

**NON.
NO.
NEIN.**

Say No!
Stop
violence
against
women

Violence against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society, and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political, and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women (1). Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harms on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15 (2).

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate. Violence against women continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Austria, more than 80 % of the population tend to trust the police (3).

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher (4). It is estimated that in Austria, 20 % of women have experienced violence, which is 13 % lower than in the EU overall (5).

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Austria could amount to EUR 1.8 billion per year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study (6), which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016 (7).



What are the facts?

- The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that:
 - since the age of 15, 20 % of women in Austria have experienced physical and/or sexual violence and 15 % of women have been stalked;
 - 27 % of people said they knew someone who has been a victim of domestic violence ⁽⁸⁾.
- From 2010 to 2012, an estimated 0.9 per 100 000 people in Austria were registered as victims of human trafficking ⁽⁹⁾.



When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



Is violence against women a crime in Austria?

Austria has no violence against women law but does criminalise numerous forms of violence ⁽¹⁰⁾.

As of 1 January 2016, protection against sexual violence was improved, due in part to a new clause, 'Violation of sexual integrity', becoming effective, which states clearly that it is a crime to engage in sexual intercourse with a person, or sexual acts equivalent to such, against that person's will or through coercion, or as a result of intimidation. It is punishable by a prison sentence of up to 2 years ⁽¹¹⁾. Ignoring a person's will is itself a form of sexual violence and does not require the use of (additional) violence, menacing threats or any other form of coercion.

Furthermore, specific regulations in cases of domestic violence apply in the Protection against Violence Act (Gewaltschutzgesetz) ⁽¹²⁾.

Gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage are considered persecution under the Asylum Act if there is a lack of willingness and/or ability of the country of origin to protect the claimant.

Good practices show the way

Austria is often taken as a role model for anti-violence legislation, in particular for its implementation and awareness-raising work. One such activity was the 'Living FREE of violence campaign' ⁽¹³⁾ 2014—2015, which included an update of the travelling exhibition, Silent Witnesses, showing 20 figures representing female victims of domestic violence who were murdered by their (ex)partner, accompanied by an extensive brochure giving detailed information about domestic violence and support facilities for victims ⁽¹⁴⁾.

What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Austria?

The national action plan (NAP) on the protection of women against violence (nationaler Aktionsplan zum Schutz von Frauen vor Gewalt) 2014—2016 was adopted on 26 August 2014. The NAP sets out to coordinate political activities on violence against women, prevent violence against women, promote data collection, support victims, strengthen legal provisions, and encourage European-level cooperation ⁽¹⁵⁾.

The NAP implements the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which Austria ratified on 14 November 2013 ⁽¹⁶⁾. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

How are women and girls protected?

Women victims of domestic violence in Austria have legal access to emergency barring orders prohibiting perpetrators from the victim's home and temporary restraining orders. Protection orders in the form of court injunctions are available for various lengths of times and can be extended if needed ⁽¹⁷⁾.

What help is available in Austria?

An overview of the specific aid facilities offering support for women affected by gender-based violence is given by the Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs ⁽¹⁸⁾.

The latest data shows that Austria has 30 shelters offering room for 766 women and children ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Each federal state has its own violence protection centre/intervention centre. Some federal states also have regional centres. They offer active help and support for persons affected by domestic violence and/or stalking, free of charge and confidentially ⁽²⁰⁾.

Six regional counselling centres for sexual violence are presently installed in Austria to provide counselling and support for rape victims (two emergency numbers are located in Vienna — one of them operating around the clock and one each in the provinces of Upper Austria, Styria, Salzburg and Tyrol) ⁽²¹⁾.



Women experiencing violence in Austria and persons wanting to support (potential) victims can call the Women's Helpline Against Male Violence (0800 222 555).

The helpline is available 24/7 and calls are free. The helpline offers advice in various languages and refers callers to the nearest specialist facility ⁽²²⁾.



Women's Helpline Against Male Violence (0800 222 555)

Endnotes

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- (⁷) *The cost of domestic violence in Estonia*. Available at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf
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- (¹²) Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs, Domestic violence. Available at: http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/EN/Women_Equality/Domestic_Violence
- (¹³) <http://www.gewaltfreileben.at/en>
- (¹⁴) <http://www.gewaltfreileben.at/de/material/infopackage>
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- (¹⁷) Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs, Violence against women. Available at: http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/EN/Women_Equality/Violence_against_women
- (¹⁸) http://www.bmgf.gv.at/home/EN/Women_Equality/Aid_facilities
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European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.



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