UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Fourth National Report of Austria

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I. METHODOLOGY – PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE REPORT

This fourth report was prepared by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs on the basis of contributions from therespective responsible Federal Ministries and regions (*Länder*), in close cooperation with the human rights coordinators of the Federal Ministries and *Länder*. A draft report was published on the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and an exchange with civil society on the draft report took place. Comments and statements by civil society were taken into account as far as possible in the final report. The report focuses on measures to implement the recommendations accepted by Austria in the 3rd UPR.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST REVIEW

Austria has initiated a systematic implementation process of all adopted UPR recommendations, in which the human rights coordinators, who have been appointed in each Federal Ministry and in each *Land* since 1999, play an essential role.

In its third UPR, Austria accepted 236 recommendations, which were subsequently assigned to the thematically responsible ministries and *Länder* for implementation. A 'structured dialogue' (annual plenary meetings with civil society, ministries and *Länder*) on human rights issues and based on the UPR process contributes to a constructive and highly appreciative, systematic exchange to better mutual understanding of specific human rights challenges and thus to **improved human rights protection.**[1]

Despite all progress, the Federal Government and the *Länder* governments are aware that promotion and protection of human rights require constant commitment and joint efforts. The ministries and *Länder* therefore remain committed to contiously improving the human rights situation in Austria. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts, the Federal Government and the *Länder* governments will continue the dialogue with civil society.

1. PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

1.1 International commitments, ratifications, reservations

Austria ratified the ILO Convention on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work in 2024 (No 190). The **ratification of the 3rd Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure**[2] has been included in the current Government Programme.[3]

1.2 Cooperation with international protection mechanisms, international cooperation

Austria has continued to work closely with international human rights mechanisms and appreciates the exchange with treaty bodies and UN Special Rapporteurs as an opportunity to further improve the human rights situation in Austria.

[1] 139.7.
[2] 140.1, 140.2, 140.3, 140.4, 140.5, 140.6, 140.7.
[3] 139.6: The first Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was already ratified in 2002 (Federal Law Gazette III No 92/2002).

In order **to ensure performance-based selection of candidates for treaty bodies,**[4] public tenders and/or hearings are being held.

The **increase of the quota of official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7% of gross national income**[5] is and remains a goal; since 2020, these contributions have increased by around € 565 million; furthermore, the budgets of the Austrian Development Agency and the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund have increased up to the year 2024.

In the **Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2025-2027,**[6] securing peace, human security and social cohesion build a thematic focus; emphasis is being put on the respect for human rights – especially children's rights –, the promotion of democracy and the development of democratic governance structures.[7] The Strategy for Humanitarian Aid of Austria follows a rights-based approach.[8]

In 2024, the guideline of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was updated; the share of ADC funds dedicated to gender equality reached 88.7% in priority regions, in line with the EU Gender Action Plan. Austria is working, as part of various replenishment negotiations,[9] for higher ambitions in the area of gender and for improved measurement of gender mainstreaming. The Austrian Development Bank published a Policy Paper Human Rights in 2024.[10] The **twin-track approach**[11] is firmly anchored in Austrian development cooperation, and accompanied by the "Working Group on Inclusion".[12] The promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities is pursued through targeted projects and through mainstreaming in all sectors.

At the international level, the realisation of human rights is further promoted by measures in **human rights education**[13] – with the goal to strengthen sustainable development through human rights competence, gender equality, peace and cultural diversity.[14]

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[4] 140.8.

[5] 139.1, 139.2, 139.3, 139.4, 139.5.

[6] Adopted on 26 June 2025.

[7] Support for democratic processes and digitalisation, as well as inclusive societies, are the main focus. Measures to implement the National Strategy against Antisemitism (see section 3.1 below) are also emphasised.

[8] The human rights principles of non-discrimination, focus on vulnerable groups, participation, accountability and empowerment are central guidelines in this context. Mainstreaming rule-of-law and human rights aspects in all phases ensures that humanitarian aid provided to states contributes to better safeguarding the rights of the population concerned. Priority is given to gender-responsive humanitarian aid, with particular attention to the (security) needs of women and girls and persons with disabilities. Austria's Humanitarian Aid Strategy also reaffirms the link between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding (the 'HDP nexus') as well as aid in protracted crises.

[9] International Development Organisation, African Development Fund, Asian Development Fund and International Fund for Agricultural Development.

[10] Based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and supplemented by an independent complaint mechanism, https://www.oe-eb.at/en/our-impact/standards-policies/human_rights.html (in English and German).

[11] 139.194.

[12] Austria's Humanitarian Aid Strategy also refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

[13] 139.147.

[14] E.g. through international research projects on antisemitism; development of teaching and learning materials, teacher training courses on topics such as racism and antigypsyism prevention; strategic guidelines for the promotion of development education and information in Austria 2024.

2. PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, NATIONAL LEVEL

2.1 Institutional and structural framework

In Austria, several thematic **National Action Plans (NAP) and Strategies** in the area of human rights protection have been developed, in particular: NAP on Disability;[15] NAP on Human Trafficking; NAP for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325; NAP on Integration; NAP on the European Child Guarantee; Strategy on Extremism Prevention and Deradicalisation;[16] National Strategy against Antisemitism; Violence Protection Strategy focusing on coordination and networking, with an emphasis on counseling and supporting women affected by violence. These are regularly evaluated and adjusted to current requirements. Additional NAPs, such as a NAP against hate crime and against right-wing extremism, are planned in the current Government Programme. Additionally, the development of a NAP to combat violence against women and girls was decided by the Federal Government in 2025.[17] Until now, a sectoral approach in improving human rights protection has been pursued succesfully; the current Government Programme also includes mention of the revival of a general **National Action Plan on Human Rights**.[18]

In 2022, the **Austrian Ombudsman Board (AOB)** was granted Astatus by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, certifying its full compliance with the Paris Principles.[19] Furthermore, the AOB was strengthened through additional personnel and budget. The current Government Programme considers a mandatory parliamentary hearing of designated ombudspersons and a review of the appointment procedure within the existing consitutional framework. This aims to fulfill civil society's request for transparency and participation in the selection process.

Media are the fourth pillar of any functioning democracy and perform important tasks. The independence and diversity of the media is guaranteed in Austria.[20] In order to the important role of media, the previous press funding was supplemented in 2022 and 2023 by digital transformation funding and quality journalism funding.

The new **Freedom of Information Act**[21] brings a paradigm shift: it replaces the previous constitutional principle of official secrecy and the obligation for administrative authorities to provide information, and introduces a new, constitutionally guaranteed right (in addition to Article 10 ECHR) to access to state information as well as to information from certain state-related private entities; it also creates an obligation for all state authorities to proactively publish certain information.[22] This promotes transparency of administration, democratic oversight, and strengthens freedom of opinion and of the press.

2.2 Human rights education, awareness raising, dialogue and tolerance promotion

Human rights as well as awareness concerning discrimination, racism, antisemitism and radicalisation[23] are widely dealt with in Austrian **schools;** previous measures have been continued and are present as the teaching principle of 'political education' throughout the entire school career.

[15] 139.185, 139.186, 139.187, 139.188, 139.189, 139.190, 139.191, 139.192.
[16] 139.35, 139.37.
[17] 139.158, 139.159, 139.160, 139.164.
[18] 140.9, 140.10, 140.11, 140.12, 140.13, 140.14, 140.15.
[19] 139.8, 139.9, 139.10, 139.11, 139.12, 139.13, 139.14, 139.15, 139.16, 139.17, 139.18, 139.19, 139.20.
[20] 139.90.
[21] Federal Law Gazette I No 5/2024, entry into force on 1 September 2025.
[22] Art. 22a of the Austrian Constitutional Law (since 1 September 2025).
[23] 139.21, 139.22, 139.23, 139.27, 139.135, 139.144, 139.145, 139.146.

Additionally, human rights are included in the mandatory subject of political education.[24] Based on an evaluation of teacher-training curricula focusing on the prevention of antisemitism (2023), training for teachers and the entire educational administration in the area of antisemitism, racism, and other forms of group-related hostility have been further developed and expanded.[25] Initiatives have also been implemented at *Länder* level.[26] The dissemination of human rights based on scientific knowledge is ensured by numerous institutes and research groups at university and college level.[27]

In order to counter prejudice and stereotypes against migrants and asylum seekers and to combat right-wing extremism, racism, and racial discrimination through **the promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue,**[28] the following measures[29] – beyond the educational sector – have been taken: promotion of large-scale projects as part of the focus on extremism prevention; promoting of projects on interreligious and intercultural dialogue;[30] establishment of the multi-stakeholder working group 'Sport and Human Rights' (2021); the handbook 'Sport and Human Rights'.[31] In Vienna, the police project 'Gemeinsam.Sicher durch Integration' has been in place since 2021.[32] In Carinthia, there has been at least one annual dialogue forum with the Slovenian-speaking minority since 2012;[33] Styria offers workshops for people with migration background and for persons affected by multiple discrimination. Longstanding international dialogue initiatives are successfully continued. The 'Intercultural Achievement Award' honors innovative dialogue projects, and since 2024, experts have been sent to selected partner countries in the framework of 'Dialogue Residencies'.[34]

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[24] 'Zentrum polis – Politik Lernen in der Schule' as a pedagogical service institution for Austrian schools on all topics of political education and the association _erinnern.at_ play a central role.

[25] www.bmb.gv.at/dam/bmbwfgvat/Ministerium/informationspflicht/veroeffentlichungspflicht/Endbericht_Juni2024.pdf (in German).

[26] E.g. in Carinthia: anti-racism workshops in schools; mobile exhibition on human trafficking for schools; Carinthian Human Rights Prize 2021 and 2022 for educational institutions; in the city of Vienna: project 'Respect: Stronger Together' ('Respekt: Gemeinsam stärker' – workshops in schools to jointly resolve conflicts and tensions in the classroom and to prevent violence in schools); 'Vienna Educational Opportunities' ('Wiener Bildungschancen' – school mediation and cooperation between the city and associations involved in extracurricular youth work; offers for teachers on topics such as bullying intervention and conflict resolution, team building and dealing with diversity in the classroom).

[27] E.g. by the Austrian Institute for Human Rights (University of Salzburg) and by cooperation of the University of Vienna with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Fundamental and Human Rights and the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC Graz).

[28] 139.21, 139.22, 139.23, 139.24, 139.25, 139.27, 139.31, 139.32, 139.145, 139.196, 139.212.

[29] 139.135.

[30] Approximately € 10.2 million from 2021 to 2025. Promotion of exchange to strengthen mutual understanding and social integration of migrants; based on Austrian and European values, counteracting radicalisation and parallel societies and aiming to foster a strong sense of belonging and active participation in social life among all population groups.

[31] Checklist for human rights issues at events, guideline for Austrian associations on international procurement decisions for major events.

[32] The project 'Safe.Together as a contribution by the Vienna Police to integration work' ('Gemeinsam.Sicher als ein Beitrag der Wiener Polizei zur Integrationsarbeit') aims to connect multipliers from Islamic, Jewish, Chechen and Serbian communities with police officers. This resulted, among other things, in the humorous and interactive social media campaign 'Cop and Che'. The project is currently running in Vienna's districts 2, 10, 20 and 22.

[33] 'Dialogue Forum for the Development of the Mixed-Language Area' composed of representatives of the *Länder* government, the parties represented in *Landes*-Parliament, mayors of the mixed-language area and representatives of the Slovenian-speaking minority in Carinthia.

[34] Information on the activities of the Task Force 'Dialogue of Cultures' at https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/international-cultural-policy/dialogue-of-cultures-and-religions.

2.3 Human rights and state bodies – state misconduct and law enforcement

In order to ensure comprehensive protection and respect for human rights, numerous initiatives in the field of **human rights education for state organs** are being undertaken.[35]

Human rights are a mandatory part of initial, ongoing, and leadership training for law enforcement. The programme 'A World of Difference', specifically adapted to police requirements, [36] and compulsory subjects covering human rights, ethics and social skills have significantly professionalised training and raised the profile of these subjects within the police. The curricula understand human rights as both the foundation and the goal of police work, assigning the police an active role in their implementation.[37] Human rights aspects are also included in personal development subjects.[38] Police tactics training covers human rights requirements for the use of force.[39] All human rights training is regularly evaluated and adapted. New elements in human rights education include hate crime, children's rights, antisemitism, and rights of persons with disabilities. Additional training seminars on human rights are open to all employees.

For the **judiciary**, there is comprehensive initial training and further education programme on human rights**,** with regular specialised anti-racism training for judicial staff. For example, all trainee judges complete the compulsory curricula 'Fundamental Rights' and 'Judicial and Contemporary History';[40] additionally, regular trainings on these topics take place. [41] Correctional officers undergo comprehensive basic training courses, covering human rights, professional ethics, and diversity and gender mainstreaming, and intercultural competence.

Furthermore, the training of members of the **Austrian Armed Forces** also includes numerous educational activities in the field of human rights, and the National Defense Academy organises multiple human rights-related events and projects.

The **Public Employment Service** focuses on equality and non-discrimination in staff development.[42]

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[35] 139.22, 139.27, 139.146, 139.75, 139.76, 139.77.

[36] In cooperation with the association 'NO CHANCE for HATE' (since 2021 successor to the 'Anti-Defamation-League'); carried out since 2003, within the framework of the Security Academy as central coordination office for education and training.

