Progress report

Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children Bogotá 2024

1. **Data collection:** Austria has been regularly monitoring the prevalence of violence against children and the attitude of parents and the overall population towards corporal punishment of children. The study on corporal punishment was first conducted in 1977 and has since been repeated by the Austrian government in 2014, 2019, 2021 and 2023. We commit to continue this data collection as a crucial step in order to design the most relevant and effective measures to prevent violence against children.

The "Right to a Violence-Free Childhood" study is to be commissioned again in the coming years. In addition, the Directorate-General for Family and Youth of the Federal Chancellery commissioned the Austrian Institute for Family Studies (ÖIF) to collect data on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The final report, "Data Analysis and Processing for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child," presented in June 2025, was prepared in collaboration with the "Data" project group of the Children's Rights Board.[1] It presents available data on the implementation of children's rights in Austria and developments in the living conditions of children and young people under the age of 18. Among other things, it also deals with Article 19 of the UNCRC, “protection from violence”. The report is available on the website of the Federal Chancellery.[2]

2. **Prevention and awareness-raising:** We conduct comprehensive education and awareness-raising campaigns to shed light on the devastating consequences of violence against children. This includes promoting a culture of non-violence in families, schools and communities. In 2024, Austria launched a campaign called “No to violence” which focuses on the protection of children from violence. The aim of the campaign is to not only inform and sensitize adults on the topic but also to empower children and young people, raising awareness about their right to grow up without violence the development and implementation of child-safeguarding guidelines, introduced in 2024, will continue to be mandatory in schools. Austria will continue to support the implementation of child-safeguarding guidelines in organizations working with children.

In order to **strengthen child protection** and violence prevention, a **special guideline for the promotion of child protection and violence prevention projects** was issued in 2024. The following projects are eligible for funding:

- Creation, evaluation and revision of child protection concepts for organisations that have direct contact with children and young people in the course of their work and operate nationwide or across federal states;
- Implementation of training events for professionals (e.g. child protection officers) from institutions that work directly with children and young people under the age of 18 on topics relevant to child protection;
- Preventive, work oriented towards victim protection with young offenders who are in direct personal contact with children and young people, including telephone hotlines;
- Victim protection projects and awareness-raising measures for different forms of violence, in particular sexualised and tradition-based violence and violence on the internet;

[1] The Children's Rights Board is an advisory body established in 2012 by the Federal Minister responsible for family affairs. The members of the Children's Rights Board are independent experts who deal with issues and problems relevant to the living conditions of children in Austria.

[2] oif.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_oif/Research_reports/FB_58_-_UN_Convention_on_the_Rights_of_the_Child.pdf

- Regional projects run by organisations represented in the Platform Against Domestic Violence;
- Specialist centre for process support for children and young people;
- Low-threshold telephone and online initial contact point for children and young people on issues of violence.[3]

Furthermore, the **Quality Assurance Agency for Child Protection Concepts** was established in 2025. The aim of this independent, non-governmental and professionally qualified agency is to award a seal of approval to institutions with quality-assured child protection concepts in order to protect children and young people up to the age of 18 and to offer parents certainty when choosing services. It began operating in April 2025. Organisations can use a self-assessment tool to carry out an initial evaluation.[4]

The **specialist agency for digital child protection** is based at saferinternet.at. The organisation supports children and young people, parents, youth workers and teachers in the safe, competent and responsible use of digital media. In 2024, the Centre for Digital Child Protection was established within "Saferinternet" and funded by the Federal Chancellery, Directorate-General, Family and Youth. The centre supports professionals who work with children and young people at the interface of digitalisation and child protection.
The focus is on the prevention of sexual violence on the internet. Services include training courses, the provision of specialist information, answering questions on child protection and digitalisation, and prevention workshops for children and young people.

Austria has set up a **working group** on "**Preventive measures against sexualised violence against and by children and** young people". The aim is to develop measures to prevent sexual violence with key stakeholders, for example by teaching children about the concept of consent in sexual relationships in an age-appropriate manner or by raising their awareness of the risks of violent pornographic content and the sharing of intimate images of themselves and others.

