



General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 December 2018

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fortieth session

25 February–22 March 2019

Agenda item 6

Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Malta

* The annex is being circulated without formal editing, in the language of submission only.

GE.18-22170(E)



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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its thirty-first session from 5 to 16 November 2018. The review of Malta was held at the 16th meeting, on 14 November 2018. The delegation of Malta was headed by the Minister for European Affairs and Equality, Helena Dalli. At its 18th meeting, held on 16 November 2018, the Working Group adopted the report on Malta.

2. On 10 January 2018, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Malta: Ethiopia, Iraq and Switzerland.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Malta:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/MLT/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/MLT/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/MLT/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Belgium, Brazil, Portugal, on behalf of the Group of Friends on national implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to Malta through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The head of the delegation of Malta emphasized the importance of the universal periodic review in assessing the human rights records of all Member States in order to improve the protection of such rights. She expressed the commitment of Malta towards the promulgation of human rights and equality across all of Maltese society and beyond.

6. The delegation highlighted the efforts of Malta to enhance social dialogue and transparency, *inter alia*, by setting up minority consultative councils and including civil society representatives in several processes, such as the Open Government Partnership, the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development and the Malta-European Union Steering and Action Committee.

7. Malta was strongly committed to the universal periodic review mechanism. The recommendations from the second review cycle had been built upon, as had been noted in its national report. Malta had made huge strides forward in enacting legislation guaranteeing social and political rights since 2013, for example in the areas of family law, gender recognition, marriage equality, women's rights, measures against gender-based and domestic violence, access to assisted reproductive technology, minority rights and child protection.

8. Malta had been shocked by the assassination of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017. The Government remained committed to elucidating that vile crime. Investigations had started immediately in collaboration with key international institutions. Three persons had been charged within 49 days, and judicial proceedings were under way. The Government had pursued investigations to identify those who had commissioned the murder of the journalist.

9. Maltese laws on libel and slander had been improved through the Media and Defamation Act (2018). The Act strengthened the right to freedom of expression through the abolition of criminal libel, the introduction of the new civil tort of slander, and the regulation of web-based news and current affairs services.

10. In 2013, Malta had enacted the Protection of the Whistle-blower Act foreseeing extensive protection for whistle-blowers in employer-employee or employer-contractor relations. Journalistic freedoms and the protection of journalists' sources were guaranteed by the Act. The Act provided extensive guarantees, including immunity from legal proceedings. Actions such as threats, intimidation and harassment were criminal offences under the Act.

11. Malta had made efforts to strengthen the rule of law, including through improved party financing legislation and the establishment of the Office of the Commissioner for Standards in Public Life and a parliamentary committee to scrutinize senior public appointees.

12. The constitutional reform in the justice sector in 2016 had significantly strengthened the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. The three pillars of the reform were transparency in the appointment of magistrates and judges, accountability of the judiciary, and improved working conditions for members of the judiciary.

13. Malta had continued to receive a significant number of first-time asylum applications and remained at the forefront of protecting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Malta had enacted legislation barring the detention of children while providing the necessary assistance to unaccompanied minors. Furthermore, it had provided for legal assistance to asylum seekers regardless of age.

14. In 2015, Malta had launched a strategy in line with the European Union Reception Conditions Directive, establishing a reception system based on three different stages of accommodation for asylum seekers and irregular migrants, namely initial reception centres, closed detention centres and open centres. The Human Rights and Integration Directorate of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties had been set up in 2015 to make progress, inter alia, in the integration and protection of the rights of minorities.

15. In 2017, Malta had set up the Council for Women's Rights with the aim of strengthening the dialogue between the Government and civil society on gender equality and mainstreaming equality in all aspects of governmental processes. Malta had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which had been transposed into national legislation. The Government had also launched the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy with the aim of ensuring that legislation, policies and services comprehensively addressed the needs of victims. The Strategy and its corresponding action plan were a renewed call to members of society, particularly men and boys, to change their attitudes towards greater equality and gender stereotypes.

16. The Government was implementing two projects to strengthen multisectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation in dealing with violence against women and gender-based violence, to introduce training programmes and a manual of procedures for those in contact with potential victims and to address violence against migrant women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning women and women with disabilities.

17. The employment rate of women had increased from 47 per cent in 2014 to 60 per cent in 2018, due to governmental efforts to combat gender stereotypes and empower women. The Government had also introduced greater transparency into employment contracts to address the gender pay gap and free childcare services to parents or guardians who were in employment or pursuing their education to help them achieve a better work-life balance.

18. The delegation reiterated the commitment of the Government to promote sexual and reproductive health and to protect the right of women to have control over and decide freely on matters related to their sexuality, and the timing, number and spacing of children, free from coercion, discrimination and violence. Notwithstanding that, abortion remained illegal.

19. Due to recent changes, same-sex couples and single women had the same right as heterosexual couples to access assisted reproductive technologies. Furthermore, legislative changes enabled couples using medically assisted procreation technology to have up to 100 hours of paid leave.

20. From marriage equality to gender-neutral markers, the progress registered by Malta concerning the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning individuals had been praised by OHCHR. Malta remained a leading European country in protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning persons in the areas of equality and non-discrimination, family affairs, hate crimes and hate speech, legal gender recognition and bodily integrity, civil society space and asylum. Moreover, Parliament had debated the matter extensively during the adoption of the Civil Unions Act (2014), the Gender Identity Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (2015), the Affirmation of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression Act (2016) and the Marriage Equality Act (2017).

