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

**Statement by Austria**

28 January 2020

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

Our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of the terrible earthquake that hit eastern Turkey. Our thoughts are with the many wounded, we hope that they will recover soon.

We recommend Turkey for its’ efforts to fight violence and discrimination against women. We encourage the Turkish administration to work closely and inclusively with human rights organizations when implementing the recently announced action plan to tackle violence against women, and to continue to publicly reaffirm its’ commitment to the Istanbul Convention.

We remain concerned by developments that took place since 2015. While recognizing the terrorism threats Turkey faces, we call upon the government to strictly uphold human rights standards when countering these threats and guarantee freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, and ensure fair trial guarantees and the independence of the judiciary. Women as well as vulnerable groups including religious minorities and LGBTI are particularly affected by the arbitrary application of restrictions for the exercise of these rights. We are worried about the fact that many of the decrees adopted during State of Emergency were transferred into legislation.

We recommend:

* Increase the number of women’s shelters, ensure unrestricted access for all women, including physically disabled women, and strictly prohibit contact between women and their perpetrators in these institutions.
* Guarantee the right to freedom of assembly of all citizens by ensuring that the restrictions provided by law are not applied in an extensive manner.
* Ensure that human rights defenders and journalists can exercise their tasks without fear of reprisals, including through bringing those responsible for attacks and harassment of journalists to justice.
* Guarantee an independent and impartial judiciary and ensure respect for the separation of powers.
* Ensure the individuals‘ right to freedom of expression, (both online and offline), in particular through the revision of the legislation on counter-terrorism by narrowing the scope of the definition of terrorism and acts related to it and introducing a criterion on proportionality.

I thank you.