechanism**, a permanent expert group established in 2012, made up of representatives of state authorities and NGOs, with the participation of the UN system and the national human rights institution, holds regular semi-annual consultations on the implementation of the Plan for implementation of the UPR recommendations. The group is coordinated by the MFA and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

The process of development of a national monitoring and reporting mechanism that includes a software system has started, and it will enable the insight into the recommendations that the state receives from the UN system and the activities and results in the implementation of the recommendations. Montenegro has been selected as a pilot country for the establishment of an OHCHR database. A Working Group in charge of the implementation of the database was formed.

**As for the questions posed by Sweden and the United Kingdom** **regarding the implementation of the legal framework for the fight against corruption,** the process of legislative reform of the judiciary has been completed by enacting a set of laws in this area. With the adoption of a set of anti-corruption laws and regulations, a quality anti-corruption system has been established that is in line with the EU standards. In the forthcoming period, special attention will be paid to the implementation of legislation and the strengthening of administrative capacities. In order to effectively implement the adopted set of laws, trainings are organized that will ensure independent, impartial, professional and efficient judiciary and prosecution.

Anti-corruption laws and strategic framework are equally implemented at the central and local levels. The success of implementation of anti-corruption measures, especially by local governments, is monitored through the established monitoring mechanism semi-annually.

In the context of **UK and Brazil's question on impunity for war crimes, as well as securing compensation to war crime victims,** in order to improve the prosecution of perpetrators of war crimes, a War Crimes Investigation Strategy is being implemented. In the process of reviewing earlier cases that resulted in an enforacble judgment, in two cases there is an ongoing process of analysis of the information and data collected through the mechanisms of international legal aid from the Office of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The search of unprotected databases of the Tribunal was conducted in order to find and collect evidence for cases formed in the Special State Prosecutor's Office which are now in the stage of preliminary investigation, as well as to gather and find evidence for possible new cases of war crimes. In all cases, international cooperation has been established with prosecution and other authorities of the countries of the region.

The Law on Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes has been adopted in 2015, and it guarantees all victims of criminal offenses punishable under international law the right to appeal to judicial authorities in order to seek redress. All cases have been resolved with an enforceable judgment. A total of € 5.7 million was awarded for compensation of damage to the victims.

Regarding the questions posed by **Liechtenstein and Spain** **on the ratification of the Kampala Amendments**, the process of development of the Proposal of the Law on the Confirmation of the Amendment to Article 8 of the Rome Statute and the Amendment to the Rome Statute, introducing the crime of aggression, is in the final stage.

**The UK and the US asked about the implementation of activities in the fight against trafficking in human beings**. Continuous implementation of the Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings strengthened the professional capacities, established a multidisciplinary framework for work based on the protection of human rights of victims, improved mechanisms of protection, reintegration and referral of victims, as well as regional and international cooperation. Legislative framework was improved through the Amendments to the Criminal Code. The Law on Foreigners was adopted, which regulates the basis for obtaining a temporary residence permit for humanitarian reasons and the period of reflection for victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as the Law on Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes. Cooperation with civil society organizations has been formalized and improved. Training is organized for representatives of state institutions, the police, the judiciary, the prosecution, with special emphasis on proactive identification, referral, protection and reintegration of victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as quality processing of the perpetrators of these crimes. For the purpose of more efficient and better quality identification of potential victims, activities are being carried out to establish an Operational Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Having in mind the complementarity of the activities envisaged in the United Kingdom initiative to undertake action in the field of dealing with modern slavery, forced labor and trafficking in human beings with national priorities in this area, I express the full readiness of Montenegro to join that initiative.

In the context of **Spain's question about ensuring universal access to birth registration**, the Amendments to the Law on Extra-Judicial Procedure simplified the procedure for registering the birth of persons born outside the health care institution. For persons born in health care institutions, the procedure for subsequent registration still has to be initiated before the regional offices and branches of the Ministry of Interior. Challenges regarding enrollment in the birth register occur in case of children abandoned by mothers after birth (primarily among Roma and Egyptians). Each case is subject to special analysis, and the plans for the future are to involve more intesively centers for social work at the municipal level in processing requests for registration of these persons. With the support of the UNHCR, “Registration of a Newborn in 4 Steps” brochure was developed as a guide for parents in line with the efforts to present the procedure to the citizens and make relevant information readily available. This brochure has been translated into all languages.

Regarding the question posed by **the Czech Republic on the harmonization of the notion of torture and physical abuse of persons deprived of liberty by the police**, the criminal offense of torture, as prescribed by Article 167 of the Criminal Code of Montenegro, contains all elements of the definition of torture under Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment of the Council of Europe. According to the relevant international documents, the notion of torture also includes the situation when torture is committed by officials, thus, the Criminal Code of Montenegro extends the notion of torture by stipulating that any person may be the perpetrator of the basic form of torture. In the period from 2014 to 2017, a total of 11 cases were brought before the courts in Montenegro for allegations of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force against persons deprived of their liberty by police officers or officers of the Institute for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions, of which in 3 cases there is an enforceable judgment, in one case the judgment is still not enforceable, while in 7 cases the proceedings are ongoing.

