

## **Human Rights Council 38<sup>th</sup> Session**

### **Annual full day discussion on the Human Rights of women**

#### **Panel 1: The impact of violence against women human rights defenders and women's organisations in digital space**

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

#### **National Statement of Ireland**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the EU and wishes to add the following.

Mr President,

Ireland welcomes the distinguished panellists and thanks them for their presentations today.

Ireland is wholly committed to the promotion of the rights of women and to the invaluable role of civil society. We welcome the opportunity that this panel gives to discuss how these rights intersect.

Women human rights defenders often face double discrimination based both on their gender and their work. Violence against women in the online sphere is a worrying phenomenon which infringes on the rights of women human rights defenders who choose to carry out their work online.

Through greater access to information and faster methods of communication the internet has had a transformative effect on the lives of many women and on civil society space as a whole. It has made it easier for human rights defenders to spread their message and for women and girls to become educated about their human rights. However, women and girls, in particular those who work for the promotion of human rights, face systemic misogyny, discrimination and violence online.

Ireland firmly believes that civil society plays a pivotal role in holding governments to account as well as supporting states in the implementation of their human rights obligations. Unfortunately, acts of reprisal, including violence, intimidation and smear campaigns, often prevent civil society actors from carrying out their role. Women human rights defenders, in particular, face gender based forms of violence and reprisals.

*We would be interested in hearing the views of the panel on how member states can do more to protect women human rights defenders from violence online?*