

Report on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution “Women in development”

Republic of Austria

*Responses should provide concrete examples of **measures taken** at the national level with regard to the issues outlined below, highlighting **results achieved, lessons learned** and **opportunities for up-scaling and replication**:*

The summary below is based on excerpts from the 9th Austrian state report for the implementation of CEDAW (2017), from responses to the CEDAW List of Issues (2019) and the Austrian state report for Peking +25 (2019). The latter will be transmitted to UN Women end of May 2019.

The reports were coordinated by the Federal Chancellery Section III (Women’s Affairs and Equality) and are based on contributions from all federal ministries as well as federal states.

- **Integrating a gender perspective in national sustainable development policies and strategies (operative paragraphs 2, 5, 50 and 60);**

The Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism aimed to strengthen the role of women in climate protection and in the field of energy and mining as part of its focus on impacts. There has been a project series called **Climate protection in everyday life**, which is publicly funded and has been implemented by the Peregrina Association since 2014. Multilingual workshops are carried out in migrant associations, refugee accommodation and German courses. The participants are taught the basic elements of climate protection. The fundamental elements of the workshops are practical exercises with high levels of everyday relevance that also aim to encourage networking between the women. Young female asylum seekers were the target group in 2017. The content was developed and edited based on their needs and interests. The project won the European Public Sector Award in 2015. In 2017, it won an award from the Austrian Society for Environment and Technology in the field of Participation and Commitment to Civil Society.

The Resolution by the Council of Ministers of 12 January 2016 created an **inter-ministerial working group** under the joint leadership of the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. This working group is responsible for drafting a regular progress report on the SDGs that corresponds to internationally determined specifications on the basis of the agreed indicators and for the implementation priorities in the respective reporting period. As the main coordinating body for gender equality and the empowerment of women within the federal government, the Division for Women and Equality is involved in this working group.

The international expert network **we4DRR - Women exchange for Disaster Risk Reduction** was founded in 2016. The aim was to bring together women from research, administration, politics and practice for regular exchange in the context of management and reducing the risk of natural hazards. The network now consists of over 100 experts from twelve countries. A general meeting is held once a year. Workshops and other activities are also organised. On

the one hand, the network raises awareness of the importance of women in natural hazard management. On the other hand, the network is strengthened by female experts from Europe.

In 2017, the working group **Equality of Women and Men and Equal Opportunities in Rural Areas** was set up as part of the Rural Development programme (ELER) to design further equality measures for the rest of the programme period. As part of this process, the participatory conference Women in the country: Equality and equal opportunities in rural areas was organized in 2017.

The new Austrian development cooperation (ADC) policy "Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls" was adapted in 2017. In line with the EU requirements, its overall objective is to promote and contribute to the achievement of equality between women and men as a goal and one of the preconditions for sustainable development. It serves as a guiding document for public officials working in the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and informs partner governments and civil society organizations about the ADC's gender approach and modalities of its implementation.

Measures for women in the field of integration are based on three important strategic papers: The National Actionplan for Integration ("Nationaler Aktionsplan für Integration – NAP.I), the 50-points plan for the Integration of asylum beneficiaries and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection ("50-Punkte-Plan zur Integration von Asylberechtigten und subsidiär Schutzberechtigten") and the Integration Law ("Integrationsgesetz") from 9 June 2017. These documents created a relevant strategic and legal basis to promote equality of women and men.

Examples for measures are immersing integration classes for women as well as consulting formats specifically tailored to women and men where participants receive information on equal rights, self-determination and the rule of law, on education and career prospects and on contact points for victims of violence. The Austrian Integration Fund implements those measures. More information can be found under <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/zielgruppen/frauen/>.

• **Promoting active labour market policies on full and productive employment and decent work for women, eliminating gender-based discrimination in labour markets and enacting and enforcing minimum wages (operative paragraphs 23, 25, 28 and 29);**

see also the answers on the Gender Wage Gap below

The **FiT – women in crafts and technology** programme fosters advanced training of women in non-traditional occupations. The programme makes an important contribution in the achievement of two equality targets: overcoming gender-specific segregation and reducing the gender pay gap. Around 1,230 women successfully completed an apprenticeship in crafts or technology within the framework of FiT in 2017. Apprenticeships for women and girls in atypical professions are also supported. The allocated budget for company-based apprenticeship subsidisation amounts to EUR 5 million each year. The following professional areas are included: mechanical engineering/metal technology, electrical engineering,

mechatronics, information technology, material technology, technical drawing and process technology.

