

**UPR INTERVENTION FOR BELGIUM**

**Wednesday 21 September 2011**

**ILGA Europe, COC Netherlands and Çavaria**

Delivered by Björn van Roozendaal

Mr. President,

We commend Belgium to accept recommendations to take action to eliminate prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We encourage Belgium to do so by developing awareness raising programs and integrating information about sexual orientation and gender identity issues in school curricula.

During the Universal Periodic Review process Belgium has indicated that gender identity and expression are currently covered under existing anti-discrimination laws and policies. Whilst we appreciate this, we recommend Belgium to make explicit reference to discrimination grounds, such as sexual orientation, gender identity and gender identity, in its constitution.

In connection to upholding anti-discrimination practices in laws and policies, we are concerned about the existing requirement of surgery leading to sterilisation, which is necessary for trans people to have their new gender recognized. This requirement applies also in the absence of medical necessity. We recommend Belgium to abolish this requirement, a view which has previously been supported by The Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights .

We encourage Belgium to share best practices in the field of combating discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity with other countries. Finally, we appreciate Belgium's recognition of the Yogyakarta Principles on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, and recommend Belgium to continue using these principles in both its domestic and foreign policies.

Thank you Mr President.