

Austrian input to questionnaire regarding GA resolution. A/RES/73/148 , A/RES/73/146 and A/RES/73/149

Please find below the Austrian input regarding the implementation of General Assembly resolutions A/RES/73/148 "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment", A/RES/73/146 on "Trafficking in women and girls", and A/RES/73/149 on "Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation". It describes measures taken by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (including the Austrian Development Cooperation), the Federal Chancellery (Women and Integration), the Federal Ministry of Justice as well as the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

I./ Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment (A/RES/73/148)

A. Measures to address sexual harassment against women and girls, as per resolution 73/148.

I. Federal Ministry of Justice

In October 2019, the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) and some other legal acts were amended through **the Violence Protection Act 2019** (Gewaltschutzgesetz 2019, BGBl. I Nr. 105/2019), which entered into force on 1 January 2020 and strengthened the protection from violent crimes and sexual offences.

The rights of **particularly vulnerable victims** (victims of sexual offences, of violence in residential dwellings, victims under the age of 18 years, other victims that are granted this status under certain circumstances) were also further extended. These victims were granted the additional right to demand that interpreting services shall be provided by a person of the same sex during interrogations in preliminary proceedings and in the main hearing (Section 66a (2) (1a) CCP).

Particularly vulnerable victims were explicitly included in the provision of Section 250 (3) CCP which allows questioning in a manner set out in Section 165 (3) CCP in the main hearing (adversarial questioning of a witness in order to avoid secondary victimisation and the direct contact of the witness and the defendant). In addition, it was clarified that witnesses who meet the criteria mentioned in Section 66a CCP may be heard adversely (Section 165 (3) CCP) on their request or on the request of the public prosecutor's office.

Section 70 CCP about the **victims' right to information** was structured in a more understandable way. The phrase "against a particular accused" in the first sentence of Section 70 CCP was removed in order to make it explicitly clear that this right is entitled to victims regardless of whether a preliminary investigation is conducted against known or unknown accused persons. Moreover, a postponement of the information to the victim should now only be permissible if there are special reasons to fear that the purpose of the investigations would otherwise be jeopardised.

It was also clarified that victims have the right to receive a written confirmation of their report and the transcript of their interrogation free of charge.

There were also changes in the Criminal Records Act with the intention of further protecting vulnerable persons. For example, a **new Certificate of Criminal Records** ("Strafregisterbescheinigung Pflege und Betreuung") was provided for persons who want to carry out a certain professional or organised voluntary activity, which mainly comprises the care and support of vulnerable persons.

In April 2019, the Federal Ministry of Justice issued an **internal decree on the prosecution of crime within the social circle** (Erlass vom 3. April 2019 betreffend Richtlinien zur Strafverfolgung bei Delikten im sozialen Nahraum, BMVRDJ-1068/0003-IV 5/2019). The decree focuses on cases of domestic violence and violence against women. It aims at raising prosecutors' awareness and offers guidelines and suggestions for practical solutions in this specific area with the focus on protecting victims and their rights.

As sexual offences often appear in the social circle, the mentioned internal decree also covers this topic. Furthermore, it is planned to focus on sexual offences in the current evaluation of the decree.

2. Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMSGPK)

The Ministry particularly supports initiatives and projects that increase the ability to deal with conflict and non-violent conflict resolution, as well as awareness-raising measures and activities to prevent violence.

Since August 2018 the following projects have been funded by the BMSGPK:

- The "Pallas" project by "samara - Association for the Prevention of Sexualized Violence" is devoted to the development and implementation of specific concepts for preventing violence for teachers, girls and boys and their parents with a migration background.

- Fighting FGM by the African Women's Organisation: The goal of the project is the prevention and elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in Austria. The project is a contribution to the national action plan "Protection of women against violence".

- 18th conference of "Friends of the Vienna network against sexual violence against girls, boys and adolescents" to be held on 16th November 2020: The aim of the conference is that traumatized children and adolescents affected by various forms of violence are increasingly offered health-promoting services by psychosocial experts.