[37] Contents include the importance of human rights for policing, key principles with particular focus on the European Convention on Human Rights, the prohibition of torture and discrimination, and the Geneva Convention on Refugees.

[38] Training and reflection on one's own values.

[39] Both in basic training and in nationwide further training units.

[40] Three days or one week, on fundamental and human rights, antisemitism, racism and National Socialism.

[41] For judges, public prosecutors, court and prosecution office staff and prison staff. E.g. 'Forum Justice: Social media – a threat to the rule of law and democracy?', 'Anti-racism and anti-discrimination in the courtroom: empowerment for judicial staff', 'Tackling diversity in everyday justice' (including LGBTIQ+ in cooperation with ZARA - Civil courage & anti-racism work); 'Rom*nja as 'strangers, criminals, beggars' – recognising and avoiding antigypsyism'; Ottenstein Criminal Law Seminar, the seminars of the Sections of Criminal Law and Juvenile Criminal Law, the Practitioner's Seminar on Criminal Law and the biennial seminar on Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure. In addition, the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) offers: 'Antisemitism and Hate Crimes', 'Online Hate Speech: Aspects that Contribute to Hate Crime' or 'Racism – a challenge for judicial systems'. Since 2023, the judiciary has offered court and prosecution office staff and prison staff excursions to the former Mauthausen concentration camp entitled 'Place of crime – Place of remembrance – Place of learning: Excursion to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial'.

[42] Extensive awareness raising, including through guidelines, training courses, funding plans; on gender and diversity, anti-discrimination, LGBTIQ+, ethnic origin, non-violence, inclusive language, prevention of sexual harassment and bullying.

The Labour Inspectorate conducts annual training and continuing education on human rights.[43]

The Competence Centre for Diversity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination (established in 2022) develops holistic strategies and measures for the areas of housing, the arts and culture, media, and sports.[44] The **Federal Administrative Academy** offers numerous courses in human rights. In recent years, several initiatives to strengthen human rights education have also been initiated in some ***Länder***.[45]

To respond to long-standing calls for **independent investigation of allegations of police violence,**[46] the establishment of the Investigation and Complaints Office for allegations of ill-treatment (German abbreviation: EBM) was legally decided in July 2023.[47] Since January 2024, it functions as a department of the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption – outside the Directorate-General for Public Security and thus outside the 'classic line organisation' of the police – and has exclusive, nationwide responsibility both for investigating allegations of mistreatment against police officers and for criminal investigations in all cases of direct use of force resulting in death or life-threatening use of firearms.[48] A number of legal and organisational measures ensure the independence of the EBM's investigatory activities. An independent and instruction-free advisory board was set up within the Ministry of the Interior to provide ongoing structural oversight of the EBM's activities. The EBM is endowed with comprehensive police powers and conducts criminal investigations under the direction of the public prosecutor's office, involving interdisciplinary and multiprofessional expertise – adequate staffing is essential here. EBM staff undergo special training with a particular focus on human rights.

Within the framework of the 'Civil Society Dialogue Committee' of the Ministry of the Interior, standardised participation processes have been ongoing since 2016, including on the investigation of police violence.[49] The joint work on important issues is characterised by openness, appreciation, and mutual trust; the Dialogue Committee is unique in international comparison.

[43] Gender and diversity; raising awareness of labour exploitation/human trafficking.

[44] Established in the Federal Ministry of Housing, Art, Culture, Media and Sport. Until 2025 also in the field of education and training of employees of the public service. E.g. development of the e-learning: 'The right to equal treatment. Respect, Dignity and Recognition in the Workplace", jointly with the Ombud for Equal Treatment, accessible in the Federal Education Management and on the website of the Ombud for Equal Treatment (for the private sector).

[45] E.g. Burgenland: Inclusion of human rights in the curriculum of the Administrative Academy; City of Vienna: on topics such as human rights city Vienna, equal treatment, anti-discrimination and diversity as well as data protection, ethics and anti-corruption as part of the basic training for all Viennese municipal employees. Styria: trainings on anti-discrimination law for equal treatment contact persons; trainings at the State Administrative Academy for newly recruited staff and senior managers; since 2020 cooperation between the Anti-Discrimination Office Styria and the Security Academy – police students get to know the work of the Anti-Discrimination Office and discuss complaints against police.

[46] 139.65, 139.66, 139.67, 139.68, 139.69, 139.70, 139.71, 139.72, 139.73, 139.74.

[47] Federal Act amending the Act on the Establishment and Organisation of the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption, Federal Law Gazette I No 107/2023.

[48] In 2024, the EBM launched 514 proceedings. Of these, 505 cases concerned allegations of ill-treatment and nine concerned the suspicion of direct use of force resulting in death or life-threatening use of firearms. As of 20 January 2025, 392 cases (around three quarters) had already been closed by the public prosecutors' offices. 187 ended with their discontinuation (Section 190 Code of Criminal Procedure), in 202 cases no preliminary proceedings were initiated (Section 35c Public Prosecutor Act). In two cases, charges were filed and another case was dealt with in a diversionary manner.

[49] Further topics include 'racism-critical security authority" (ongoing), 'dealing with allegations of ill-treatment', 'civil society participation in the pilot project on bodycams for police', 'human rights challenges in connection with the dissolution of assemblies and demonstrations' and 'accountability-friendly self-image of the police'.

In the **penal system,**[50] every suspected case of a criminal offence is brought to the attention of the competent senior public prosecutor's office. The procedure to be followed by the prosecuting authorities in cases of suspected ill-treatment was regulated in 2015 by two decrees issued by the Ministry of Justice,[51] in order to ensure swift investigations and to avoid any appearance of bias on the part of the prosecuting authorities. [52]

Insofar as **racial profiling**[53] constitutes a criminal offence, it will be prosecuted and punished without restriction. In public prosecution investigations, the inclusion of sensitive personal data, such as ethnic origin, is generally inadmissible. Since autumn 2023, a specialist group within the Civil Society Dialogue Committee has been addressing the issue of 'racism-critical security authorities', with the aim of evaluating profiling methods and comparing them with international best practice methods. Racial profiling is also to be discouraged through the training programme described above.

Overcrowding in prisons[54] is a long-standing and pressing challenge. Electronically-monitored house arrest has been expanded, further measures to reduce prison populations have been implemented,[55] and measures to enforce existing rules on electronically-monitored house arrest are being put in place. Construction measures are being planned and – within the limits of budgetary possibilities – are being pushed forward. In July 2024, the 'Occupancy Management' task force was established. Since 2018, the number of prisoners transferred to other EU Member States for the enforcement of sentences has also risen, which not only relieves the burden on the Austrian prison system but also serves to improve rehabilitation. The necessary **staffing levels**[56] for prisons/forensic therapeutic centres are determined annually. Recruitment and public outreach initiatives are intended to ensure sufficient interest in jobs in prisons and forensic therapeutic centres.

With the 2022 **reform of the preventive detention/measure in forensic therapeutic centres**,[57] many long-standing recommendations have been implemented and significant improvements introduced.[58]

2.4 Human Rights and Business

Improving compliance with human rights and fundamental social standards and combatting human trafficking and labour exploitation in global supply chains are key priorities.[59] For many years, projects and studies in the areas of *Corporate Social Responsibility, Responsible Business Conduct* and *Business & Human Rights* have therefore been promoted, particularly in the context of publicising the OECD

[50] 139.79.
[51] These decrees were merged into *one* decree (including clarifications) with effect from 1 June 2025.
[52] In particular, the heads of the senior public prosecutor's offices are requested to assign the further (investigative) steps to a public prosecutor's office other than the one of local jurisdiction.
[53] 139.75, 139.76, 139.77, 139.87.
[54] 139.80, 139.81, 139.82.
[55] Amendment to the the Penitentiary Act and the Criminal Code, Articles 24 and 25 of the 2025 Budget Accompanying Act, Federal Law Gazette I No 25/2025: electronically monitored house arrest now applicable to (remaining) sentences of up to 24 months (from 1 September 2025); measures to reduce prison population in the context of (conditional) releases (from 1 January 2026).
[56] 139.84.
[57] 139.83.
[58] Preventive Detention Amendment Act 2022, Federal Law Gazette I No 223/2022; Federal Act amending the Youth Courts Act 1988, Federal Law Gazette I No 98/2023. Improvements include the application of more precise criteria for causality between disorder and cause or prognosis; stricter criteria for assessing dangerousness in less serious cases; decisions on the necessity of further detention within one year of the last decision; special provisions for adolescents and young adults regarding the imposition and enforcement of measures.
[59] 140.17.

Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. In July 2024, the EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD) entered into force, which must be transposed into national law by July 2027. Austria is endeavouring to reinvigorate its long-standing constructive dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, in particular civil society organisations.

3. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY

3.1 General remarks

Austria attaches great importance to **preventing, protecting against and combatting (incitement to) racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, religious hatred and hate crimes, intolerance and discrimination,**[60, 61] and is continuing its efforts in this area. Further serious efforts are needed, particularly in the field of human rights education.

General measures during the recent years include: participatory elaboration of an anti-racism strategy in the field of arts, culture, civil service and sport;[62, 63] significant increase of positions in public prosecutors' offices in order to intensify the fight against "cybercrime";[64] promoting projects to protect migrants from discrimination;[65] increase in budget and staff of the Ombud for Equal Treatment;[66] long-time support for the Klagsverband (Litigation Association of NGOs Against Discrimination) to enforce the rights of victims of discrimination; additional women's project funding for specific groups affected by discrimination.[67]

Combatting **hate crime and hate speech**[68] is a challenge for society as a whole. The adoption of the Act Against Online Hate Speech[69] brought aggravations of substantive criminal law,[70] made the identification of perpetrators easier and improved victim protection.[71] Communication platforms have been provided with a clear legal framework. Training for psycho-social court assistance is offered.[72]

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[60] 139.24, 139.26, 139.27, 139.31, 139.47, 139.48.

[61] 139.31, 139.32, 139.34, 139.37, 139.40, 139.41, 139.42, 139.44, 139.46, 139.47, 139.48, 139.49, 139.50, 139.52, 139.57, 139.58, 139.63, 139.86, 139.87, 139.88.

[62] https://www.bmwkms.gv.at/dam/jcr:ec8e92ef-f349-44d1-8700-94b5f5293030/ars.pdf (in German); developed by the Competence Centre for Diversity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination, with systematic involvement of self-representation organisations, associations and scientists.

[63] https://www.bmwkms.gv.at/dam/bmoedsgvat/content/Ministerium/gleichstellung-und-diversitaet/ars_umsetzungsbericht_23_24_b.pdf (in German).

[64] Especially for the prosecution of hate crime online.

[65] 2021 to 2025: around € 6.2 million.

[66] One-stop shop for all grounds of discrimination under the Equal Treatment Act for the private sector since 2019.

[67] Such as migrant women, women with disabilities, older women, LGBTIQ+ persons and sex workers.

[68] 139.30.

[69] 'Hass-im-Netz-Bekämpfungs-Gesetz', Federal Law Gazette I No 148/2020, in force since 1 January 2021.

[70] Especially in the case of violations of the right to one's image, hate postings, and cyber bullying.

[71] Internet users can take more effective action against criminal content on the internet, and victims can receive help quickly and without bureaucracy. The 'Hass-im-Netz-Bekämpfungs-Gesetz' has restructured legal and psychosocial support during proceedings and extended it to include victims of 'typical' online hate crimes, as well as underage witnesses to violence in their immediate social environment (now extended to underage witnesses of all forms of violence by the Criminal Procedure Act Amendment Act 2024, Federal Law Gazette I No 157/2024). In the area of civil law, the enforcement of rights in cases of violations of personality rights has been simplified.

[72] Teaching the legal basis for the offences of 'online hate' (incitement, cyberbullying, defamation, etc.), raising awareness for working with victims of discrimination/hate crimes; practical tips on digital civil courage, such as information on preserving evidence, reporting options and support services.

Comprehensive information[73] on psycho-social and legal court assistance for victims is available in 26 languages (including Braille). In order to counter **underreporting of hate crimes,**[74] victim information folders have been distributed in 12 languages since 2021.

Since end of 2020, **bias motives** – based on victim groups – have been recorded in police reports and forwarded automatically to the Ministry of Justice; in addition, the judiciary is now also required to record bias motives.[75] Police data has been published as 'Hate Crime Report'[76] since 2022. Taking every victim seriously as well as documentation in criminal proceedings are the main objectives; additionally, prevention measures can be developed on the basis of this data. Since 2020, the police has been **trained on bias-motivated crime** nationwide;[77] an online course on 'Hate Crime – systematic recording of bias-motivated crimes' has been offered to judicial staff since 2021.