**Several countries - Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, Czech Republic - raised the issue of guaranteeing the freedom of expression and freedom of the press, investigating cases of violence against journalists and ensuring the safety of media workers**. Activities are undertaken in order to apply more intensively the standards of the ECHR in this area, to resolve cases of attacks on journalists and their property, to ensure transparency and non-discrimination in media advertising, by providing adequate legal solutions and strengthening the capacity of self-regulatory bodies. We are aware that the media scene in Montenegro is polarized in a way that requires additional and urgent efforts for improvement. I particularly emphasize here the need to strengthen media self-regulation. On the other hand, the Government of Montenegro respects the principle of the independence of the media, free expression and objective information of the public, and strongly condemns any attempt or act of assault on journalists and media property.

In order to protect journalists from threats and violence, a system of preventive and repressive measures and actionss undertaken by the Police Directorate has been introduced. During the reporting period, there was a decrease in the number of cases of violence against journalists. Statistics in 2017 confirm that Montenegro is not a country in which recorded violence against media can be characterized as a systemic problem.

In 2016, a new Commission was established to monitor the actions of the competent authorities in investigating cases of threats and violence against journalists, the killing of journalists and attacks on media assets. The work of the Commission has not been suspended. The Government of Montenegro fully supports the work of this important body. We are ready to respect all requests and recommendations that fall within the competence of the executive power and in line with applicable regulations, and to come up with an optimal model of further communication and information exchange, so that this body can give the greatest possible contribution to the safety of journalists and investigations in cases of threats and attacks on media representatives and media assets.

I now give the floor to the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, Mr. Kemal Purisic to answer questions under the jurisdiction of this Ministry, and then to the Director General of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Ms. Blanka Radosevic Marovic.

**Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, Kemal Purisic – answers to questions**

Mister President,

Representatives of the Member States,

Representatives of international organizations and civil society organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also wish to greet you all and thank you for the questions posed.

In relation to the question posed by **Germany on the integration of the RE population into the education system**, emphasis is put on preschool education, the improvement of teacher competences, cooperation within the teaching process, strengthening of the intercultural dimension and prevention of early drop-out. A preparatory kindergarten for children of RE population that are not covered by formal education was organized; an additional mechanism of integration into regular preschool activities is implemented through inclusion in educational groups, organization of educational units and interactive services. The campaign for enrollment of RE children into the first grade of elementary school was conducted, language support and supplementary classes were provided, mediators and assistants in social inclusion are financed for their work in schools, free textbooks and scholarships for secondary school and university students were provided. A school drop-out prevention team was established, which meets monthly with the aim of identifying problems and preventing the risk of leaving school.

In relation to access to the labor market, measures are being taken to include members of the Roma and Egyptian population in the activities of the Employment Service, which promote their employability and social inclusion. For the time being, this mostly refers to education and training programs and participation in public works, for which special financial resources are allocated.

Regarding **Czech question, early and child marriages, violence against women and domestic violence** still represent one of the serious challenges. The practice of early-forced marriages is dominant among the RE population. In order to eradicate this practice, campaigns and educational-informative activities for members of the RE population and state administration officials are being implemented. For the purpose of more effectively protecting the victims of domestic violence, a number of by-laws were adopted for the implementation of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and the Law on Social and Child Protection. The Family Law defines the area of ​​entering into marriage before adulthood, and the Criminal Code protects adequately all categories of persons, including juveniles, with regard to the conclusion of a null and void marriage, and enabling the conclusion of an unlawful marriage, or a common law marriage with a juvenile. The amendments to the Criminal Code of Montenegro prescribe the criminal offense of Rape - a prison sentence of one to eight years shall be imposed on a person who engages with another person in coitus or an act equal to it without the consent of that person. The foregoing envisages a different form of criminal offense than the one involving the use of force or the threat of direct attack on life or body.

As for the question posed by **Germany about the existence of selective abortions**, the selective abortion of female fetuses is not permitted in the Montenegrin health system. There are indications that such actions are taken in health institutions outside the country. Since private health institutions are not electronically linked to the public sector, it is very difficult to determine the number of selective and even other abortions. In the health sector, regular measures of control and supervision of work of public and private health institutions are undertaken. This is certainly not a challenge for the health sector only, in terms of control and prevention, but a fundamental social and problem rooted in the outdated beliefs about the importance of a male child. In order to prevent such abortions in 2017, NGOs organized a public performance under the title "Unwanted", and state institutions got involved in it.

