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**35th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Armenia**

23 January 2020

**Statement by Austria**

Austria welcomes the delegation of Armenia to the 3rd cycle of the UPR and thanks them for their report and presentation today.

We commend Armenia for its increased efforts in combating domestic violence and welcome the national legislation adopted in this regard. We also welcome the signing of the Istanbul Convention in January 2018. Despite the positive developments mentioned, domestic violence and the availability of services for survivors of domestic violence remain to be a serious concern. We have taken note that the intention of the government to ratify the Convention has led to campaigns against its ratification, including the dissemination of false information. We encourage the government to raise awareness on the important content of the Convention to counter these developments.

While welcoming the draft law on ensuring equality, we note that the draft bill does not include sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as grounds for protection from discrimination.

Austria is concerned about reports on harassment, threats of violence, hate speech and intimidation against human rights defenders in Armenia.

We recommend:

1. ratify without delay the Istanbul Convention and conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the Convention;
2. ensure the availability of shelter spaces and services for survivors of domestic violence;
3. strengthen anti-discrimination laws with regard to a better protection of LGBT persons;
4. ensure immediate and effective investigation of all threats and attacks against human rights defenders;

I thank you.