**Universal Periodic Review 23 – Austria**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Thank you Mr. President,

The Netherlands thanks Austria for its comprehensive report [and for addressing our advance questions].

We welcome the ruling of Austria’s Constitutional Court this year that allows joint adoption by same-sex couples. However, we note that these couples are still barred from marriage.

1. The Netherlands firstly recommends Austria to ensure further equality by allowing same-sex couples the right to marriage, according to international standards.
2. Secondly, we recommend Austria to withdraw its reservations to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Netherlands is pleased with Austria’s ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in 2012, but regrets that Austria maintains reservations to the convention. Moreover, we would welcome steps by the Austrian government to establish an independent mechanism to investigate allegations of excessive use of force and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials, including towards ethnic minorities.

Thank you, Mr. President.