

United Nations Human Rights Council

16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review

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Review of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Geneva, 29 April 2013

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi,  
Permanent Representative of AUSTRIA**

Thank you, Mr. President!

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of the Russian Federation to their second UPR. We thank them for their report and the presentation today.

At the first UPR examination of the Russian Federation in 2009, Austria expressed concerns regarding laws unduly restricting activities of civil society and NGOs. Sadly, both issues continue to give rise to concerns. We are particularly worried about the recent adoption of several new laws further curtailing civil liberties, such as changes to the assembly law, the internet law, the so-called "propaganda of homosexuality" laws, changes to the penal code related to the crimes of treason and espionage, as well as the so-called Foreign Agents Law.

Austria offers the following recommendations:

- Ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC, the 1954 and 1961 conventions regarding stateless persons and OP-CAT;
- Review recent legislative changes with a view to fully ensuring freedom of assembly and association, in accordance with international obligations;
- Intensify cooperation with the Council of Europe, in particular the Venice Commission, in properly implementing freedom of association and assembly;
- End the widespread practice of arresting participants at opposition rallies and pressing charges against them;
- Finally, intensify efforts to investigate cases of violence and intimidation against journalists and ensure that perpetrators are held to account.