**37th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of GEORGIA**

26 January 2021

**Statement by Austria**

Thank you, Madam President,

Austria welcomes the delegation of Georgia to the UPR and thanks them for their report and presentation today.

Austria commends Georgia for the substantial number of concrete steps taken to strengthen the country´s human rights framework. Austria would like to encourage Georgia to continue the reform path, particularly with regard to the justice sector, and address the outstanding issues.

Austria therefore offers the following recommendations:

1. *Continue justice reform efforts with the goal of a fully independent and transparent judicial system, including the devolution of competencies and powers from the High Council of Justice to lower levels as well as further improvements in the selection procedures of judges to ensure transparency and merit based appointments;*
2. *Ensure prompt and impartial investigations into all incidents of excessive use of force by law enforcement authorities against protestors and journalists;*
3. *Continue strengthening and supporting institutions and services to effectively assist victims of gender-based violence, such as shelters and crisis centres;*

I thank you.