

25th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2 – Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Statement by the Czech Republic

Madam High Commissioner, Mr. President,

The Czech Republic supports the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

We would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the comprehensive Annual Report and her statement delivered today. We wish to reiterate our full support for her work. We are pleased to note that the High Commissioner has always been a positive force behind the coordinated action for human rights throughout the United Nations system. The international community does need strong, independent voices speaking up and acting for promotion and protection of human rights.

The Czech Republic is encouraged by the increased mobilization of civil society throughout the world for the defense of human rights, fundamental freedoms and enhanced participation in public affairs. We are glad that your office, Madam High Commissioner, is well aware of the importance and relevance of civil society and participatory approaches for the progressive realization of human rights for all as reflected in your new thematic priorities for the next four years. Free democratic space allowing for broad public participation is a pre-requisite for a healthy society rooted in the respect for human rights.

On the other hand, we remain gravely concerned about crackdowns on civil society we witness today in many parts of the world, be it through restrictive legislation and other forms of undue control of the public space or through the use of force against peaceful protestors calling for democratic changes. We do appreciate that your office, in timely response to these worrying trends, is aiming at the widening of the democratic space and thus contributing to the strengthening and sustainability of democratic checks-and-balances systems at the national level.

Madam High Commissioner, the Czech Republic wishes to reiterate its support for your continued efforts to provide tailored assistance and expertise to States through your country and regional offices. We commend your tireless efforts aimed at opening the offices in Egypt and Myanmar/Burma. However, we cannot but reiterate our disappointment over the delays by the Governments of both countries to finalize the agreements on the opening of the respective OHCHR field offices. We encourage them to fully engage with your Office and the Human Rights Council. We also encourage you, Madam High Commissioner, to remain seized of human rights situations in Egypt and Myanmar/Burma both prior and after the desired opening of the field offices. We are convinced that the network of field offices could play an important role in addressing the human rights situation also in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The Commission of Inquiry has presented a highly disturbing account of human rights

violations and crimes against humanity in the DPRK. We believe that this important evidence collection must be followed up and that the OHCHR with its offices in the region is particularly well-placed to carry out such a task.

To conclude, the Czech Republic would like to wish you, Madam High Commissioner, all success for the remainder of your mandate and beyond.

Thank you.