21. All couples enjoyed the same rights in Malta. No one was barred from adopting a child simply because of his or her personal characteristics, and all individuals enjoyed the right to the recognition of his or her gender identity. Additionally, policies had been put in place to ensure inclusive education and a safe school environment for transgender, gender-variant and intersex students.

22. The protection of the rights of the child remained a priority on the human rights agenda of Malta, and the Government was placing greater emphasis on the physical and mental well-being of children, in particular those in vulnerable situations. As part of those efforts, Malta had enacted the Child Protection (Alternative Care) Act (2017). The Act catered for a review of the childcare system, providing, inter alia, for children's protection during judicial proceedings, including the availability of children's advocates.

23. Regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, Malta followed a two-pronged approach of empowerment and protection. Noteworthy legislative instruments were the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (2000) and other disability-specific legislation, such as the Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act (2016) and the Persons within the Autism Spectrum (Empowerment) Act (2016). Furthermore, the Government had launched the National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability in 2014, after convening the Fair Society Action Council, composed of persons with disabilities, academics and civil society stakeholders. Malta had also been finalizing its National Disability Strategy.

24. The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability had been formally designated as the independent monitoring mechanism, in accordance with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Commission had a mandate, inter alia, to assess whether public places were accessible to all and to vet planning applications towards that end.

25. Malta intended to establish a national human rights institution. Malta had finalized an Equality Bill and a Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill in close consultation with national stakeholders and international partners.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

26. During the interactive dialogue, 64 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

27. Uganda commended Malta for various initiatives taken to improve the human rights situation since its second review cycle, in particular the rights of persons with disabilities.

28. Ukraine commended Malta for its achievements in combating domestic violence and promoting gender equality. It encouraged Malta to continue its efforts to safeguard and promote human rights and to raise awareness of them through education.

29. The United Kingdom welcomed the progress in combating discrimination and encouraged Malta to establish the National Human Rights and Equality Commission in

accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). It noted advances in judicial reform and urged Malta to give further attention to the slowness of judicial progress.

30. The United States of America commended the Media and Defamation Act, abolishing criminal libel. It encouraged Malta to address terrorist financing, money-laundering and corruption in banking supervision. It noted that the ongoing investigation of the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia had revealed challenges to the rule of law.

31. Uruguay welcomed the progress made in protecting the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, particularly in the treatment of unaccompanied minors, migrant families with children and pregnant women. It commended Malta for the legislative measures taken to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

32. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela commended Malta for the progress made in the protection of the rights of children and persons with disabilities, ensuring equality, including gender equality, in public and political life, and combating discrimination and racism. It noted the efforts of the Government to establish a national human rights institution.

33. Viet Nam noted with appreciation the progress achieved in protecting and promoting human rights since the second review cycle, in particular the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities.

34. Afghanistan commended the efforts of the Government in combating trafficking in persons, including through the development of victim assistance services, the training of government officials, public awareness-raising initiatives and the establishment of a national referral mechanism.

35. Albania welcomed the legislative measures taken to protect the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities. It commended Malta for the reforms to the justice sector, including reinforcement of the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and for the project to decriminalize defamation. It inquired about the measures taken to protect the safety of journalists.

36. Algeria noted with appreciation the efforts of the Government to protect and promote human rights. It encouraged Malta to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles and to make further efforts to fully protect individuals from all forms of discrimination.

37. Argentina noted with appreciation the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

38. Australia welcomed the efforts made to enhance the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and increase female participation in the workforce. It commended Malta on the adoption of a strategy and law on gender-based violence and domestic violence. It encouraged Malta to incentivize female workforce participation and to strengthen the representation of women in leadership and management positions and to focus on care for older persons.

39. Austria commended Malta for ratifying the Istanbul Convention and the progress made in protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. It was concerned about the killing of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia and asked about the measures taken to ensure the safety of journalists and their protection from threats, intimidation and violence.

40. Belarus noted the ratification of a number of human rights treaties and the implementation of a national action plan on trafficking in persons. It noted its concerns in relation to the manifestations of racism and xenophobia against migrants and the detention of irregular migrants, and detainees' access to a lawyer and their unsatisfactory conditions of detention.

41. Belgium congratulated Malta for the integration of persons with disabilities and for successfully promoting and protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and

intersex persons. It expressed concern about traditional stereotypes and the lack of progress on gender equality.

42. Botswana commended Malta for its ratification of the Istanbul Convention and for its efforts to establish a national human rights institution. It noted, however, the challenges in addressing racism, gender equality and trafficking in persons.

43. Brazil commended Malta for its achievements in the areas of social inclusion, poverty reduction and access to education and for adopting laws to combat violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including legalizing same-sex marriage and protecting the right of transgender persons to their gender identity.

44. Bulgaria commended Malta for its commitment to promote the representation of women in political and public life. It noted the adoption of the Child Protection (Alternative Care) Act and the National Children's Policy. It noted several measures taken by Malta to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including the adoption of legislation to ensure their inclusion in the governing bodies of public entities.

45. Cameroon noted with appreciation the commitment of Malta to support the United Nations instruments related to the protection and promotion of human rights.

46. Canada welcomed the steps taken by Malta to protect and strengthen the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and the adoption of a number of laws, strategies and policies, particularly with regard to the rights of women and migrants.

47. Chile welcomed the ratification of various human rights treaties. It urged Malta to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. It expressed concern about persisting violence against and racial discrimination of migrants.

48. China commended Malta for its commitment to safeguard the human rights of its people, adopt measures against discrimination, racism and trafficking in persons, protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities, and promote gender equality and social inclusiveness.

