



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Concluding observations on the combined seventh and  
eighth periodic reports of Austria**

**Addendum**

**Information provided by Austria in follow-up to the  
concluding observations\***

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*Note:* The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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**25. Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee, urges the State party to:**

**(a) Adopt a comprehensive national action plan on violence against women as soon as possible;**

The 2014-2016 National Action Plan (NAP) on the Protection of Women against Violence, prepared by the inter-ministerial working group Protection of Women against Violence, was adopted by the Austrian Federal Government on 26 August 2014.<sup>1</sup> The inter-ministerial working group Protection of Women against Violence is led by the Women's Division of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and includes representatives of the Federal Ministries of the Interior; Justice; Health; Family and Youth; Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection as well as the Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. A round table was held together with representatives of civil society, mainly from victim protection organisations, to develop the National Action Plan.

Reflecting the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the NAP comprises about 60 measures in the following areas:

- coordination, data collection, research;
- prevention;
- protection and support;
- substantive law;
- investigations, criminal prosecution, procedural law and protective measures;
- European and international cooperation.

The NAP mainly serves as a tool for cross-ministerial collaboration and should bundle all activities and utilise synergies. The most important factors for selecting the measures were their feasibility and sustainability. In addition to these measures, other proposals that are not specifically mentioned will selectively be taken into account wherever possible, and additional measures might be adopted if required, depending on relevant developments. The NAP does not include measures on the protection of women against human trafficking and violence in armed conflicts or war because Austria has specific National Action Plans in place that deal with these topics.

An important project which is already being implemented in the context of the NAP is the awareness-raising campaign "Living a NON-violent life" ("GewaltFREI leben"). The campaign aims at preventing (serious) violence against women and children. The project is supervised by the Women's Division of the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs and is funded by the European Union as well as the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs. It is being realised together with three project partners from civil society (the Association of Autonomous Women's Shelters in Austria, the Vienna Intervention Centre against Domestic Violence and the Austrian National Youth Council). The project focuses on providing information, raising awareness and working on prevention. The campaign, which will last until mid-December 2015, wants to reach a wider public and aims at including

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bmbf.gv.at/ministerium/vp/2014/20140826.pdf?4ja8p5>.

stakeholders from the most important fields — representatives and professionals from victim protection facilities, migrant organisations, migrant communities and the media as well as leading representatives from health care institutions — who should act as multipliers.

**Further NAP measures are already under implementation, including the following initiatives:**

In 2014, White Ribbon Austria ran the **poster campaign “My hands against violence part 2”** (“Meine Hände gegen Gewalt Teil 2”), commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, as part of the “16 days against violence” campaign. Men with a migration background form the main target group of the current campaign. This new focus also takes gender-related and cultural aspects into account.

**Support for violence prevention workshops** for women, girls and male adolescents and for **measures to fight role stereotypes** continues to be an important aspect. This also includes the funding of work with offenders that integrates a victim protection perspective. The Federal Working Committee (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft) on victim-protection-oriented work with offenders in Austria, which is part of the Vienna Intervention Centre against Domestic Violence, is co-funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs. The overarching aim is to provide victim-oriented anti-violence training in cases of domestic violence all over Austria and to develop uniform standards and new collaboration opportunities relating to work with offenders together with all relevant actors.

In 2009/2010, quality standards were established to raise awareness of and deal with (suspected) cases of violence. They serve as recommendations for “accompanied visits”. These standards form the basis of a “**curriculum for people who accompany visits**” and the associated training course that is funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The training course on raising awareness of and dealing with (suspected) cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other serious incidents in the context of accompanied visits started in November of 2013 for the second time.

**Examples of measures to prevent and combat violence against women in the Federal Provinces**

The “**2020 equal treatment of women and gender equality strategy in the province of Styria**” outlines the prevention of and protection against violence as one of six policies. In the light of its outcome-oriented approach, the Styrian administration’s global budget for women names the coordination of and enabling access to facilities and measures to address sexism and to prevent violence against women and girls as the main focus. The relevant Styrian network, currently consisting of ten counselling centres for women and girls and several affiliates, offers counselling services for women and girls who have experienced violence.

The province of **Carinthia** published several information folders on “Zero tolerance of violence against women” as well as one multi-lingual information brochure for victims of human trafficking in cooperation with the Provincial Criminal Police Office and Caritas.

In 2012, the **Government of Salzburg** adopted an anti-violence strategy in the “Master plan on the prevention of domestic violence” for the province of Salzburg. The strategy is being implemented at cross-divisional and cross-departmental levels.

