



**Reply to the List of Issues
prior to the Submission of
Austria's fifth periodic
report (C.12/AUT/QPR/5)
by the Austrian Disability
Council**

**Submitted on the occasion of the
79th session (9th February 2026 – 6th
March 2026) of the UN Committee
on Economic, Social and Cultural
Rights**

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The present report is largely based on documents from the Austrian Disability Council, the legally established umbrella organisation of more than 85 member organisations representing around 1.4 million persons with disabilities in Austria.

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LOI A. 5

Studies show that women with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience violence than women without disabilities.¹ A 2019 study found that women and girls with disabilities - particularly those with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities - are approximately twice as likely to become victims of sexual violence.²

Key research findings further show that persons with disabilities living in institutional settings are exposed to various forms of violence over the course of their lives, with women being particularly at risk.³ The reliance of women with disabilities on institutions is largely the result of insufficient investment and efforts to develop services that enable independent living within the community and provide adequate support outside institutional settings. As a consequence, many women with disabilities continue to

¹ Mayrhofer, Schachner, Mandl, Seidler: Erfahrungen und Prävention von Gewalt Menschen mit Behinderungen, BMASGK (2019), 453 ff.

² Erfahrungen und Prävention von Gewalt Menschen mit Behinderungen, BMASGK (2019), 37.

³ Erfahrungen und Prävention von Gewalt Menschen mit Behinderungen, BMASGK (2019), 453 ff.

depend on institutions for specific forms of assistance (such as support with personal care) or for general personal assistance required in daily life.

This dependency creates a power imbalance that facilitates different forms of violence, in particular sexual violence. The study referred to indicates that women with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities constitute the most affected group. Men with disabilities experience sexual violence significantly less frequently than women with disabilities, and their experiences of violence typically occur in public spaces rather than within the family environment.⁴

Despite these findings, women with disabilities in Austria continue to be inadequately protected from gender-based violence.⁵ This is evident, among other things, in the Austrian federal government's violence prevention strategy published in 2024:⁶ across 99 pages, women and girls with disabilities are mentioned only once - without any concrete, needs-based measures. A targeted focus on this particularly vulnerable group is therefore entirely lacking.

In the summer of 2025, a National Action Plan (NAP) to combat violence against women was developed and presented in November 2025.⁷ While it includes a dedicated chapter on vulnerable groups and provides for some specific measures targeting women with disabilities, it must nevertheless be noted that no disability mainstreaming was applied and that the measures set out in the respective NAP remain overall very vague and superficial.

Although women with disabilities experience violence in an intersectional manner and face multiple forms of discrimination across all areas of life, there continues to be a lack of accessible and specialised victim support and counselling services. Nationwide, there is only one peer counselling service for women with disabilities who have experienced violence - and it is located in Vienna.⁸ Women's shelters, which play a

⁴ Erfahrungen und Prävention von Gewalt Menschen mit Behinderungen, BMASGK (2019), 38.

⁵ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9, 13 (40).

⁶ Bundeskanzleramt, Gewaltschutzstrategie zur Koordinierung und Vernetzung (2024), [Gewaltschutzstrategie zur Koordinierung und Vernetzung mit Fokus auf Beratung gewaltbetroffener Frauen in Österreich 2024 - Bundesministerium für Frauen, Wissenschaft und Forschung](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025)

⁷ Bundesministerium Frauen, Wissenschaft und Forschung, Nationaler Aktionsplan zur Bekämpfung von Gewalt an Frauen und Mädchen 2025-2029, [Nationaler Aktionsplan zur Bekämpfung von Gewalt an Frauen und Mädchen 2025-2029 - Bundesministerium für Frauen, Wissenschaft und Forschung](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

⁸ Ninlil, Empowerment und Beratung für Frauen mit Behinderung, [Ninlil - Willkommen](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

crucial role in situations of acute crisis, remain insufficiently adapted to the needs of women with disabilities.⁹

In addition, there is a significant lack of data on the experiences of violence against persons with disabilities, and civil society organisations working in the field of violence prevention and victim protection continue to face inadequate and insecure funding.¹⁰

The first thematic evaluation report by GREVIO from 2024 further highlights the substantial barriers faced by women with disabilities in accessing justice and effective support within judicial proceedings. These include, among others, the lack of physical accessibility of court buildings, insufficiently accessible communication - such as the absence of easy-to-read language and adequate breaks - as well as a shortage of interpreters, preferably of the same gender.¹¹

