

AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement

by

H.E. Thomas May
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

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Commission on the Status of Women

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Hungary on behalf of the European Union. It is a privilege and honour for me to address the high-level plenary of the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Let me give you a brief description of Austria's situation concerning the access of women and girls to education and measures taken to empower them to achieve economic independence.

The educational background and qualification structure of the Austrian population demonstrates that the objective for equal educational opportunities of women and men has been achieved to a large extent. Austria's women have now reached a higher educational level than men. Women outnumber men as university students and graduates, however, with respect to academic personnel women account for 49 per cent of the positions held. This situation is particularly unsatisfactory in the highest academic ranks, since only 42.7 per cent of university chairs are held by women. In order to overcome this situation Austria has developed a targeted personnel policy and introduced development measures as well as 10 per cent women in all university bodies.

The percentage of women in the board of directors of public companies is regrettably also small. In 2010, only 3.7 per cent of the positions on the boards of directors of the 200 largest companies in Austria were held by women. The share of women who feature in executive boards and managerial positions is just 5.3 per cent.

Access to equal opportunities in the labour market is determined not only by the level of education achieved, but also by the choice of studies and areas of specialization. Throughout all levels of training and education, there is a trend of young women to focus on just a few fields: retailing, office clerical work, regarding university studies on the humanities. On the other hand, training and education in industrial and technical subjects has remained a male majority domain. In order to attract more women to the highly technical professions, Austria has conducted special information and promotion programmes for many years. A comprehensive programme called STEEP, which is in operation since 2002, aims to promote women in the fields of research, the natural sciences and technology. Within

There is a special fund programme for women in science and technology, in management positions and entrepreneurship. A special programme of the Austrian Labour Market Service also encourages the employers to hire women in their companies by showing them the differences between the non-career and the career female jobs compared to those in technical fields.

Our way of thinking appears to be still strongly governed by prevailing stereotypes and prejudices. Education for equality is a principle at schools, reflexive co-education is now being initiated at the teacher training institutions. We must ensure that the barriers, which hinder an development of gender-related roles and stereotypes.

Despite the considerable progress made in terms of access to education, the employment opportunities in the different professions, economic sectors and in positions for women and men remain unequal. The gender-specific disparities in income are also mainly based on factory. It is an important fact to note that women suffer an income disadvantage right from the start – when they first enter working life.

Austria is Austria government has therefore adopted a "National Action Plan for the Equality of Women and Men in the Labour Market", which was presented in June 2010 by the Federal Minister for Women and Public Administration. It and is to be implemented by 2013.

The strategic goals are

- to diversify education and the choice of professions, and to ensure gender-sensitive vocational orientation
- to increase the participation of women in the labour market and to increase their employment including equal sharing of responsibilities
- to increase the number of women in managerial positions, and
- to reduce the income disparities between women and men.

We plan to launch these goals with 55 concrete measures, which were compiled by experts.

One of the most important projects of the Action Plan is the introduction of measures geared to strengthening income transparency. On 1 March 2011, an amendment to the Equal Treatment Act will come into effect, which will oblige companies to compile sex-disaggregated remuneration reports.

Economic independence is a key element in determining one's own future, and we therefore ensure that women and girls have access to all the opportunities and possibilities available in society. Neither our economic situation nor our education can afford to do without the realisation of the full potential and knowledge of women and girls.

Let me now briefly turn to recent efforts and developments.

The enhanced implementation of landmark resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was one of the driving forces behind the Security Council in the last two years. As the 10th anniversary of the adoption of this resolution has shown last year, we continue to face large numbers of casualties outlined in resolution 1325: access to education and training is a pre-condition for the participation of women in peace negotiations, post-conflict planning and as a consequence for the representation of women in state structures and decision-making positions. Women's full employment and decent work is vital for economic recovery. The indicators that have been endorsed by the Security Council last year to measure progress in the implementation of resolution 1325 constitute an important step in our vision and will help to target our efforts. We welcome and support the efforts by UN women to ensure that the indicators become fully operational within the time frames set out by the Secretary.

Austria will do more fully support all efforts to address the enhanced need to combat sexual violence in conflict, including the appointment of a special representative. We welcome the establishment of a working group and analysis of the means on conflict-related sexual violence as proposed by the UN. These arguments will complement the framework already in place to protect children in armed conflict, inter alia from sexual violence. However, it is crucial that these measures be put in hand in hand with education, as education is a key to reducing gender-based violence. Austria is committed to continue its efforts in the area of

Women's peace and security and full enjoyment of UN Women and its

Executive Director Michelle Parbelot in his field.

Thank you.