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**36th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Croatia**

10 November 2020

**Statement by Austria**

(1 min 15 sec)

Austria welcomes the delegation of Croatia and thanks them for their presentation today.

We welcome the adoption of a law on protection against domestic violence as well as the reintroduction of domestic violence into the Criminal Code.

Austria also welcomes recent steps taken towards reconciliation between the Croatian majority and the Serbian minority in the context of commemorative events since August 2020 and encourages Croatia to build on this progress.

[While we commend Croatia’s efforts in increasing funds for and providers of free legal aid, we are concerned about the accessibility of free legal aid.]

Austria recommends:

1. to ensure that the right to use minority languages is fully respected and to take measures to address discrimination against minorities notably in the areas of labour, access to public services, public information and the media;
2. to further increase public funding for organisations providing free legal aid and to ensure the availability of free legal aid at all stages of criminal proceedings;
3. to use the expertise of international, regional and national institutions to ensure that border management measures are in full compliance with international human rights obligations and EU asylum laws and to enable independent investigations and monitoring;
4. to ensure a safe and enabling environment for the work of journalists and the media and effectively investigate threats against journalists.