

Global Leader's Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment - Umsetzungsstand der Pledges 2016

Since the Global Leaders' Meeting in September 2015, Austria has continued her efforts to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment. In the following, some of the recent legal developments and policy initiatives are outlined:

Firstly, Austria has taken further steps to raise awareness for and to prevent and to protect women and girls from all forms of violence: The implementation of the National Action Plan on the Protection of Women against Violence which was adopted in 2014 continues to be a priority. A new regulation of sexual harassment entered into force to strengthen protection against sexual harassment. Additionally, a new provision on cyberbullying was included in the Austrian Criminal Code to better address new forms of online violence against women. And the Austrian Government adopted the 'Initiative against Online Violence' in July 2016 to comprehensively fight hate speech, cyberbullying or non-consensual sexting.

Second, women's economic empowerment remains a major focus: The expansion of all-day schools has recently been decided by the Council of Ministers with an ambitious target to double the available places in all-day schools until 2025. This initiative also aims at improving reconciliation of work and family life for both women and men. The reform of the child care allowance system – which will enter into force in March 2017 – also aims at more flexibility for parents as well as an increase in the number of fathers taking parental leave. Furthermore, father's participation in parental leave and unpaid care work is the objective of a major project currently being carried out by several ministries in cooperation with academia, research and social partners. Moreover, a new provision has entered into force in the beginning of 2016 to strengthen women's labor market participation: Employers are now obliged to inform part-time workers about full-time job vacancies within the company.

Finally, for the SDGs to be successfully implemented it is important to involve and cooperate with civil society, NGOs, research, social partners and businesses as well as parliaments. In addition, young people - girls and boys - should be encouraged to become actively involved. One pre-condition for participation and involvement is information dissemination. As such, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs regularly organizes exchanges between representatives of the public administration, parliamentarians and NGOs working in the area of women's rights and gender equality. In order to actively inform young people about the SDGs, a workshop is currently being prepared to train young persons about the SDGs and to develop ideas on how to implement SDG 5 on gender equality in the specific contexts that the participants live, work and study in.