- Training and awareness raising by specialists in the "WAVE training academy" for the prevention of violence. A key goal of the training academy is to contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, particularly in the areas of prevention, integration of the topic into the curricula of relevant professional groups and implementation of training for different professional groups. The WAVE-Network (Women Against Violence in Europe) has been financially supported by the ministry for several years.

- "Training and implementation of StoP: districts without partner violence" by the Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters Association; StoP aims at developing good neighbourhoods, preventing violence and at achieving non-violent relationships.

- Training course on raising awareness and dealing with (suspected) cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other cases of hardship as part of the supervised visits funded by the BMSGPK.

- Federal Working Group on Victim Protection-oriented Perpetrator Work (BAG-OTA), continuation; The overarching goal of the BAG-OTA is the development and practical implementation of victim protection-oriented offender work in Austria in order to end violence.
- "Brave girls - violence prevention workshops for girls and young women" by the organisation "wendepunkt - women for women and children"
- "PERSPECTIVE: WORK - economic and social empowerment of women affected by violence"; Psychosocial care, measures for financial stabilization, qualification and job coaching are coordinated and combined. The project is currently implemented in two federal states (Bundesländer), a gradual nationwide roll-out is envisaged.

3. Federal Chancellery/Women and integration

The Equal Treatment Commission investigates matters concerning discrimination according to the Equal Treatment Act (Gleichbehandlungsgesetz). The Equal Treatment Act covers discrimination based on grounds of sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation in the working sphere. This also includes sexual harassment in the working sphere.

Victims can address the commission directly and online. This was also possible throughout the pandemic in spring 2020. Yet, during this period, there was no significant rise in filed complaints regarding sexual harassment in the working sphere. The number of complaints filed at the Equal Treatment Commission regarding sexual harassment in the working sphere since the 1st of August 2018 is 38.

The commission acts independently and issues an expert opinion. These are anonymised and are available on the website (in German language only). The proceeding is cost-free and does not require legal representatives. Compensation must be claimed at a civil court. Website of the Commissions: <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gleichbehandlungskommissionen.html>

In 2019, four further autonomous women's counselling centres on sexual violence were set up in Austria, thus allowing for at least one such specialized service in each federal state of Austria. These counselling centres offer psychosocial support, guidance and empowerment, as well as advice regarding access to legal and psychosocial court assistance. Furthermore, the counselling centres engage in educational and public relations work on the subject of sexual violence.

The government program 2020-2024 plans specific integration measures for women. This includes strengthening diversity competence in the health system and health literacy of women, in particular raising awareness in areas of women's health including mental health such as escape trauma and sexual violence. Furthermore, there are increased measures for the integration of women to protect against all forms of violence, in particular against domestic violence, violence in the social area, against ideologically based violence and against violence in any social, cultural and religious context (such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage or child marriage) planned.

Integration act of 2017: After coming into effect, a visit of a value and orientation course for all persons entitled to political asylum became mandatory. The course, hosted by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), informs the participants about the rules of communal life in Austria like

constitutionality, democracy and equality of men and women. The course also teaches important everyday knowledge about the school-and education system, job market or healthcare system.

The ÖIF offers in addition to the value and orientation courses deepening integration courses with a focus on women, which create an awareness for opportunities for an emancipated life in Austria. The course also informs about contact points for women who are confronted with violence. Female refugees get information about the rights and the role of women in Austria during the female-specific courses.

Furthermore, the ÖIF offers special focus advice:

Female refugees are informed about their rights and freedoms in Austria as well as the different aspects of equality between men and women. Furthermore, they get contact details regarding shelter and help in case of violence, about forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

Information to male refugees are given about the importance of equality between men and women, the right of self-determination for women and the prohibition of the use of force in Austria. Further topics are forced marriage, polygamy, and female genital mutilation.

The video series „self-determination of women“ from the ÖIF focuses on issues like integration, self-determination over the own body and sexual violence.

<https://www.integrationsfonds.at/zielgruppen/frauen/videoreihe-selbstbestimmung-von-frauen>

Since 2020 the ÖIF supports refugees and migrants with online workshops concerning “violence against women”. Topics of the workshops are prevention of violence, protection against violence, help with violence and diverse offers of assistance like a women`s helpline, women`s centres and help chats. Because of the online course “The strengthening of women in Austria`s society” 502 participants could be reached within the first month (April).