Recommendations

- **Ensure the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources for the nationwide expansion of peer counselling services for women and girls with disabilities across all federal states.**
- **Victim support services and facilities must be made fully accessible and, in particular, be provided in a needs-based manner in rural areas as well.**

LOI B. 6

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was ratified by Austria subject to a reservation requiring implementing legislation (Erfüllungsvorbehalt). In Austria, the Covenant is only rarely used as an interpretative tool in the application of national law, and international treaties are generally taken into account only in exceptional cases. As a result, the Covenant has little to no practical effect. Since the most recent concluding observations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2013, there has been little progress.¹²

LOI B. 8

Although the Austrian Ombudsman Board (Volksanwaltschaft) has now been granted A-status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), a number of challenges remain.¹³ The Federal Constitutional Law provides that the

⁹ GREVIO, "Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice. Austria. First thematic evaluation report" (2024) [1680b18c17](#), para 106 (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

¹⁰ CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9, 6 (22d, 23d).

¹¹ GREVIO, Austria, First thematic report (2024) 45 (175).

¹² Economic and Social Council, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/AUT/CO/4.

¹³ Die wurde auch vom UN-Menschenrechtsausschuss hervorgehoben (CCPR/C/AUT/CO/5), 3 (9).

members of the Ombudsman Board are nominated by the three political parties with the largest number of seats in the National Council and are then elected by the National Council on the basis of this joint recommendation.¹⁴

However, the current procedure is neither sufficiently public nor transparent. In particular, it lacks clear rules for the public announcement of vacancies, comprehensive consultation mechanisms, and a merit-based, participatory approach. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the Ombudsman Board, the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation has therefore recommended the establishment of a transparent and inclusive selection process that ensures broad public participation, objective assessment criteria, and a pluralistic approach to the selection of candidates.¹⁵

LOI B. 9

To date, no National Action Plan (NAP) on human rights has been adopted, nor does the Government Programme for 2025–2029 provide for the development of such a plan.¹⁶

LOI B. 14

To date, no measures have been taken to harmonize the anti-discrimination legislation in Austria. Responsibilities continue to be fragmented - as highlighted in the Committee's previous UN recommendations - across different bodies, depending on the specific ground of discrimination.

LOI B. 16

The evaluation of the National Action Plan on Disability (NAP Disability II) is currently being carried out by the Vienna University of Economics and Business, following the award of the contract.

Importantly, it should be noted that numerous measures, whose implementation should have already begun or been completed, have not yet been initiated. Given the current budgetary constraints faced by the federal government, it is also uncertain whether the planned measures will be implemented on schedule.

Statistics No. 18 presented in the Austrian progress report show that the employment quota for persons with disabilities is being met by only about one quarter of the obligated companies. Companies that fail to meet this employment quota are required to pay compensatory levies, which are collected into a fund used to finance support

¹⁴ GANHRI Bericht des Unterausschusses für Akkreditierung – März 2022, 12. Artikel 148b B-VG.

¹⁵ GANHRI Bericht des Unterausschusses für Akkreditierung – März 2022, 13.

¹⁶ Jetzt das Richtige tun. Für Österreich. Regierungsprogramm 2025-2029, [Regierungsprogramm](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

measures for the employment of persons with disabilities. However, this system is inherently contradictory: if the employment quota were fully met, no funding would remain available. Therefore, the compensatory levy system must be reformed.

Recommendation

- **Reform the compensatory levy system to promote the long-term and sustainable employment of persons with disabilities.**

LOI B. 17

In 2022, the employment rate of “eligible persons with disabilities” was 57.6%.¹⁷ This group includes individuals with a recognized disability degree of at least 50%, who are capable of working, and generally under the age of 65. This rate is significantly lower than the employment rate of persons without disabilities, which stood at 73.3%.¹⁸

The situation is particularly precarious for individuals working in day-structure settings. They do not receive a (collectively agreed) wage for their work, but only an allowance. Legal protections for employees, including holiday and sick leave entitlements, do not apply to them.¹⁹ A positive step was the introduction of a directive on inclusive employment,²⁰ which aims to enable persons with disabilities who were previously employed in day-structure settings to access work in the general labour market. However, this project funding is limited in amount and has not been converted into regular, ongoing funding.

Recommendations

- **Transition the Inclusive Employment directive into regular, ongoing funding.**
- **Establish specific support and funding measures for persons with disabilities, tailored to gender, as well as an inclusive part-time model, to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the labour market.**

¹⁷ Statistik Austria im Auftrag vom BMSGPK (Hg.); Menschen mit Behinderungen in Österreich III: Bildung, Erwerbstätigkeit und institutionelles Wohnen von Menschen mit „registrierter Behinderung“ 2022, Wien: 2024.