49. Costa Rica noted the commitment of the Government to combat violence against women and trafficking in persons and to protect the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. It urged Malta to continue those efforts. It was concerned about the lack of progress in dealing with statelessness and the low participation rate of women in public life and senior decision-making positions.

50. Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the efforts of the Government to improve the situation of human rights and strengthen the normative and institutional framework. It encouraged Malta to continue its reforms aimed at improving the situation of women, children and migrants.

51. Croatia welcomed the adoption of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion for 2014 to 2024. It concurred with the observations of the Human Rights Committee that further efforts should be made to prosecute the perpetrators of violence against women and children.

52. Cyprus commended Malta for its efforts to promote gender equality and enhance the participation of women in the labour market and public life. It also welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

53. Czechia welcomed the measures taken to improve the treatment of prisoners and detainees and to strengthen the independence, impartiality and transparency of the judicial system through constitutional amendments. It encouraged Malta to continue those efforts.

54. Denmark commended the efforts of Malta to protect freedom of expression, including the adoption of the new Media and Defamation Act. It was concerned, however, about the state of media freedom and the safety of journalists, in the light of the assassination of the investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

55. Egypt commended Malta for its continued efforts to promote and protect human rights. It welcomed the efforts of Malta to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, in particular refraining from the detention of children and women.

56. Finland noted the remaining challenges in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights and encouraged Malta to take further action in that regard. It also expressed concern about the freedoms of expression and the media, the justice system and ensuring the rule of law and good governance.

57. France welcomed the implementation of a number of recommendations from the second review cycle, in particular the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

58. Georgia commended Malta for its ratification of the Istanbul Convention. It also welcomed the measures taken to prevent trafficking in persons for the purpose of labour exploitation.

59. Germany commended Malta for the introduction of same-sex marriage in July 2017. Germany expressed concern that there was no explicit prohibition on the recruitment of children under the age of 15 years in the Armed Forces in Malta.

60. Greece commended Malta for its ratification of the Istanbul Convention, the initiatives to encourage women to enter or remain in the labour market and the enactment of the Civil Unions Act, granting same-sex couples in a civil union the same rights as heterosexual married couples.

61. The delegation of Malta provided responses to a number of questions posed by Member States. Regarding the rights of women and sexual and reproductive health and rights, the Government had carried out awareness-raising campaigns on health, sexuality and relationship education since 2013. Malta had licensed the sale of emergency contraception without medical prescription.

62. Regarding questions on the representation of women in decision-making roles, women constituted 15 per cent of members of Parliament and half of the country's representatives within the European Parliament. The President of Malta was a woman. The delegation expressed the commitment of Malta to promote gender-balanced representation in the public arena. The 2017 government programme had included positive measures to increase the participation rate of women in Parliament, and national discussions had been launched to introduce gender equality targets. The Government would publish a green paper on the constitutional amendments to be introduced into Parliament.

63. The Government had been considering legal amendments to allow ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the withdrawal of some of its reservations to the Convention. However, Malta would retain its reservation to article 16 of the Convention.

64. As regards the fight against corruption, money-laundering and financial crimes, the constitutional reforms to the justice sector in 2016 had strengthened the independence of the judiciary. In addition, Malta had had a robust regulatory framework since 1994 and a legal framework for the banking sector since 1968.

65. Malta had increased the financial allocations and human resources of the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit in order to strengthen its supervisory role in mitigating the risks associated with money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. The Unit had been operating in accordance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force. The Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (1994) provided guarantees for the independence of the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit and extensive powers to investigate. The Unit had also been mandated to ensure compliance with anti-money laundering laws through the imposition of considerable fines.

66. Furthermore, Malta had transposed the European Union anti-money-laundering directives into national law, and was continuously discussing with the European Commission the issue of how to improve its legal framework.

67. The Government was actively working to save thousands of migrants at sea and to protect their rights. The Armed Forces of Malta, which were responsible for maritime search and rescue, had been guided by the provisions of international law. Meanwhile, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers had been providing material support and accommodation to asylum seekers.

68. Additionally, asylum seekers were entitled to receive emergency health care and medical treatment. Malta had transposed the European Union Reception Conditions Directive into national law, which ensured the protection of family life and access to legal advisers and representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The legislation also provided asylum seekers with the right to access the labour market after a period of nine months, as long as they had retained their status. With the adoption of the country's Migrant Integration Strategy, asylum seekers could present an integration request, prior to the determination of their application.

69. Malta had already implemented certain provisions of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, including those intended to prevent and address the statelessness of abandoned children. At the same time, the Government was considering the possibility of ratifying the Convention.

70. The Directorate for Human Rights and Integration, which had been set up in 2015, had been designated as the national mechanism to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations from the universal periodic review. The Directorate had cooperated with civil society organizations on issues relating to human rights.

71. The Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act (2018) had strengthened legal provisions criminalizing trafficking, forced prostitution and sexual exploitation. The budget allocations to combat trafficking in persons and assist the victims of exploitation had been increased. One of the new projects that had been financed focused on raising public awareness to prevent trafficking in persons. A second project aimed at providing support to victims of trafficking in persons and reducing the chances of being re-trafficked. Additionally, cooperation between civil society and the Government had been strengthened through consultation processes.

72. As for mental health services, Malta would spend 30 million euros to build a new psychiatric facility and refurbish the current psychiatric hospital. Mental health had been identified as a priority area in the National Health Strategy 2020–2030. Moreover, the World Health Organization had provided technical assistance to draft the mental health plan.

73. Malta was striving to improve its justice sector. The number of pending cases before the Civil Court, Criminal (Superior) Court and Family Court had reduced and the clearance rate for criminal cases had increased. A new commercial section within the Civil Court had recently started functioning.