Prevention is also a focus in **the education sector**. Child protection, violence and bullying prevention and measures carried out in conjunction with the police to clarify norms in response to the increase in violence among children and young people are important cornerstones of a safe school environment. Further measures in schools include raising awareness of preventive measures, clear guidelines for action, e.g. participatory development of mandatory child protection concepts with risk analysis in all schools, formation of child protection teams, introduction of codes of conduct, process definition for dealing with suspected cases and strengthening cooperation with regional security authorities. A video competition encourages pupils to engage with the topic,[5] and a hotline has been set up for conflicts in the classroom.[6] Special training and further education measures have been developed for school staff.[7]

The child protection campaign: "No to Violence" https://neinzugewalt.at/ in 2024 was an Interdepartmental cooperation – involving the ministries of justice, family, education, social affairs and others and was key to successfully raising societal awareness of the issue.[8] The current government programme explicitly states "information campaigns on children's and young people's rights" and the

[3] Funding for "Child Protection and Violence Prevention" – Austrian Federal Chancellery
[4] The self-assessment tool and further useful information on the application process can be found online at www.qs-kinderschutzkonzepte.at.
[5] Look instead of looking away – Together against violence and aggression for a safe school
[6] Hotline for conflicts in the classroom, Vienna Board of Education
[7] In cooperation with the Centre for Violence and Bullying Prevention at PPH Burgenland, among others
[8] Federal Chancellery, Do the right thing now. For Austria, https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzler-amt/die-bundesregierung/regierungsdokumente.html

goal of "integrating child protection into the training of professional groups working with and in child protection teams, anchoring it more firmly and further developing relevant content priorities".

Women and girls with a migrant background are often victims of specific forms of honour-based violence such as forced marriage, child marriage or female genital mutilation. For this reason, the Federal Chancellery (BKA) places particular emphasis on identifying and breaking down patriarchal structures of violence. For example, as part of integration projects, the Austrian Coordination Centre against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM/C) of the FEM Süd Women's Health Centre has been supported since 2021 in order to provide important support for affected women and girls and to take preventive action against the spread of FGM. Educational and preventive work in particular is considered an important goal of the coordination centre. In the area of integration, the BKA promotes the National Competence Centre against Abduction and Domestic Violence, which offers specialised counselling for victims of domestic violence and abduction: particular focus is placed on young women and girls who are at risk in the context of forced marriage, for example – repatriations from abroad are also carried out.

The "No to Violence" campaign was evaluated.[9] The most important findings were as follows: More than a third of respondents said they had noticed the campaign (34%). This was most frequently through posters (56%), social media (20%) and the internet in general (19%). The campaign is rated overall: 78% stated that they liked the subjects shown either somewhat or very much. Those who rated the campaign positively justified this by saying that it dealt with an important and topical issue in a modern way (42%). In addition, the subjects are striking, appealing and direct (36%). Critics mainly rate the subjects as too colourful or, as a result, too trivialising (25%). Overall, the campaign is rated as honest (92%), credible (90%), eye-catching (88%) and understandable (87%). In general, all detailed ratings of the campaign are at a good to very good level.

Respondents to the follow-up survey are significantly more likely to agree that measures to protect children and young people who experience violence have improved in recent months. They also tend to agree that children and young people are better protected against bullying and sexual assault today. Those who completed the survey at the second measurement point also tend to believe that adults understand that they have a duty to protect children and young people from violence and that they are more likely to recognise such violence. They also believe that adults are now more likely to know where to get support and how to intervene appropriately. The follow-up survey shows that significantly more adults believe that children and young people know where to find support. Furthermore, they believe that children and young people now set clearer boundaries with regard to violence than they did five years ago. Respondents to the follow-up survey also believe that there has been a decline in violence against children and young people and an increase in civil courage. Accordingly, they believe that the population is more sensitised, but also that children and young people feel more empowered to seek help.

[9] Publications in accordance with § 2 (1b) Z 1 MedKF-TG - BMJ

3. **Support for parents and caregivers**: Well-implemented parental education as well as the "No to violence" campaign provide easy and universal access to resources that support parents and caregivers in creating violence-free and nurturing environments for children.

In 2025 and 2026, €1.65 million will be available for programmes offered by non-profit **parental education** providers. The focus is on promoting parent education events and publishing free information media, in particular the website www.eltern-bildung.at (parent education)[10] and the advice brochure **"ElternTIPPs" (Parent Tips)**[11] , which deals with children's developmental stages and special family situations.
Special target groups are parents whose native language is not German and families with psychosocial problems. There are programmes such as "eltern.tisch" and "eltern.chat" (discussion groups in the native language), the **HIPPY** programme in Carinthia and "mama stark" in Styria, parent education programmes offered by the **Black Women's Community** in Vienna, and intercultural groups run by **Kinderfreunde Österreich.**
Digital parent education in the form of webinars is becoming increasingly important. The platform www.eltern-bildung.at offers webinars, web talks and podcasts. In addition, the Directorate-General Family and Youth promotes events on media education and provides information on topics such as internet safety, gaming and online hate.

