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Introductory Statement
by the Head of Delegation of Austria
H.E. Ambassador Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff

37th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against
Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of
the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against
Women

New York
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Madam Chair,

- combating trafficking in women and support for affected women (for example, upgrading emergency accommodation; action plan against human trafficking).

Current equality policy developments in Austria

We are aware that Austria is no exception in having to admit that women are still being discriminated against, even though equality has been established by law. Hence, our policy-makers must and will focus on further improvements and seek to progressively achieve de facto equality.

Equal treatment

The equal treatment of women and men in employment is mandatory in Austria under two equal treatment acts (Equal Treatment Act for the Private Sector 1979 and Act on Equal Treatment in Federal Service 1993). The equal treatment acts provide for women to realise their rights, inter alia, with the support and advice of bodies set up under the equal treatment law, such as the Ombud Office for Equality Issues and equal treatment officers. Other relevant law enforcement institutions are the Equal Treatment Commissions and the Labour Court. The legal basis for equal treatment was further improved by far-reaching amendments of Austria's equal treatment law in 2004 implementing EU-legislation.

A new brochure entitled "Your Legitimate Right", which is now also available in English, contains comprehensive information on equal treatment and equality of women and men as well as the complete text of the Equal Treatment Act. I have .3(hing)TJ0 -1.s .

Federal Minister responsible for women's issues and includes representatives of all ministries and relevant top-level institutions.

The objective of the working group is to support and to accompany the gender mainstreaming process in all ministries at all political levels. The working group is primarily tasked with facilitating exchange of information including best-

There are health risks and diseases that affect only women or have a more lasting or serious impact on women than on men.

There are also differences in access to and the use of health services between women and men.

Further measures are, therefore, conditional on gathering key indicators relevant to health planning as well as gender disaggregated health statistics. With this in mind, emphasis was placed on disaggregating the available data and to introduce a global perspective by comparing them with EU and non-EU figures, when drawing up the 2nd Austrian Health Report published in 2005.

Recently, a **guideline** was published for **the implementation of gender mainstreaming in hospitals**. The guideline was designed to ensure the sustainable integration of gender mainstreaming in the management tools of hospitals and the formulation of gender mainstreaming goals to guarantee the routine application of gender mainstreaming principles in service delivery (gender-equitable medicine and care) as well as in staffing and organisational development.

Gender Mainstreaming and education

Austrian policy takes care of the fact that gender mainstreaming is also important in the area of education. **Co-education**, the integrated education of girls and boys, which has been mandatory for all state schools since 1975, has won full acceptance at Austrian schools.

Since the eighties, the co-educative approach has been a focus of discussions that were stimulated by research studies and has led to some new developments.

However, educational policies are **not** being realigned towards renewed gender separation by abolishing co-education and setting up separate schools for girls or

as part of a “new learning culture” implies that engagement with gender differences and ways of addressing them are deliberately taken up in class teaching. Gender-specific work with boys who are confronting their male role is vital in this approach. A critical perspective on co-education and corresponding adjustments to class teaching may benefit both girls and boys. Let me give you an example: Studies have been showing just as girls are affected by the predominant focus of boys on the field of technology, boys are often affected by the superior performance of girls in reading and modern languages.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are also a guiding principle for the **Austrian Development Cooperation**, as stipulated by the relevant Act of 2002/03. The overarching goal of poverty elimination cannot be achieved without a special focus on women. The Austrian Development Cooperation has also formed its strategies for gender equality in accordance with the three interrelated

Equality policies – priority setting during Austria’s EU Presidency in

2006:

During the Austrian EU Presidency in the first half of 2006, Austria also set its own priorities in the field of gender equality:

Implementing the **Beijing Platform for Action** within the European Union, Austria formulated indicators for women and health which were adopted by the Council of EU-Ministers in June 2006. Women’s health was also the key topic at the meeting of EU health ministers.

Conscious of the persisting **pay gap** between men and women in the EU member countries, Austria together with the EU Commission organised a conference of experts in May 2006 under the heading “Closing the Gender Pay Gap”, which was the first conference ever to gather all the social partners at the European level.

In the framework of the **EU’s human rights policy**, Austria carried out a

During penal proceedings, victims of human trafficking who are, as a rule, exposed to exceptional emotional stress, are entitled to psychosocial and court assistance services.

Austria has been the driving force behind the so called COSPOL project for effectively combating human trafficking. In the coming months, the pertinent operational and strategic action plans will be jointly drawn up with Europol and other European countries involved.

With reference to the measures already listed in Austria's 6th periodic report in response to **Recommendation 228, Measures against Trafficking in Women**, I should like to mention that additional measures have in the meantime been taken at the national level. On 9 November 2004, the government set up an interministerial "Task Force on Human Trafficking", which is chaired by the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs and tasked with coordinating the activities of all the ministries concerned, bringing national and international developments up for discussion and generating solutions

To this end the Task Force drafted a National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and in particular against trafficking in women and children, which will be adopted shortly.

Austria is a state party to all pertinent, international acts against human trafficking, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

In this context I should like to draw special attention to the fact that Austria was one of the first EU countries to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of May 2005 as early as in June 2006.

In order to implement our commitment regarding the prevention of trafficking as well as the protection of victims, the **Austrian Development Cooperation** is providing roughly 5 Mio. Euros over the next 3 years for projects regarding trafficking in women and girls.

Women in decision making positions

Let me now turn to the area of women in decision making. The number of women in economic and political centres of decision-making is a yardstick for de-facto gender equality. With the exception of the Scandinavian countries, the EU member states are still far from equal representation of women and men in such

positions. A study conducted by the Ministry for Women's Issues and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber on Austrian enterprises has revealed that just 16 % of enterprises with more than 50 employees are headed by female managing directors and 3% of companies with an executive board have women in these leading positions. In just under 83% of all respondent enterprises at least one woman holds a top position. The total number of businesswomen who manage their own enterprises in Austria is roughly 100 000 or 31.4 %. In 1996, the proportion of women managers of start-up companies was 27 %, today, 10 years later, the proportion has risen to 38 %.

Even though progress has been registered in the participation of both genders in business, executive positions have remained a male domain.

This cannot be attributed to an insufficient number of women with excellent training, but rather to the persisting **traditional role model**, in part to a lack of opportunities to reconcile work and family life. This is also due to insufficient support to women applicants by people inside or outside companies during the recruitment process and during the initial stages of their careers. It is thus vital and one of our major concerns to complement the 'old boy networks' with mechanisms that benefit, connect and support women pursuing their careers. Two years ago, a cross-mentoring programme was launched in the public sector at the federal level and has since been expanded to the level of the Provinces; similarly, a business mentoring project and a cross-mentoring programme were set up and supported in the private sector. All of them have proved effective and are to be extended.

If engrained role images are to be softened and stereotypes overcome, it is essential to raise awareness among young gi

account of disparities in the following areas: demographic structures /life styles, education, gainful employment, income/standard of living, health, leisure time, division of labour in the family/support by institutions, EU comparison. This was followed by the report "Women in Austria 2003–2006", a collection of all the reports published in the period under review that address the circumstances of women living in Austria.

The first part of the report "Women in Austria", which is already off the press, contains inter alia:

- 6th Austrian Report to the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2004
- Women's Health Report, 2005
- Women in Decision Making Positions in Austria, 2006

The comprehensive report on "Women and Men in Austria" as well as other reports are supposed to be published in the second part of the Women in Austria report.

Distinguished members of the Committee, these **examples of current Austrian policies in the field of women and equality** are intended to demonstrate that efforts to dismantle discrimination against women have continued apace since we