74. Following a long consultation process with national, regional and international stakeholders, Malta was close to initiating parliamentary discussions on the establishment of a national human rights institution. In that connection, the Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill had envisaged the establishment of a national institution to protect human rights, and investigate and issue binding decisions on alleged human rights violations. It would act as an independent and impartial body, in full accordance with the Paris Principles and the European Union's legislation on equality.

75. The Holy See acknowledged the efforts of the Government to combat every form of violence and to foster a family-friendly environment in the workplace. It also welcomed the efforts made to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants and refugees who continued to pass through Malta.

76. Hungary commended Malta for carrying out the preparatory work for the establishment of a national human rights institution. Hungary also commended Malta for its efforts to strengthen its legislation on equality.

77. Iceland commended Malta for the decision of its Parliament to approve legislation on marriage equality, extending full marriage rights to same-sex couples. It noted that Malta had been a strong supporter and advocate of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons during the previous few years.

78. Indonesia noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Government to guarantee fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life. It welcomed the approval of the Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons and the establishment of the Council for Women's Rights in 2017.

79. Iraq welcomed the policies and programmes of the Government to promote and protect human rights, including a plan to implement the recommendations from the previous review cycle.
80. Ireland welcomed the steps taken by the Government to amend the anti-discrimination legal framework in order to include sexual orientation, gender identity and religion as prohibited grounds for discrimination. It noted with appreciation the commitment of the Government to take measures to combat trafficking in persons and provide assistance to the victims.
81. Italy commended Malta for ratifying the Istanbul Convention and for its efforts to eradicate gender discrimination through awareness-raising campaigns in the education field, promote gender equality in employment and uphold the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities through equal opportunities.
82. Japan welcomed the efforts made by Malta to combat violence against women, including through the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. It noted with appreciation the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
83. Jordan commended Malta for the steps it had taken to implement the recommendations from the previous review cycle and to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, as well as the legislative reforms enacted to integrate the international treaties to which Malta was a party.
84. The Lao People's Democratic Republic commended Malta for making good progress in implementing the recommendations from the previous review cycle, including those relevant to the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities.
85. Libya commended Malta for the efforts it had made to implement the recommendations from the previous review cycle, particularly those aimed at strengthening the protection of the rights of women and children and the health and education sectors, and for its cooperation with the international human rights mechanisms.
86. Maldives commended Malta for the efforts it had made to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities through the national policy on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Persons with Disabilities (Employment) Act.
87. Mexico noted the establishment of the Council for Women's Rights, which aimed at integrating equality in all government processes, the ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights) and the entry into force of the amendments to the Persons with Disabilities (Employment) Act.
88. Montenegro commended Malta for strengthening its national normative framework for human rights. It encouraged Malta to make further progress in setting up a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles. It noted the ratification by Malta of the Istanbul Convention and the measures it had taken to bring its legislation into line with the provisions of the Convention.
89. Nepal noted with appreciation the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion using a human rights-based approach to achieve socioeconomic development. It also noted the measures taken to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to uphold the rights of children.
90. The Netherlands commended Malta for its legislative measures to ensure the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and for its commitment to establish an independent human rights institution. It expressed concern about the safety of journalists. It regretted that abortion remained a criminal offence, under all circumstances.
91. The Philippines commended Malta for taking legislative measures aimed at protecting human rights and for its efforts to promote the participation of women in political life and gender equality in employment; as well as its enhancement of the safeguards against trafficking in persons through the adoption of a national action plan.

92. Portugal commended Malta for ratifying Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights in 2015 and for amending its legal framework against discrimination to introduce religion, sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for discrimination. It also commended the efforts made to protect the rights of migrants.

93. The Republic of Korea noted with appreciation the amendments to the Criminal Code aimed at prohibiting corporal punishment of children and increasing the age of criminal responsibility from 9 to 14 years. It welcomed the criminalization of female genital mutilation.

94. The Republic of Moldova noted the progress made in promoting gender equality, combating discrimination and gender-based violence and improving the child protection framework. In particular, it welcomed the adoption of the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, the establishment of the Council for Women's Rights and the adoption of the Child Protection (Alternative Care) Act, at the centre of which were the child's best interests.

95. Romania commended Malta for its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and for its constructive engagement with the universal periodic review mechanism. It noted the progress made by the Government in the protection of human rights since the second review cycle.

96. Senegal welcomed the progress made by Malta in implementing the recommendations from the second review cycle. It noted that the institutional and administrative reforms carried out by the Government since 2012 had consolidated respect for civil and political rights.

97. Serbia commended Malta for its efforts and achievements since the previous review cycle and for its constructive approach and open dialogue with the United Nations human rights mechanisms.

98. Singapore welcomed the efforts of the Government to promote the rights of women and gender equality, particularly through the Council for Women's Rights, the free childcare scheme and the extension of paternity leave for civil servants. It commended Malta for its efforts to combat trafficking in persons and noted the adoption of the Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons.

99. Slovenia was concerned that the investigation into the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia had not managed to find those who had commissioned the killing of the journalist. It noted with appreciation the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the legislative changes made to the mandate of the existing national human rights institution in order to bring it into line with the Paris Principles.

100. Spain welcomed the efforts made by Malta to eradicate the stereotypes about migrants and combat discrimination against them. It hailed the adoption of the Media and Defamation Act. It appreciated the fact that the age of criminal responsibility had been increased from 9 to 14 years.

101. The State of Palestine welcomed the steps taken by Malta to combat discrimination, including through the extension of the mandate of the National Human Rights and Equality Commission and the Strategy for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants.

