

24th session of the Universal Periodic Review

Statement by Ireland on the review of Estonia

19 January 2016

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Estonia and thanks it for its national report and presentation.

Ireland commends Estonia on its positive actions on human rights since the first UPR cycle, including the establishment of the Ombudsman for Children and the Gender Equality Council. We encourage Estonia to take further steps in the field of equality – in particular we urge Estonia to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We welcome the confirmation provided by the delegation today that the Registered Partnership Act, providing equal partnership rights for same-sex couples, has entered into force. We now urge its full implementation.

Amendments to the Citizenship Act providing for Estonian citizenship from birth of certain children of persons with undetermined citizenship and easing language requirements for applicants over the age of sixty-five are welcome. We also note the additional information provided by the distinguished Minister today. However, Ireland shares the concerns of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights regarding language barriers facing the Russian-speaking minority population in Estonia. Ireland **recommends** that Estonia accede to the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons 1954; and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 1961; and ensure that language requirements relating to employment are implemented in a fair and objective manner and that the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities are actively promoted and protected.

Finally, Ireland **recommends** that Estonia expedite the process of establishing an independent and effective National Human Rights Institution with a broad human rights mandate, in accordance with the Paris Principles.