Furthermore, the Roma Dialogue Platform[78] serves to **make minorities affected by racist attributions visible.**[79, 80]

The **fight against antisemitism** represents a central concern of the Austrian Federal Government.[81] In January 2021, Austria presented a holistic strategy to prevent and combat all forms of antisemitism (National Strategy against Antisemitism, NAS),[82] comprising 41 measures in the areas of education, training and research, security, law enforcement, integration, Europe-wide data comparison, and civil

[73] Online on the website of the judiciary at https://www.justiz.gv.at/html/default/prozessbegleitung.de.html (in German) and in print at public prosecutors' offices, courts as well as at police departments and victim support facilities.
[74] 139.72.
[75] 139.63. This covers 9 diversity groups and a total of 19 subgroups: age, disability ('physical/sensory impairment' and 'mental/cognitive impairment'), gender ('diverse/inter', 'woman', 'man', 'trans', 'other'), skin colour, national/ethnic origin, religion ("Christians", 'Jews', 'Muslim', 'Other'), sexual orientation ('bisexual', 'heterosexual', 'homosexual'), social status ('homeless', "other") and worldview ('political parties', 'western democracies', 'other'). In the area of justice, until the beginning of 2024 only the general offence code 'VM' (Vorurteilsmotiv – Bias Motive' was available; thanks to a technical upgrade, new, subdivided offence codes for individual bias motives are now also recorded in the justice databases, which correspond to those in the police database and must be set or reviewed by the decision-making bodies. A decree addressed to the decision-making bodies was published to accompany the technical changeover.
[76] The annual reports are published in the following year around the International Day of Remembrance for Victims of Hate Crime on 21 July (available at: Systematische Erfassung von Vorurteilsmotiven bei Strafanzeigen ('Hate Crime'), https://www.bmi.gv.at/408/Projekt/start.aspx, also in English). Since 2021, part of the report has also been included in the annual security report of the Ministry of the Interior. The most recent report is available here: Hate Crime in Austria – Annual Report 2023, https://www.bmi.gv.at/408/Projekt/files/285_2024_Hate_Crime_Bericht_2023_Englisch_V20241009_webBF.pdf.
[77] 3-stage concept: 1. Compulsory e-learning seminar (with exam and certificate), 2. Train-the-trainer seminars for internal police multipliers, 3. Personal training of all graduates by multipliers. In addition, civil society is continuously involved (in particular through free seminars offered by the Ministry of the Interior as part of the Austrian Integration Fund programme), and international workshops on victim support and information campaigns have been held with domestic and foreign government representatives since 2023.
[78] Members of the Roma communities, representatives of public authorities, civil society associations and experts.
[79] 139.30.
[80] At *Länder* level, the app 'BanHate' (operated by Styria), and enabling low-threshold reporting of hate postings, can be mentioned in this context; reports are shared with experts of the Styrian Extremism Prevention Agency: https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.steiermark.at/cms/beitrag/12902135/173602746 (in German).
[81] 139.22, 139.28, 139.63.
[82] In implementation of the EU Council Declaration of 6 December 2018, with the involvement of affected Federal Ministries, civil society and the Jewish Community of Vienna.

society;[83] the strategy was refined in 2025. An annual implementation report is submitted to Parliament.[84] A comprehensive working structure has been set up for its implementation, comprising various national bodies[85] as well as the EU-like-minded group of the European Conference on Antisemitism (ECA). In 2022, the National Forum against Antisemitism was established as an annual platform for exchange.[86] A Task Force on Online Antisemitism and Disinformation was founded in 2023, elaborating a set of measures against antisemitism online in 2024.[87] In 2023, the annual subsidy to the Jewish Religious Community, enshrined in the Austrian-Jewish Cultural Heritage Act 2021, was substantially increased.[88]

3.2 Children and youth

Combatting child poverty[89] and **promoting the well-being and social participation of children** are central priorities of the Austrian Federal Government. In light of the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing inflation crisis, numerous measures have been put in place to benefit, in particular, low-income households, in order to leave no child behind. Austria adopted its **NAP on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee** in December 2023, which focuses on disadvantaged children.[90] Families are supported by a 3-pillar-model of monetary, in-kind and tax benefits on federal, *Länder* and municipal level with poverty-reducing effects.[91] Children also benefit

[83] Measures in the education sector: adaptation of teacher training and continuing professional development, as well as strengthening the entire education administration (e.g. through continuing professional development seminars for school directorates); numerous training measures in the field of security and justice (for police officers, judges, prosecutors and court staff; see comments on point 2.3.); evaluation and intensification of local security concepts (Memorandum of Understanding between the Jewish Community and the Ministry of the Interior); close cooperation in the National Network for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation (BNED); comprehensive recording of antisemitism in police reports; in the area of integration: aiming to raise awareness of antisemitism among persons with a migrant background (through active educational work by means of courses on values, training for multipliers and support for youth projects). To date, 38 measures of the National Strategy against Antisemitism have been successfully implemented.

[84] The last implementation report, which is also an overall evaluation of the National Strategy against Antisemitism, was presented in November 2024: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:c36f67cd-4a6e-45fb-9a41-d54b9b1e1e16/umsetzungsbericht-2023-2024_nas-kampf-gegen-antisemitismus_bf.pdf (in German).

[85] The implementation of the National Strategy against Antisemitism is coordinated by the Federal Chancellery, Department IV/12 – Fostering Austrian-Jewish Cultural Heritage and Combatting Antisemitism, which was set up in 2021.

[86] Between local authorities, civil society, academia, the Jewish religious community and other institutions.

[87] Complementing the National Strategy against Antisemitism with 16 measures against the increasing spread of antisemitic hate content and disinformation in the digital sphere, with a focus on strengthening cooperation with online platforms, supporting of and networking between actors in the fight against online antisemitism and strengthening civil society resilience.

[88] From € 4 million to € 7 million. In addition to the protection of Jewish institutions, it also serves to preserve and maintain the Austrian-Jewish cultural heritage as well as to promote Jewish community life.

[89] 139.177, 139.180.

[90] From precarious family backgrounds, children with migration background or experience, children with disabilities, children belonging to an ethnic minority, homeless children, or children affected by severe housing shortages, and children in alternative care. Free access to the following six core services will be ensured: early childhood education and care; inclusive education and school-related activities; at least one healthy meal per school day; healthcare; healthy eating; adequate housing. The first Austrian progress report on the Child Guarantee was submitted to the European Commission in December 2024.

[91] At *Länder* level, e.g. the Vorarlberg family subsidy (https://vorarlberg.at/-/familienzuschuss-fuer-vorarlberg, in German) or the establishment of municipal prevention chains via the programme 'Vorarlberg leaves no child behind'; measures against child poverty in the education sector of the City of Vienna; Styria's subsidy for child-

particularly from several packages to mitigate inflation.[92] The valorisation of social benefits, automatically adjusting family benefits to inflation since 2023, and the child allowance introduced in 2023,[93] have eased the burden on socio-economically disadvantaged families.[94] Projects to effectively combat poverty[95] of children and youth were scaled up in 2023/2024, a programme to test new, innovative projects was launched. Studies on the socio-economic situation of children allowed for better planning of data-based measures.[96] Regional 'Early Childhood Interventions' networks have been expanded – since 2023, the offer has been available in all of Austria.

The **protection of children and youth against violence**[97] is a focus of the Federal Government's work, long-time measures have been intensified.[98] The fifth representative survey on societal attitudes towards violence was conducted in 2023;[99] effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were also re-examined.[100] In 2023, comprehensive measures were adopted to protect children and youth against violence, focusing on sexual violence. By sensitising society, taking preventive measures and amending criminal law the aim is to improve awareness, prosecution and prevention of offenses.[101] Furthermore, a working group on 'Preventive measures against sexualised violence against and by children and youth' was established, with a focus on psychosocial aftercare for children and youth who have

holiday-weeks for low-income families; free child education and care in Carinthia, and the new Carinthian housing allowance.

[92] A study on family benefits (commissioned in 2021) confirms the significant contribution of family benefits to reducing family and child poverty.

[93] However, the automatic inflation adjustment of family allowance and childcare allowance introduced in 2023 will be suspended for two years, due to budgetary consolidation.

[94] For low-income single-earners or employed single-parent workers, as well as for recipients of unemployment benefits, emergency assistance, social assistance or compensatory allowance; € 60 per month per child. This child allowance was granted for the above-mentioned group of persons from July 2023 to December 2024. From the second half of 2025, the € 60 special allowance will be paid out as a child supplement for single earners and single parents in accordance with Section 104 Income Tax Act.

[95] E.g. Programme 'Ready for School' ('Schulstartklar' – support for families with schoolchildren, receiving minimum income benefits ('Mindestsicherung') or social compensation ('Sozialhilfe'), at the start of school; 2022-2028 programming period; 2023: 45.513 persons supported, total amount around € 6.5 million); projects to mitigate the social consequences of COVID-19 for children and youth (2021/22: 14 projects amounting to around € 16 million).

[96] Statistics Austria, 'Child Cost Analysis 2021': updated estimate of the direct costs of children, consumption expenditure for children; Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection (ed.), 'Study on monetary family benefits for different household constellations 2021'; Federal Chancellery (ed.), 'Analysis of transfer payments to support households with children in Austria', 2022; OECD, 'Childhood socio-economic disadvantage in Austria. A snapshot of key challenges', 2023.

[97] 139.168, 139.179, 139.180, 139.182.

[98] E.g. platform against domestic violence established in 1993 to promote and network support services in the field of violence protection; increase in financial support for child protection centres in 2021; expansion of awareness-raising and support measures to strengthen parental education and non-violent parenting.

[99] On parenting norms, violence in dealing with children; awareness of the prohibition of violence in parenting. Previously conducted in 1977, 2014, 2019, and 2021. The parent survey showed a decline in support for corporal punishment, while there was greater acceptance of 'tangible punishments' such as deprivation of privileges. 60% of parents had heard of the legal prohibition of violence.

[100] 139.122.

[101] The package includes, among other things, the establishment of a 'Child Protection Quality Assurance Agency' that awards seals of approval for child protection concepts developed by organisations, as well as the promotion of non-profit organisations for the creation and implementation of child protection concepts. Furthermore, financial support for family counselling centres will be increased by € 3 million annually; capacity for cyber investigations by specialists from the criminal investigation department will be expanded; psychosocial aftercare for children and youth who have been victims of sexual abuse will be expanded; and 'victim-oriented work with perpetrators' will be strengthened and expanded in the field of psychotherapy.

experienced violence.[102] In 2024, a nation-wide child protection campaign,[103] developed with child protection organisations, children and youth, was implemented.

The education sector has also prioritised this issue, especially since 2024:[104] child protection, violence and bullying prevention, as well as police-assisted norm awareness measures responding to an increase in child and youth violence, are cornerstones for safe schools.[105] Special training for school staff has been developed.[106] A recent scientific evaluation of the youth crime prevention programme 'UNDER18', running primarily in schools since 2018,[107] confirmed its positive effects.[108] The *Länder* also take essential measures for child protection and violence prevention.[109]

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[102] Inclusion as part of the update of the special directive "Strengthening crisis intervention in Austria".

[103] See the campaign website neinzugewalt.at ('No to Violence') (in German).

[104] School Regulation 2024, Federal Law Gazette II No 126/2024.

[105] Numerous other measures for a safe school include raising awareness of preventive measures, clear guidelines for action, e.g. participatory development of mandatory child protection concepts with risk analysis in all schools; formation of child protection teams; introduction of codes of conduct; process definition for dealing with suspected cases; strengthening cooperation with regional security authorities. A video competition encourages pupils to engage with the topic ('Look instead of looking away – Together against violence and aggression for a safe school' – 'Hinschauen statt Wegschauen – Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt und Aggression für eine sichere Schule'); a hotline for conflicts in the classroom has been set up, and important information has been compiled at https://respektvolleschule.at, https://gegen-gewalt-an-schulen.at.

[106] In cooperation with the Centre for Violence and Bullying Prevention at the Private University of Education (PPH) Burgenland.

[107] Key areas of focus: Violence prevention, violence prevention in the context of digital media, delinquency prevention as a result of the consumption of legal and illegal substances. Since 2019, a total of 28.617 workshops have been implemented, reaching 643.276 parents, teachers and young people.

[108] 'Evaluating_UNDER18: Evaluation study to measure the implementation quality and effectiveness of the youth crime prevention programme 'UNDER18', carried out by the University of Vienna from 1.4.2021 to 31.3.2024, funded by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency.'

[109] Lower Austria, e.g., focuses on prevention, including through specially designed puppet shows, children's musical theatre and travelling exhibitions on the subject of children's rights. In Vienna, e.g.: creation of the 'Safer Internet' guide on the subject of 'grooming' and 'cyberbullying' (2019); support for victims of violence and bullying through the education-ombudsman's office of the Children and Youth Advocacy Service; promotion of further training for people who work with children and youth; improvement of communication between authorities and institutions in the city; expansion of the internal school violence protection package to prevent suspension or expulsion from school; expansion of expertise on extremism and prevention. In addition, outpatient support measures were expanded as part of educational assistance, social therapy and social psychiatric residential places were created, a special crisis centre and a crisis centre for children aged 3-6 were set up for inpatient risk assessment, and the framework conditions for crisis foster parents and foster parents were improved. Measures were also developed at the level of early childhood education (in particular, mandatory child protection concept, child protection officers and further training for kindergartens and day-care facilities; establishment of a competence centre for child protection in early childhood education). Styria: mandatory trainings on the topic of child protection in early childhood education; guidelines on radical symbols for teachers (https://www.no-extremism.at/news/leitfaden-radikalisierungssymbole-online-und-offline, in German); specialist unit for bullying at the Children and Youth Advocacy Service. Carinthia: Comprehensive education, awareness-raising and training measures for interdisciplinary professionals by the Unit for Quality Development within Carinthian child protection systems; initiatives to establish an integrated child protection system in Carinthia (child protection concepts); establishment of a child protection advisory service within the framework of child protection centres for all groups of persons working with children, youth and families (both full-time and voluntary work); implementation of the Carinthian public awareness campaign on violence against children: '#ichbinESwert' (https://www.ichbineswert.at, in German); current study on well-being and participation of children in elementary educational settings in Carinthia (https://pep.uni-graz.at/de/kibeki, in German) and feasibility study on the establishment of further participation structures for young people in Carinthia.