Further information about the online workshops hosted by the ÖIF are available at: <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/newsbeitrag/oeif-onlineseminare-zum-thema-gewalt-gegen-frauen-5690>

In the context of “an offensive against domestic violence”, attention has been drawn increasingly to specific offers like a woman`s helpline against violence 0800 222 555. The helpline is completely free, anonymous, and available twenty-four-seven 365 days a year. It refers pointedly to regional women protection devices and advice centres. In addition to the telephonic advice exists an online consulting under <https://www.haltdergewalt.at/>. The help chat is a virtual advisory body for women and girls who live in an environment of psychic, physical and sexual violence.

Consulting is offered in various languages in order to support specifically female persons granted political asylum and women with immigration background in Austria. An additional overview over the different information- and support offers provides the brochure “violence against women – aid organisations”, which is available in 13 languages.

More detailed information on all support offers can be found on the homepage of the Austrian Federal Chancellery – BKA and the Austrian Integration Fund – ÖIF:

- <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gewalt-gegen-frauen/hilfseinrichtungen.html>
- <https://www.integrationsfonds.at/newsbeitrag/bundesministerin-susanne-raab-offensive-gegen-haesusliche-gewalt-5344>

4. Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

During its EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2018, Austria has worked hard in order to advance the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Thereby, considerable progress has been achieved to prepare the necessary decisions to be taken by the Council of the European Union relating to the ratification. However, a few EU Member States were not in the position to agree to the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention. In particular, the term 'gender' used in the Istanbul Convention and its possible interpretations were seen as problematic by those Member States. Therefore, finalised texts of the necessary draft decisions were handed over to the subsequent EU Council Presidency so that the EU could be enabled to ratify the Istanbul Convention in the future, if a political momentum occurs.

Furthermore, as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council from 2019 to 2021, Austria is placing particular importance on continuing its work towards protecting women's rights, including protection against violence, combatting FGM and forced marriage.

5. Austrian development Agency (ADA)

Adoption of the first international standard to address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) in development cooperation by the **Development Assistance Committee (DAC): Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response** on **12 July 2019** by all 30 DAC members. Austria co-chaired the OECD SEA Reference Group that guided the scoping and development of the DAC Recommendations with Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In **2019**, Austria started to participate in the **Group of Friends to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment**. Within this group, Austria supports the UN Secretariat to enforce the zero-tolerance policy to end any forms of sexual harassment and abuse within the United Nations.

Fighting sexual and gender based violence and FGM in areas of conflict and fragile states are **key priorities** of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), which is set forth in the *Three-Year Programme for the Austrian Development Cooperation 2019-2021*. During the reporting period, the ADC is supporting around 30 projects targeted at gender-based violence amounting to about EUR 30 million. The following list offers an exemplary view of the ongoing projects:

- Strengthening the resilience of women and youth

In **Western and Northern Uganda**, a strategic partnership with CARE Austria promotes women, girls and youth to become economically independent and less at risk of becoming victims of sexualised and gender-specific violence. Psychosocial support for survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation as well as advocacy work are to contribute to implementing relevant international, regional and national framework agreements for the protection of rights and a life

without violence for women and girls. Contribution of **EUR 1,900,000** in the period from **2019 to 2024**.

- Institutionalizing Quality Rehabilitation and Integration Services for Violence Survivors

Implemented by AWC - Autonomous Women's Centre (AZC-Autonomni ženski centar), the project in the **Western Balkans** aims at improving secondary legislation/programs and institutionalization of quality services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and improved quality of rehabilitation and integration services for survivors of GBV. At least 30,000 women and their children survivors of GBV and at least 1,800 professionals from relevant institutions and CSOs in the Western Balkans are benefitting from this program. For the period **Dec. 2019-Nov. 2022**, support amounting to **EUR 1 million** is provided.

- Improving the response of responsible local institutions to gender based violence survivors

Implemented by Counselling Line for Women and Girls, the project aims to sustainably prevent the gender-based violence in **Albania** through an effective institutional response and establishment of a sustainable system for addressing the needs of women and girls, victims of Domestic Violence (DV)/Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Albania. The project will work closely with men and boys, women and girls, and aims to reach 8,000 direct beneficiaries. For the period **July 2019-June 2022**, support amounting to **EUR 310,466** is provided.