102. Sweden congratulated Malta for the adoption of a law on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, the steps taken to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights and the strategy to strengthen the integration of migrants. It noted that the recent murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia had revealed the risks related to the investigation of corruption, money-laundering and organized crime.

103. Switzerland welcomed the legal amendments made to recognize the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including the legal recognition of partnerships between same-sex couples. It noted with concern that the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia questioned the status of freedom of expression in Malta, particularly press freedom.

104. Tunisia welcomed the efforts made by Malta to strengthen its legal and institutional framework, to expand the powers of the National Human Rights and Equality Commission and to ratify various international human rights instruments, particularly the Istanbul Convention.

105. The delegation of Malta thanked Member States for putting forward questions and recommendations during the interactive dialogue. The Government was determined to accept as many recommendations as it was in a position to do in order to improve further the living standards and quality of life of its citizens.

106. Malta had made significant progress due to the ratification of various human rights instruments and its membership of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Government would continue to build on those achievements.

107. The retrospective assessment of the previous reviews had demonstrated that Malta had made progress in many areas, notably in the protection of the rights of minorities and women. The Government had introduced cohabitation rights, civil unions and marriage equality for all couples, regardless of gender or sexual identity. The right to family life and equal adoption had been extended to single persons.

108. Furthermore, Malta had made efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities were able to live independently and to promote their inclusion in the labour market. To ensure the economic independence of women, measures had been taken to facilitate employment or re-entry to the labour market. Malta had opened up to foreigners and had continued to honour its obligations towards refugees and persons enjoying subsidiary protection. Progress had also been made in the protection of the rights of women and persons with disabilities.

109. In conclusion, it was imperative for the Government to continue its efforts to strengthen national institutions, increase collaboration with civil society and widen social dialogue. Human rights should be mainstreamed across all policies and practices and serve as the main reference point for all future reforms.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

110. **The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Malta and enjoy the support of Malta:**

- 110.1 **Bolster cooperation with the United Nations treaty bodies (Senegal);**
- 110.2 **Intensify efforts to establish a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Uganda);**
- 110.3 **Establish a consolidated national institution with broad competence in the field of human rights, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Ukraine);**
- 110.4 **Establish a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Cameroon);**
- 110.5 **Establish a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Spain);**
- 110.6 **Establish, in full conformity with the Paris Principles, an independent national human rights institution (Finland);**
- 110.7 **Move towards the creation of a national institution with broad competence in the field of human rights (Chile);**
- 110.8 **Accelerate internal processes for the establishment of a national institution for human rights, in accordance with the Paris Principles, as recommended previously (Costa Rica);**
- 110.9 **Consider further necessary steps to establish a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Nepal);**

- 110.10 **Adopt the law on the establishment of the national human rights institution (Hungary);**
- 110.11 **Strengthen efforts in establishing a national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Indonesia);**
- 110.12 **Establish a national human rights institution as an independent body in full conformity with the Paris Principles (Ireland);**
- 110.13 **Establish a consolidated national institution with broad competence in the field of human rights, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Portugal);**
- 110.14 **Establish a dedicated national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Republic of Korea);**
- 110.15 **Establish a body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to equal treatment (Greece);**
- 110.16 **Further guarantee the rights of groups, including migrants, women, children and persons with disabilities (China);**
- 110.17 **Ensure that, in the future, a consultative process for the drafting of the national report for the universal periodic review is established, and that meetings with civil society are organized in order to evaluate the outcomes of the review (Finland);**
- 110.18 **Provide consultations with civil society organizations during the process of implementing the recommendations from the current review cycle and the drafting process of the report for the next cycle (Slovenia);**
- 110.19 **Continue to work towards streamlining and strengthening equality by prohibiting discrimination in various spheres of life (Greece);**
- 110.20 **Increase awareness on equality and non-discrimination, particularly against persons in vulnerable situations, such as migrants, through the provision of training and programmes to relevant stakeholders (Egypt);**
- 110.21 **Continue to promote public awareness-raising campaigns and provide adequate training for public officials on the right to equality and non-discrimination (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);**
- 110.22 **Introduce further effective measures to combat inequalities and uphold sustainable development (Viet Nam);**
- 110.23 **Take further practical steps to ensure full implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and to combat all forms of discrimination, including on grounds of race, sexual orientation, gender identity and others (Czechia);**
- 110.24 **Continue efforts to combat racial discrimination and protect vulnerable groups and to disseminate a culture of non-discrimination against migrants (Libya);**
- 110.25 **Redouble efforts to combat all forms of racism, intolerance, stereotypes and discrimination (Indonesia);**
- 110.26 **Continue efforts towards combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of related intolerance (Egypt);**
- 110.27 **Adopt specific measures to address reports of racism and xenophobia, including racially motivated violence and racial discrimination in access to employment, housing and services (Botswana);**
- 110.28 **Take measures to ensure the full implementation of legislation against xenophobia and discrimination, paying special attention to migrants (Chile);**
- 110.29 **Take effective measures to prevent incitement to racial hatred in social networks and bring those responsible to justice (Belarus);**

