

UNODC Beijing +25 Event Austria

Until today, the Beijing Declaration remains the most powerful global framework for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Its twelve critical areas of concern are as relevant today as they were in 1995 – even more so in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic and the resulting crisis have drastic social, political and economic consequences particularly affecting women.

- Women make up the vast majority of the workforce in many essential professions, such as in the health and nursing sector, commerce, teaching, education, and cleaning.
- Sectors with a traditionally high proportion of women, such as tourism, gastronomy and retail, see high levels of unemployment.
- Childcare and home schooling adds an additional burden, since women perform a much higher share of unpaid domestic and family work.
- Single parents are particularly hard hit, with the vast majority of them in Austria being mothers.

The Austrian federal government has compiled a comprehensive package of measures to ensure continued support for women affected or threatened by violence throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and to respond to the prevailing situation with specific measures.

Needs and perspectives of women and girls have to be heard. It is crucial to systematically include a gender perspective in the development, implementation and monitoring of all policies, measures and in the gradual re-“opening” of society. Women’s equal participation in decision-making is key in this regard and one of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Gender equality is a crosscutting issue. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national policies and programmes as well as the work of the UN is an important step towards the implementation of our commitments.

Both the CND and the CCPCJ have adopted resolutions regarding the mainstreaming of a gender perspective (Res. 59/5 and Res. 26/3) and regularly work on such important issues as violence against women, or human trafficking.

The importance of gender-sensitive approaches must also play a key role in the context of addiction prevention and addiction help services. This requires a high level of awareness among practitioners, and continued reflection on one’s own patterns of behaviour towards clients or patients, cooperation partners and colleagues. Continued reflection is necessary to enable gender equality in patterns of thought, language and action. Therefore, this topic also plays an important role in the Austrian Addiction Prevention Strategy.

Austria remains strongly committed to promoting gender equality, to promoting and fulfilling all human rights of all women and girls and to fully and effectively implement the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action. NGOs play a key role in this regard and it is therefore crucial to closely work with civil society partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects entail new challenges, it is essential to continue and further strengthen our efforts to safeguard, promote and realize women's rights and to achieve gender equality. In light of this 25-year anniversary of Beijing, let us renew our commitment and strengthen our joint efforts to this end.