**34th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

13 November 2019

**Statement by Austria**

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

Austria commends Bosnia and Herzegovina for the progress achieved since its last review, notably for establishing legislation and action plans in the field of gender equality and persons with disabilities.

However, many areas of concern remain in which legislative action to correct discriminatory provisions is required. Austria also notes with growing concern the ongoing political interference with the judiciary at various levels.

Austria therefore offers the following recommendations:

* Take all necessary measures to combat discrimination of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, in particular with regards to persons who do not identify as Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats, by removing discriminatory provisions from the constitution, the election law and other legislation and by implementing judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, such as the Sejdic/Finci judgement;
* Ensure the independence of the judiciary, including of the HJPC, (“High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina”) in particular by sanctioning individuals who do not respect its independence.
* Continue to promote gender equality and take measures to support the economic empowerment of women, inter alia by improving their access to the financial system;
* Guarantee media freedom and the protection of journalists and media workers, especially women, notably by ensuring the appropriate judicial follow-up to cases of threats and violence against them;

I thank you.