The labour market policy also provides support measures for professional reintegration, in particular for women returning to work after parental or care-for-dependant leave. Those who come back are especially supported by the programme **Wiedereinstieg unterstützen** (Support return to work). Special information sessions for the specific target groups are offered by all regional offices of the *Arbeitsmarktservice* (AMS – Labour Market Service) and are carried out by qualified counsellors. Furthermore, the AMS offers the training programme **Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft** (Return to work with future prospects). Around 4,500 women take part each year.

The **Operational Programme Employment Austria 2014-2020**, which aims at implementing the European Social Fund, places a special emphasis on investment to promote gender equality in the labour market. Specific educational services are on offer for educationally disadvantaged women as well as counselling projects with a focus on cooperating with businesses. The projects have the following aims: reduction of income disparities, education of low-skilled female employees in industries dominated by women, career opportunities for women, measures to foster a better work-life balance and employment of migrant women.

The Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) has been supporting its partners in promoting gender-responsive policies and programmes, in order to promote full employment and decent work for women. One initiative that stands out is the project “Women’s Economic Empowerment in the South Caucasus” which is implemented by UN-Women and UNDP and supported by the ADC with EUR 800.000. The overarching goal of the project is to ensure that women in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are economically empowered and participate in relevant decision-making.

- **Eliminating gender-based occupational segregation and gender wage gaps, and improving recruitment, retention and promotion policies for women (operative paragraphs 25, 29, 31 and 48);**

Gender based occupational segregation

The reasons for gender-specific income disparities are still stereotypical educational and professional choices among others. Different initiatives aim at attracting more women and girls to scientific and technical vocational training and professions.

The campaign day **Girls’ Day** has taken place in the public service since 2006. In 2018, a total of 3,866 female school pupils took part in the **Girls’ Day** in the public service. The aim of the campaign day is to increase girls’ interest in technical and future-oriented professions. The **Girls’ Day MINI** has also taken place in the public service in parallel to this since 2015. In 2018, 423 children from 23 kindergartens took part in the range of programmes offered in the field of science and technology.

The **Law Amending School Legislation of 2016** combined the previously separate optional subjects of textiles and technical work. This means all children from the 5th grade have access

to basic knowledge in the field of technology and manual skills in all types of school. Previously, girls often exercised their right to give up the subject of technical work.

In adult education, the **Adult Education Initiative** enables educationally disadvantaged people to start their learning process again by learning language skills, learning skills, and mathematical and digital skills. The aim is to reduce structural disadvantages in educational processes and break down gender-specific barriers to access to education. Educationally disadvantaged women with low levels of qualification, elderly women, women in rural areas, and female migrants are addressed in particular. The third programme period started in 2018.

The 2018 **Teaching Principle on Reflexive Gender Education and Equality** addresses more diversified career choices and the elimination of gender-based stereotypes. These topics will receive special attention in the training of teachers at the University Colleges for Teacher Education and human resource development in the future. The issue of gender segregation in the educational choice has also been included in the resource, goals and performance plans for the **Boards of Education** in the form of key figures. **The Social dimension strategy** in tertiary education aims to reduce gender segregation in study choices.

There are numerous measures, projects and funding options for women and girls at the national and regional level that aim to overcome barriers to education and professions in natural sciences and technology. A central online medium has been created in the form of the **meineTechnik** platform, which shows these initiatives all together. The target groups are girls and young women, teachers, companies and parents. Information on 380 projects is currently available for download free of charge on the online platform.

Eliminating Gender wage gaps

The high gender pay gap continues to be a challenge. The EU indicator shows that the gender pay gap was reduced from 25.5 percent in 2007 to 19.9 percent in 2017. However, Austria remains significantly above the EU average of 16.0 percent.

The requirement for companies to produce income reports was introduced in 2011 and has been gradually expanded. It has also applied to companies with more than 150 employees since 2014. In keeping with the 2013-2018 government programme, an **evaluation** was carried out of the requirements contained in the Equal Treatment Act to state the minimum wage in job advertisements and to produce income reports. The study analysed the implementation of the relevant legal provisions from the Equal Treatment Act and the effect that these tools have on the intended increase in income transparency. Further initiatives to promote equal pay were taken based on this outcome.

