

**UPR: Ireland**  
**COC Netherlands, ILGA-Europe, GLEN**  
**United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva. 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Madam President,

Ireland has a young but impressive history when it comes to addressing human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. In 1993 consenting sexual conduct between men was decriminalised. In the same year sexual orientation was included as a protected ground in the Unfair Dismissals Act. In years following sexual orientation became a ground for seeking asylum, became a protected ground against discrimination in employment, goods and services. In 2010 same-sex couples received rights to civil partnership, receiving same rights as married couples across a comprehensive range of areas including tax immigration and social welfare.. These measures have allowed LGBT citizens to become more visible in society, to call for their rights to be protected and have fostered a climate of social acceptance.

Whilst we welcome the progress delivered to date by this Government, we urge the government to address, in light of the UPR review process, through legislation, the legal recognition and support of children in same-sex headed families, as was outlined in the Programme for the Government. The widespread public acceptance and support of civil partnerships nationally can, in this context, be seen as a strong platform on which further change can be build, in particular that relating to LGB-headed families. In this light we welcome Ireland's commitment, as expressed in the UPR report, to progressing same-sex marriage through the Constitutional convention.

Whilst Ireland has made significant progress on this matter, significant challenges still remain. Children face widespread homophobic bullying in schools; only 46% of LGBT people feels open and supported in the workplace, violence and harassment targeted at the LGBT community remains a daily reality, significantly underreported to the police. In this context it is essential that the government remains committed to promoting full equality of LGBT young people, at school, at the work place, in the family and everywhere else. As pointed out during the UPR process by Switzerland, we remain concerned by legal provisions allowing for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in certain medical, religious and education institutions and call for legislative reform to remove this.

Transgender people remain particularly vulnerable to discrimination and marginalisation in Irish society. Ireland is one of the few remaining countries in the EU that does not allow for legal gender recognition of transgender persons, despite a High Court ruling in 2007 that this was incompatible with Ireland's obligation under the European Convention on Human Rights. We call on Ireland to urgently introduce legislation to ensure full and inclusive legal recognition of transgender people in their preferred gender.

Finally, we stand ready to continue work with the government of Ireland to ensure that all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can enjoy their citizenship in full equality and in fairness.

Thank you madam president