

Universal Periodic Review – 22nd session

Statement by Ireland on the review of Belarus

4 May 2015

Ireland welcomes the delegation of Belarus and thanks it for the presentation of its report and for the submission of a voluntary mid-term report in 2012.

Bearing in mind concerns expressed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, we urge Belarus to ensure that those wishing to receive their education through the medium of the Belarusian language have the opportunity to do so, and to take effective measures to promote the wider use of the Belarusian language in all areas of life, including cultural life.

We continue to have serious concerns at a number of aspects of the human rights situation in Belarus, for example the continuing use of the death penalty, including where the Human Rights Committee has requested a stay of execution. Ireland **recommends** that Belarus take concrete steps towards the abolition of the death penalty, including the imposition of an immediate moratorium on its use.

The precarious position of civil society, existing under a legal and regulatory regime which makes it impossible to carry out legitimate activities without risking prosecution, is also of grave concern. Ireland **recommends** that Belarus create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment in which civil society can operate free from hindrance and insecurity, and can participate fully in democratic processes.