A project called **Fair Wage** was carried out in order to heighten awareness about fair wages and income transparency in companies. A tool box was introduced for the development, analysis and use of income reports. Positive communication about the benefits of fair wages for companies and best practices were another main focus of the project.

Starting in autumn 2018, the Minister for Women invited experts from research, administration and the social partners to take part in three **round table sessions on income transparency**. Discussions focused on indicators to measure pay gaps, additional efforts to strengthen income transparency, international best practices and non-discriminatory job evaluation schemes. This initiative will be continued.

Women in leadership positions

Due to the under-representation of women at the highest levels of management in the public service, the Council of Ministers imposed a women's quota to be applied to federally-appointed members of the supervisory boards of state-owned or state-affiliated companies having a public share of 50 percent or more in 2011. According to a graduated scheme, the share of women should increase to 35 percent by the end of 2018. A review is carried out on an annual basis to determine whether the quota has been reached. In 2017, the authorities held a share in 54 such companies and appointed 289 supervisory board members, 135 of whom were female. The women's quota is between 25 and 35 percent in 17 companies, 7 of which, with a share of women of 33 percent, are already very close to achieving the required 35 percent quota.

When it comes to raising the share of women in leadership and decision-making positions, an important step was taken by adopting the **Act on Equality between Women and Men in Supervisory Boards** in 2017. Since 1 January 2018, there must be at least 30% women on the supervisory boards of publicly traded companies and companies with more than 1,000 employees. This quota applies to new members. Existing mandates remain unaffected. At the beginning of 2019, the share of women in the supervisory boards of the 68 publicly traded companies was at 22 percent and has increased by 4 percentage points since 2018. In the 29 publicly traded companies which are affected by the legally required quota, the share of women increased more in the same period of time, from 22 to 27.5 percent.

Furthermore, the management programme **Zukunft.Frauen** has been carried out. Women who are potential candidates for leadership roles in their companies are specifically prepared for management and supervisory board positions. It is complemented by a database of female supervisory board members in which currently more than 668 women are registered.

In order to raise awareness in companies and among decision-makers such as HR managers and headhunters, the EU co-financed project **Women are top! To the top by innovative corporate cultures** was implemented. The aim was to develop approaches which lead to a gender equitable business culture and a greater representation of women in supervisory boards and management positions in companies. Measures of good practice in Austrian companies were collected. Furthermore, the online simulation game *Choose your Board* was developed which serves as a training and reflection tool.

- **Accelerating the transition of women from informal to formal employment through access to decent work, social protection, quality childcare, and education and training, including for migrant women workers and domestic workers (operative paragraphs 10, 22 and 40);**

Expanding childcare services or make existing services more affordable

In accordance with Article 15a of the Federal Constitution about the **Expansion of Institutional Childcare Facilities**, the initiative of creating new childcare places, launched in 2008, was intensified between 2014 and 2018, and the budget was multiplied. In that period of time, the federal government spent EUR 357.5 million and the regional governments at

least EUR 152.75 million. The focus was on expanding childcare facilities for under-threes, longer opening hours and pushing flexible care options, such as qualified childminders and inter-municipal or intergenerational projects. In the upcoming years (kindergarten years 2018/2019 to 2021/2022) an agreement between the federal and regional governments will further push the initiative of expanding infant care facilities in particular. On the federal, regional and municipal level, around EUR 180 million are spent every year for the expansion initiative, to offer the compulsory kindergarten years free of charge and to promote language learning at a very young age.

In its decision of the Council of Ministers of 12 July 2016, the Austrian government resolved to invest an additional EUR one billion in education and research, of which EUR 750 million are to be dedicated to the expansion of full-time schools. This markedly strengthens equal opportunities for children and the work-life balance. Particularly women and single earners benefit from full-time schools.

A total of EUR 750 million will be available for the school years 2019/2020 to 2032/2033 after the amendment of the Act on Educational Investment which is due in spring 2019. In addition, unused funds from the funding opportunities set aside for full-time schools up to and including 2018/2019 should be allowed to be used until 2022. This ensures the needs-based expansion of the full-time schools and childcare facilities whilst taking the freedom of choice into account.

