

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

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

**Review of Kyrgyzstan**

**Geneva, 19 January 2015**

**Statement by AUSTRIA**

Austria welcomes H.E. .... and the delegation of Kyrgyzstan to the UPR and thanks for the submission and presentation of the national report.

Austria commends the democratic progress of the Kyrgyz republic since the last review and expresses its sincere hope that this development will continue in the future. We also commend the government for its efforts in implementing recommendations received during its first UPR, including the passing of a national action plan against torture and the establishment of a National Preventive Mechanism.

Despite these positive developments, we remain concerned about continuous reports of widespread practice of torture and ill-treatment, in particular for the purpose of extracting confessions in Kyrgyz police detention and about the lack investigation into such allegations. We therefore recommend to implement without delay the recently adopted Action Plan on Torture and to ensure that safeguards against torture are effectively granted in practice, in particular in the first hours of detention.

Austria is furthermore deeply worried about systematic violence, harassment and discrimination, often by the police and other state authorities, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as the consideration by Parliament of a so-called „anti-gay propaganda bill“ - in violation of the principle of non-discrimination and freedom of speech.

We therefore recommend to withdraw the draft law on 'formation of positive attitude to non-traditional sexual relations' and to develop and implement comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, in close cooperation with civil society.

With regard to the situation of civil society in the country, Austria is concerned about the so-called “Foreign Agents” draft law that is pending in Parliament and that would decisively restrict the work of civil society organisations.

Austria therefore recommends to ensure that relevant legislation guarantees the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and association for all individuals, including human rights defenders, journalists and political activists.

Austria also remains concerned about continuous reports of violence against women, including domestic violence and early and forced marriage despite many recommendations on the issue during the first UPR-cycle. We therefore again recommend to take further legislative and practical measures to end violence against women, in particular also addressing the problem of bride kidnapping; and early and forced marriage in compliance with Kyrgyzstan's international obligations

Austria also recommends to ratify the CRPD as well as the Rome Statute of the ICC.

I thank you