To: Pavlo Petrenko

The Minister of Justice of Ukraine

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Subject: **National Human Rights Strategy in Ukraine: LGBTI rights need further support!**

Dear Minister Petrenko,

LGBT Human Rights “Nash Mir” Center, Ukrainian civil society organization, recently have informed us about very slow progress and even governmental attempts to step back from previously acknowledged obligations to promote LGBTI rights in Ukraine. These rights comprise very important and essential components of the Action Plan on implementation of your National Human Rights Strategy.

In particular we would like to bring your attention and the attention of other responsible Ukrainian government authorities to several items of the Action Plan which have direct influences upon the situation of LGBT people: developing and adopting legislation on combating hate crimes on various grounds, including SOGI (item 105.3); explicit protection of LGBT people by anti-discrimination legislation (105.1); working out a draft law on registered partnership for same-sex couples (105.6); improving social and psychological assistance to vulnerable youth, including LGBTs (107.9); and some other important and obligatory tasks.

Nash Mir Center shared with us their enthusiasm and confidence foreseeing positive changes in the situation of LGBTI community after your country’s great landmark – the historic uprising known here as ‘Euromaidan’. We totally accord with and support their intention to live and enjoy this nation as a modern civilized country having a society where all people – the LGBTI community as well, – enjoy equality and respect.

At the same time it was regrettable to know that now they begin to feel disappointment over the very slow progress in the realization of the above mentioned LGBTI components of your national human rights plans and agenda. Recently they scrutinized with care your Ministries’ propositions for ‘updating’ the Human Rights Action Plan – including reneging on previous obligations of the Ukrainian government on LGBTI human rights. These erasures involved, for instance, removing from official obligations the explicit mentioning of SOGI in some new legislation, while in the Action Plan initially adopted in 2015 SOGI had to be mentioned explicitly.

We totally agree with Nash Mir that improving the human rights situation for Ukrainian LGBTI citizens must remain an integral and explicit task for the state. Without such improvement, progress and modernization of Ukrainian society and nation, and most countries, will be very slow indeed or even impossible. A glance at human rights standings elsewhere in the world proves the pertinence of this observation.

**So, we strongly call on Ukrainian authorities to accelerate and indeed fulfill the government’s already previously acknowledged obligations to further LGBTI rights.** Timely modernization is overdue and LGBTI citizens are suffering for it.

We hope you understand our deep concerns and our support for achieving, together, right solutions for the problems described in this letter.

In conclusion, we wish Ukraine further economic development, political confidence, strong international security, dynamic social development and all the best in the future. Help make it happen, underpinned inclusively by human rights assured by law, for all?

Sincerely yours,