

Country	Austria
SIGI 2019 Category	Very low
SIGI Value 2019	12%

Discrimination in the family		22%
	Legal framework on child marriage	50%
	Percentage of girls under 18 married	3%
	Legal framework on household responsibilities	50%
	Proportion of the population declaring that children will suffer if mothers are working outside home for a pay	58%
	Female to male ratio of time spent on unpaid care work	2.0
	Legal framework on inheritance	0%
	Legal framework on divorce	0%

Restricted physical integrity		8%
	Legal framework on violence against women	25%
	Proportion of the female population justifying domestic violence	3%
	Prevalence of domestic violence against women (lifetime)	13%
	Sex ratio at birth (natural =105)	106.2
	Legal framework on reproductive rights	0%
	Female population with unmet needs for family planning	10%

Restricted access to productive and financial resources		4%
	Legal framework on working rights	0%
	Proportion of the population declaring this is not acceptable for a woman in their family to work outside home for a pay	5%
	Share of managers (male)	68%
	Legal framework on access to non-land assets	0%
	Share of house owners (male)	-
	Legal framework on access to land assets	0%
	Share of agricultural land holders (male)	65%
	Legal framework on access to financial services	0%
	Share of account holders (male)	49%

Restricted civil liberties		12%
	Legal framework on civil rights	0%
	Legal framework on freedom of movement	0%
	Percentage of women in the total number of persons not feeling safe walking alone at night	51%
	Legal framework on political participation	50%
	Share of the population that believes men are better political leaders than women	-
	Percentage of male MP's	66%
	Legal framework on access to justice	0%
	Share of women declaring lack of confidence in the justice system	49%

Note: Higher values indicate higher inequality. Percentages range from 0 to 100, while legal variables are categorised as 0%, 25%, 50%, 75% or 100%. See data source [here](#).

Source: OECD (2019), Gender, Institutions and Development Database, <https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019>.

Austria

1. Discrimination in the family

a) Overarching legal framework for marriage

Under the current Austrian Law, a marriage is defined as two persons of the opposite sex legally declaring their will to live together in an inseparable lifetime union, to have children, to educate them, and to stand by each other (Austrian Marriage Act 1939). Austrian law only recognises civil marriages formalised by a marriage contract and does not allow for same-sex unions (Austrian Marriage Act 1939:15; Austrian Civil Code: 44).

In Austria, unions involving first and second grade relatives, adoptive parents and their adopted children, as well as individuals with profound mental disabilities are prohibited (Austrian Marriage Act 1939: 6, 10).

Same-sex marriages are also prohibited under Austrian national law. However, Austria is currently in the process of undergoing a two-step procedure to grant same-sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples i.e. the reduction and the elimination of discrimination of same-sex oriented persons and the entitlement to marriage (PERFAR, 2014).

Even though cohabitation is not recognised as a civil union comparable to marriage, nearly all of the essential rights and duties of spouses have been transferred to partners in consensual unions as well, with an equalisation of rights in tenancy and inheritance law (PERFAR, 2014).

b) Child marriage

In Austria both women and men must be 18 years old to get married (Austrian Marriage Act 1939:1). If one of the partners is aged 18 and the other is aged 16 or 17, the court can declare the underage individual to be prepared for marriage (Austrian Marriage Act 1939:1).

Even though child marriage is illegal in Austria, it is reported to be practised in minority communities, specifically Roma and Muslim communities (ECPAT, 2012). Children from these groups are reported to be forced into marriage in their home countries and to return to live with their families in Austria after the wedding (ECPAT, 2012).

With the 2015 Act amending the Penal Code, forced marriage is a stand-alone criminal offence requiring public prosecution which can be initiated following a third-party report, rather than requiring a complaint made by the victim (GEMMA Project, 2010). Moreover, with the 2015 amendments, pre-offence of forced marriage was introduced, which made to punishable to force a person by means of violence or threat to go to another country to get married (CEDAW, 2017). Forced marriage is also an offence under the Austrian Law against Violence (Gewaltschutzgesetz), as it is considered a form of domestic violence.

Nowadays, forced marriages are a concern among immigrant communities in particular. The Austrian Government has taken action to support victims of violence, from both a psychological and legal

perspective. Since January 2006, victims of violence, including forced marriage, have the right to free social, psychological and legal support during criminal proceedings, with the costs being covered by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Justice (Penal Code: 66(2)).