In criminal law, penalties for possession and production of child abuse material were tightened in 2023.[110] In 2025, a brochure for family court judges and other professionals was published, with the aim of making various forms of violence visible and providing strategies for action in line with the best interests of the child. As of August 2025, the minimum age for marriage was set at 18 years without exemptions.[111]

With the aim of improving general access to healthcare,[112] the Austrian Structural Plan for Health 2023 incorporated developmental and social pediatric services for the integrated care of children and youth with congenital or acquired developmental disorders or impairments. To prevent **overweight,**[113] measures in schools and kindergartens as well as target group-specific projects are carried out and promoted; nutrition recommendations, information materials and quality standards for a healthy diet are provided.[114] In order to ensure **high-quality sexual education**[115] for children, a quality assurance structure was introduced.[116] The *Länder* are also increasing appropriate measures.[117]

To improve access to mental health care for children and youth,[118] a new concept[119] establishes pathways to the psychosocial range of assistance. The number of child and adolescent psychiatrists has significantly increased;[120] additional training places have been created. Between 2022 and 2025,

[110] Federal Act amending the Criminal Code, the Code on Criminal Procedure 1975, the Communications Platforms Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Act, Federal Law Gazette I No 135/2023. In particular, the following changes were made: linguistic adjustments to the definition of the offence under Section 207a of the Criminal Code as 'visual material depicting sexual abuse of children and visual depictions of sexual acts involving minors'; increase in penalties and introduction of qualifications in Section 207a StGB with regard to 'many' images or depictions; extension of the scope of application of the prohibition of activities under Section 220b (1) and (2) of the Criminal Code.

[111] Marriage and Partnership Law Amendment Act 2025, Federal Law Gazette I No 46/2025: abolition of the possibility of declaring minors eligible for marriage; furthermore, prohibition of marriage between relatives up to the fourth degree (cousins).

[112] 139.124, 139.125, 139.129.

[113] 139.127, 139.129.

[114] E.g. the 'Eating Right from the Start' programme ('Richtig essen von Anfang an'), the 'Children Eat Healthily' initiative ('Kinder essen gesund'). Nutritional recommendations, information materials, practical implementation aids (e.g. school catering checklist, school buffet evaluation tool) and quality standards (e.g. for catering in kindergartens) are provided to help implement healthy eating in practice. In order to support those responsible for catering, efforts in the area of communal catering have been stepped up and a dedicated competence centre has been created. Among other things, its task is to identify factors that promote or hinder the implementation of healthy catering in educational institutions. In addition, target group-specific projects are being carried out and promoted (e.g. 'Health for Children and Parents' – 'Gesundheit für Kinder und Eltern').

[115] 139.152.

[116] Office for Sexual Education for the assessment of school-external offers in the field of sexual education (External Quality Assurance Ordinance - Federal Law Gazette II No 44/2023).

[117] In Vorarlberg, for example, a course on sex education is offered and institutions that provide educational workshops for young people and information evenings for parents and multipliers are supported. Vienna, for example, supports the 'Firstlove' counselling centre, which offers information, free contraceptives and help, as well as the associations 'Mädchenberatung' and 'samara', which carry out prevention work against sexualised violence and provide counselling for those affected.

[118] 139.124, 139.125, 139.129.

[119] 'Complete solution for the organisation of psychological and psychotherapeutic care.'

[120] Since the introduction of the specialised subject (2007), from 38 to now around 330.

free psychological and psychotherapeutic counselling and treatment were provided to children and youth.[121, 122]

Ensuring access to free, fair and **high-quality primary and secondary education for all children**[123] remains a major challenge. All measures in the field of education serve to achieve this goal,[124] complemented by specific projects to increase equal opportunities ('Chancengerechtigkeit').[125] A socially-targeted bonus to strengthen schools individually has been included in the current government programme. In addition to the formal education system, low-threshold language courses and tutoring are promoted to improve educational opportunities.[126] Furthermore, parents are supported to better accompany their children in school matters. At *Länder* level, many learning opportunities are provided free of charge, especially for children and youth with migrant background.[127] **Early childhood education** has been significantly expanded since 2024.[128]

In 2011, the Federal Constitutional Law on the Rights of Children[129] was enacted, securing child rights standards at constitutional level – an evaluation of impact and potential of these provisions was published in 2025.[130] Improving data collection on children's rights has been pushed in particular since 2024,[131] and projects to promote awareness of children's rights among adults and children have been increasingly funded since 2023.[132]

[121] Project 'Healthy after Crisis' ('Gesund aus der Krise' – special directive 'Healthy after Crisis III, https://www.sozialministerium.gv.at/Themen/Gesundheit/Nicht-uebertragbare-Krankheiten/Psychische-Gesundheit/Sonderrichtlinie--Gesund-aus-der-Krise-III-.html; https://gesundausderkrise.at; in German). The extension of the project is enshrined in the current Government Programme.

[122] Supplementary measures to promote psychosocial health, e.g. the 'ABC of Psychosocial Health for Young People' initiative by the Competence Centre for Future Health Promotion; the 'WohlfühlPOOL' resource platform with a collection of free offers and materials; annual 'Mental Health Days', an awareness programme to raise awareness and destigmatise mental health.

[123] 139.133, 139.134, 139.139, 139.140, 139.142, 139.181.

[124] Educational concerns such as educational and career orientation, pedagogy package, reading promotion, acquisition of interdisciplinary skills, learning aids underline this.

[125] For example, the project '100 schools – 1000 opportunities', the evaluation of which is foreseen in the current Government Programme.

[126] From children and youth from 18 months to the end of compulsory schooling. Integration projects 2021-2025: around € 15 million.

[127] For example, the expansion of the Caritas Learning Cafés with the support of the state of Vorarlberg; Vienna Summer German courses as a free offer from the City of Vienna for extraordinary students in the summer months; from 2025 also for children who are subject to compulsory schooling in Vienna from autumn onwards.

[128] The expansion of early childhood education envisaged in the Government Programme includes an increase in the number of places, longer opening hours and high nationwide quality standards. The aim is to guarantee a full-time, year-round place. The necessary funding will be provided as part of the fiscal equalisation scheme via the Future Fund in the years 2024 to 2028, with € 500 million (annualised) per year, and through an agreement between the Federal Government and the *Länder* on early childhood education for the years 2022/23 to 2026/27, with € 200 million per kindergarten year.

[129] Federal Constitutional Law on the Rights of Children ('BVG Kinderrechte'), Federal Law Gazette I No 4/2011.

[130] Available here: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:512d65db-f17c-4729-a2d6-57f49bd24cc4/Eval-BVG-Kinderrechte_2025_BF.pdf (in German).

[131] Comprehensive data analysis on various aspects of the life of under-18s, including health, education, legal status and social conditions, prepared by the Austrian Institute for Family Research.

[132] In 2024, a session of the Children's Rights Board dedicated itself to UNCRC General Comment No 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment, with a particular focus on climate change.

3.3 Women and Equality

In order to **promote equality between women and men,** to support women's rights[133] and to combat discrimination, discriminatory stereotypes and role models in family and society, including the portrayal of women as sexual objects,[134] all ministries, *Länder*, political leaders and civil society work hand in hand. Main actions at state level include:

The **budget** of the Directorate-General (DG) for Women and Equality has more than tripled since 2019.[135] Regular publications on 'Women and Equality'[136] as well as the biannual 'Report on Equal Treatment for the State and Private Sector'[137] aim at increasing awareness. Since 2023, each Landes-education directorate provides a contact person for 'Reflexive Gender Pedagogy and Equality' networking. Summer 2023 saw the third cohort of a higher education course accompanying implementation of the circular on reflexive gender pedagogy and equality.[138] Courses conveying key values and rules to foreign persons in federal basic welfare support are also designed to reduce discrimination and stereotypical role models.[139] In 2021, measures were adopted to empower women and girls with migration background in the fight against patriarchal structures and cultures of honor.[140] At the *Länder* level, the adoption of the Styrian equality strategy in 2021 can be pointed out.[141]

In 2022, the Austrian Fund for the Empowerment of Women and Girls was established.[142] Since 2021, grants by the DG for Women and Equality have amounted to € 6.7 million for projects in STEM empowerment, financial literacy and digital space.[143] To sensitise the advertising industry, the Anti-

[133] 139.110, 139.117, 139.148, 139.154, 139.155, 139.156, 139.165, 139.180.
[134] 139.29, 139.117, 139.151, 139.152, 139.153.
[135] The entire budget is dedicated to women's and gender equality areas, including in particular measures to promote women's and girls' self-determination, the strengthening of protection against violence and anti-discrimination, and the maintenance and expansion of women-specific counselling and care facilities. In addition, the integration section 2021-2025 supported integration projects with a focus on empowerment of women with around € 17.6 million.
[136] For example, the brochure 'Equality between women and men in Austria. Milestones, Achievements and Challenges', published in 2022.
[137] https://www.bmfwf.gv.at/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gleichbehandlung/gleichbehandlungsberichte.html (in German). In the field of art and culture, the Gender Report was published for the first time in 2024. It analyzes the gender distribution in the cultural sector funded by the Federal Government and the *Länder* between 2017 and 2021 (structures such as personnel, management levels and salaries, as well as the allocation of grants, awards and scholarships). The Gender Report is to be published every five years in the future.
[138] Especially for persons in management-relevant positions such as Education Directorate, Pedagogical University, School.
[139] E.g. on culture and manners, equality.
[140] Expansion of counselling measures in ÖIF centres, school attendance campaign of integration ambassadors, contact point for girls and women affected or threatened by forced marriage in Innsbruck, prevention workshops for young men from an honor cultural background.
[141] Comprehensive measures for equality, combatting stereotypical role models, prevention of violence, etc., https://www.verwaltung.steiermark.at/cms/ziel/109255607/DE (in German).
[142] 'Let's Empower Austria' (LEA), https://letsempoweraustria.at (in German). As a strategic long-term contribution to the reduction of discriminatory stereotypes of women and men, with a particular focus on equality in future industries such as STEM.
[143] Including on reducing gender stereotypes in education and career choices and diversification of training pathways and career choices (2021/2022); on empowering girls and women through digital literacy and positive self- and body image in the digital space (2022/2023); on reducing gender stereotypes of roles of girls and women, in particular women in old age and rural areas (2023/2024 and 2024/2025). In 2024, as part of the structural support for women's and girls' counselling centres throughout Austria, a focus was placed on mental load (mediation of opportunities for action to divide the 'invisible tasks' and responsibility for financial situation and care work).

Sexism Board was established back in 2012 – it provides expertise on complaints about gender-discriminatory advertising, which is subsequently taken into account in decisions and published.

To **economically and socially empower women**,[144] focus has shifted to improving data-collection.[145] Since 2021, several major projects for the prevention of poverty among single parents[146] have been supported;[147] in addition, 2021/2022 saw the funding of projects on financial literacy for girls and women; in 2024, a counseling focus was placed on 'Women and Financial Literacy' and 'Pension Advisory Sessions.'[148]

Women in the **labour market**[149] are given special consideration in the budget for active labour market policy.[150] **Priority measures** are targeted at improving women's job opportunities, especially through upskilling.[151] The **Labour Inspectorate** also integrates gender-specific impacts of occupational health and safety actions into its activities, and adresses gender-issues in priority measures, projects, and publications.[152] Measures **promoting gender equality in companies**[153] and increasing women's representation on supervisory boards and in executive positions[154] include the 'equalitA' quality seal,[155] the updated www.frauenfuehren.at guide,[156] and the Brigitte Bierlein Women's Prize.[157] The state as employer demonstrates its leadership role regarding gender equality in work and women's

[144] 139.109.
[145] Study on at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion of single-parent households in Austria; Maintenance survey: first systematic and representative survey on the maintenance situation and living conditions of single parents in Austria; Time Use Survey 2021/22 (https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/population-and-society/time-use) shows the distribution of paid and unpaid work largely by traditional gender roles; Study on equality in the labour market in Carinthia.
[146] In Austria, about 83% of all single parents are women – Statistik Austria 2024.
[147] Support in everyday life, expansion of information and advisory services, support in court proceedings and administrative procedures, empowerment.
[148] Within the framework of structural support for women's and girls' counselling centres.
[149] 139.107, 139.111.
[150] For example, they are disproportionately supported in relation to their share of the stock of unemployed, by +4 percentage points in 2024 and 2025 in relation to their share of all unemployed. In 2023, 212,999 women were supported by active labour market policies, of which 133,901 were supported by qualifications.
[151] Pre-qualification and training of women in craft and technical professions and in green jobs ('women in craft and technical professions'); Women's vocational centres for counselling and career guidance for women with a qualification interest; comprehensive support for re-entry after parental leave (own counsellors; childcare allowance as a subsidy for care costs); Completion of the course in modules; gender-sensitive STEM projects on career orientation.
[152] For example, in the field of health and safety protection in the hotel and hospitality industry or the cleaning industry, in the case of manual load handling, age-appropriate work design or the prevention of work-related psychosocial burdens, especially in the case of stress and to help against bullying and violence at the workplace. Further information can be found on the Labour Inspectorate's website at: Gender mainstreaming in occupational safety and health, https://www.arbeitsinspektion.gv.at/Uebergreifendes/Gender_und_Diversity/Gender_Mainstreaming_im_Sicherheits-_und_Gesundheitsschut.html (in German).
[153] 139.106.
[154] 139.110.
[155] www.equalita.at (in German). Distinguishes companies and organisations that promote women internally, ensure gender equality within the company, promote and make visible women's careers and thus support both gender equality in their own company and beyond.
[156] Helpful tips and practical examples for increasing the proportion of women at all management levels.
[157] Award for women under the age of 35 in management positions for their achievements in order to strengthen visibility and create role models.

advancement with the Federal Equal Treatment Act. The proportion of women among federal staff in general[158] and in leadership positions has steadily increased in recent years.[159]

In 2025, the Austrian Federal Government committed to increasing the proportion of female **supervisory board members** of companies in which the state holds at least 50% to 50% by 2029. Already in 2024, the average 'federal women's quota' stood at 53%. A **public online database of female supervisory board members** increases the visibility of highly qualified women.[160] Swift implementation of the EU Directive on Gender Balance on Corporate Boards is anchored in the current government programme.

