

Austria on item IV
9th session of the Forum on Minority Issues - ohchr
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Thank you Mr Chair. Let me start by congratulating you on your election as the Chair of the Forum for Minority Issues and to the Special Rapporteur my congratulations for her important work she has done in preparation of this forum. Once again this forum allows us to hear the voice of minorities from all over the world on the important topic of minorities in situations of humanitarian crises. And provides us with an essential opportunity for sharing best practices and promoting mutual understanding of minority issues. The Forum's Draft Recommendations underline the primary responsibility of the state to contribute continually to building resilient and prepared minority communities, able to actively respond when crises arise; and if and when the crisis occurs to provide timely appropriate assistance that is relevant to minority communities' specific needs. In many cases only the minority communities themselves will be able to assess which protection measures a likely genuinely to prove security and which risks [are making his situation worse]. Therefore, the establishment of dedicated institutions to take the lead in mainstreaming the attention to minorities and in monitoring their situations well as participation of minorities themselves at the political level is essential, in our view. In the main strategic document of Austria's humanitarian assistance the three year program on Austrian development and policy, we have put a specific focus on the inclusion of vulnerable groups throughout the whole project [...]. We also have made commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit to empower local humanitarian action as well as resilience building. At the international level, UN institution funds, programs and organisations must be prepared to actively contribute to the task of protecting minorities in humanitarian crises. In this context, we should expose flaws of the possibility of a more efficient mainstreaming of minority issues into all bodies of the UN. We welcome the initiative that the Special Rapporteur has taken in this regard such as the organisation of the recent consultative session in New York and encourage her warmly to continue contributing to deeper integration of minority issues also in peace and security agenda of the UN. We hope that our discussion during the two days will also be the starting point for ECOSOC to consider specific situation of minorities during the humanitarian segment and that this Forum will be able to make a complete recommendation to ECOSOC in including the specific needs and abilities of minorities in its discussions or coordinated responses to humanitarian crisis. In closing, let me reiterate once again that diversity and pluralism pose no risk to our society, but a source of development, progress and peace. There may be many different ways in addressing the risks that minority face in humanitarian crisis but irrespective on national context all should have a common objective to the promotion and protection of persons belonging to national minorities. Austria will continue its strong engagement in this direction and we are confident the idea and recommendations of this year's forum will be a good basis for further progress. Thank you very much Mr Chair.