**32nd Session of the UPR Working Group**

**Review of Slovakia**

28 January 2019

**Statement by Austria**

We warmly welcome the delegation of Slovakia to the UPR and thank them for their presentation. Austria commends Slovakia for the numerous efforts undertaken since the last review, including initiatives that have contributed to the decrease of verbal and physical violence against Romani individuals as well as the decision to introduce a pre-primary education year for all five year olds, which is scheduled to enter into force in September 2020.

Journalism in Slovakia is vibrant. However, journalists have regularly been subject to lawsuits, apparently intended to hamper their work, and to serious verbal insults, including by officials. It is of utmost importance to protect journalists against any form of intimidation, including by thoroughly persecuting hate speech on the internet.

The deplorable killing of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his partner Martina Kušnírová in Slovakia in 2018 reminded us once again of the importance of the freedom and independence of the media and the safety of journalists.

Austria offers the following recommendations:

* Continue to duly examine and investigate all reports of alleged inhumane treatment or use of violence, particularly against Roma be it by police forces or individuals;
* Intensify efforts to protect journalists against any form of intimidation, including verbal assaults;
* Put an end to corporal punishment of children in all settings and encourage non-violent forms of discipline as alternatives;
* Follow the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on human trafficking.

I thank you!