

**29th session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**15-24 January 2018**

**Review of Serbia**

**Statement by Ireland**

Thank you, Mr (Vice) President.

Ireland warmly welcomes the delegation of Serbia and thanks it for its presentation.

Ireland commends Serbia's progress on a number of recommendations accepted in its last UPR, its ratifications of various human-rights instruments, and its adoption of various strategies, action plans and legal frameworks designed to advance human rights and rule of law issues.

We welcome the provisions in Serbia's Action Plan to protect journalists and ensure freedom of expression and **recommend** that Serbia take timely action to provide media workers with protection and ensure that perpetrators of crimes against media workers are duly investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned.

We take note of the Council of Europe's assessment that homophobia and LGBTI discrimination persist, but are pleased to note the actions Serbia has taken to safeguard the rights of the LGBTI community, and call on Serbia to make provision in law for same-sex civil partnership and marriage.

We acknowledge the efforts made to combat discrimination against certain minority groups, but note that there are still issues regarding equality of access to education, accommodation and healthcare. We echo the UN country team's call for the establishment of a strong monitoring and evaluation framework for Serbia's strategy on Roma inclusion.

Finally, we **recommend** that Serbia strengthen the mandate and independence of its Ombudsman's office, ensuring that it is adequately resourced and that it can operate independently.

We wish Serbia every success in this UPR cycle.

Thank you.