**United Nations Human Rights Council
28th Session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review
3rd Cycle Review of the Czech Republic, 6 November 2017**

**Statement by Austria**

Austria warmly welcomes H.E. Vice-Minister Štěpánková and the delegation of the Czech Republic and thanks them for their presentation and national report.

The acceptance of a high number of recommendations in the second UPR cycle reflects Czechia’s commitment to further strengthen its solid framework for the protection of human rights and we appreciate the efforts undertaken by Czechia to implement the recommendations received. We have been pleased to note that a number of international instruments such as the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking and the Palermo Protocol have been ratified. Regarding the Optional Protocol to the CRPD, Austria welcomes the government’s proposal for ratification and encourages a speedy process in the newly elected Parliament.

While we welcome the Roma Integration Strategy and reforms in the education system, the situation of Roma in Czechia, including Roma children’s access to mainstream education, continues to be problematic. Data suggest that Roma children continue to be overrepresented in schools for children with mild mental disabilities. We would be interested to hear what efforts Czechia is taking to counter negative stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.

With respect to the Views of the Human Rights Committee regarding the Czech restitution legislation and Art. 26 CCPR Austria would like to ask which measures have been taken or are envisaged to address the discriminatory effects of the restitution legislation and administrative practices in the Czech Republic, in particular with regard to people of Jewish origin.

Austria also notes worrying tendencies of hate speech and hate crimes against foreigners and members of minorities, including Muslims.

Austria therefore would like to offer the following recommendations to Czechia:

* Monitor the implementation and impact of reforms to end the segregation of Roma children in the education system, and ensure that discriminatory attitudes and treatment of children by teachers and other staff are properly addressed;
* Publicly condemn hate crimes and hate speech, and ensure the investigation, prosecution and punishment of discrimination or violence motivated by the victim’s national, ethnic or religious identity ;
* Strengthen its child protection system by explicitly prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, and enhance its efforts to end/limit the institutionalization of children under three years of age.

I thank you.