In August 2013 an emergency housing unit for victims of forced marriage was established for the whole country in Vienna with the aim to provide counselling and support for girls and young women who are at risk of falling victim to, or are a victim of, forced marriage (Beijing Report, 2014). Furthermore, the Austrian government made available an online counselling service, which offers safe and anonymous counselling independent of the place of residence of the person in need (UN Women, 2013).

In order to respond to this issue, the Federal Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Women have been funding the work of Orient Express, a national NGO which offers counselling and support for girls and young women who are threatened or affected by forced marriage (Beijing Report, 2014). Since 2013, the Austrian Government also provides emergency accommodation in cases of imminent danger as well as anonymous online-counselling (Beijing Report, 2014).

c) Household responsibilities

Under Austrian national law spouses are considered equal, have the same rights and duties regardless of their gender, and are jointly entrusted with parental authority (Austrian Civil Code: 144). This partnership-oriented model was implemented in 1975, with the reform of the Austrian Family Law that at the time was still based on the General Civil Law Code of 1811. The new law saw the marital couple as one made of equal partners, and no longer legally considered the husband as the head of the family (Austrian Embassy Washington, 2015).

Since this reform, women can hence decide if they want to keep their maiden name. Both parents share parental responsibility (*obsorge*), which means they both are to decide jointly about the education and upbringing of their children, manage their children's finances and represent them in dealings with other people (European Commission, 2005).

As it pertains to informal unions or unmarried parents, the mother alone is entrusted with parental responsibilities; however, if she subsequently marries the child's father, he may then be entrusted with equal parental responsibilities as the mother (Austrian Civil Code: 161-166).

Even though equal contribution to household duties are encouraged by Austrian Law, it is reported that there are strong social expectations that women should take primary responsibility for domestic and care work (CEDAW, 2012).

d) Divorce

Men and women have equal rights to initiate divorce in Austria in the case there is no agreement on a joint divorce application (Austrian Marriage Act: 55(a); Austrian Civil Code: 177(1)).

Women, especially single mothers and those with migrant backgrounds, may be particularly vulnerable to higher monetary costs of civil proceedings as they are reported to possess lower asset amounts than men (CEDAW, 2012). The aforementioned amendments seem therefore to have

restricted access for women to proceedings such as divorces and other family law disputes (CEDAW, 2012).

Access to the Austrian law, especially with regards to divorce matters, poses particular obstacles for migrant women. As many women move to Austria to join their families, their right to reside in country is often linked to their spouse's (CEDAW, 2012). This means that divorce may result in loss of the residence permit, restricting migrant women's access to divorce and complicating the legal procedures when it comes to cases of domestic violence (CEDAW, 2012).

In the case of divorce, under the Austrian Civil Code, parents must provide proportionately for children's maintenance (Austrian Civil Code: 140). The parents may agree to joint custody, as long as primary residence of the child is specified, and the court agrees the decision is in the child's best interest (Austrian Civil Code: 161-166). If the parents fail to reach an agreement, the court will entrust one parent with sole parental responsibilities based on the best interest of the child (Austrian Civil Code: 167).

Joint custody is reported to be unequally distributed within Austrian marriages (CEDAW, 2012). As the man-breadwinner model still influences partnerships in Austria and in most cases children tend to stay at their mothers' (CEDAW, 2012).

e) Inheritance

Under the Equal Treatment Act (private sector), Austrian national law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex in access to goods and services (Equal Treatment Act (private sector): 30-40). Women and men share the same rights to inherit land and non-land assets and as it pertains inheritance no evidence of discriminatory practices was found against wives and daughters.

In the absence of a will, if the deceased was unmarried and without children, the parents of the deceased inherit equal shares. If the deceased was unmarried and leaves children, the children inherit equal shares (CESIFO DICE, 2014).

If the deceased leaves a spouse, the surviving spouse becomes sole heir regardless of gender. If the deceased leaves a spouse and children, one third of inheritance goes to the spouse, while the rest is shared equally among the children (CESIFO DICE, 2014).

2. Restricted Physical integrity

a) Violence against women

Austria is a signatory of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which was ratified in 2013 and came into effect on 1 August 2014. In implementing this convention, the Austrian government founded an Inter-ministerial Working Group tasked with the development of a national action plan (NAP) on the protection of women against violence (Beijing Report, 2014). In 2014 the NAP to Protect Women against Violence 2014 – 2016 was approved and since then the working group has formalised and expanded. The NAP

includes federal government measures only and serves as an instrument of inter-ministerial cooperation.

