



28. August 2009

Questionnaire to Governments on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)

Response to the Questionnaire by Austria

Reporting period 2004 to 2009

Comments by the Austrian Frauenring (OeFR)

The Austrian Frauenring (OeFR), representing more than 40 women's organizations, board member of the European Women's Lobby, appreciates the opportunity to mention some points the Austrian government might want to pursue in addition to efforts that already have been made for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action as mentioned in the Response. We were not asked to comment on any draft response and in view of the late date we cannot comment on the entire official document.

Women and the economy (part two)

Income Transparency: The OeFR is convinced that the publication of pay schemes in private and public companies constitutes a precondition in the effort to reduce the steadily increasing gender pay gap. Only such transparency will enable women to negotiate their remunerations at the start of their employment and thus ensure that women's salaries are equal to men's. Trade Union representatives and shop stewards should have full access to pay schemes of private and public enterprises.

Women in Power and Decision-Making (part two)

Statistics of women in elected positions at local, provincial and national levels are not very encouraging. The OeFR therefore hopes that quota for all elected bodies be made mandatory by law. Such legislation should also apply with regard to the representation of women in management and board positions of public and private companies.

The share of women at universities (part two)

The OeFR deplors the fact that although over 50% of students are women the world of academia is still dominated by men at the decision making level. In spite of multiple efforts to implement gender balance at the highest levels, to date there is not a single woman heading an Austrian university as vice-chancellor. Effective and legally binding provisions to ensure gender balance are indispensable.

Institutional mechanisms, structures and measures (part 3)

The OeFR commends the re-establishment of a Ministry for Women in 2007 and its efforts to continuing and constructive co-operation and partnership with the wider NGO community. According to all relevant documents from the BPfA to the Beijing+10 Review such partnership and support is highly recommended and the involvement of NGOs "...especially women's organizations..." seen as crucial to the full and accelerated implementation of the BPfA and follow-up documents. The OeFR believes this co-operation should be intensified and widened as well as institutionalized. The OeFR appreciates and welcomes financial support given to some NGOs. However, a sound planning of activities and the running of routine operations by NGOs would only be possible if grants were guaranteed on a long-term basis.

Migrant women (part four)

In view of the often precarious life situation of migrant women the OeFR urgently recommends that these women be given residence permits in their own right. Furthermore, victims of trafficking should also have the right to residence and not be returned to their country of origin immediately after their cases have been officially dealt with.