**25. Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, the Committee, urges the State party to:**

**(b) Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and introduce criminal sanctions for non-compliance with restraining orders;**

Austria **ratified** the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence on **14 November 2013** and the Convention **entered into force** on **1 August 2014**.

**Sanctions for non-compliance with relevant restraining orders** were introduced with the Federal Act amending the Security Police Act. The Act declares that violations of certain restraining orders imposed to protect against violence and invasions of privacy are administrative offences.<sup>2</sup>

In detail, the violation by a potential offender of a restraining order imposed to protect against violence in homes now constitutes an administrative offence. The potential penalty could be a fine of up to 500 euro or imprisonment of up to two weeks in case the fine cannot be paid. Before this amendment was introduced, this option was only available for prohibitions to enter the victim’s home or surroundings imposed by the police. The same applies to cases where the potential offender does not comply with an order that requires the offender to avoid certain locations or meeting the person at risk and/or to refrain from personal contact or stalking. In cases of persistent non-compliance the offender may be arrested.

**31. The Committee calls upon the State party to take measures, such as quotas, and support the provinces taking these measures with benchmarks and concrete timetables, to guarantee the rapid increase of the representation of women in elected and appointed positions in provincial governments and in the parliaments, including in the European parliament, as well as in political parties, the diplomatic service and sports associations.**

#### **Measures to increase the representation of women in provincial governments and parliaments**

In some provinces there has been an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in provincial civil service and in political bodies. Women currently account for 33% in the provincial governments and for 32% in the parliaments. At this point in time, there are only 132 female mayors in Austria, which represents a share of only 5.6% in all 2354 municipalities in the country. In order to increase the proportion of women in municipal and provincial politics, training courses and mentoring programmes for female politicians and women interested in politics are being held in all provinces.

The **Government of Vorarlberg** launched a mentoring programme for female politicians to support women in their political activities and to encourage interested women to take up political careers. Annual training courses on politics are held to

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<sup>2</sup> 2013 Amendment to the Security Police Act, Article 2, Federal Law Gazette I no. 152/2013.

encourage women to address their concerns and to integrate and use their potential in political committees and in the public sphere. The courses include several modules focusing on self-management, political work, rhetoric, conflict management and PR work.

In 2013, the project “Women shape communities” was launched in cooperation with the Vorarlberg Women’s Network. It is being implemented in the current run-up to the municipal elections. Several events have been organised in the municipalities and network opportunities and workshops have been created on “political activities in a municipality” and “rhetoric and communication” to encourage women to participate in municipal politics in Vorarlberg.

In the province of **Carinthia**, a course for female politicians has been launched to inspire women to take-up political offices. Several seminars, e.g. on political decision-making processes at EU level or on working with social media, have been organised to prepare women for their political careers and the tasks involved. In autumn 2014, the course started for the tenth time. In addition, discussions and network meetings have been held for politicians and interested women addressing topics such as cross-party promotion of women and positive conditions for women and their political work. The meetings are also designed to encourage women to engage in political decision-making processes.

The Women’s Division of the **Styrian Government** laid down “equal gender representation in decision-making bodies and leading positions” as an outcome objective. In order to broaden the scope of participation for women — mainly in politics and business — projects and events have been carried out and publications were issued to raise awareness of increased participation, active involvement and representation of women in decision-making bodies. Dedicated gender and diversity officers should further facilitate this.

### **Measures to increase the representation of women in political parties**

The Austrian legislator did not lay down a provision that ties funding to measures for the elimination of discrimination against women in its revision of the Federal Act on the Financing of Political Parties.<sup>3</sup> However, several political parties have voluntarily adopted measures to increase the share of women in their respective bodies and committees. The organisation statute of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, for example, stipulates that in the elections of officials and in drawing up candidate lists it must be ensured that women represent a minimum of 40%<sup>4</sup> and men also account for no less than 40%. In their party programme, the Green Party outlines that by having relevant provisions (such as electoral rules or rules of procedure) in place, it must be made sure that women account for at least 50% in all elected bodies and roles.<sup>5</sup>

### **Measures to increase the representation of women in the diplomatic service**

The selection process for hiring staff for the diplomatic service is partly anonymous. According to the Federal Equal Treatment Act, women are given

<sup>3</sup> 2012 Federal Act on Political Parties, Federal Law Gazette I no. 56/2012; last amended by Federal Law Gazette I no. 84/2013.