In the context of **Spain's question about the rights of persons with disabilities**, in the Law on Social and Child Protection daycare centers have been identified as a support service for life in the community. There are a total of 12 daycare centers in the country. So far, two daycare centers for adults with disabilities have been opened, while the process of establishing another one is underway and in the upcoming period we plann to open another daycare center for persons with disabilities.

The education system defines as a first choice and an imperative for disabled children to attend regular schools. The basis for work is the individual development and education program. Individual transitional plans have been developed that connect primary and secondary education with the aim to ensure continuity of education, and to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities. Special schools have been transformed into resource centers - oriented to support inclusive education. The focus is on early intervention. Schools engage teaching assistants as technical support during the school year.

In the context of questions posed by the **US, in order to ensure respect for basic labor rights, including the elimination of the worst forms of child labor**, by the end of 2018, the adoption of a set of laws is planned, including a new Labor Law, which will further enhance respect for basic labor rights, but also regulate special protection of certain categories of persons, including children. The protection of children in terms of work engagement is prescribed by the Constitution of Montenegro. In 2017, there was not a single case of reporting child labor, including the worst forms of child labor.

**Ms. Blanka Radošević Marović, Director General in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights**

**Concerning the Czech Republic's question on ensuring the independence and functionality of the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM)**, the latest amendments to the Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms provide very wide powers in the performance of the NPM function. The Ombudsman, his deputies and advisers have a completely unrestricted access to all premises of institutions, bodies or organizations, as well as insight into all documentation, without limitations and regardless of the degree of confidentiality. The budget for the functioning of this institution is increasing every year. According to the views of the Institution, recommendations given by the Ombudsman are respected, particularly the ones given when acting based on individual complaints. However, when it comes to the so-called "systemic" recommendations - recommendations given in the reports and in dealing with general issues, the Institution of the Protector believes that they still can not be satisfied. In the area of ​​judiciary, the Ombudsman's recommendations are generally respected, and courts react promptly to its requests and submit reports on the implementation of recommendations.

**With regard to fighting homophobia and effectively investigating all reported cases of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity – questions posed by Czech Republic and Brasil**, the implementation of the Strategy for the improvement of the quality of life of LGBT persons involves a multisectoral approach and deals with all issues of relevance to advancement and respect for rights of LGBTI people in Montenegro. In the security sector, a network of police contact points in all security centers has been established, as well as a special "Trust Team" of the LGBTI community and the Police Directorate, as a mechanism for strengthening mutual trust and improving the safety of LGBTI people. The cases in which LGBTI people are an injured party are continuously monitored by police, judiciary and prosecutors in order to resolve them on time and in a quality way.

In legislative terms, the Criminal Law and the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination have been improved, and the work on the drafting of the Law on Registered Partnership has been initiated. Representatives of all NGOs involved in this issue are involved in the work on this Law. Adoption of the Law is planned by the end of the year.

In the context of **Sweden and Slovenia's question** regarding the achievement of gender equality, when planning annual budgets, all bodies at the national and local levels are required to allocate funds for the implementation of activities from the National Gender Equality Plan. Support from the international funds is also used, and a part of the funds from the budget of the competent Ministry is allocated for projects of the non-governmental organizations.

With regard to education, a special Training Program on domestic and international documents in the field of gender equality is being implemented within the Center for Training in Judiciary and State Prosecution.

With the implementation of the previous Gender Equality Plan, visible progress has been achieved in the legislative and institutional framework, both at the national and local levels. The representation of women in parliaments has increased. Significantly better results after the parliamentary elections gave an additional impulse to women's political activism. Representatives of all political parties have joined the Women's Political Network in order to improve the position of women in politics and economy and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Economic entrepreneurship is specifically defined in the Strategy for the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship. The state has offered three favorable credit lines for women, established programs for better positioning of women in the market, and in the upcoming period it will work on supporting the development of business plans and mentoring in order to ensure their better use. The capacities of institutional mechanisms and reporting methodology have been enhanced.

The key challenge remains the fight against violence against women. We are working on the improvement of the multisectoral response, better implementation of the law, as well as the implementation of measures aimed at protecting victims and sanctioning the perpetrators. The intention is to establish a single database and to improve victim support services.

\*

\*\*

**Concluding statement**

Montenegro pays particular attention to the UPR process, which allows each country to point to national achievements and challenges in the field of human rights in a constructive and transparent manner. UPR allows all countries to participate at the same time in the dialogue and by applying recommendations to improve the state of human rights. In relation to that, I take the opportunity to thank all countries for their participation in the discussion, as well as all civil society organizations that have contributed and encouraged the interest of members in the situation in Montenegro. I particularly appreciate the engagement of the Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro and non-governmental organizations in Montenegro, who I believe are following us via webcast.

I assure you that we will carefully consider the recommendations received in a spirit of constructiveness and cooperation with the common goal of improving the state of human rights in Montenegro.

Thank you.