Achieving **equal pay for equal work and work of equal value**[161] still requires diverse measures. Actions taken to reduce structural factors for the gender pay gap include: information campaigns or 'STEM-Girls Challenge'[162] to boost girls' and women's career prospects in all professions; removing barriers for women to work full-time;[163] and promoting women in economic leadership and decision-making positions.[164] Additionally, income transparency measures have been taken, such as the online wage calculator established in 2011, showing salary ranges for specific professions, sectors and regions, and the updated 2022 'Income Report Toolbox'.[165] Further implementation of the EU Pay Transparency Directive[166] is ongoing and firmly enshrined in the Government Programme; details are being discussed with all stakeholders involved. Gender equality, including equal pay, is also a priority in the current ESF+ funding period.[167], [168]

Increasing **women's participation in politics and decision-making**[169] is one of the aims of the 2022 'Girls in Politics'[170] project; some *Länder* continue to offer courses and mentoring for women in

[158] 44.1% (end of 2023); Proportion of women in the executive: 26% (increase of 10% since 2016).
[159] 2023: 38.7%, for heads of section 42.6%.
[160] Graduates of the management programme 'Future.Women' ('Zukunft.Frauen', www.zukunft-frauen.at, in German) http://www.zukunft-frauen.at/highly qualified candidates for supervisory board positions, as well as women who already hold supervisory board mandates.
[161] 139.107, 139.108, 139.109, 139.110, 139.111, 139.112, 139.113, 139.114, 139.115, 139.116, 139.117, 139.118, 139.148, 140.21.
[162] Annual ideas competition with the aim of getting more girls and young women interested in STEM topics and thus interested in promising sectors with a tendency to higher income opportunities.
[163] Including the provision of sufficient and high-quality childcare and care places; Increase in fathers' participation; Raising awareness of financial losses in life income due to lack of working hours and part-time work. 139.105.
[164] Such as the 2024 updated guide for companies 'Women Leading' ('Frauen führen').
[165] www.einkommensbericht.gv.at (in German), with practical help for companies to strengthen gender equality.
[166] EU Directive 2023/970 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms.
[167] European Social Fund (ESF), 40% EU co-funded.
[168] Projects include, for example, the advisory service *"100 per cent – gender equality pays off"* (2023-2028; € 10.5 million) for companies and employees with a focus on income and careers (www.100-prozent.at, in German); http://www.100-prozent.at/the *'FairPlusService'* advisory service (2023-2028; € 6 million) for low-wage companies and employees with a focus on gender equality and training (www.fairplusservice.at, in Germanhttp://www.fairplusservice.at/); the *'EqualPayNetwork'* (2024-2027; € 1.3 million) will test new approaches to reduce income disparities by networking regional players in industry and tourism (www.equalpaynetz.at, in German).http://www.equalpaynetz.at/
[169] 139.148, 139.149, 139.150.
[170] On the occasion of the International Day of Girls, mayors throughout Austria will be accompanied by girls and young women in their daily work; the project is carried out annually together with the Association of Municipalities and Towns.

politics.[171]

Protection against violence – and thus comprehensive measures for prevention, combat, and punishment of all forms of violence against women[172] – is of highest priority for the government. Findings from a scientific evaluation of the Protection against Violence Act (2022) informed further policy development. Strategic goals are defined and implemented by numerous working groups, e.g. the nationwide, inter-institutional "National Platform Violence against Women." Since 2022, annual meetings to share experiences on 'Violence in Close Social Relationships' [173] have improved communication, networking, best-practices, and the discussion of challenges. The 2024 'Violence Protection Strategy for Coordination and Networking focusing on Counseling and Support for Women Affected by Violence in Austria' is another milestone. The overarching goal is for clients to contact the counselling network at an early stage and without shame, in order to receive the best-possible assistance in escaping violence. In 2025, the government decided to develop a NAP to combat violence against women and girls.

The biggest part of the budget available for women's and equality policy is devoted to violence prevention and protection. Support services have been expanded: financing of violence protection centers increased and support services (counseling on cyber violence, group offers, aftercare etc.) were expanded;[174, 175] women's and girls' counseling centers – serving as low-threshold first points-of-contact for violence prevention and protection – now cover 100% of the country and serve survivors of sexualised violence; more shelters and transitional housing are available; [176] training against cyber violence has been provided. In addition, acceptance of high-risk victims in women's shelters across the *Länder* is guaranteed until at least end of 2027. In 2021, the first FGM coordination center was established as nationwide service and competence center; in 2022, the vera* Trust Center Against Abuse of Power was established for survivors of violence and harassment in the field of arts, culture, and sports.[177] Tyrol set up a counseling center for those threatened by forced marriage. Additionally, there are measures for the prevention of male violence with a focus on victim-protection. [178] Awareness-raising is also central: during the '16 Days against Violence', a broad range of awareness-

[171] Vorarlberg: Political training course for women; Programme for Women in Politics ("Women's Network").
[172] 139.161, 139.162, 139.165, 139.168, 139.169, 139.170, 139.173, 139.174, 139.17; 139.89.
[173] Between representatives of the public prosecutor's offices, the courts, the Federal Criminal Police Office, the Ministry of Women and Equality, the victim protection institutions, the NEUSTART association and the legal profession.
[174] 139.163, 139.166, 139.167, 139.169, 139.170, 139.171.
[175] For the expansion of shelters, the Federal Government provides the *Länder* with a total of € 12 million over a period of four years, whereby at least 180 additional places are to be created and maintained by the end of 2027. City of Vienna: The Vienna Women's Houses Association is almost 100% funded by the City of Vienna and also regularly carries out prevention and awareness campaigns. In total, there are currently 228 places in five Viennese women's shelters and 54 places in transitional housing for women and children affected by violence. This clearly exceeds the requirement of the Istanbul Convention that 1 place should be available for every 10,000 inhabitants in a protective facility for women. At the same time, one of the existing women's shelters was converted into a women's shelter for girls and young women aged 16 and over in order to better meet the needs of this specific target group.
[176] At least 180 additional places for women affected by violence and their children.
[177] It offers support to all those affected by harassment and violence, outlines possible courses of action, and provides guidance on the next steps to take. Starting in 2025, direct support for those affected has been complemented by prevention services.
[178] For example: Austria-wide expansion of violence-preventive men's counselling and gender-sensitive work with boys and young men (violence prevention workshops); 'Männerinfo' (men's crisis helpline); Austria-wide campaign 'Mann spricht's an' ('Man speaks up'; low-threshold public awareness raising on the topic of male violence through TV spots, print materials, poster displays).

raising activities are being implemented, all over Austria as well as by Austrian embassies abroad. The website 'Hilfe bei Gewalt' ('Help in case of Violence') has facilitated the search for assistance since 2023. As part of the women's project funding programme, € 2.85 million was awarded for projects preventing violence against women and girls and providing support and protection from (further) gender-based violence, including cultural violence, between 2020-2022. [179] From 2021–2025, integration projects to protect women and girls with migration background from violence were funded with around € 8.5 million. In 2022, the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) supported initiatives to empower women and girls in the context of integration with € 2 million, focusing on violence prevention. [180] Furthermore, the project 'StoP – Neighborhoods without Partner Violence' was continued and expanded,[181] along with the programme 'PERSPEKTIVE:ARBEIT' ('PERSPECTIVE:WORK') for economic and social empowerment of women affected by violence, and specialised support for migrant and refugee women through the 'Centre for Empowerment of Girls and Women affected by Violence – Bakhti'. Additionally, a training course on domestic violence for professionals in the field of assisted visits ('Besuchsbegleiterinnen und Besuchsbegleiter') was provided; measures to combat stereotypical roles and violence prevention workshops for women, girls and male youth were implemented.

In the area of **criminal prosecution of violence offenses**, the 'Guidelines for the Prosecution of Offenses in Close Social Relationships' for public prosecutors were amended in 2021, in order to reflect the specific investigative requirements in cases of domestic violence, and to adress the issues of detention and risk assessment of the accused. Special competences within public prosecutors' offices for cases of domestic violence and subsequent specialisation of prosecutors lead to more effective investigation and prosecution. These cases are entrusted to specially trained public prosecutors. To support victims of violence in asserting their claims,[182] eligibility for legal and psycho-social support for the proceedings were expanded.[183]

In 2024/2025, two pilot projects were launched to prepare for the nationwide establishment of clinical forensic medical examination centres for victims of violence[184] that offer specialised forensic medical examinations, evidence preservation and documentation for victims of violence, independent of proceedings and free of charge; ultimately, this service should be available 24/7. By now, 99% of hospitals have set up victim protection groups[185] for persons in need of care after having experienced violence; an interdisciplinary advisory board has developed a corresponding online toolbox.[186] The aim is early detection of and awareness about domestic violence; those affected should be quickly referred to the right place, to be able to receive assistance, and escape the cycle of violence earlier.

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[179] An up-to-date overview of the measures taken can be found in the thematic evaluation report on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Austria.

[180] Concrete assistance for those affected, awareness-raising; 'Violence prevention and self-determination' consultation hours for migrant women with executive officers and staff of anti-violence institutions; multilingual brochure 'Stop! Against violence against women and girls'.

[181] Neighbourhood project to prevent partner violence and domestic violence; there are now 41 locations in all *Länder*.

[182] 139.169.

[183] On the website www.hilfe-bei-gewalt.gv.at, information on support for the proceedings can be found in several languages. Currently, 47 victim support institutions are contracted to provide legal support. Among them are numerous institutions specialising in specific groups of victims. In 2023, 11,554 victims benefited from litigation support. There was an information campaign on process support in 2022.

[184] 'Gewaltambulanzen'.

[185] Section 8e of the Federal Act on Hospitals and Health Resorts.

[186] Available online at https://toolbox-opferschutz.at (in German), since September 2020.

To garantee **improved data collection** on femicides and other violent crimes,[187] a uniform definition of violence in close social relationships[188] was introduced for the public prosecutors' offices in 2021, studies were commissioned.[189] Nationwide statistical evaluation should provide a scientific basis for further analysis and preventive actions.[190] To **reduce the number of unreported cases** of violence against women and femicides,[191] awareness campaigns are conducted.[192]

Three studies[193] were carried out to examine the **long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic** in the field of domestic violence;[194] during the pandemic, the budget of the violence protection centers was substantially increased to meet potential higher demand.

Improving **access to sexual and reproductive rights**[195] is a priority of the Women's Health Action Plan. As an example, monthly hygiene and contraception will be tax-exempt from 2026 onwards.

3.4 LGBTIQ+

To secure the rights and, in particular, the participation of children with a variation in sex characteristics in medical interventions,[196, 197] a bill was drafted during the last legislative period, stating that only medically absolutely necessary interventions on congenital physical sex characteristics of minors should be permitted without their consent. The current Government Programme again includes the establishment of such a provision, as well as the expansion of sensitisation measures for healthcare personnel.

In principle, all insured residents have equal access to high-quality healthcare;[198] nevertheless, inequalities persist in health services for LGBTIQ+ persons.[199] Further equality is being pursued, e.g.,

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[187] 139.157, 139.158.

[188] According to the definition, violence in close social relationships or criminal offences within the family circle essentially refer to intentional offences against life and limb, offences against sexual integrity and self-determination to the detriment of a partner, spouse or registered partner of the accused, even after the relationship has ended.

[189] Among other things, prevalence study on gender-based violence against women in Austria; study 'Investigation of murders of women – a quantitative and qualitative analysis'; study 'The provision of emergency services for victims of violence in Austria.' See also the website: Publications on violence against women – Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research, https://www.bmfwf.gv.at/frauen-und-gleichstellung/services/publikationen-zu-frauen-und-gleichstellung/gewalt-gegen-frauen.html (in German).

[190] Austria has also called on the European Institute for Gender Equality to step up its research on 'Femicides and violence against women', in order to pave the way for uniform data collection across Europe.

[191] 139.172.