<sup>4</sup> [http://spoe.at/sites/default/files/spoe\\_statut\\_2014\\_monitor.pdf](http://spoe.at/sites/default/files/spoe_statut_2014_monitor.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gruene.at/partei/programm/parteiprogramm>.

preference up to a women's share of 50% if they are equally qualified as their male counterparts. The current ratio in the diplomatic service is about 34.3% women to 65.7% men. With regard to the birth cohorts of 1975 and later, however, an equal ratio of about 50:50 could be achieved in the hiring process in the diplomatic service. This development signals a trend reversal. Consequently, a convergence of the general average will be achieved after a certain period of time due to demographic developments. The new Plan for the Advancement of Women developed by the Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs<sup>6</sup> entered into force on 1 October 2014. One of the objectives set out in the Plan — to increase the share of women in leadership positions — is already being implemented.

### Measures to increase the representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in sports associations

The 2011 Sports Bodies Report (Sportgremienbericht 2011) examined at a federal level the managing boards of all 60 professional associations, the three governing bodies and the following sports organisations: Austrian Sports Organisation, Disabled Sports Association, Austrian Olympic Committee, Austrian Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics Austria and Sporthilfe. In 2011, the gender ratio in the managing boards was 14% women to 86% men. The 2011/2014 Sports Bodies Report comprised the figures for 2014, when women accounted for a total of 16% in all sports associations included in the report. This represents a 2% increase on 2011.

Table 1  
Share of women in the federal managing boards of professional associations, governing bodies and sports organizations

Organisation	2011		2014		Increase of women between 2011 and 2014 in %
	% women	% men	% women	% men	
Professional associations	13	87	15	85	+2
Governing bodies	23	77	20	80	-3
Sports organisations	15	85	21	79	+6
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>+2</b>

With regard to the representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in sports, the **Salzburg Regional Sports Council** (Sportlandesrat) introduced a **25% quota for women**. The quota was achieved shortly after its introduction and represents a unique requirement in Austrian sports.

In implementing the EU Strategic Action Plan “Gender Equality in Sport 2014 — 2020”, a **strategy group** was set up in February 2015 to develop a set of measures for equality of women and men in Austrian sports relating to the four main fields outlined in the EU Action Plan:

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20008928>.

- gender balance and equality in decision-making in sport,
- gender equality in coaching,
- fight against gender-based violence in and through sport, and
- fight against gender stereotypes in sport and the role of the media.

A **mentoring programme** is currently being developed to support women in obtaining positions in managing boards. The programme will outline the perspectives and opportunities of careers in decision-making bodies in organised sports in Austria for interested candidates. The mentees will receive support from their mentors regarding their integration into organised sports at a decision-making or management level. The overall aim of the project, the launch of which is scheduled for 2015, is to increase the representation of women in official bodies in Austrian sports over the medium or the long term.

Moreover, **training courses and awareness-raising activities** as well as conferences (e.g. conferences for the gender officers of professional associations), panel discussions and information campaigns on different aspects of equality in sports have taken place. Since 2007 there has been a focus on the implementation and assessment of “**gender sports projects**” that aim at increasing the share of girls in the featured types of sport. As of autumn 2015, a “**gender module**” will be integrated into the **training courses for coaches** at the Austrian Federal Sports Academies. The courses for the relevant speakers have already started.

#### **Measures to increase the representation of women in national minorities’ advisory councils**

As regards the national minorities’ advisory councils, Austria reacted to the request to increase the representation of women in elected and appointed positions. The Austrian Federal Government strives to achieve gender balance in the national minorities’ advisory councils and has urged the authorities that can nominate members to consider this aspect. These efforts have been successful, as a comparison of the number of female members in national minorities’ advisory councils between 2010 and 2015 shows. Austria will continue to strive for a further increase in women in these councils.

Table 2  
**Share of women in national minorities’ advisory councils**

<i>National minorities’ advisory council</i>	<i>Total number of members</i>	<i>Female members 2010/2015</i>
for the Croatian national minority group	24	1 3
for the Slovene national minority group	16	3 7
for the Hungarian national minority group	16	0 3
for the Czech national minority group	10	3 3
for the national minority group of the Roma	8	4 3
for the Slovak national minority group	6	3 3

**Measures to increase the representation of women in university committees**

The 2009 Amendment to the University Act laid down quotas for university committees. Women had to account for a minimum of 40% in all university committees and bodies such as the rectorate. The 2015 Amendment to the University Act increased the quota to a minimum of 50%. The composition of collegiate bodies at universities should be gender-responsive. This amendment adjusted the quota for women's representation laid down in the University Act to the quota that is outlined in the Federal Equal Treatment Act.

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