**42nd session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of United Arab Emirates**

8 May 2023

**Statement by Austria**

Austria welcomes the delegation of United Arab Emirates and thanks them for their presentation.

We commend the Government of United Arab Emirates for the efforts it has made to implement the recommendations since the last review, particularly in the area of socio-economic rights, especially with regard to migrant workers, the adoption of recent laws to strengthen the protection of women and enshrine equal pay and a reform of family law decriminalizing consensual extra-marital relationships and strengthening the protection of children born out of wedlock]. We also note the UAE’s multicultural approach, which emphasizes tolerance and coexistence to ensure that religious and expatriate minorities can live freely and practice their religions, e.g. the recent opening of the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi, an interfaith centre, or a new Hindu temple in Dubai.

While Austria welcomes the UAE’s acceptance of our previous recommendation on the protection of human rights defenders and journalists, we remain concerned about the restrictions on civil and political rights and political pluralism, such as censorship of the media, imprisonment of peaceful critics, political dissidents and human rights activists. The death penalty also remains a punishment for certain grave crimes.

At the same time, we notice gaps in some areas and would therefore like to offer the following recommendations:

* Abolish the death penalty and ensure that fair trial guarantees are properly implemented.
* Take steps to ensure adequate protection of media freedom and safety of journalists, media workers as well as human rights activists from all forms of violence, harassment or intimidation.
* Promote the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination by developing specific legislation to protect against all forms of violence and discrimination against persons based on their actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation.
* End discriminatory practices against women in law and practice, including by removing laws that continue to give men guardianship over women.