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UN Human Rights Council
17th Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review
Review of MALTA

Geneva, 30 October 2013

Statement by AUSTRIA

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Thank you, Mr. President,

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Malta to their second UPR and thanks them for their national report and presentation.

We commend the Maltese government for all efforts undertaken since the last review, in particular the establishment of a ministry responsible for civil liberties and we are very pleased to welcome H.E. Minister Helena Dalli as head of delegation here today.

Austria is fully aware of the heavy burden Malta is bearing in relation to the high number of undocumented migrants coming on the seaway and seeking protection in the country. We commend that Malta - despite the limited and restricted resources - provides a migration and asylum system that is efficient and well organized. However, regarding unaccompanied migrant children seeking international protection, we recommend that Malta ensures that the best interest of the child, as spelled out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is of primary consideration in all asylum proceedings involving children. In this context, we call upon Malta to consider the principle that migrant children should not be subjected to detention.

We recognize the positive steps taken by Malta towards granting equality to LGBTI persons, for example by amending the Criminal Code as well as the Chapter 456 Equality for Men and Women Act. At the same time, Austria recommends that Malta takes swift action to further enhance equality legislation, particularly in the area of partnership and cohabitation, as proposed by the current Maltese government.

We also regret that Malta is among the few remaining countries who have not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), granting Maltese citizens the right to bring individual complaints before the CEDAW Committee. We recommend that Malta ratifies the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW as soon as possible.

I thank you, Mr. President