No specific funding resources have been allocated to the NAP and due to Austria's federal structure, varying distribution of ministerial responsibility, it is impossible to make a statement regarding the extent of budgetary resources actually being dedicated to the field of violence against women (GREVIO, 2016).

Violence against women is regulated by the Austrian Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch -StGB*), which includes a number of statutory offences for protection of bodily, psychological and/or sexual integrity, the Code of Criminal Procedure, which ensures the protection of victims, and the Act on Protection Against Violence (*Gewaltschutzgesetz*). The latter is of particular relevance as it empowers the police to ban a person who threatens violence from entering the home in which the threatened person resides and to remove the threatening individual if they will not leave voluntarily (Security Police Act (SPG): 38a).

When longer-term protection is necessary, the person at risk may petition the court for an injunction, which may be sought even without obtaining a restraining order from the police (Enforcement of Judgements Act: 382b ff).

The Austrian Government has established a number of services to support victims of violence. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs funded the fem:HELP- App, a mobile application designed to help women and girls to contact support organisations when victims of violence. Counselling centres, aid organisations for children and young people, federal social welfare offices and health facilities have also been established to support women and girls (GREVIO, 2016). In each federal state, there is a centre for protection against violence, sometimes with regional satellite locations, to provide comprehensive support to people at risk. In addition, in Austria hospitals are abided by law to set up victim support groups for early detection of sexual, physical and psychological violence (GREVIO, 2016).

b) Domestic violence

Domestic violence is a crime punishable by law in Austria since 1997, when the first legislation for rapid and efficient protection of victims of domestic violence entered into force with the Protection Against Violence Act (*Gewaltschutzgesetz*). Further advancements were made with the 2000 amendments to the Security Policy Act and the 2004 Enforcement Code (Beijing Report, 2014). In 2009 a comprehensive revision of the legal framework led to the introduction of the Second Protection Against Violence Act, whose amendments include the introduction of persistent perpetration of violence as an offence, the introduction of minimum punishment levels in cases of sexual abuse of a defenceless or mental impaired persons, or a person under age of 14, as well as the definition of a new criminal offence regarding the establishment of sexual contact with a person under the age of 14 (Beijing Report, 2014). The Act is not a single law; its provisions are laid down in the Civil Code, the Enforcement Code and the Security Police Act.

The domestic violence legislation covers physical and psychological abuses, as well as stalking, continued use of force and sexual violence (GREVIO, 2016).

Since 1997, support offered by aid organisations to affected persons has significantly increased. Specialised support centres exist for victims of domestic violence and stalking, with one Violence Protection Centre in every Federal Province (Beijing Report, 2014). Despite the tense budgetary situation, the Violence Protection Centres' financial resources were increased by over 9% between 2009 and 2013 (Beijing Report, 2014).

In 2010, the Ministry of the Interior initiated the "Alliance Against Violence" in order to ensure better networking between all Austrian actors actively engaged in violence prevention. One of the main projects generated by this cooperation is called "MedPol", a venture to enhance identification of injuries caused by third violence when inflicted by domestic violence and improve tracking documentation of abuses (Beijing Report, 2014).

The legal situation of migrant and asylum seeking women in Austria is particularly difficult. Even though in the Settlement and Residence Act (SRA), there is an exceptional provision enabling victims to receive an independent right to residence (Settlement and Residence Act (SRA): 3, 27), women with uncertain residence status are often afraid to call the police as there is a lack of information about this exception provision (CEDAW, 2012).

c) Rape

Rape (Austrian Criminal Code: 201), including marital rape, is defined as taking place when someone has coerced a person by means of violence, threats with immediate danger to body and health, or false imprisonment to engage in sexual intercourse or other comparable sexual acts.

The victim's volition is violated by the use of physical violence, menacing threats or false imprisonment. The basic offence is punishable by a prison sentence of between one and ten years. In cases resulting in death, the offence may be punishable by a life sentence. An offence committed within the family, including current and previous partners, is considered an aggravating factor (GREVIO, 2016).

With the 2009 Second Protection Against Violence Act minimum punishment levels were introduced for cases of sexual abuse of defenceless or mentally impaired persons, as well as the definition of a new criminal offence regarding the establishment of sexual contact with a person under the age of 14 (Austrian Criminal Code: 208a).

Rape, including spousal rape, is punishable by up to 15 years' imprisonment under the law. Government statistics on rape and sexual coercion included 1 215 reported occurrences and 281 convictions in 2012 (USA Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, 2013).