¹⁸ STATISTIK AUSTRIA, abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik 2022. Erstellt am 17.06.2024.

¹⁹ CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, 63 (12).

²⁰ Richtlinie für die Gewährung von Förderungen nach § 33 des Bundesbehindertengesetzes zur Teilhabe von Menschen mit hohem und sehr hohem Unterstützungsbedarf am ersten Arbeitsmarkt des Bundesministers für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz, 2024.

LOI B. 19

Significant gaps remain in Austria in addressing gender- and disability-related stereotypes. Women with disabilities are particularly affected by discriminatory stereotypes that encompass both traditional gender roles and assumptions about disability, shaping their roles within the family and society. Despite repeated international calls, no improvements have been observed in this area to date.²¹ There is no information on targeted measures, such as awareness-raising campaigns, and no notable change is apparent in public perception. Neither the National Action Plan on Disability I (2012–2020) nor the subsequent National Action Plan on Disability II (2022–2030) include specific measures to combat such stereotypes.²²

Persistent structural problems are also evident in media coverage.²³ A study shows that persons with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in Austrian mass media.²⁴ Among persons with disabilities, women with disabilities account for only 32%.²⁵ A comparison with a study conducted seven years ago indicates that this situation has not changed.

Moreover, persons with disabilities are frequently portrayed in print media either as “helpless victims” or as exceptional “heroes” who overcome everyday challenges.²⁶ Such forms of reporting reproduce stereotypical narratives and stand in clear contradiction to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Recommendation

- **Implement targeted awareness-raising measures and conduct systematic data collection based on disability and gender to sustainably enhance the public visibility of women with disabilities.**

LOI B. 20

In Austria, the labour market participation of women with disabilities is lower than that of women without disabilities and also lower than that of men with disabilities. Moreover, the gender pay gap is significantly higher for women with health conditions

²¹ CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9, 5 (20, 21).

²² Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung I 2012-2020/2021 ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung - Zwischenbilanz 2012-2015](#)), Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung II 2022-2030 ([Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung in Österreich](#)).

²³ CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9, 5 (21).

²⁴ Media Affairs, Menschen mit Behinderungen & Inklusion in österreichischen Massenmedien (2021/2022) 98.

²⁵ Media Affairs, Menschen mit Behinderungen & Inklusion in österreichischen Massenmedien (2021/2022) 55.

²⁶ RTR, Menschen mit Behinderungen in Österreichischen Massenmedien (2015/2016) 36, 37.

than for women without any health conditions.²⁷ Many women with disabilities also take on additional care work. However, there is a lack of needs-based personal assistance, particularly outside the working-sphere, which can further limit employment opportunities for women with disabilities and increase their risk of poverty and social exclusion.

According to the 2024 Gender Equality Index, women with disabilities are more affected by poverty compared to women without disabilities and men with disabilities. Specifically, 18% of women with disabilities are at risk of poverty, compared with 13% of women without disabilities.²⁸

Recommendation

- **Introduce appropriate and accessible measures to promote the equal and non-discriminatory participation of women with disabilities in the labour market.**

LOI B. 27

The National Action Plan on Disability II 2022–2030 foresees the development of a strategy to make shortage occupations more attractive, including in the field of psychosocial care for children and adolescents. However, this measure has not yet been implemented. As a result, staffing needs in this area remain unmet, and waiting times continue to be unacceptably long.²⁹

There is a significant shortage of personnel in the area of psychiatric and psychotherapeutic care within the implementation of measures; for example, as of 1st January 2023, only 52% of planned positions in this sector were filled.³⁰ This has led to a severe undersupply for individuals receiving these services.

An acute shortage of staff also exists in the field of nursing, which is expected to worsen further, while informal caregivers continue to receive insufficient support.³¹

²⁷ Momentum Institut, Equal Pay Day 2025: Größte Gender-Pay-Gaps bei Frauen mit Migrationsgeschichte oder gesundheitlicher Einschränkung (2025), <https://www.momentum-institut.at/news/equal-pay-day-2025-groesste-gender-pay-gaps-bei-frauen-mit-migrationsgeschichte-oder-gesundheitlicher-einschraenkung/> (last accessed: 06.11.2025)

²⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality, Austria, Gender Equality Index 2024, 5, [AT 2024 factsheet.pdf](#) (last accessed: 06.11.2025).

²⁹ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, 11 (57, 58).

