



**Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Austria**

*Delivered by Minister-Counsellor Josefin Simonsson Brodén, Geneva, November 9, 2015 (speaking time 1 min 10 sec)*

Mr President,

Sweden wishes to welcome the delegation and express our appreciation for the information related to our advance questions.

Sweden recommends to the Government of Austria the following:

- 1) to take further action in order to encourage equal opportunities for both men and women, for instance through more equal salary levels and enhanced childcare services in order to improve reconciliation of work and family life. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Employment Market ought to be fully implemented without delay.
- 2) to continue ensuring an environment conducive to the full respect and protection of the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers within the Austrian society at large.
- 3) to take further action against the use of excessive force by the police.

Sweden commends Austria's efforts to improve gender equality, especially in the labour market. However, reports from national and international organisations show that there is still room for improvement and a need of structural reform in order to reduce the high gender pay gap, improve women's participation in the labour force and encourage further male participation in family life.

As many other countries, Austria is affected by the unprecedented increase in migration. Austria has taken commendable measures in order to meet these challenges. However, there are still reports on needs of improvements when it comes to the situation for asylum-seekers in Austria, including lengthy asylum procedures, cumbersome procedures for appeal, insufficient provision of legal assistance, lack of reception places and varying conditions in reception facilities.

Sweden notes that the Government of Austria generally respects the human rights of its citizens, and that the law and judiciary provide effective means of addressing individual cases of abuse. However, there are still reports on instances of use of excessive force by the police.

Thank you, Mr. President