The Security Police Act provides regulations on restraining and eviction orders (Section 38a). The police have the authority to forbid the person posing the threat from entering a residence and their immediate vicinity and to evict the person posing the threat in the event that they refuse to leave the residence (GREVIO, 2016). Protection is provided to all individuals living in the residence and any individual who represents a risk may be subject to a restraining order irrespective of the relevant relationships or ownership (GREVIO, 2016).

The Austrian government also established women's shelters and counselling centres for cases of sexual abuse and for women affected by violence (GREVIO, 2016). Hospitals are also required by law to set up victim support groups, which are responsible for early detection of sexual, physical and psychological violence and for raising awareness among the hospital staff on the matter (GREVIO, 2016).

Under the Austrian Victims of Crime Act (VOG), victims of violence have also the right to financial assistance, such as compensation for loss of earnings, the provision of medical aids, psychotherapeutic treatment and crisis intervention (GREVIO, 2016). In the case of bodily harm with serious long-term repercussions, a lump-sum settlement could also be set as a form of compensation for pain and suffering (GREVIO, 2016).

Numerous efforts have been made to incorporate the issue of violence into vocational trainings for health professionals, police officers, judges and public prosecutors and different ministries have integrate mandatory requirements on sexual violence in basic training (GREVIO, 2016).

d) Sexual harassment

Individuals are protected against sexual harassment in Austria under criminal law as well as labour and civil law. The Criminal Law Amendment Act (2004) created an explicit provision against sexual harassment as a form of protection against undesired acts of sexual nature (Austrian Penal Code: 218). Sexual harassment is punishable by a prison sentence of up to six months or a fine up to 360 times the daily rate.

The law recognises sexual harassment in both private and public spaces, as well as cyber harassment or cyber stalking. The Equal Treatment Acts for the public and private sector provide specific protection from sexual harassment at work. This legislation guarantees a low threshold, free of charge and simple prima facie evidence process for this kind of offences (GREVIO, 2016). Stalking is also considered a criminal offence (Austrian Criminal Code: 107) and it is punishable by a prison sentence of up to one year or a fine up to 720 times the daily rate (GREVIO, 2016).

e) Female genital mutilation

Forms of genital mutilation (FGM) fall under the definition of bodily harm under Austrian law (Austrian Criminal Code: 83ff) and they are punishable by a prison sentence of 1 to 15 years. Consent is not relevant in this cases and forcing a victim to give consent meets the legal definition of severe coercion (GREVIO, 2016).

In 2011, the Austrian Government launched the Vienna action plan against female genital mutilation. The agenda included a range of activities to be held in Vienna, such as training measures for kindergartens teachers, obstetrics and youth workers, as well as a conference on "Female genital mutilation: from prevention to treatment" which took place in 2014.

A number of qualitative studies was carried out in early 2000s to assess the number of girls and women who had been subjected to FGM, which recorded FGM primarily amongst female migrants. The estimate, based on a study carried out by the African Women's Foundation, is somewhere between

6 000 and 8 000 victims (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). However, there are no official figures on girls and women affected by FGM in Austria.

f) Abortion

Austria liberalised its abortion law in 1974 through a reform of the Austrian Penal Code. Abortion is only available on request during the first trimester of pregnancy if performed by a physician after a previous medical consultation. After the first trimester, abortion is permitted only when necessary to avert a serious danger to the life of physical or mental health of the pregnant woman; when the child may be afflicted with a serious physical or mental defect; or when a girl under 14 years of age becomes pregnant. An abortion must be performed with the pregnant woman's consent unless it is performed to save her life from an immediate danger (UN Population Division Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2002).

Under Austrian law, all women have access to legal and risk-free abortion. However, income and availability of services pose important restrictions as the government subsidises only those abortions performed on medical grounds and many physicians refuse to perform it for moral/religious reasons (UN Population Division Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2002).

3. Restricted Access to productive and financial resources

a) Secure access to land and non-land assets

Men and women have equal rights to own, use, made decisions over land and non-land assets in Austria regardless of their marital status (Austrian Civil Code: 18).

b) Secure access to formal financial resources

Men and women enjoy equal rights to financial services, including opening bank accounts and obtaining credits.

c) Workplace rights

Austria is a signatory of a number of ILO conventions related to workplace rights, including the Equal Remuneration Convention, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention and the Convention concerning the Revision of the Maternity Protection Convention.