³⁰ Steuerung und Koordinierung des Straf- und Maßnahmenvollzugs; Follow-up-Überprüfung, Rechnungshof Österreich, 2024, [Bericht des Rechnungshofes: Steuerung und Koordinierung des Straf- und Maßnahmenvollzugs; Follow-up-Überprüfung](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

³¹ Juraszovich, Brigitte; Rappold, Elisabeth; Gyimesi, Michael (2023): Pflegepersonalprognose. Update bis 2050. Aktualisierung der Pflegepersonalbedarfsprognose 2030. Ergebnisbericht. Gesundheit Österreich, Wien.

Recommendation

- **Implement concrete, targeted, and fully funded measures to address structural deficits in the provision of psychotherapeutic care for children and adolescents; to remedy the lack of psychosocial support in the implementation of measures; and to prevent the nursing shortage while supporting informal caregivers.**

LOI B. 28

Many healthcare facilities and services remain inaccessible. Both physical and communication barriers hinder or entirely prevent access to medical care for many persons with disabilities.

Due to the lack of accessibility in numerous healthcare facilities and the long waiting times for examinations, surgeries, or appointments with the few publicly funded physicians who have accessible practices, persons with disabilities are often forced to seek private services. This issue is particularly pronounced in the field of gynecological care, where accessible public practices are especially rare, forcing many women with disabilities to turn to private practitioners.

The limited availability of free and affordable services affects numerous areas of healthcare. Reimbursements for privately paid services through social insurance often fall far short of the actual costs, creating significant financial burdens. Those without the necessary resources frequently remain without treatment for extended periods, increasing the risk of further deterioration in their health.³²

Recommendation

- **Implement concrete, targeted, and fully funded measures to ensure a fully accessible, inclusive, and affordable healthcare system without long waiting times.**

³² CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, 6, 11 (35-36, 57-58).

LOI B. 31

The Austrian education system remains largely segregated rather than inclusive. During its 2023 review of Austria, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities correctly noted setbacks in the area of inclusive education. This development is partly due to the discontinuation of inclusive model regions, the preference for segregated over inclusive schools under the 2017 Education Reform Act, and significant resource shortages.³³ Consequently, children with disabilities are increasingly educated in special schools and often have only limited opportunities to access higher education or vocational training thereafter.

In recent months, the situation has further deteriorated. For example, the federal state of Styria explicitly endorses special schools in its government programme³⁴, and in several federal states - including Upper Austria, Styria, and Vienna - new special schools are currently being built or planned.

There are also serious deficits in early childhood education: in Vienna alone, around 1,500 children with disabilities are currently waiting for a kindergarten place.³⁵ The City of Vienna is additionally funding the expansion of special education groups with € 3 million.³⁶ However, these special education groups represent the equivalent of special schools in early childhood education and are therefore clearly in contrary with the UN CRPD.

Moreover, there remains a lack of comprehensive and systematically collected data on the educational situation of children with disabilities, which significantly hampers targeted planning of measures in the education sector.³⁷

Recommendation

- **Establish a nationwide inclusive education system with sufficient resources (financial and human resources), providing opportunities for lifelong learning and gradually transforming special schools into inclusive schools through a phased plan.**

³³ CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, S. 10 (57a).

³⁴ Österreichischer Behindertenrat, Steirisches Regierungsprogramm: Bekenntnis zu Sonderschule (2024), [Steirisches Regierungsprogramm: Bekenntnis zu Sonderschule – Österreichischer Behindertenrat](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

³⁵ Österreichischer Behindertenrat, Inklusion in Wiener Kindergärten: Anspruch und Realität (2025), [Inklusion in Wiener Kindergärten: Anspruch und Realität – Österreichischer Behindertenrat](#) (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

³⁶ Stadt Wien, Presse-Service, Wien fördert kontinuierlich weiter mehr Inklusion in der Elementarpädagogik, <https://presse.wien.gv.at/presse/2025/04/23/wien-foerdert-kontinuierlich-weiter-mehr-inklusion-in-der-elementarpaedagogik> (last accessed: 15.12.2025).

³⁷ CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, S. 12 (57).

LOI B. 32

It is evident that women and girls are traditionally overrepresented in female-dominated fields of study, while they are significantly underrepresented in STEM subjects.³⁸ For women with disabilities, this inequality is further compounded by multiple forms of discrimination and a lack of accessibility. Targeted training opportunities specifically tailored to the needs of women with disabilities are lacking, as are accessible part-time education models.

Recommendation

- **Establish training programs tailored to the needs of women with disabilities, including accessible part-time education models.**

³⁸ CEDAW/C/AUT/CO/9, 9 (30).