- 110.30 Continue efforts to combat hate speech against foreigners and promote a culture of difference and tolerance (Tunisia);
- 110.31 Implement legal instruments against hate crimes and awareness-raising campaigns to promote respect and tolerance, and ensure that victims of discrimination have access to all the necessary legal remedies for expediting the investigation and punishment of those responsible (Spain);
- 110.32 Adopt a comprehensive policy aimed at ending traditional stereotypes (Belgium);
- 110.33 Continue to promote sustainable economic and social development and to improve people's living standards (China);
- 110.34 Comply with the European Union's anti-money-laundering and countering terrorism finance directive (United States of America);
- 110.35 Ensure the full implementation of the European anti-money-laundering directives (France);
- 110.36 Strengthen its anti-corruption institutions, including the enforcement of anti-money-laundering regulations (Sweden);
- 110.37 Strengthen measures in the fight against corruption and impunity so that every Maltese citizen enjoys the same rights and obligations before the law (Belgium);
- 110.38 Continue to uphold the right to life from conception to natural death (Holy See);
- 110.39 Improve the work of national preventive mechanisms on torture, including by extending the mandates of the relevant councils to enable access to places of deprivation of liberty (Belarus);
- 110.40 Ensure that all persons detained by the police can effectively benefit from access to a lawyer throughout their police custody, including during any police questioning, and that the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code are amended accordingly (Hungary);
- 110.41 Take further measures to provide qualified health-care assistance to persons in places of pretrial detention (Belarus);
- 110.42 Continue to improve living conditions in prisons (United States of America);
- 110.43 Implement a targeted strategy to accelerate judicial processes to ensure decisions are reached within a reasonable time frame (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 110.44 Ensure that crimes and offences are investigated thoroughly and court cases are concluded within a reasonable amount of time (Netherlands);
- 110.45 Eliminate Title IV of the Criminal Code with a view to decriminalizing defamation and guaranteeing the full exercise of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, in addition to ensuring the physical and legal protection of journalists and human rights defenders (Spain);
- 110.46 Enhance the safeguards of the exercise of freedom of speech, especially in cases in which the accountability of public officials and institutions is concerned (Holy See);
- 110.47 Take measures to strengthen the independence of the media, in particular by removing from the Media and Defamation Act the possibility of resorting to lawsuits as this constitutes a means of pressure and censorship on the freedom of the press (Belgium);

110.48 Take all steps necessary to guarantee the full exercise of freedom of expression and of the press, as stipulated in the Constitution of Malta and in accordance with its international commitments in the field (Switzerland);

110.49 Create a conducive environment for media pluralism and independence in Malta, ensure the effective safety of journalists and guarantee proper and impartial investigations (Czechia);

110.50 Investigate fully all threats, harassment and violence against journalists, bringing to justice not only the direct perpetrators, but also those who incited them to commit those deeds (Denmark);

110.51 Investigate and prosecute cases of intimidation and violence against journalists (Australia);

110.52 Ensure accountability through the conduct of independent, impartial, prompt, thorough, effective, credible and transparent investigations into all cases of violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers (Austria);

110.53 Spare no efforts in fully investigating Daphne Caruana Galizia's assassination with a view to identifying all those involved and ensuring that there is no impunity for this crime (Slovenia);

110.54 In the light of the killing of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, take all measures to protect and support journalists working to uncover corruption and other matters of the highest public interest (Iceland);

110.55 Revise the legislation on the financing of political parties and the investigative powers of the Electoral Commission, in order to provide transparency with regard to donations to political parties and effective public control over the fulfilment of prerequisites for such donations (Germany);

110.56 Intensify efforts to combat trafficking in persons (Iraq);

110.57 Increase efforts in the fight against corruption and trafficking in persons, including by improving the relevant legislation and law enforcement practices (Belarus);

110.58 Ensure the implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons to ensure increased convictions of cases of trafficking in persons (Botswana);

110.59 Ensure sufficient resources are allocated for the effective implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons, in particular to improve the support provided to child victims of trafficking (Singapore);

110.60 Step up efforts to combat trafficking in persons through legislation and implementation of measures under its Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons for the period 2017 to 2019 (Philippines);

110.61 Conduct a review of the national action plan against trafficking in persons to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of trafficking-related crimes, while ensuring a victim-centred approach (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

110.62 Continue efforts aimed at protecting victims of trafficking in persons and ensure that legal remedies are offered to them (Algeria);

110.63 Continue to combat trafficking in persons, including by developing victim assistance services, providing training for government officials and raising public awareness (Indonesia);

110.64 Further advance its efforts in assisting victims of trafficking in accordance with their needs (Georgia);

- 110.65 Take further steps to assist the victims of trafficking, such as the provision of safe accommodation, adapted to the specific needs of victims (Ireland);
- 110.66 Improve the system for identifying victims of trafficking in persons, especially in the case of children, irregular migrants and asylum seekers (Spain);
- 110.67 Continue the fight against trafficking in persons by improving inter-agency interaction, enhancing victim assistance services, training government officials, raising public awareness and other relevant initiatives (Bulgaria);
- 110.68 Continue investigations of trafficking in persons, keeping in mind the recommendation made by a human rights treaty body to intensify efforts to combat such trafficking (Japan);
- 110.69 Ensure that access to services for older persons is dignified, affordable and readily available (Australia);
- 110.70 Continue to implement policies directed at improving access to health services and health education, with a particular focus on the needs of young persons (Moldova);
- 110.71 Continue efforts to promote human rights education at all levels of the national education system (Viet Nam);
- 110.72 Continue efforts to put in place a system of comprehensive sexuality education (Austria);
- 110.73 Continue implementation of the framework for the education strategy for the period from 2014 to 2024 in order to reduce the gaps in educational outcomes between boys and girls (Afghanistan);
- 110.74 Continue efforts to eliminate violence and discrimination against women (Maldives);
- 110.75 Continue efforts aimed at the elimination of violence against women and children (Côte d'Ivoire);
- 110.76 Redouble efforts to eliminate violence against women and children, and put in place mechanisms that guarantee their access to justice (Algeria);
- 110.77 Intensify efforts to eliminate violence against women and children and promote the participation of women in the public and private sectors (Mexico);
- 110.78 Continue efforts to prevent violence against women (Tunisia);
- 110.79 Continue to intensify actions to eradicate violence against women (Japan);
- 110.80 Fully implement legislative and practical efforts to address domestic and gender-based violence, including ensuring support for victims (Australia);
- 110.81 Adopt measures to ensure full respect for and implementation of its international obligations relating to gender-based violence, including through appropriate training for the police force and the judiciary (Canada);
- 110.82 Invest appropriate resources to ensure the implementation of existing strategies related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including ensuring access to safe, affordable and modern means of contraception, and information related to them (Canada);
- 110.83 Ensure women's sexual and reproductive rights, including through education and family planning (Australia);
- 110.84 Improve the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning (Iceland);