In Austria non-discrimination on the basis of sex in employment is covered by national law under the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GIBG) and the Equal Treatment ACT (GIBG) for the Private Sector. The former came into force in 1993, however it was subject to amendments in 2011 and 2014 to ensure that an income analysis was produced at the federal level every year (Beijing Report, 2014). The GIBG has existed in Austria since 1979 and since recently, in addition to access, it includes all the areas covered by the EU Equal Treatment Directive for self-employed workers, such as the establishment or equipment of a business (Beijing Report, 2014). Even though they are regulated by two distinct legislations, public and private employees have the same basic rights concerning matters related to

parental leave and part time-arrangements, the enforcement of which is provided for by legal courts and the equal treatment commission (Burri ,Caracciolo Di Torella, Masselot, 2012).

The gender pay gap is still a major issue in Austria. Between 2009 and 2012, it was only narrowed by 0.9%, moving from 24.3 to 23.4 % (Eurostat. unadjusted calculation, Beijing Report, 2014). This is accompanied by unequal distribution of women and men across all hierarchy levels as well as a significant gender-specific distribution of men and women in different occupational roles, with women primarily working in the service sector, including health and social services, and the accommodation and hospitality sectors (Beijing Report, 2014).

Women in Austria are entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave, which usually begins eight weeks before birth and are paid by the government. During this period, the employment relationship continues to exist, and the employees are entitled to 100% of their average wages earned over the last 13 weeks before the absolute employment prohibition. Since 2008, freelance contractors are entitled to maternity allowance as well (Austrian Government, 2017).

Paternity leave was introduced in March 2017 with the Family Time Bonus Act, which guarantees 28 to 31 days of leave to fathers and at an amount of 22,60 Euro daily euros of benefits paid by the employee's local health insurance for the leave period (Family Time Bonus Act, Article 1 § 3 (1)).

Mothers and fathers are entitled to parental leave up to 365 days from the child's birth, provided the parent in parental leave lives in the same household as the child (Family Time Bonus Act, Article 2 § 3 (1)). Parents can also spread payments over a longer period (up to 851 days) at a lower payment rate (OECD Family Database, n.d.). However, a shorter claim does not increase the daily amount. This means they can make special arrangements that allow them to modify their contracts in a way that allows them to work part-time and then later return to their full-time positions (CEDAW, 2011). With the Family Time Bonus Act, parents that share parental leave 50/50 receive a partnership bonus, which is provided by social insurance (Family Time Bonus Act, Article 2 § 3 (1), Willis Towers Watson, 2016).

Federal legislation on equal treatment forbids discrimination on grounds of sex, therefore protecting women's employment security and forbidding questions about pregnancy or family planning during the interview process (Beijing Report, 2014).

Gender stereotypes continue to represent an obstacle to achieving gender equality in working environments and in family life in Austria. However, the government has tailored programmes designed to achieve parity and equal opportunities in all spheres of society (Beijing Report, 2014). For instance, the Austrian Public Employment Service promotes vocational training in those professions that the society still considers atypical for women, with the final aim to enable women's advancement in the technical sectors and in skilled trades (Beijing Report, 2014). Alongside this, the Minister of Women launched an information campaign aimed at promoting parental leave for fathers and creating a modern corporate culture that motivates men to engage more in family duties (Beijing Report, 2014).

Measures have been taken to increase income transparency and raise awareness of wage discrimination. Since 2011 companies employing a pre-determined number of workers have been

required to present income reports and state the minimum wage in job vacancy advertisements (Beijing Report, 2014).

The Ombud for Equal Treatment has been established as a National Equality Body to provide independent advice and support to victims of discrimination. Since 2009 its focus has been on equal pay for equal value, reconciliation of work and family life, sexual harassment and career advancement (Beijing Report, 2014).

4. Restricted Civil liberties

a) Citizenship rights

According to Article 11 of the national Constitution, citizenship and nationality are regulated by the Federal Legislation and executed by the Federal States (*Austrian Constitution: 11*). In Austria, women and men share the same rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality. There is also no gender discrimination in the legislation as it pertains to conferring Austrian nationality to spouses.

Austrian citizenship is based primarily on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, which means that an Austrian descendant may acquire Austrian citizenship if a parent is Austrian, irrespective of place of birth (Austrian Government, 2017).

Women and men have equal rights to confer nationality to their children and register their birth (Austrian Government, 2016). Birth in Austria does not in itself confer Austrian citizenship. A child born to two Austrian parents is automatically an Austrian citizen, regardless of the parents' marital status. Prior to 2013, unmarried fathers had to fulfil additional requirements to prove their paternity and confer nationality to their children. As of 1 August 2013, changes to the nationality law came into effect and now the only requirement is for paternity to be recognised by the father himself or a court within eight weeks of the birth of the child, but if this is not done there is also a provision for easier acquisition by the child of Austrian citizenship (Equality Now, 2016).

