**29th Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Serbia**

**Statement by Austria**

24 January 2018

We warmly welcome the delegation of Serbia and thank them for the presentation and their national report.

Austria commends the numerous efforts undertaken to improve the legislative and institutional framework to observe human rights obligations and to uphold and to protect minority and cultural rights. A clear political support would further strengthen a consistent and effective implementation by making full use of EU funds available through the Instrument for pre-Accession (IPA).

Austria is concerned about the lack of progress made in the field of media freedoms and freedom of expression. In this context, we would be grateful to receive information about the new media strategy the government is currently working on.

Although Serbia has adopted various measures, corporal punishment of children and domestic violence still remain issues. In particular, Austria is concerned by the high number of femicide.

Despite efforts, Roma, LGBTI people, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and other socially vulnerable groups are still facing discrimination in Serbia. We would be interested to hear about further plans to improve their situation and to facilitate their integration into society.

Austria offers the following recommendations

* foster an enabling environment where freedom of expression can be exercised without hindrance and ensure that all threats and violence against journalists and bloggers are publicly condemned and properly and promptly investigated
* take further measures to combat domestic violence by inter alia establishing shelters and supporting centres with medical, psychological and legal support
* prohibit by law corporal punishment of children, including in the family
* ensure the full implementation of the new strategy for Roma inclusion and adopt promptly the action plan