**46th session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of North Macedonia**

02 May 2024

**Statement by Austria**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Austria welcomes the Delegation of North Macedonia and welcomes the progress achieved since the last cycle, and encourages the new Government to intensify efforts to improve the overall human rights situation in the country.

We welcome for example the progress made with regard to identity documentation and the adoption of the new Strategy for Inclusion of Roma citizens (2022-2030).

We also commend the adoption of the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination in October 2020 and the significant amendments to the Criminal Code regulating criminal acts of gender-based violence, that were adopted in February 2023.

In the area of freedom of expression and freedom of the media we have seen moderate progress. Working conditions for journalists remain challenging and strengthening the independence of the national broadcasting service is still necessary.

More efforts should also be made regarding prevention of and fight against corruption, as it remains widespread in many areas and is a cause for concern.

Austria offers the following recommendations:

* Promote inclusive education, inter alia by ensuring access to education, including preschool, for all children, especially minorities.
* Take concrete steps to foster professionalism, accurate reporting and strengthening the independence of the media.
* Implement measures to strengthen institutions in order to prevent and fight corruption, and encourage a more proactive attitude of all engaged actors at all levels.
* Raise awareness about discrimination and its different forms, including highlighting protection mechanisms through targeted information campaigns, especially in schools.

Thank you.