

30^h session of the Human Rights Council

Item 6 – Consideration of UPR Outcome of Bulgaria Statement by the Allied Rainbow Communities International

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Mr. President,

I want to commend the significant legislative actions and changes taken place in Bulgaria in terms of the recommendations regarding LGBTI rights received during the previous UPR session in 2010. In order to further improve the legal frame work and the policies regarding this issue I would like to note few problematic topics which need to be taken into consideration.

First of all, based on the annual reports of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Bilitis foundation it has to be outlined that there is no significant development of the effective measures to overcome continuing discriminatory patterns against LGBTI persons through education and training. The topic of LGBTI issues has not been included in the official educational program and there is no training provided to the law enforcement institutions when dealing with LGBTI people.

Secondly, the efforts to overcome stereotypical attitudes regarding the roles of men and women and existing gender inequality remain unsatisfactory keeping in mind the fact that Bulgaria has not ratified the Istanbul convention from 2011.

Third, gender identity and expression need to be included as single comprehensive protected characteristic among other protected characteristics in the law (not only in case of gender reassignment and not as derivative of gender/sex). This will make it inclusive for intersex people. It is highly problematic that there is no gender recognition law in the Bulgarian legislative system.

Hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity have to be included in the Penalty Code and sexual orientation and gender identity or expression need to be included as a qualifying circumstance.

Last but not least the topic of civil unions between people of same sex has not been taken into a serious consideration and there is not political will for further discussions and consultations. Same sex couples who are fully recognized citizens and taxpayers are denied the right to benefit from an official civil union on social, economic and legislative level.

We believe that there will be many changes in the law framework and we are ready to cooperate and work together with the Bulgarian government in order to improve the legislation and the social policies regarding the rights of LGBTI people and women.

Thank you