Further support is available **in crisis situations**: Around 400 subsidised family counselling centres[12] , measures for victims of violence[13] , parent-child support[14] and mediation in cases of separation and divorce[15] , networking with "early help" services to provide early support to overwhelmed parents[16] and parent-child groups for parents with psychosocial stress.[17]

In 2025-2026, 34 organisations across Austria will provide visitation support funded by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. In highly contentious cases of conflict following separation or divorce, this service aims to maintain or re-establish personal contact between low-income parents with visiting rights and their children – in a protected setting at a neutral location with professional support.

[10] "[10] www.eltern-bildung.at
[11] Homepage - Tips for parents
[12] www.familienberatung.gv.at
[13] www.gewaltinfo.at
[14] Support for parents and children - Federal Chancellery of Austria
[15] Mediation for separation and divorce - Federal Chancellery of Austria
[16] Home | Early Support Austria
[17] Home - Grow Together

4. **Integrated support services for children**: We strive to further develop our system of response and support services. Austria already has a wide variety of support services for children – from free telephone hotlines (zB RataufDraht, Opfernotruf) to organisations like the children and youth-welfare services (Kinder- und Jugendhilfe) or the children and youth advocacy (Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft) and psychosocial and legal court assistance in criminal proceedings. These services are designed to ensure that all children who are victims of violence, abuse or neglect have access to effective, child-friendly and accessible support services, regardless of their background.

All information on **legal support** is available in several languages on the website www.hilfe-bei-gewalt.gv.at (help in case of violence). Currently, 47 victim support organisations are contractually commissioned to provide legal support. These include numerous organisations specialising in specific victim groups.

In 2025, a brochure was published for **family court judges** and other professionals to highlight different forms of violence and outline strategies for action in the best interests of the child. In August 2025, the minimum age for marriage was standardised at 18 years without exception.[18]

In addition, **women's and girls' counselling centres**, which play an important role in violence prevention and protection as low-threshold first points of contact, were expanded to provide 100% coverage and to include victims of sexual violence.

The regulation on psychological and legal court assistance (Prozessbegleitungs-Regulierungsverordnung – PbRegVO[1]), adopted on the 11th of September 2024 and entering into force on the 1st of October 2025, comprehensively revises the legal framework for commissioning psychological and legal court assistance organizations and sets binding quality standards for psychological and legal court assistance. Its purpose is to ensure transparency in the selection and funding of organizations and to guarantee the long-term quality of psychosocial and legal assistance provided to victims of crime.

5. **Cooperation and partnerships**: Austria places particular emphasis on the involvement of civil society in the promotion of the right of every child to be free from violence. Consequently, the government and the authorities are engaged in continuous dialogue with civil society and value the engagement and technical expertise demonstrated by many civil society organizations.

A **National Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women and Girls** is currently being developed. Concrete proposals for measures have been drawn up in eight working groups composed of representatives of civil society, ministries and federal states. The Federal Government plans to present the National Action Plan before the end of this year.

The **Children's Rights Board** is an advisory body to the Federal Minister for Family Affairs. The members of the Children's Rights Board are independent experts from civil society who deal with issues and problems relevant to the living conditions of children in Austria.
For example, last year a meeting was held on the topic of protection against violence and children's rights in a digital world.

[18] Marriage and Partnership Law Amendment Act 2025, Federal Law Gazette I No. 46/2025: Abolition of the possibility of declaring minors eligible for marriage; furthermore, prohibition of marriage between relatives up to the fourth degree (cousins).

The **working group** on **"Preventive measures against sexualised violence against and by children and young people"** brings together representatives of civil society and various ministries. In the future, project groups will work on priority issues, develop proposals for measures and, as far as possible, implement them.