[192] Promotion of awareness-raising measures; publicising the support available; annual violence protection summit; Website 'Help in case of violence' ('Hilfe bei Gewalt', https://www.hilfsangebote-bei-gewalt-gegen-frauen.at/hilfe-gegen-gewalt.html, in German).

[193] The study 'Best practice: Protection against violence in the context of COVID-19' examined the specific challenges during the COVID-19 crisis and measures successfully tested in other EU countries to protect women from domestic violence.

[194] 139.122.

[195] 139.126.

[196] 139.128, 139.130, 139.131.

[197] 139.132.

[198] 139.129.

[199][199] The LGBTIQ+ Health Report 2022 (https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/dam/jcr:1f1c5f5a-d437-4f96-963c-5a9c744228c3/LGBTIQ+%20Gesundheitsbericht%202022.pdf, in German) shows that discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in Austria leads to inequalities in access, quality and availability of health services.

by now granting these persons the possibility to donate blood.[200] Within the framework of the funding priorities of extremism prevention and diversity, numerous projects to empower LGBTIQ+ persons[201] as well as to combat homophobia and transphobia[202] were supported. At *Länder* level, Vorarlberg adopted its first action plan against discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people in 2022, following a broad participatory process;[203] since 2023, sexual identity has been explicitly named as a ground for discrimination in Styria.[204]

In 2021, the then Federal Minister of Justice **apologised** on behalf of the judiciary for prosecuting homosexual people in the Second Republic. In 2023, a **law on the rehabilitation and compensation** of persons who had been prosecuted or convicted for consensual homosexual acts during the Second Republic was adopted[205] (informal application for annulment of convictions and for compensation).[206]

3.5 Persons with disabilities

In 2022, the **'National Action Plan on Disability 2022-2030'** (NAP on Disability II)[207] was adopted as a result of a multi-annual, broad participatory process;[208] it aims at comprehensive inclusion of persons with disabilities and will be continuously evaluated in the future. Implementation will be accompanied by the NAP supervisory group established in 2012.

The development of a **strategy for de-institutionalisation**[209] is foreseen in the NAP on Disability II[210]: the de-institutionalisation of housing is a priority in the current Government Programme. A significant contribution to independent living and social participation is made by establishing mandatory accessibility requirements in the ICT sector.[211] Persons with disabilities have the same access to **social benefits**[212] as all other eligible persons.

On the pathway towards **inclusive education and science,**[213] Austria is committed to a systemic transformation process towards an inclusive teaching and learning culture, while also recognising

[200] Amendment to the Blood Donor Ordinance, Federal Law Gazette II No 217/2022 and Federal Law Gazette II No 30/2025, taking into account the opinion of the Bioethics Commission on 'Intersexuality and Transidentity' (2017) for the gender categories intersex, open, diverse or without indication.
[201] E.g. expanding the range of counselling services.
[202] E.g. awareness-raising workshops.
[203] Vorarlberg Action Plan LGBTIQ* (https://vorarlberg.at/-/aktionsplan-lgbtiq*, in German).
[204] Styrian *Landes*-Equal Treatment Act 2023.
[205] Federal Act on the Criminal Rehabilitation and Compensation of Persons Sentenced under Sections 129 I, 129 I (b), 500, 500a, 517 or 518 of the Criminal Code 1945 or Sections 209, 210, 220 or 221 of the Criminal Code, Federal Law Gazette I No 152/2023.
[206] This initiative was accompanied by the project 'Befreiter Regenbogen' ('Liberated Rainbow'), which created visibility for the fate of homosexual persons in the Second Republic. Digital memorial platform www.diskriminiert.at (in German); comprehensive scientific study on the subject; display of commemorative plaques at all courts dealing (also) with criminal cases throughout Austria.
[207] 139.185, 139.186, 139.187, 139.188, 139.189, 139.190, 139.191, 139.192.
[208] It contains 288 policy objectives of all Federal Ministries and *Länder*, as well as 375 measures and around 150 indicators. The recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are an important guideline in this regard. At *Länder* level, for example, Tyrol decided on the participatory implementation process of its own action plan for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2023.
[209] 139.85.
[210] Action No 281: 'Participatory development of de-institutionalisation strategies in the framework of the Working Group on the Inclusion Fund [NAP-Action 4] in the context of the audit of an inclusion fund'.
[211] Accessibility Act, Federal Law Gazette I No 76/2023, in force since 28 June 2025.
[212] 139.193.
[213] 139.143.

challenges standing in the way of swifter transformation. Based on the 'Strategy and Position Paper on Inclusive Education and Special Education', the following priorities are set: strengthening cooperation and joint responsibility between the Federal Government and the *Länder*; establishment of centres of excellence for inclusive education in educational directorates in the regions to transfer inclusive skills into mainstream education; expanding inclusion by way of establishing school clusters; anchoring special education competences with school leaders and staff; optimising transitions within education and science system as well as to the labour market and awareness-raising for a diversity-sensitive language. To promote the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in regular classes, modernised curricula for special education have been introduced in the 2025/2026 school year, facilitating inclusive teaching, providing all pupils with access to all educational content and emphasising the design of accessible education by establishing a 'disadvantage compensation' (measures supporting persons with physical or mental impairments or special learning difficulties, in order to compensate for disadvantages in school).). Austrian Sign Language has been anchored as an independent subject in the new curricula for special education; furthermore, from the school year 2026/2027 onwards, Austrian Sign Language can be offered as a second foreign language in Academic Secondary Schools. Based on a nationwide evaluation of the allocation of special educational needs support, work on improving the current system is underway (needs orientation, acceleration, standardisation). At *Länder* level, Vorarlberg's new Child Education and Care Act (2023) enshrines inclusion as a guiding principle, significantly facilitating access to education and care for children with special needs;[214] in 2024, Vienna stepped up inclusive education and care for children with special needs in regular early education institutions, and established a Competence Centre for Inclusion.[215]

To combat **stigmatisation and stereotyping of children with disabilities,**[216] the NAP on Disability II contains measures to improve data collection[217] and a comprehensive chapter on awareness-raising.[218]

In order **to facilitate access to the labour market and improve occupational participation of persons with disabilities,**[219] the following measures have been implemented: individual funding[220] as well as project funding (such as through the Vocational Assistance Network[221] and support for inclusive companies). Additional resources are being made available to harmonise standards for personal assistance in the workplace and in private life,[222] and to strengthen autonomy and participation of

[214] The admission of a child with special needs can only be refused if the visit to the institution would be an unreasonable burden for the child, due to medical reasons. In principle, *every* 3- to 5-year-old child (even with an increased need for support) must have access to a full-time place if needed, regardless of the professional activity of the parents; every 2-year-old child must have access to a half-day place from the 2025/26 onwards. Every child of school-age must have access to afternoon-care (exception: holidays). Through these measures, the expansion of inclusive capacities is accelerated. In 2023, a mobile child education and care facility for inclusion and integration was set up: JUMI (Jupident Mobile child education and care facility for Inclusion and Integration) is targeted at children with increased and particularly high need for support between the ages of three and six, and supports children and pedagogical staff on site.

[215] By the end of 2026, € 3 million will also be allocated to private curative educational groups to create places for children with very high care needs, which cannot currently be cared for in regular groups.

[216] 139.184.

[217] See NAP on Disability 2022-2030 Chapter 1.3.

[218] See NAP on Disability 2022-2030 Chapter 8.

[219] 139.103, 139.154, 139.193.

[220] E.g. technical aids, wage subsidies, assistance offers, assumption of sign language interpreting costs.

[221] Netzwerk Berufliche Assistenz (NEBA): Youth Coaching, ApprenticeshipFit, Work Assistance, Vocational Training Assistance, Job Coaching.

[222] Personal assistance at the workplace falls within the competence of the Federal Government; personal assistance in other areas of life falls within the competence of the *Länder*.

persons with disabilities in all areas of life.[223] Additionally, funds are – for the first time – also provided to promote projects permitting people with disabilities to earn wages in the open (primary) labour market rather than 'pocket money' in day-care structures in the *Länder*, and for projects that improve the situation of deaf persons.[224]

The Public Employment Service also supports persons with disabilities by developing and enhancing labour market relevant qualifications. Since 2024, youth with disabilities (up to 25 years of age) have been eligible for support by the Public Employment Service and can take advantage of further education and training opportunities.[225] **Women with disabilities**[226, 227] are within the focus of occupational inclusion activities.[228] The 'Competence Centre for Inclusion' was created as a central point of contact around the employment of persons with disabilities in the public service.[229] The appointment of accessibility officers in the federal administration[230] is enshrined in law – they are to be involved in all relevant measures.[231] Since 2025, companies with more than 400 employees must also appoint accessibility officers.

Additionally, Austria aims **to encourage companies to employ more persons with disabilities**[232] – a specific consulting and support scheme for businesses has been developed for this purpose.

3.6 Older persons

To further **strengthen the rights of older persons**,[233] Austria is engaged at the international level; in recent years, national and international events on the rights of older people (networking and awareness-raising) have been held. At *Länder* level, anti-discrimination bodies have been sensitised to issues of age discrimination.

To **combat poverty among older persons**,[234] projects – in particular focusing on protection for older workers and educational initiatives for preventing old-age poverty – are supported.[235] Regularly

[223] From the Disability Compensation Fund.
[224] € 36 million and € 4 million, respectively.
[225] Until then, the Public Employment Service referred youth and young adults to the competence centres of the pension insurance institution, if doubts about their general ability to work existed; the following examination of their ability to work was carried out according to deficit-oriented, medical criteria. If incapacity for work was attested, the persons were de facto excluded from the offers of the Public Employment Service.
[226] 139.156.
[227] 140.21, 140.26.
[228] E.g. in the case of the 'inclusion promotion Plus-Women' introduced in 2020. The proportion of women receiving inclusion grants increased from less than 38% (2019) to 42.9% (2024). As part of the NEBA project funding, the proportion of women participating in NEBA projects (youth coaching, training fit, employment assistance, vocational training assistance, job coaching) has increased to a total of 44.6% (an increase of around 2% since 2019).
[229] To implement the 2021 'inclusion package' and to support Federal services and persons with disabilities' trustees.
[230] In Federal Ministries, including subordinate departments, the Constitutional Court, the Administrative Court, the Court of Auditors, the National Council, the Federal Council, the Ombudsman's Office, the Federal Administrative Court and the Federal Finance Court.
[231] E.g. conversion, refurbishment, new rental of buildings, safety and fire protection measures, purchase of software, signage, etc.
[232] 139.04.
[233] 140.24.
[234] 139.123.
[235] Special focus is placed on projects to promote women: supporting and advising older women; empowering women 60+ in the context of calls for funding 2023 and 2024 with a total of around € 3 million, inter alia as contribution to the reduction of gender-stereotypical role models of women in old age.

updated information on the pension system and options for securing one's own pension is available, also adressing specifically women.

3.7 Migrants

Improving **the integration of migrants and the protection of their rights** [236, 237, 238] is a task for society as a whole; implemented measures include: support for integration initiatives[239] and projects focusing on German language, children, youth and parental involvement, women's empowerment, community, identity and social cohesion, labour market and voluntary engagement.[240] All projects are aimed at enabling migrants to successfully integrate and, thus, to participate equally in economic and social life. Integration has been designated as a priority in the current Government Programme, in order to further complement the many initiatives[241] supported by the state and *Länder*.

In order to **improve the integration of migrants in the labour market,** [242] priorities include: competency assessments, job-specific German courses, basic and further qualifications; cooperation with external counselling and support centers as well as migrant counselling centres; career centres for young women; obligation to provide a nationwide advisory network for the recognition of foreign qualifications. The Integration Service for Skilled Workers as well as regular career platforms run by the Austrian Integration Fund in cooperation with well-known companies make a significant contribution.

Measures are also specifically targeted at promoting **the rights of migrant women and girls:**[243] in order to protect them against culturally motivated forms of violence,[244] for example, a dense network of counselling centres[245] is being co-financed, targeted information and awareness-raising campaigns are conducted, and projects on, inter alia, culturally motivated forms of violence and on prevention of culturally motivated and family-based violence with a focus on forced marriage are promoted.[246]

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[236] 139.212.
[237] 139.197, 139.198, 139.201, 139.202, 139.210.
[238] 139.213.
[239] For example, 'Foreigners become Friends' ('Fremde werden Freunde'): the objective of making diversity visible in all areas; 'Sports – Friends' ('Sport – Freunde'): inclusion of people with a migration biography or refugee background in society through sports activities, volunteering, preventive psychological support measures and networking; 'Family Integration Initiative' ('Integrationsinitiative Familie'): preventive work against radicalisation and identity diffusion, against social withdrawal tendencies and social isolation.
[240] Funding priorities in the area of integration can be found here: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/integration/projektfoerderung/foerderschwerpunkte/allgemein.html (in German).
[241] For example, 'Sport connects: train together, run together' ('Sport verbindet: gemeinsam trainieren, gemeinsam laufen') of the asylkoordination Österreich: professionally guided training in several *Länder* to involve refugees through sport (2/2024-12/2025); 'A second home through sport' ('Ein zweites Zuhause durch den Sport') by SPORTUNION Salzburg: various sports activities for migrant workers, mainly in the care and health sector, to make it easier to arrive in Austria (12/23-10/26). Vienna: free 'StartWien' support programme; individual 'New to Vienna' orientation talks and themed information events; 'StartWien' offers are available in over 20 languages.
[242] 140.21, 140.26.
[243] 139.155.
[244] Forced marriage, child marriage or female genital mutilation (FGM).
[245] Specialised migrant women's advice centres and violence protection centres, specific support services for forced marriage and FGM.
[246] Call for funding applications from the DG for Women and Equality with a total of € 1.6 million in 2021/22 and with a total of € 2 million 2024/2025.

