

## Permanent Mission of Austria

Thank you Chair. We thank the OHCHR Secretariat for organizing this year's minority forum and welcome the focus on equality, social inclusion, and socio-economic participation. We believe socio-economic empowerment is an important tool in helping people to help themselves. As many of you know, Austria has placed the promotion and protection of minority rights at the center of its human rights agenda. At the national level, we have taken specific measures to support national autochthonous minorities, including in education, language, culture, and media, and at the international level, Austria traditionally initiates resolutions in the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly and supports the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and this Forum. Today, I would like to highlight a new initiative for Roma empowerment in the labor market. It is part of the implementation of the current EU Roma Strategic Framework and the Austrian National Roma Strategy. Why? Well despite some progress over the last years, we still see discrimination in the labor market and particularly high numbers of long-term unemployment of members of the Roma community. With this initiative, it is possible to provide additional financial support to projects that aim to support members of the Roma community by providing advice and information about potential job or educational opportunities, support in writing job applications, preparing for job interviews, support in the workplace, during school or retraining, or support in dealing with administrative tasks relating to authorities like the tax office or counseling services to name just a few examples. It is key that these measures are easily accessible and include members of the community to provide not only multilingual support, but also positive role models. At the same time, the initiative supports public relations and awareness-raising measures to counter negative stereotypes and biases in the general public, in particular within schools, universities, and youth organizations. Thank you