- Women and Girls Access to Justice through Effective, Accountable and Gender-Responsive Justice Institutions

Implemented by UN WOMAN in **Uganda**, the project supports survivors/victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) access quality integrated essential justice services through effective, accountable and gender-responsive Justice Institutions. The project in Uganda will directly benefit approximately 30,000 women, children, older persons, refugees, and persons with disabilities and people vulnerable to violence by improving the quality of justice services. For the period **Nov. 2019-Dec. 2020**, support in the amount of **EUR 1,790,225** is provided.

- Further Advancing Women's Rights in Kosovo

In cooperation with the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), the rights and interests of women and girls in **Kosovo** are promoted through capacity development of civil society women's organisations and civil servants at national and municipal level. The awareness of civil servants and citizens about gender-based violence (GBV) is raised and survivors are offered legal support. For the period **2018-2020**, support in the amount of **EUR 500,000** is provided.

- Contribution to UNDP's Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP)

The project aims to strengthen resilience during the ongoing conflict in **Iraq**. The measures are aimed at more effective coordination of crisis management at government level, improving

basic services and the livelihoods of the affected population. This includes awareness-raising activities that address gender-based violence and measures to ensure the participation of women in reconstruction activities and capacity development. For the period **2017-2019**, support amounts to **EUR 2,000,000**.

In the margins of the open debate of the UN Security Council on sexual violence in conflict in **April 2019**, Austria pledged, amongst others, to finance specific projects up to the amount of EUR 100,000 to combat sexual violence against women within the framework of implementing UNSCR 1325. The pledge resulted in the contribution of **USD 50,000** to the **UN Women Trust Fund to End Violence against Women** and **USD 50,000** to the **UN Women Expert Deployment Programme** with Justice Rapid Response in the MENA Region with the focus to **Ending Impunity for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence** (Investigating Crimes, Preparing for Justice).

From **1 July to 31 December 2018**, Austria held the presidency of the Council of the European Union and put a focus on “gender equality and development” in the sphere of development cooperation. During this time, the Council adopted conclusions on the Implementation Report 2017 of the EU Gender Action Plan II 2016-20 with a clear statement on **combating all forms of violence against women** and particularly female genital mutilation.

In December 2018 during Austria’s EU Council presidency, the OECD Development Centre’s Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2019 edition was launched in Brussels. Austria has been supporting the work of the OECD Development Centre in creating country profiles, which measure discrimination against women in social institutions. By taking into account laws, social norms and practices, the SIGI captures the underlying drivers of gender inequality with the aim to provide the data necessary for transformative policy-change, e.g., along with other elements one of the foci is physical integrity of women and girls (violence against women, FGM, etc.).

Project funding „SIGI Index Afrika 2019-2021“, implemented by OECD Development Centre, EUR 500,119, Africa, Sept. 2019-March 2021.

Project funding „SIGI Index 2018“, implemented by OECD Development Centre, EUR 125,000, developing countries, 2018-May 2019.

- **B. Impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in regards to violence against women and girls and measures undertaken to address those in the short, medium and long-term, particularly in the following areas**

- o Impact on the nature and prevalence of violence against women and girls, including violence in private and public spaces, and in on-line settings.

- o Adaptation of service delivery and prevention interventions to lockdowns and restricted movement.

- o Use of technology and innovation in responding and preventing to violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19.

1. Federal Ministry of Justice

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two measures have been carried out to make it easier for victims of violence to obtain **interim injunctions for protection against violence**:

Firstly, victim protection and support facilities have been granted **extended powers of representation**: Suitable victim protection and support facilities in accordance with Section 25 (3) of the security police law (Sicherheitspolizeigesetz) can represent victims of violence to a limited extent for the duration of the restriction of freedom of movement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The powers of representation include the filing of applications for interim injunctions for protection against violence and for protection of privacy pursuant to Sections 382b, 382e and 382g on the Act of the Enforcement of Judgements and other written pleadings (except for legal remedies). The victim protection and support facility can refer to the granted power of representation without having to show the written mandate to the court. If possible, the legal documents should be submitted via the electronic legal communications system (Elektronischer Rechtsverkehr; ERV), otherwise also by email if the court has been notified by telephone before.

