

Human Rights Council – 30th session (14 September – 2 October 2015)

**General Comment after the vote regarding draft resolution HRC30/L.25/Rev 1:
Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism**

Ireland on behalf of a group of States

2 October 2015

Mr President

Ireland wishes to explain its position in relation to draft resolution L.25/ Rev 1 - Human rights and preventing and countering violent extremism. We do so on our own behalf and on behalf of group of States members and observers, namely: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Mexico, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

We are fully committed to preventing and combatting violent extremism in all its forms. We support efforts to do so in all appropriate ways which are in compliance with international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. We are also fully supportive of initiatives advancing human rights education, including in light of its role in preventing and countering violent extremism.

We voted in favour of draft resolution L.25/Rev.1 due to these considerations and our consequent support for the overall objectives of the draft.

However, we have serious concerns and reservations regarding a number of aspects of the resolution as adopted, including in particular a number of significant changes to the draft by oral revision just prior to action.

We are deeply concerned by the language of op 9, which purports to introduce an inappropriate qualification on the freedom of civil society to act “in accordance with national strategies”. This is not consistent with the obligations of States to create and maintain a safe and enabling environments for civil society. Further, this limitation to acting in accordance with national strategies does not respect the important role of an independent, diverse and pluralistic civil society in addressing human rights issues.

We are also particularly concerned about op7 bis regarding communications technology, including the internet. This paragraph introduces uncertain and unclear language referring to ‘supporters’ of violent extremism. Further, it does not reflect the human rights focus and approach which should apply in this Council. Nor is it consistent with the human rights approach applied over a long period in this Council, best reflected in the recurring resolutions adopted on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights online and offline. In protecting human rights and

fundamental freedoms we're recognizing that Internet is a powerful tool for supporting transparency, democracy and the involvement of civil society.

This is not an exhaustive list of our concerns in relation to the text, but it gives an indication of the difficulties which exist.

We also regret the manner in which the negotiations took place during the final stages and in particular that consideration of the draft resolution was not deferred from this morning until the afternoon session, to permit discussion and consultation here in Geneva and with capitals on the orally revised text, which contained a number of very significant alterations as compared to the tabled draft.

As set out above, we did not oppose the draft resolution due to our support for its overall objectives, but in light of our concerns with the text, we do not regard all the language of the resolution as adopted as a precedent for the future.

Thank you