**37 th Session of the UPR Working Group- Review of Rwanda Statement by Austria**

Austria warmly welcomes H.E. …and the delegation of Rwanda and thanks them for the presentation of their national report.

We commend Rwanda for some positive steps towards the implementation of previous UPR recommendations –in particular reforms aiming at bringing the Penal Code in conformity with international standards. Notwithstanding however, threats and limitation to freedom of expression endure.

We are concerned by a number of persisting restrictions on the exercise of the journalistic profession including a narrow legal definition of journalists, the lack of adequate safeguards against abusive restrictions on journalists and particularly on their related online activities. Austria is equally worried about reports of harassment and intimidation of human right defenders and journalists.

Following up to the second UPR, Austria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Take measures to protect human right defenders and journalists from harassment and attacks and ensure independent credible investigation of alleged cases and the prosecution of offenders.

2. Take measures against the legal ambiguity regarding the competences of media regulatory bodies such as the Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) in order to strengthen their independence against government interference and align them to international standards.

3. Ratify the Rome statute of the ICC.