The number of full-time schools and childcare facilities is to be increased throughout Austria. The care rate in compulsory schools is to be increased from 26 percent in 2019 to 40 percent as early as 2022. The aim is for 85 percent of the facilities to provide day care. It is also planned to provide extracurricular care options at full-time facilities during holidays or when no classes are being held. Increasing equal opportunities by applying a modulated social scheme for the care costs is an important criteria.

• **Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, discrimination, and sexual harassment against women at work, and providing remedies, support and services for victims and survivors of violence and harassment (operative paragraphs 14, 32 and 33);**

Laws against violence

The first **law protecting against violence** was implemented in Austria in 1997 and has been continuously developed in the past two decades: The **Law Amending Criminal Law of 2015** (in force since 1 January 2016) resulted in improvements in protection against gender-specific violence under criminal law, among other things through:

- increasing the criminal penalty for qualified physical injuries, for example in the case of FGM the sentence has been increased to 1 to 10 years (instead of 6 months to 5 years).
- introduction of the separate criminal offence of *forced marriage*
- introduction of the separate criminal offence of *cyber bullying*
- introduction of the separate criminal offence of *violation of sexual self-determination*

- increase in criminal liability for sexual harassment

The **Law Amending the Criminal Procedure Law of 2016** (in force since 1 June 2016) has also been expanded to include victims' rights. The Law Amending Criminal Law of 2017 (in force since 1 September

2017) also included an increase in the penalty for sexual harassment in a public space in a group or under abuse of a dependent relationship.

In March 2018, a **Task Force on Criminal Law to Better Protect Women and Children** was set up under the leadership of the State Office in the BMI. The Task Force included more than 120 experts from relevant federal ministries and facilities. They worked in subject-specific sub-working groups to develop measures in the fields of *criminal law, victim protection and active work with the offender*. More than 50 proposals by the Task Force on Criminal Law that were identified as urgent were passed by the Council of Ministers on 13 February 2019. The competent ministers were asked to introduce implementation measures. This included:

- an increase in the minimum sentence and removing the option of an entirely conditional sentence for rape,
- an expansion of the offence of stalking,
- an increase in the penalty for ongoing violence against minors and vulnerable people,
- under certain conditions an increase in the maximum sentence for repeat offenders,
- the introduction or increase in the minimum sentence for certain premeditated offences against minors or particularly vulnerable people,
- the introduction of a lifelong ban on an activity as a sanction for legal convictions for offences against the sexual integrity and self-determination of minors or vulnerable people
- the classification of FGM as a serious permanent consequence of a physical injury.
- There are also plans to give particularly vulnerable victims the right to interpreting services provided by people of the same gender in legal proceedings and to clarify the right of victims to receive a free confirmation of complaint and the record of interrogation and the right of victims and witnesses to request a considerate examination.

Istanbul Convention and NAP Violence

Austria was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the **Istanbul Convention**. Austria received a very positive rating in the GREVIO Baseline Evaluation with regards to the legislative implementation of the Convention, with hardly any room for improvement.

The **National Action Plan to Protect Women from Violence 2014-2016 (NAP)** was developed by the inter-ministerial working group (IMAG) Protection of Women against Violence and passed by the federal government. More than 60 measures covered all forms of violence except human trafficking and measures to prevent violence in armed conflicts and wars, as separate action plans were passed for these. Among other things, the NAP includes measures regarding victim protection-oriented work with offenders, combating role

stereotypes and workshops for women, girls and young men to prevent violence, as well as sensitization measures.

The working group Protection of Women against Violence has now been institutionalized and expanded to include members from the federal provinces and NGOs. The working group's job is to support the implementation of the NAP through structured cooperation and dialogue and drive forward the implementation of more open obligations from the Istanbul Convention.

Support and Services for Victims

The share of **support granted to female victims of violence in the violence protection centres** for which the Minister for Women is responsible, remained at 100 percent in 2017 and 2018, which means that every affected woman received help and support. The number of administrative districts with one or more subsidised counselling centre for women reached a record high of 88 percent in 2017, which could also be maintained in 2018.

Both the government programme and the strategy reports on the federal financial framework for 2018-2021 and 2019-2022 intend to maintain the **budget for women and equality**. The expansion of necessary facilities, including violence protection centres, emergency housing, and counselling centres for women and girls is to be safeguarded.

Two new **women's shelters** are currently under development in Tyrol and Vienna and are scheduled to be opened in 2019 and 2022 respectively. The provincial authorities are responsible for funding the shelters. A temporary housing unit for victims of forced marriage has been opened in Vienna in early 2019, funded by the city administration.