Migrants have full and equal access to **health care** under the statutory social security system,[247] as all insured persons and their dependents.[248] Work continues at *Länder* level **to improve access to education for migrants;**[249] Vienna, for example, offers a wide and low-barrier array of services.[250]

3.8 Asylum seekers, refugees

The **protection of the rights of asylum seekers in Austria**[251] is ensured – in particular – by an asylum procedure based on the rule of law. **Facilitating the asylum application process and the relocation of asylum seekers to Austria**[252] is currently not envisaged: as one of the European states bearing the highest burden, Austria is meeting its international obligations.[253] The **principle of non-refoulement**[254] is respected at every stage of the asylum and return procedure. The **independence of legal counseling**[255] for asylum seekers through the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services (BBU) was revised by law in 2024.[256]

To guarantee a sensitive approach in identifying particularly vulnerable persons, the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum offers numerous training programmes on 'vulnerable groups' in close cooperation with internal and external experts.[257]

Asylum seekers included in basic care, foreigners in need of assistance and protection,[258] as well as Ukrainian nationals and other persons who have been temporarily admitted to Austria since 24th February 2022, due to the war in Ukraine,[259] are covered by the statutory health insurance and thus have access to **healthcare**.[260]

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[247] 140.26.
[248] That is, employed or self-employed persons and their dependants covered by compulsory insurance.
[249] 140.26.
[250] StartWien Jugendcollege (https://www.interface-wien.at/projekte-startwien-college/); InterSpace (basic education for youth and young adults aged 15 to 25, https://www.interface-wien.at/basisbildung-kurse-jugendliche); basic education for adults and specific offers for women (https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/deutsch-lernen/deutschkurse-erwachsene.html); (all in German and English); parental information events on educational choices: 'Where to at age 14?' ('Wohin mit 14?') in German, Turkish, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Farsi/Dari and Ukrainian).
[251] 139.197, 139.198, 139.201, 139.206, 139.210, 139.206.
[252] 139.205.
[253] Excluding the approximately 129.600 registered persons with temporary protection status from Ukraine to date, over 112.000 asylum applications were lodged in Austria in 2022, around 59.000 in 2023 and around 25.400 in 2024. In 2024, around 26.300 asylum seekers were granted protection.
[254] 139.204, 139.209.
[255] 139.195, 139.203, 139.208, 139.209, 139.211.
[256] Amendments to the The Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services Establishment Act and the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Procedure Act with Federal Law Gazette I No 134/2024, in force since 23 July 2024, – implementing Constitutional Court ruling G 328/2022 of 14 December 2023, which had repealed the original provisions as unconstitutional due to insufficient independence of legal advice. The independence and freedom from instruction of legal advisers is now enshrined in specific legal provisions (in particular, extended protection against dismissal and termination, allocation of cases, administrative and technical/legal supervision, quality advisory board; budgetary and personnel authority for legal advice department management).
[257] E.g. in the areas of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, identification of potential victims of human trafficking and of traumatised persons, physically ill, torture victims, victims of sexual violence, dealing with children and women and unaccompanied minor applicants. See Recommendation 139.155.
[258] Under Article 2 of the 15a Agreement between the Federal State and the *Länder* on basic care.
[259] In accordance with the EU Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001.
[260] 140.26.

In Austria, **effective access to the labour market for asylum seekers** [261] is guaranteed by implementating the EU Reception Conditions Directive:[262] asylum seekers must be granted effective access to the labour market no later than nine months after their application for international protection; furthermore, the Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals allows for employment permits in the framework of labour market tests. Persons granted asylum or subsidiary protection as well as persons with temporary protection status have unrestricted access to the labour market and thus to the services offered by the Austrian Employment Service. An additional € 75 million was made available for labour market integration of recognised refugees in 2024 and 2025.

The **protection of asylum-seeking children**[263] is a concern for Austria, the **best interests of the child** should be taken into account in all steps of the procedure.[264] In 2021, a **'Child Welfare Commission'** of independent experts issued a report with concrete recommendations to safeguard the best interests of the child in asylum and procedures on the right of residence – measures that have been implemented include: appointment of a contact judge for the best interests of the child at the Federal Administrative Court;[265] numerous interdisciplinary trainings; publication and continous update of the guidelines on 'The best interests of the child in asylum and alien law' for the Federal Administrative Court; ten new positions for judges and legal staff at the Federal Administrative Court (2022). In addition to providing information materials written specifically for children, participatory workshops are held to inform children about their rights. Additional measures are continually implemented to maintain the high level of protection.[266]

In all federal reception facilities, specifically and anually trained child protection officers and managers are present. Based on UNICEF minimum standards for children in reception, the Federal Agency for Reception and Support Services has developed and implemented an internal child protection concept with external experts, which stipulates the consideration of the child's best interests in all individual measures. Federal reception facilities support the **school enrollment** of school-age children, German and educational courses are offered. [267] Some federal reception facilities provide a school-like environment through 'bridge classes' or school pilot projects with local schools.[268] Unaccompanied minors who are no longer subject to compulsory schooling can voluntarily attend the bridge classes.

To **protect unaccompanied minors seeking asylum (UAM),**[269] separate accommodation-areas or specialised facilities are provided. Federal reception facilities provide age-appropriate daily routines, educational programmes, German and integration instruction, workshops and leisure activities. Specifically tailored information material on asylum procedure, accommodation and external support services are available. Within the framework of the 'Restoring Family Links' programme, Austria

[261] 140.33, 140.34.
[262] Directive 2013/33/EU.
[263] 139.181, 139.206, 139.207.
[264] E.g. when assessing the credibility of a minor's statements, their age and stage of development are also taken into account; ongoing training; use of child-friendly language appropriate to their stage of development.
[265] Bundesverwaltungsgericht (BVwG) – the court of appeal responsible for asylum and right of residence proceedings.
[266] E.g. based on expert analyses and recommendations, greater consideration of the situation of children in their country of origin in the country information provided in the state documentation; adaptations in the investigation process; additional training modules focusing on child welfare assessments for the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum.
[267] 140.26.
[268] The emphasis is on teaching German in a child-friendly and playful manner, as well as promoting physical and coordination skills.
[269] 139.199, 139.201.

cooperates with the tracing service of the Austrian Red Cross. The Ministry of Justice, as the competent authority, is working in close coordination with the *Länder* and the Ministry of the Interior on a solution to ensure the custody of UAM from day 1 (from the first encounter until allocation to the *Landes*reception systems). In Vienna, the child and youth welfare authority assumes custody of underage minors (apprehended in Vienna) from day 1.[270]

3.9 National Minorities

A range of measures underscores the Austrian Federal Government's commitment to the support and promotion of the cultural identity and diversity of national minorities in the country:

In 2021, national minority funding was nearly doubled;[271] at the same time, a dedicated funding approach for national **minority media**[272] was established in order to increase visibility of the culture and language of national minorities in the media.[273] Since 2021, there is an emphasis on digitisation projects, which includes funding for multilingual municipal websites in national minority languages. The Federal Broadcasting Act requires the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) to offer an appropriate proportion of programmes in national minority languages.

The **constitutional provisions on national minorities** have been implemented;[274] measures are being taken on an ongoing basis to improve the situation of national minorities. National minority advisory councils in the Federal Chancellery must be heard before legislative or general funding plans affecting national minorities are passed. Since 2017, the Carinthian *Landes* Government has been constitutionally obliged to submit an annual report on the situation of the Slovenian national minority in Carinthia to *Landes* Parliament.[275]

Access to education for national minorities:[276] On the basis of the Minority School Acts for Carinthia and Burgenland, bilingual instruction in German/Croatian, German/Slovene and German/Hungarian is offered mainly at primary school level and in secondary schools. The acts regulate the teaching of the mentioned languages as compulsory and elective subject. Additionally, Burgenland offers 'Romanes' as a non binding language course.[277] Educational projects outside traditional settlement areas are regularly supported in the framework of national minority funding. In 2023, the Carinthian Children's Education and Care Act explicitly established the promotion of the language of the Slovenian national minority. In 2022, an agreement under Article 15a of the Austria Constitution was concluded for kindergartens from 2022/23 to 2026/27, in which national minorites and their languages are included

[270] In the case of minors with legal capacity, immediately upon referral to Vienna. When an unaccompanied minor is referred to the Vienna *Landes*-Basic Care Service, the Child and Youth Welfare Service can take interim measures in cases of imminent danger, in order to temporarily take over care, upbringing and legal representation in this area. At the same time, the Child and Youth Welfare Service submits a corresponding application for custody to the court.

[271] From € 3.8 million to € 7.8 million.

[272] This funding approach supports print and online media that promote the language and culture of the respective national miority. Each national minority has designated one medium as its lead medium.

[273] 140.32.

[274] 139.140.

[275] Available at www.ktn.gv.at/volksgruppen (in German).

[276] 139.136, 139.137, 139.138, 139.139, 139.140, 139.141, 139.183.

[277] See Section 14 Minority School Act for Burgenland.

for the first time.[278, 279, 280]

In 2021, the **'Strategy for the Continued Inclusion of Roma in Austria'** was adopted, with various measures in the educational field.[281] There is also a particular focus on combatting prejudice, racism, discrimination and xenophobia. To institutionalise a dialogue between Roma civil society and the administration, the National Roma Contact Point of the Federal Chancellery regularly organises the Roma Dialogue Platform, which addresses Roma-specific concerns. Online teaching materials[282] offer students insight into the life of Roma and Sinti. In 2022, a special directive 'Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market 2022-2030' was issued, fostering projects to sustainably combat (long-term) unemployment and unfavourable living conditions for Roma, resulting from a lack of labour market integration and inclusion.[283] In 2024, August 2 was declared a national day of remembrance for the Roma and Sinti murdered in the Holocaust, with the genocide officially recognised as a historical fact by the Federal Government.

4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The pursuit **of respect and guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights**[284] is the basis of Austria's traditionally well-developed welfare state, which seeks to guarantee social security and an adequate standard of living for all people living in the country – by combining preventive and curative elements (cash or in-kind benefits) focusing on vulnerable groups. The welfare state makes a significant contribution to the prevention of poverty and social exclusion, creates the conditions for social cohesion, and helps to address the consequences of multiple crises.

The **COVID-19 pandemic** in particular brought a multitude of challenges for human rights protection – several analyses[285] allow for conclusions to be drawn for future similar situations and for assuming responsibility.

Poverty reduction[286] has become increasingly important in the context of multiple crises in recent

[278] Article 15a B-VG Agreement on Early Childhood Education, 2022.

[279] A working group on continuous language education in the minorities' language, set up in 2024 by the Carinthian Dialogue Forum, drew up a catalog of measures that was presented to the Federal Minister and the Governor in 2025.

[280] In Burgenland, affected communities have been obliged since 2009 to offer the respective language of the national minority (Croatian or Hungarian) in addition to the instructional language (German). Projects such as 'Naturally multilingual' ('Natürlich mehrsprachig') provide practical guidance on how to deal with multilingualism in day-to-day kindergarten-life in Burgenland.

[281] E.g. compulsory early childhood education in the final year of kindergarten; expansion of language support; improvement of the school-entry phase; expansion of cooperation between kindergartens and primary schools and between all-day school types; provision of learning support programmes; establishment of Roma school mediators; provision of bilingual teaching in Burgenland and native-language teaching; expansion of career guidance and educational counselling; provision of adult education.

[282] 'Romane Thana – Places of Roma and Sinti' (www.romane-thana.at, in Germanhttp://www.romane-thana.at/), produced on behalf of the Ministry of Education by the association Romano Centro, in cooperation with the Wien Museum.

[283] 139.183.

[284] 140.25.

[285] 139.122. E.g. a study funded by the City of Vienna on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's rights and child protection; a study commissioned by the City of Vienna on the situation of women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic (2021); since 2021, two university research projects have been investigating longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and youth as well as adults with disabilities and mental illnesses in the areas of school and housing, including with the aim of developing a model for inclusive crisis monitoring.

[286] 139.119, 139.120, 139.121.

years. Based on improved evidence[287] on living conditions of different target groups, extensive measures and programmes have been developed and adapted.[288] Targeted measures have also been implemented by the *Länder*.[289] In the area of **unemployment insurance,** additional measures have been taken to alleviate special needs.[290] By expanding short-time work arrangements, more than 1.3 million jobs were secured during the crisis;[291] a restart-bonus provided incentivised rapid filling of open part-time positions; the 'Corona Job Offensive' implemented well-tried labour market policies (qualification, employment, support); furthermore, the programm 'Springboard' additionally brought around 47.000 long-term unemployed persons into subsidised employment.

