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15<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Montenegro

Statement by Austria

28 January 2013

We warmly welcome H.E. ... and the delegation of Montenegro and thank them for the presentation and the national report.

Austria commends the numerous efforts undertaken since the last review, including the ratification of international instruments such as the CRPD and the adoption of various laws and actions plans, including the general anti-discrimination law.

Although positive progress has been made to address discrimination in particular of the Roma community, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the Roma population was the most discriminated against and marginalized minority in Montenegro. We would be interested to know more about your strategies towards more inclusion of Roma into society in light of the recently adopted Strategy and Action Plan on this issue.

Austria is equally concerned that Montenegro had not yet regularized the legal status of a large number of displaced and internally displaced persons in order to minimize the risk of statelessness. In this context, we would like to inquire about your intension to ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Finally, we commend Montenegro for its efforts in the area of the rule of law, including the enhancement of the judicial independence. However, we remain concerned by reported acts of physical violence against journalists and media representatives. Could you inform us on further measures foreseen in order to ensure the safety of journalists?

Austria offers the following recommendations:

- Fully implement without further delay the provisions of the 2011 Anti-Discrimination Law;
- Continue to raise awareness of the needs of the Roma population, including children and establish an adequate system that provides for their social and educational inclusion;
- Pursue the implementation of the regional refugee housing program in the municipalities;
- Continue the improvements within the judicial reform process, including by eliminating political influence on the judiciary;
- Ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;
- Ensure further measures regarding the safety of journalists and the protection of the principle of press freedom.

I thank you.