

**18<sup>th</sup> Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Slovakia**

**Statement by Austria**

3 February 2014

We warmly welcome the delegation of Slovakia to the UPR and express our appreciation to H.E. .... for his presentation. Austria commends the government of Slovakia for the numerous efforts undertaken since the last review, including the ratification of several UN and CoE human rights instruments and the adoption of a *National Roma Integration Strategy* in 2012.

We are however concerned that the pace of implementation of this *Strategy* is slow and that many of the members of the Roma remain caught in a spiral of exclusion and discrimination that affect their daily lives across a range of areas, from housing to education, employment and personal safety to name just a few.

We are particularly concerned about the recorded growing number of verbal and physical violence – including police violence - against Romani individuals and the rising number of anti-Roma marches and assemblies that take place in Slovakia.

We are furthermore concerned that measures to prevent and effectively address situations of unlawful segregation of Romani children in schools are still not in place.

We would therefore like to make the following recommendations:

- to take all necessary measures to implement the *National Roma Integration Strategy*. This includes the provision of financial means regarding the efficient implementation of this *Strategy*;
- to strengthen its efforts to combat racist attacks committed by law enforcement personnel, particularly against the Roma, by among others, providing special training to law enforcement personnel aimed at promoting respect for human rights and tolerance for diversity;
- to unequivocally and publicly condemn attacks against Roma and other minorities whenever they occur and to effectively investigate all reported cases of harassment of members of the Roma by the police forces;
- to adopt a concrete plan and measures leading to the abolition of segregated settings and achievement of better education outcomes for children from Romani communities;

I thank you!