5. SPECIAL TOPICS

5.1 Combatting human trafficking[292]

The Task Force on Combatting Human Trafficking, established in 2004, developed the **7th Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2024-2027**,[293] monitors its implementation,[294] and regularly submits reports.[295]

In order **to improve victim protection,**[296, 297, 298] funding for victim protection facilities[299] providing comprehensive support, counselling services[300] and shelter for victims has been increased since 2021;

[287] Study: 'Social Factors of the Pandemic'; Study: 'COVID-19: Analysis of the Social Situation in Austria'; Survey: 'People Affected by Poverty and the Corona Crisis 2.0'; Study: 'COVID-19 and Migration Background'; Study: 'Evaluation of the Last Social Safety Net and its Interaction with the First Social Safety Net, with Special Consideration of the Current COVID-19 Crisis and the Effects of the Basic Social Assistance Act'.

[288] For example, within the framework of the Federal Act on Combatting the Consequences of Poverty Caused by the Pandemic, and the Federal Act on Compensation for Inflation-Related High Living and Housing Costs. Based on the Special Directive on COVID-19 Poverty Reduction, projects worth around € 9 million were funded (in addition to the projects mentioned in the chapter on 'Children'). The programme 'WOHNSCHIRM Rent and Energy' supports tenants who are in arrears with their rent and energy costs and are at risk of eviction or having their household energy cut off. 'WOHNSCHIRM Housing First' provides support services for homeless people, such as social work assistance including housing placement, coverage of rental costs and needs-based start-up support (starting in October 2024).

[289] For example, the City of Vienna has developed a range of instruments to help secure the right to a dignified life and an adequate standard of living, e.g. housing and energy allowances for broader sections of the population and a package of special benefits for vulnerable target groups (energy cost allowance, energy support plus, housing security plus in the event of rent arrears). Automated payment and simplified application procedures have made it possible to provide access that is as barrier-free and fast as possible.

[290] Temporary increase in emergency assistance; several one-off payments for unemployed persons; simplified access to unemployment benefits for self-employed persons; easier access to continuing education and part-time education allowances as well as partial retirement; education bonus.

[291] Employees in short-time work received at least 80 to 90% of the net income; a long-term short-time work bonus supplemented the measure.

[292] 139.91, 139.95, 139.99, 139.98, 139.101.

[293] Focus areas: Prevention; victim protection and criminal prosecution; development of a national referral mechanism for victims of human trafficking; consideration of LGBTIQ+ persons and the involvement of so-called survivors.

[294] 139.101.

[295] Tri-annualy to the Federal Government and Parliament; annually on the implementation of the Action Plan.

[296] 139.92, 139.99.

[297] 139.96, 139.97.

[298] Most recently by the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 2024, Federal Law Gazette I No 157/2024.

[299] LEFÖ-IBF (Intervention Centre for Victims of Trafficking in Women); MEN VIA victim protection facility for male victims of human trafficking (Men's Health Center).

[300] Focus on empowerment, improving living and working conditions.

support for transitioning into independent living has also been expanded.[301] The promotion of legal advice for migrants in their native-languages[302] and of trade-union-support for undocumented workers[303] improves victim protection. In preparation for a *National Referral Mechanism,* a leaflet on 'Child Trafficking' has been adapted and the 'Guidelines for the Identification and Management of Potential Victims of Child Trafficking'[304] are being revised. To **harmonise protection standards** for victims of child trafficking,[305] a process to establish a nationwide protection facility has been initiated. In order to improve **data collection** on human trafficking, police crime statistics[306] are continously being adapted.

Cooperation between public authorities, civil society organisations and victim protection associations is required to ensure efficient **law enforcement and prosecution**[307] of human trafficking. **Training** of judges and public prosecutors covers general aspects of human trafficking[308] as well as victim protection[309] in particular.[310]

To foster **economic and social inclusion** of victims of human trafficking, the Intervention Center for Trafficked Women[311] provides needs-based counseling; as soon as access to the labour market is gained, the full range of support provided by the Public Employment Service is available. Labour market integration is supported in cooperation with external (migrant) counselling centres and the Austrian Integration Fund. The Act Governing the Employment of Foreign Nationals also provides the legal basis for granting an employment permit without prior labour market test to persons accorded special protection.[312]

[301] Establishment of accommodation units; 'buddy programme'.
[302] Project ASOBEM, free consultation in Arabic, Bulgarian, Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian for migrants on labour and social law issues.
[303] Contact point UNDOK (https://undok.at/en/home-en-translation, in several languages).
[304] For police, child and youth welfare services, asylum and immigration authorities, health actors and judicial authorities.
[305] 139.100, 139.102.
[306] 139.102.
[307] 139.92, 139.94, 139.96, 139.97, 139.98.
[308] E.g. 2021 seminar on 'Sexual offences and trafficking in human beings – best practices in the investigation process'; 2022 'Countering impunity by enhancing investigations into and the prosecution of THB'. In the area of human trafficking, too, criminals are trying to blur their traces in the digital space. The annual seminar 'Cybercrime' as well as the new 'Basic Training Course on Cybercrime' with in-depth modules such as 'Social Media', 'Investigations in the Darknet' and 'Cryptocurrencies' provide prosecutors with the necessary knowledge and technical understanding for the prosecution of crimes in connection with human trafficking on the internet.
[309] E.g. a two-week compulsory internship at a victim protection or welfare institution for trainee judges; seminar on 'Trauma in child victims and consequences for the court'.
[310] In addition, relevant training courses are also carried out in the *Länder* – e.g. in Lower Austria for social workes.
[311] 139.93.
[312] Under Section 57 of the Asylum Act, in particular subsection (1) (2) and (3).

5.2 Combatting terrorism and extremism

Austria has implemented numerous measures to combat **terrorism, violent extremism**[313] and the resurgence of **right-wing extremist and national socialist ideologies**,[314] and to further strengthen the victims' rights. These initiatives span from legislative amendments and strategic action plans to specific prevention projects.

In terms of legislation in the area of **right-wing extremism**, the amendment of the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947 (2023) should be mentioned in particular.[315] Since 1947 it has banned any activities in the spirit of National Socialism: it now mandates mandatory disqualification from civil service for public officials convicted under the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947, allows for prosecution of acts committed abroad and stipulates the possibility of confiscating Nazi propaganda material. Furthermore, amendments to the Symbols Act (2021) banned additional symbols of extremist groups. The first Report on Right-Wing Extremism (2020-2023) was presented in 2024.[316]

In 2021, the National Network for the Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation (BNED), coordinated by the Directorate of State Protection and Intelligence, prepared a **National Action Plan on Extremism Prevention and Deradicalisation**,[317] which targets all forms of extremism.[318, 319] At *Länder* level, Upper Austria updated its Action Plan against Extremism in 2023;[320] the City of Vienna tackles extremism and devaluation ideologies via the *Vienna Network for Democratic Culture and Prevention,*[321] which is coordinated by the Child and Youth Welfare Service since 2023 and involved in the BNED.[322]

Workshops on extremism prevention in schools are key: since early 2023, trained prevention officers not only act in the school context, but also advise organisations, institutions and public institutions at municipal and district level – thus strengthening collaboration and communication with the public. The free 'Extremism Prevention in Schools II' workshop series has been extended until 2027/2028; students are to be sensitised of extremism and their resilience to radicalisation increased.[323] Cooperation and information exchange between police security coordinators and schools is being intensified nationwide – joint action facilitates i.a. prompt discussions to clarify norms. Additionally, extensive funding for anti-radicalisation and anti-extremism projects is provided.[324] A Coordination

[313] 139.78.
[314] 139.25, 139.27.
[315] National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947 Amendment 2023, Federal Law Gazette I No 177/2023.
[316] Created by a newly established research center at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance.
[317] 139.35, 139.37.
[318] Adopted and published on 14 May 2024 with Ministerial Council Decision 98/14.
[319] In 2024, 779 measures to prevent radicalisation and extremism were implemented by national security (Directorate State Protection and Intelligence Service). In the school sector, 1.300 students were reached. In addition, 2.324 adults were reached by awareness-raising lectures.
[320] Among other things, with projects for democracy education, promotion of media literacy.
[321] https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/kind-familie/servicestellen/wned.html (in German).
[322] Priorities: Prevention of extremist ideologies, protection of children and youth, promotion of social diversity. Measures include training courses, case conferences, school workshops, individual consultations and observation of public events in close cooperation with the police. The aim is to build democratic resilience through close inter-agency cooperation, knowledge transfer and support for vulnerable groups.
[323] For this purpose, 235 different offers by 77 providers are available. The workshops focus on topics such as democracy, human rights, radicalisation, conflict resolution, violence prevention and antisemitism.
[324] Thematic priorities include low-threshold (online) awareness-raising and counselling work with youth on the subject of extremism and radicalisation; prevention of racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism, LGBTIQ+ hostility, etc. and empowerment of those affected; prevention of gender-based violence against girls

Office for Extremism Prevention and Deradicalisation[325] has been set up in the detention system.[326]

In **counter-terrorism,** the Counter-Terrorism Act[327] introduced a number of aggravations.[328] Most public prosecutor's offices now have specialised units for terrorism offenses,[329] for offenses under the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947, and for incitement under Section 283 of the Criminal Code, improving proceedings' efficiency. Since 2022,[330] criminal records must separately indicate convictions, court orders of judicial supervision or instructions in cases of terrorist and anti-state offenses, as well as for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

III. CURRENT CHALLENGES

Working toward the **protection and promotion of human rights worldwide** is and remains a core concern of Austria's foreign policy – a prerequisite for securing freedom and democracy also for future generations. Austria remains highly committed to addressing global challenges based on international law and human rights.

For the **consolidation of Austria's budget**, comprehensive reforms will be required in the coming years – it will be crucial to ensure that necessary structural reforms ultimately improve human rights guarantees. Austria is aware that, despite the need for austerity, sufficient resources must be provided to fulfill its human rights obligations, with special attention to the rights of persons in particularly vulnerable situations and the general non-discrimination principle.

Ensuring **equal access to quality education** for all children and youth in Austria remains a challenge and is an essential part of the current Government Programme. Without equitable access to high-quality education, the realisation of many other human rights remains incomplete.

Coping with the impact of climate change and environmental pollution on the realisation of human rights [331] poses growing challenges for Austria. Austria advocates for a socially balanced, comprehensive climate policy in line with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, in order to

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and women (including in the context of honour-culture; prevention of FGM); prevention of online hate; raising awareness of human rights and democracy and promoting civil courage and tolerance; psychosocial services for refugees and people with migrant background, and promotion of their social participation; counselling and treatment services for children and youth affected by multiple crises; seminars for practitioners by the Austrian Integration Fund.

[325] Target group: criminals sentenced to unconditional imprisonment under the National Socialism Prohibition Act 1947 or for terrorist offences or international crimes, as well as other detainees suspected of radicalisation.

[326] The aim and tasks are: gaining information through closer cooperation between judicial institutions, courts, public prosecutors' offices, public authorities and probation officers; interface and information management; risk and ressource assessment; monitoring of external contacts; creation of uniform training and training content for staff; definition of education and care services for inmates; conducting cross-agency case reviews; monitoring and networking in the run-up to the granting of freedom-related easing; classification, standardisation and control of measures and structures at the level of judicial institutions; transitional management.

[327] Federal Law Gazette I No 159/2021, in force since 1 September 2021 and 1 January 2022, respectively.

[328] I.a. introduction of a new aggravating circumstance of religiously motivated extremist commission of an offence; introduction of the new offence 'religiously motivated extremist movement' (Section 247 b Criminal Code); judicial supervision of terrorist offenders with case conferences and electronic monitoring, including the possibility of extended, also repeated extension of the probationary period in case of such judicial supervision.

[329] Since 1 February 2022, Section 4 (3a) (2) of the Ordinance of the Federal Minister of Justice on the implementation of the Public Prosecutor Act contains the obligation to establish a special competence for terrorist criminal matters for public prosecutor's offices with more than ten positions.

[330] Preventive Detention Amendment Act 2022, Federal Law Gazette I No 223/2022.

[331] 139.164.

secure the livelihoods of present and future generations. The updated Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan[332] for 2021–2030 stipulates that Austria must reduce its climate-damaging emissions by 48% by 2030. Furthermore, Austria presented a long-term emissions reduction strategy for for the period until 2050: by establishing governance structures, strengthening CO_2 accounting and monitoring, the Federal Government aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2040.[333] Austria also intensifies its climate change adaptation – an advanced adaptation strategy was adopted in 2024.[334] To further improve the implementation of environmental programmes, youth participation is encouraged, and regular exchanges on environmental and climate topics with civil society have been established.[335]

The **defense of democratic core principles** – e.g. against attacks through disinformation, deepfakes, or other activities – is a central concern for Austria. Independent media that report objectively, fact-based, and critically are indispensable – which is why Austria also advocates internationally for the protection of journalists. Strengthening (digital) media literacy, fostering a culture of discussion and science-friendly attitudes, introducing a school-subject on 'democracy education', and expanding obligations for digital platform operators are further essential elements securing our liberal democracy.

New **digital technologies** can promote the realisation of human rights, but may also – as long as appropriate safeguards are lacking – seriously endanger them. Austria is therefore committed to upholding human rights standards in the development and application of new technologies in relevant multilateral fora.

[332] Austria has revised its 2019 National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) with extensive public involvement.
[333] Anchored in both European climate legislation and numerous federal laws.
[334] Adaptation strategy for Austria: Among other things, promoting heat protection plans at *Länder* and local level, taking into account people in vulnerable situations.
[335] 139.119.