Secondly, **persons who are in quarantine** under the Epidemic Act (Epidemiegesetz) can also file an application to obtain an interim injunction for protection against violence pursuant to Sections 382b and 382e on the Act of the Enforcement of Judgements **through the police**. For this purpose, a form was created which has to be handed out to the victim along with an information sheet after the police has issued an expulsion and prohibition to return order. The documents were translated into six languages in total. After the application to obtain an interim injunction has been handed over to the police, the expulsion and prohibition to return order is automatically extended by two weeks. The police has to submit the application including documentation (for example, the report of the incident) immediately to the court, if possible via the electronic legal communications system (ERV).

In addition to that, the website of the Federal Ministry of Justice (<https://www.justiz.gv.at/home/covid-19-7a5.de.html>) offers a Covid-19 sub-link for the public (in German language), containing

general information on Covid-19 specific measures at court and prosecution services,

a Covid-19 "questions & answers" section, and

specific information on Covid-19 related laws, respective amendments and ministerial orders.

Links were set to Covid-19 awareness raising websites from other Federal Ministries and NGOs. Victim protection and support facilities were advised on Covid-19 measures at court and prosecution services and are updated regularly.

Covid-19 specific measures were not only introduced for victims of domestic violence, cybercrime and hate crime but for all victims of crime as follows:

The courts and prosecution services received Covid-19 guidelines from the Federal Ministry of Justice and were equipped accordingly (surgical masks and helmets, acrylic glass barriers, etc.).

Respective equipment is available for and offered to victims, too.

Courts and prosecution services are advised to increasingly make use of video conferencing tools.

2. Federal Chancellery/Women

The Austrian federal government has compiled a comprehensive package of measures to ensure continued support for women affected or threatened by (sexual) violence throughout the corona crisis and to respond to the prevailing situation with specific measures. Furthermore, the Minister for Women's Affairs is in close dialogue with relevant stakeholders, especially victim protection agencies throughout Austria, to identify necessary adjustments / extensions of measures.

Comprehensive information offensive: The network of support and protection facilities in Austria is well developed. However, access to information is more complicated in times of exit restrictions. Hence, an information offensive was launched to address women directly: An information flyer with the addresses of support centres for the respective provinces is available online and is distributed in large retail chains, allowing for even more women to be approached. Also, due to the exit restrictions a rise in domestic violence was to be expected. Thus, support and help offers were extended.

In addition, comprehensive information on domestic violence including a list of victim protection facilities and emergency contacts is available online (including an information brochure translated in several foreign languages) <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gewalt-gegen-frauen/hilfseinrichtungen.html>; furthermore an information campaign in daily newspapers has been launched.

To support women's and girls' counselling centres, an information on the COVID-measures was published on the website of the Federal Chancellery: <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/service/foerderungen-des-bundestkanzleramtes/frauenprojektfoerderungen.html>.

Sensitization of the wide public - press conferences: In order to draw attention to the increased risk of domestic violence due to exit restrictions and to disseminate the support services available and further measures taken, press conferences were / are held by the Minister for Women's Affairs, the Minister for Family Affairs, the Minister for Justice and the Minister of the Interior.

Expansion of online counselling (minimisation of personal contacts in counselling services offered by victim protection institutions): In order to minimise personal contacts, counselling is mainly provided by telephone, e-mail or online e.g. via

the helpchat www.haltdergewalt.at, which offers anonymous and confidential help for all women and girls affected by violence in German, English and Turkish since 2010, and extended its service hours to 15:00-22:00 daily due to the COVID outbreak,

or the women's helpline www.frauenhelpline.at, which increased service hours and staff.

Personal contacts are reduced to the bare minimum (also to counteract the danger of "complete quarantine" in case of infection and to protect all parties involved to avoid that counselling centres have to reduce or even stop their operations in case of infection). Practice shows that there is a high level of understanding and that these forms of counselling are well accepted. Also online-services offered by the national helpline have been expanded. The centre against sexual violence on children and youth www.selbstlaut.org published tips for parents, guardians and other people living with children and youth on the crisis in six languages as well as tips for carriers in communities for young people to handle the current situation.