- 110.85 Continue initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in employment and the participation of women in decision-making positions (Romania);
- 110.86 Collaborate closely with the private sector to formulate policies that support women in re-entering the workforce (Singapore);
- 110.87 Take legislative measures and implement public policies to increase the participation of women in public life (Costa Rica);
- 110.88 Adopt concrete measures to promote women's full and equal participation in political and public life and accelerate women's full and equal participation in elected and appointed bodies (Iceland);
- 110.89 Continue efforts to strengthen policies and strategies aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of children and women (Lao People's Democratic Republic);
- 110.90 Continue its steps to further promote and protect the rights of the child, including addressing child abuse and sexual exploitation of children (Cameroon);
- 110.91 Continue the measures covering a wide spectrum of child-related issues in various areas, such as education, health, welfare support and so forth, aimed at guaranteeing better protection and improved opportunities for child development and well-being (Romania);
- 110.92 Take measures to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for young persons (Moldova);
- 110.93 Take the necessary measures to move towards a human rights-based approach to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and incorporate that approach in its national legislation and public policies (Argentina);
- 110.94 Take further steps to provide welfare services and assistance to all persons with disabilities, especially children (Bulgaria);
- 110.95 Continue efforts to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities (Cyprus);
- 110.96 Continue its commitment to promoting the empowerment of persons with disabilities to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities (Lao People's Democratic Republic);
- 110.97 Continue efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and provide the necessary support to the relevant national mechanisms (Jordan);
- 110.98 Strengthen its mechanisms to protect and promote the human rights of migrants in the country (Uganda);
- 110.99 Strengthen efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants, inter alia, by conducting public awareness-raising campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for diversity (Afghanistan);
- 110.100 Strengthen efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants, inter alia, by conducting public awareness-raising campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for diversity (Portugal);
- 110.101 Create campaigns that promote tolerance and inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and apply legislation to combat all forms of discrimination (Mexico);
- 110.102 Strengthen efforts aimed at the elimination of stereotypes and discrimination against migrants, in particular by carrying out awareness-raising campaigns to promote tolerance (Côte d'Ivoire);

- 110.103 Continue to strengthen efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants, by conducting public awareness-raising campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for diversity (State of Palestine);
- 110.104 Make further efforts to combat discrimination against foreigners and asylum seekers (Iraq);
- 110.105 Provide effective protection of migrants (Cameroon);
- 110.106 Continue effectively to protect and guarantee the safety and fundamental human rights of migrants and refugees, especially minors (Holy See);
- 110.107 Continue to adopt effective measures to ensure the protection of the rights of all migrant workers (Nepal);
- 110.108 Intensify measures aimed at raising the awareness of the population in order to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants and refugees, and to investigate and sanction acts of discrimination against them (Argentina);
- 110.109 Provide for the effective protection of migrants from manifestations of racism and xenophobia and guarantee to them and to asylum seekers their rights, in accordance with international standards (Belarus);
- 110.110 Ensure fair treatment to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in accordance with its international human rights obligations (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 110.111 Ensure respect for the rights of migrants in irregular situations in detention camps (Senegal);
- 110.112 Continue to combat discrimination against refugees and minors (Senegal).
111. The following recommendations will be examined by Malta, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the fortieth session of the Human Rights Council:
- 111.1 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Austria) (Croatia) (Spain);
- 111.2 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and withdraw its reservations to the Convention (Albania);
- 111.3 Ratify the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and submit, as a matter of priority, all outstanding reports to the relevant treaty bodies (Czechia);
- 111.4 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, as recommended by Montenegro during the previous review cycle (Montenegro);
- 111.5 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal) (Spain);
- 111.6 Ratify the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Portugal) (Spain);
- 111.7 Consider acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Italy);
- 111.8 Consider acceding to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Italy);
- 111.9 Ratify the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions (Austria);