Other measures against violence

Since 2012, the **Federal Working Group on Victim Protection-Oriented Work with Offenders**, a collaboration with protective facilities for those experiencing domestic violence and male advice centres have also been funded with public money. In 2016, these groups created standards for victim protection-oriented work with offenders.

A range of sensitization campaigns have been carried out in the past years. The **GewaltFREI leben** (Living Violence FREE) campaign ran across Austria from 2014-2015 and was funded by public and EU funds. Numerous violence prevention measures were carried out in different social areas.

In 2015, the three-year pilot project **PERSPEKTIVE:ARBEIT** (Perspective:work) was launched. The model project, which implemented the first social impact bond in Austria, aims to reintegrate women affected by violence into the labour market. The focus is on improving women's economic and social independence.

Special emphasis has been placed **on cyber violence**. An online evaluation of cyber violence was carried out at the end of 2017, the main findings of which were published in a brochure. Furthermore, in 2017 and 2018 a training concept for cyber violence was developed for staff working in violence protection and counselling centres.

Moreover, a study was commissioned called "**Experience with and the prevention of violence against persons with disabilities**", with a main focus on women. It aims to gather

data on violence against and sexual abuse of people with disabilities who use support services for persons with disabilities or live in psycho-social institutions. Another goal is to identify effective prevention measures. The final report should be completed by mid-2019.

Overall, Austria has recently placed special emphasis on the **fight against FGM**. In line with the 2019-2021 triannual programme for Austrian development cooperation, the fight against FGM, particularly in conflict regions and fragile states, is one of Austria's priorities. EUR 1 million were made available in 2018 for efforts to address FGM and to support affected persons, primarily in the Sahel region and at the Horn of Africa.

- **Promoting the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities by recognizing, valuing, reducing and redistributing women's disproportionate share of unpaid and domestic work, increasing flexibility in working arrangements, such as part-time work, and making sustained investments in the care economy to expand access to quality childcare and care facilities for children and other dependents (operative paragraphs 10, 26, 30, 40 and 44);**

Strengthening maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave

In 2015, the provision about **early parental leave for fathers in the public service law** was extended. It now also includes the legal right to unpaid parental leave for up to four weeks for people in a same-sex relationship and for adoptive parents. The 2018 amendment to the public service law introduced a part-time option for re-integration for contract staff and teachers at compulsory schools, and the option to extend family hospice leave.

Since the amendment of the **Maternity Protection Act in 2016**, freelance workers have also been protected insofar as they are also entitled to take maternity leave during the prohibition of employment before and after birth. Moreover, they are also protected against unfair termination of employment during pregnancy and the prohibition of employment.

Parental part-time employment was reviewed, and foster parents are now entitled to take parental leave. When mothers or fathers opt for parental part-time employment, they must reduce their normal working hours by at least 20 percent and have to work for at least 12 hours per week. Foster parents are now entitled to take parental leave.

Moreover, a law on the so-called **family time bonus** was established for all working fathers (biological fathers, adoptive fathers, fathers in permanent foster care relationships, or equal same-sex partners). They receive EUR 22.60 per day for one month after the birth of the child.

The **partnership bonus** of EUR 500 which was introduced in the **2017 Act on Childcare Allowances** is intended to be an incentive for the parents to receive the childcare allowance for as much as possible equal amounts of time.

Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

It is still women who take on most of the informal long-time care. Therefore, it is particularly women who benefit from measures which reconcile care responsibilities and work. Since 2014, people who take care leave or who work part-time and care for someone the rest of the time have a legal right to a **carer's allowance**, to free health and pension insurance and to a

supplement for dependent children. This security measure under social law also applies to the family hospice leave for the terminal care of close relatives or seriously ill children. In 2017, 2,634 people received a carer's allowance. The average amount was EUR 987.30 (as at December 2017). The expenditure for the carer's allowance amounted to EUR 7.8 million and an additional EUR 3.8 million for social security.

- **Promoting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth strategies that benefit women by shifting employment from low-paid, low-skill and low-productivity sectors to more value-added activities [such as agribusiness, manufacturing, financial and business services], and ensuring that industrial upgrading linked to export expansion includes women (operative paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 15, 43 and 48).**