Women and men have equal rights to apply for identity cards and passports and travel outside the country. There is also no discrimination against mother or fathers when it comes to acquiring travel documents for their children (Austrian Government, 2016).

b) Voting

Austrian citizenship is the only pre-condition to enjoy the active and passive rights to vote (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2017). Universal suffrage was extended to women in 1918 and it was exercised for the first time in 1919; however prostitutes remained excluded from the polls until 1923. In 1919 the first eight women entered Parliament after the elections to the Constituent National Assembly (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2017).

c) Political voice

The Austrian law provides women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office. However, female representation in politics remains low when compared to men's.

In 1985, the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPO) was the first party in Austria introducing a non-mandatory 25% quota for women on candidate lists and for appointed offices. In the following years, other parties, with the only exception of the right-wing populist party Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), followed the example (Gresch et Sauer, 2015). In 1993 the government passed the first Federal Equal Treatment Act for the Public Services, stating that each unit of a department must create affirmative action plans if the percentage of women is below 40%. The quota was then raised in 2010 to 45% and in 2012 to 50%. As of today, most of the main Austrian parties have some kind of internal quota provision for the candidate lists, with the exception of the FPÖ (European Commission, 2016). In general, the existing Austrian quotas rely on voluntary regulations and sanctions are non-existent. Transparency in the formation of candidate lists is often lacking and obviously getting women's names does not mean that they actually get elected (European Commission, 2016).

Even though the introduction of gender quotas in politics led to a rise of the proportion of women in public offices, the female percentage has stagnated roughly at 30% for the recent years (Gresch et Sauer, 2015). Whilst Austria ranks relatively high at the European and national levels, it shows considerable deficits in the representation in local structures and municipalities (European Commission, 2016). For instance, only 6% of the 2,354 towns, cities and municipalities have a female mayor, while in the European Parliament, 50% of those elected in Austria are women (Austrian Association of Municipalities, 2015).

The lack of women's involvement in politics is considerably greater in local and regional levels, and among young women. According to the OSCE-report (2014), women with young families are deterred by the hours and increased responsibilities that come with a political career. Media also appear to enforce stereotypes of male domination in politics, focussing mostly on appearance or emotions of women candidates rather than content (European Commission, 2016). Networks represent another obstacle to women's participation in politics. Not only are men more engaged in using those networks, but they also dominate the majority of the relevant social spheres, such as football clubs or fraternities (European Commission, 2016).

In order to increase women's participation in politics, initiatives for female networking and mentoring have been implemented at both local and national levels. Women's groups within parties have been created and workshops on topics of daily political life have been offered. However, none of these initiatives seem to have had enough power to influence the "gate-keepers" (European Commission, 2016).

d) Access to justice

The Austrian law provides men and women with the same rights to sue and be sued, as well as to give testimony, regardless of their marital status.

The protection of human rights defenders is a matter of particular concern for Austria; the Austrian government supported the formulation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders that were adopted in 2004 and last revised in 2008. Austria is also actively engaged in the formulation of resolutions on the promotion and the protection of human rights defenders within the Human Rights

Council and the United Nations, and supports a number of projects in third countries (Austrian Government, 2016).

As it pertains monitoring processes, regular monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of laws, strategies and plans for the promotion of gender equality is assured through regular reports to Parliament, that must comply with the Equal Treatment Laws and the National Action Plans. A comprehensive report on the situation of women was published in 2013, describing the social status quo of Vienna's population from the perspective of integration policies (Stadt Wien, 2013).

Austria has enshrined the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its Constitution, and therefore the Federal Provinces also have the obligation to implement it. Even though the Federal Government has no authority to directly influence matters falling within the responsibilities of the Provinces, regular meetings are regularly held with representatives of both parties, as well as the Minister for Women and representatives of the Ombud for Equal Treatment (CEDAW, 2011).

Gender Budgeting is another tool utilised by the Austrian government for realising de-facto gender equality. Since 2005, gender budgeting has been implemented in the budgets of the Federal Ministries through gender related projects. Since 2009 gender equality is considered a state goal in the Constitution, and the Federal State, the Federal Provinces and Municipalities have been required to apply gender budgeting in budget management (Beijing Report, 2014).

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