- 111.10 Sign and ratify the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Sweden);
- 111.11 Accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Costa Rica) (Côte d'Ivoire) (Montenegro);
- 111.12 Withdraw the reservation to article 29 (a) (i) and (iii) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and take the necessary steps to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully exercise their right to vote (Austria);
- 111.13 Withdraw reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which are incompatible with the principle of equality between men and women, and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention (France);
- 111.14 Adopt an open, merit-based process to select national candidates for United Nations human rights treaty body elections (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 111.15 Strengthen further the independence and mandates of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and the Parliamentary Ombudsman, with a view to making them compatible with the Paris Principles (Georgia);
- 111.16 Develop a national action plan in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Japan);
- 111.17 Ensure that its policies, legislation, regulations and enforcement measures effectively serve to prevent and address the heightened risk of business involvement in abuses in conflict situations, which include situations of foreign occupation (State of Palestine);
- 111.18 Increase the number of investigations and, where appropriate, prosecutions in cases of corruption and financial crime (United States of America);
- 111.19 Ensure that the national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment has the necessary powers and tools for its proper functioning, including human, financial and logistical resources, and that its mandate covers all places of deprivation of liberty and access to the corresponding documentation concerning allegations of ill-treatment (Czechia);
- 111.20 Put in place concrete measures to ensure that all cases of detention are subject to non-discriminatory judicial review (Republic of Korea);
- 111.21 Improve conditions in detention centres, including seeking alternatives to detention in accordance with international law, including human rights and refugee law, as well as existing European legislation (Sweden);
- 111.22 Ensure that children between 16 and 18 years of age are tried by special juvenile courts, not ordinary courts (Spain);
- 111.23 Revise the legislation on public service media, including appointment procedures, in order to establish safeguards against political interference (Germany);
- 111.24 Continue to reform legislation on media in order to better protect journalists (France);
- 111.25 Take steps in order to further increase the protection of journalists (Greece);
- 111.26. Adopt effective measures to guarantee the safety of journalists and the exercise of freedom of expression, such as the creation of a national mechanism for the protection of journalists (Mexico);

- 111.27 Conduct a transparent investigation into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia and exercise all due diligence to ensure that justice is done (Switzerland);
- 111.28 Guarantee that an independent and effective public inquiry into the killing of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is carried out, and enhance policies aimed at ensuring the safety of journalists (Brazil);
- 111.29 Continue to strengthen the mechanisms to combat trafficking in persons and to guarantee adequate protection, reparation and compensation to victims (Maldives);
- 111.30 Include in the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Bill an explicit mention of the link between gender inequality and violence against women, both in its preamble and in its implementation instruments (Chile);
- 111.31 Continue efforts to achieve gender equality, especially in the labour market, and eliminate wage disparities (Tunisia);
- 111.32 Intensify its efforts to eliminate violence against women and children, duly investigate cases of violence against them, provide access to justice for all women, increase the number of shelters with adequate resources, and improve the training for the staff of legal institutions and the police force (Croatia);
- 111.33 Continue and intensify efforts to eliminate violence against women and children, by duly investigating cases of violence against them and establishing a rehabilitation system for victims (Cyprus);
- 111.34 Intensify its efforts to eliminate violence against women and children, duly investigate cases of violence against them, establish a rehabilitation system for victims, provide access to justice for all women, increase the number of shelters with adequate resources, and improve training on the issue for the staff of legal institutions and the police force (Serbia);
- 111.35 Ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly blind persons and persons with intellectual disabilities, have the right to vote by secret ballot (Republic of Korea);
- 111.36 Work to address the shelter needs of migrants and asylum seekers, and in particular improve living conditions in open centres (Canada);
- 111.37 Promote the integration of migrants into Maltese society, reducing the time required for a person to reside in Malta before applying for citizenship, which is currently set at more than 18 years (Uruguay);
- 111.38 Ensure that migrants and refugees rescued at sea are promptly disembarked with full respect for their human rights, without arbitrary detention, and are given a genuine opportunity to seek asylum, and refrain from criminalizing persons involved in rescue activities at sea (Brazil);
- 111.39 Establish a national mechanism to identify stateless persons and guarantee their rights and protection (Mexico).
112. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Malta and have been noted by Malta:
- 112.1 Consider acceding to and ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Uruguay);
- 112.2 Consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families to complement its ongoing efforts in advancing migrants' welfare (Philippines);
- 112.3 Decriminalize abortion, preferably completely, but at least when the life or health of the mother is in danger, by bringing the law into line with obligations deriving from several human rights conventions (Netherlands);

112.4 **Reform laws on abortion with a view to legalizing it and improving the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, in particular family planning (France);**

112.5 **Amend the Criminal Code to decriminalize the termination of pregnancy in cases of rape, incest and severe foetal impairment, and eliminate all punitive measures (Denmark);**

112.6 **Take steps to increase the promotion and protection of women's full enjoyment of their human rights, especially the ability to make decisions concerning their own bodies and reproduction, including the legalization of abortion (Sweden).**

113. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

[English Only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Malta was headed by the Minister for European Affairs and Equality, Ms. Helena Dalli and composed of the following members:

- Mr. Joseph Camilleri – Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality;
 - Mr. Olaph J. Terribile – Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations and Other Organizations;
 - Mr. Joseph Vella – Chef de Cabinet at the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union;
 - Dr. Charmaine Gauci – Director General, Office of the Superintendence of Public Health;
 - Ms. Maria Galea – Director General, Strategy and Support Office, Ministry for Education and Employment;
 - Dr. Daniel Attard – Government Spokesperson, Ministry for European Affairs and Equality;
 - Mr. George Sultana – Director, Policy Development and Programme Implementation, Ministry for the Family, Children’s Rights and Social Solidarity;
 - Mr. Silvan Agius – Director, Human Rights and Integration Directorate, Ministry for European Affairs and Equality;
 - Ms. Francesca Gatt – Director, Global Issues, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion;
 - Dr. Ann Marie Cutajar – Lawyer, Office of the Attorney General;
 - Ms. Renee Laiviera – Commissioner, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality;
 - Mr. David Cassar – Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Malta to the United Nations and Other Organizations;
 - Mr. Roberto Pace – First Secretary, Permanent Representation of Malta to the United Nations and Other Organizations;
 - Ms. Justine Micallef – First Secretary, Permanent Representation of Malta to the United Nations and Other Organizations.
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