

Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 62nd Session

Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

Adoption of the UPR outcome of Austria

1 July 2026

Delivered by Anna Mouhot

Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance thanks Austria for its constructive engagement in the UPR process.

We commend Austria's efforts to protect victims of human trafficking, including the codification of a non-punishment provision for victims of exploitation. However, we remain concerned about gaps in implementation, particularly the lack of consistent and comprehensive victim identification systems. We therefore encourage Austria to further strengthen protection and support structures by deepening cooperation with civil society organisations and by ensuring access to residency permits for survivors of exploitation.

We also welcome Austria's support for recommendations aimed at protecting freedom of religion or belief, including reforms to promote more equitable treatment of registered religious groups and to ensure that national security measures fully respect this fundamental freedom.

We urge Austria to ensure that freedom of religion or belief is protected equally for all religious groups, regardless of their legal form or registration status. This includes not only churches and congregations, but also faith-based organisations and religious associations that do not fall under the existing categories of recognised religious churches.

Such organisations should not be placed in a weaker legal or practical position than comparable cultural or charitable associations simply because their work is rooted in religious conviction.

Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right of individuals and communities and should not depend on whether a group fits into a particular state-defined legal structure.

Finally, we reiterate our concern regarding the discriminatory treatment of unborn children suspected of having disabilities, who are more likely to be aborted. We respectfully urge Austria to review its legislation in light of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank you.