6. **International cooperation**: Austria is committed to improving the situation of children worldwide – standing up for children's rights has been and will continue to be an important objective of Austria's foreign and development policy. Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) has been stepping up its efforts to protect children, especially girls, from violence, as a result of Austria's engagement in the Human Security Network – and will continue to do so. Ongoing efforts in ADC to work towards inclusion and de-institutionalisation of children with disabilities, thus reducing the risks of physical and psychological violence in the institutional context. Austria is seeking to engage with other States, the European Union, the United Nations and international and regional organizations for exchanging best practice examples and for finding solutions to cross-border challenges in combating violence against children.

The protection of children's rights has always been a central concern of Austrian foreign and development policy. Austria's humanitarian aid strategy[19] aims to ensure that children are actively involved at all levels of the process.
Prevention, combating violence, and medical care, as well as the equal participation and active involvement of women and girls, are among the priorities of every humanitarian measure. Special attention is given to girls with disabilities who are exposed to multiple and intersectional discrimination due to their disability, gender, and/or sexual identity. For this reason, Austria prioritizes support for people with disabilities in humanitarian situations. The Austrian Humanitarian Aid Strategy places a special focus on the inclusion of women and girls with multiple disabilities in fragile contexts.
The protection of women and girls from gender-based violence is another key priority. As of September 4, 2025, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is funding 31 ongoing projects from the ADC core budget with a total volume of EUR 56.1 million, which contribute to the protection of women and girls from violence.
One example of such a project is "Oky – Girls Empowerment and Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence" in the Southern Africa region.

The overall objective of the Oky Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) regional initiative is to contribute to wider national, regional, and SDG goals, empowering adolescent girls and boys and their communities to have improved knowledge and attitudes towards adolescent sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV). Moreover, to enhance access to information, services, protection, and support in Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.

Among the 51 projects that contribute to protecting women and girls from violence, the ADA is currently (as of September 4, 2025) funding a project with around 0.3 million euros that is dedicated to combating female genital mutilation (FGM).

Zusammenfassung

[19] DE_Strategie_fuer_die_Humanitaere_Hilfe.pdf

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1. Data Collection:
Austria regularly monitors the prevalence of violence against children and public attitudes towards corporal punishment. Studies on this topic have been conducted since 1977, most recently in 2023. The study "Right to a Violence-Free Childhood" will continue in the future. In 2025, the Austrian Institute for Family Studies published a comprehensive report on children's rights implementation, covering key areas like Article 19 of the UNCRC ("protection from violence").

2. Prevention and Awareness:
In 2024, Austria launched the interministerial campaign "No to Violence" to raise awareness and empower children.

The child protection campaign: "No to Violence" https://neinzugewalt.at/ in 2024 was an Interdepartmental cooperation – involving the ministries of justice, family, education, social affairs and others and was key to successfully raising societal awareness of the issue.[20]

Child-safeguarding guidelines became mandatory in schools, and project funding was introduced to support training, victim protection, and preventive work with young offenders. A new **Quality Assurance Agency** was set up in 2025 to award seals of approval to institutions with strong child protection concepts.

In schools, prevention includes codes of conduct, clear guidelines for dealing with violence, child protection teams, and training for staff. A hotline for classroom conflicts was launched.

Digital Child Protection is another focus. Saferinternet.at and the newly created Centre for Digital Child Protection offer training and resources for professionals, focusing on preventing online sexual violence.

Different projects combatting FGM and forced marriage have been funded.

3. Support for Parents and Caregivers:
In 2025–26, €1.65 million is allocated for non-profit parenting programmes. Resources include brochures, webinars, and platforms. Around 400 counselling centres offer crisis support, while 34 organisations provide supervised visitation services.

4. Child-Centred Support Services:
Austria offers a range of child-friendly services like hotlines, legal and psychosocial court assistance, and youth advocacy offices. A 2025 brochure for family court professionals addresses different types of violence. The minimum marriage age is now 18 without exceptions. Women's counselling centres now cover 100% of Austria. A new regulation sets quality standards for court assistance services, effective October 2025.

5. Partnerships:
Austria engages civil society in developing strategies like the National Action Plan to Combat

[20] Federal Chancellery, Do the right thing now. For Austria, https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzler-amt/die-bundesregierung/regierungsdokumente.html

Violence Against Women and Girls. The Children's Rights Board advises the Federal Chancellery, Directorate General Family and Youth on key topics, regarding children Rights. A working group on preventing sexualised violence among children collaborates with NGOs and ministries.

6. International Cooperation:
Austria's development policy prioritises children's rights globally. Through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), €56.1 million supports projects protecting women and girls. Key projects address gender-based violence, SRHR, and FGM.