Close co-operation between health authorities, victim protection institutions and the police: In order to maintain the protection of victims in shelters (such as women's shelters, sheltered housing, etc.) in suspected cases of infection, victim protection institutions work closely with the health authorities (no case known so far). The same applies in cases of (suspected) infection of perpetrators barred from home; here the police cooperates closely with the health authorities in order to avoid a risk to victims in case of a necessity of quarantine.

Simplification of filing a restraining order: In general, an injunction can be applied for in person at the respective district court of the victim's place of residence. The following measures are intended to extend the scope for submitting written applications and to avoid the necessity of personal filing:

Mutual agreements between violence protection centres and district courts in addition to measures taken by the government: Violence protection centres (fully state-funded) are specialised victim protection institutions for domestic violence and are located in every federal state. They offer inter alia support with the application of an injunction. Where the police have issued a protection order, they pass on the victims' data to the violence protection centres, which then proactively contact the victims and provide assistance as well with the application of an injunction.

These violence protection centres have established varying agreements with the courts to facilitate the filing of the injunction for victims, e.g.: Applications for injunctions can be submitted to the courts via e-mail or fax and are thus deemed to be filed. The application for an injunction can also be prepared by telephone and transmitted to the police. The victim can then collect and sign this application which can then be forwarded to the court.

Finally, it is also possible for the violence protection centre to send the application to the victims by post, who then signs it and sends it to the court by post.

Adaptation of Women's shelters: The women's shelters have taken measures to provide the highest attainable level of protection for residents and staff against infection. At present, the reception capacities are sufficient. In addition, the federal states have made provisions for the availability of alternative accommodations.

Specific support services for men: Men who are at risk of resorting to violence due to the increased stress factors (children and partners who may be permanently present, changed work circumstances or unemployment, financial pressure, etc.) can turn to the newly established helpline "men's counselling for violence in the family". Men's counselling centres working in a victim protection-oriented approach have set up this telephone help line available from Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at local rates throughout Austria; communication is also offered via e-mail.

However, it is not sufficient to take measures solely linked to violence directly. Consideration must also be given to the framework conditions that particularly affect women. In response, inter alia the following measures have been taken:

Simplified filing for advance maintenance payments by the State: In order to prevent financial bottlenecks (and to avoid possible dependencies), access to advance maintenance

payments by the State for single parents has been simplified (acceleration of the procedure, no application for execution required).

„Special care time“ (Sonderbetreuungszeit) for children: On March 16th, a new federal law came into force which allows employees to be granted a special care period of up to three weeks for children until the age of 14, who are subject to compulsory care. For the duration of the special care period, the employee retains his or her full entitlement to continued remuneration.

3. Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection: In the context of the implementation of the „Austrian Action Plan on Women’s Health“, health related offers for and needs of women during the Covid-19-crisis on issues e.g. violence against women and girls, pregnancy, childbirth, contraception, were collected during the Focal Point meeting in April 2020.

The competent authorities, the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and the Austrian Federal Chancellery – Ministry for Women and Integration, the Austrian Public Health Institute discussed with all regional Focal Points (Focal Points – nominated women’s health experts in the federal states) issues of women’s health associated with the COVID-19-crisis. The summary of collected information will be presented on the websites of the Ministries with links to the relevant institutions in the federal states.

The Focal Points are coordination interfaces in the regions and a central pillar in the implementation of the Women’s Health Action Plan.

Goal 3 of the Action Plan of Women’s Health focuses on the prevention of violence with two measures: „ Continue ongoing awareness-raising, education and information activities on violence in the public social sphere“ and „Implement multi-professional victim or violence protection groups in the health care system facilities“.

The Austrian Public Health Institute, on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, prepares in a subproject of the Action Plan of Women’s Health, a starter set for victim protection. This tool will offer a standardized „Practical Guide for Victim Protection Groups“ in hospitals, including standardized notification reports for health professionals, awareness raising tools of doctors and health professionals in regard to domestic violence.“