



**31st session of the Human Rights Council – Item 6 – UPR Outcome Georgia
Statement by Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie van
Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland
Joined by International Lesbian and Gay Association**



Delivered by Natia Gvianishvili

Mr. President,

The following statement has been prepared in partnership with Women's Initiative Supporting Group. In the previous cycle of UPR in 2011, Georgia didn't receive recommendations on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. In 2015 Georgia received 10 recommendations addressing LGBT issues; Georgia accepted 9 and noted 1. The received recommendations address the importance of establishing efficient mechanisms for the implementation of the Anti-Discrimination law, combatting hate speech and stigmatization of LGBT persons, and establishing efficient mechanisms to combat hate crimes.

We commend Georgia on accepting most of the recommendations on SOGIE issues. However, we disagree that the issues raised in the recommendations have already been or are being implemented. We also commend Georgia on undertaking "to identify, assign the task to and train specialized police officers for hate crime investigation in all regional police departments", but we do expect that Ministry of Internal Affairs take measures to involve NGO's working on LGBT issues in the process.

Mr. President,

Worries remain. With Georgia's recent membership of the Human Rights Council, we expect the State to act more responsibly and follow up on its international human rights commitments, inclusive of the rights of LGBT persons. However, no amendments have been made to significantly improve the implementation mechanism of the Anti-Discrimination Law. We expect Georgia to consider the feedback from PDO and NGO's and amend the law to include an efficient, legally binding mechanism of implementation.

The Ministry of Justice remains reluctant to change the practice of legal gender recognition for trans people, although problems stemming from the incoherence between one's gender identity and gender marker remain. Unemployment, poor housing, stigma and discrimination have already led to the tragic deaths of two transgender women¹. Georgia should establish swift, transparent and accessible mechanism of legal gender recognition which does not require prior medical interventions.

While Georgia claims that the State is combating hate speech and stigmatization of LGBT people, SOGIE issues continue to be used for political speculations; currently, with the approaching Parliamentary elections, Georgian MP's and government officials do not refrain from homophobic/transphobic statements and initiatives, which increase the level of homophobia and transphobia in our society.

Mr. President,

We urge the state to support public education campaigns to combat hate speech and social stigmatization of LGBT persons and take effective measures to increase tolerance and social inclusion in Georgian society. As we stand ready to work with Georgia's government, we expect our State to be consistent with all its commitments and promises, and properly address the issues and act accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. President

¹ Sabi Beriani, murdered in her apartment on November 10, 2014; Bianka Shigurova died as a result of a gas-leak February 4, 2016.