*What are the promising practices emerging from your country to ensure the realization of women’s rights to work and women’s rights at work, in the context of technological and demographic change, as well as continuing globalization and the shift towards sustainability? (laws, economic, labour market and social policies, programmes).*

**I./ Overview**

The employment rate of women in Austria has been rising over the past years. In 2018, the **labour market participation** rate of 15- to 64-year-old women was 70.7 percent for women, and 81.6 percent for men. At the same time, the share of women in **part-time employment** was 48.3 percent, compared to 10.3 percent of men. This high part time quota of women is one of the main challenges and further contributes to the persisting income disparities.

On average, women still earn less than men: in 2017, the **gender pay gap** in Austria amounted to 19.9 percent. The gender specific income gap in Austria remains one of the largest within the European Union, despite progress in recent years. Therefore, measures and initiatives to raise awareness and to increase income transparency have been put into practice.

For instance, in 2011 a legal obligation for companies to draw up internal income reports was introduced. Since 2014, a biannual report is mandatory for all companies with more than 150 employees. Companies are also required to publish the minimal collective wage and option for higher payments in job vacancy advertisements.

In addition to the legal measures already in place, projects and initiatives have been implemented to further increase income transparency. Inter alia, a comprehensive toolbox has been developed to support companies with the preparation, analysis, and communication of the income reports. Furthermore, an online calculator for wages and salaries offers the option to calculate the expected pay for employees who start a new job or who are promoted. Moreover, the “Round Table Income Transparency” was initiated. Its meetings between September 2018 and May 2019 served as platform for exchange and mutual learning for experts from administration, statistics, research and social partner organisations.

Another factor contributing to income disparities between women and men in Austria, is the **gender-specific segregation** of the labour market. When looking at individual sectors, there are considerably more women working in the service sector, with the highest percentage in trade and in the health and social services, while men predominantly work in the production of goods, in the building industry and in commerce. When it comes to choosing the subject of study or vocational training, women are particularly underrepresented in technical and scientific subjects.

In order to overcome stereotypical gender roles and diversify the vocational choice and career paths of women, a number of programmes have been in place for several years. The aim of these measures is to encourage girls and women to choose an education, apprenticeship or further training in technical professions (i.e. the platform “meine Technik”, or the “Girls’ Day” and the “Girls’ Day MINI”). In the context of technological change, digitalisation, and the transition to sustainability, it is essential to encourage women to enter the fields of STEM and ICT in order to ensure that they equally benefit from newly created jobs in these high-growth and high-paid areas of employment.

Moreover, differences in the labour market participation of women and men further result in gender-specific disparities in **old age pensions**. In Austria, the average old-age pension level of women is lower than that of men, which is mainly due to the lower income of women and the fact that women are more often employed part-time and have more career interruptions. In 2017, the gender gap in pensions was 38.7 percent in average pensions. Due to the low average pensions, women are also more often at risk of **poverty in old age**.

In the context of an aging population, it is crucial to secure women’s economic independence in old age. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the Austrian gender gap in pensions is currently conducted in the context of the EU co-financed project “TRAPEZ” (transparent pension future). Furthermore, awareness raising measures such as a toolbox for companies, video clips, events, and publications about the gender gap in pensions will be developed and published mid-2020.

Regarding the protection of women’s rights in the world of work, Austria has a long tradition of legislation concerning equal treatment. The Equal Treatment Act was adopted in 1979, since then, the law has been considerably expanded, including the offenses of harassment and sexual harassment. The Equal Treatment Commission further provides persons affected by discrimination in their professional life with the possibility of settling such conflicts out of court. Moreover, the Ombud for Equal Treatment provides counselling services and information about the right on equal treatment

**II./ Specific examples for an active labor market policy**

In the context of active labor market policy, the following measures, which have been successful and hence are promising for the future, are implemented:

**Women in Crafts and Technology (Frauen in Handwerk und Technik - FiT)**

FiT aims to promote education for women in non-traditional occupational fields. The aim is to take a apprenticeship as a participant or to complete further education, for example in technical colleges or higher technical colleges. The programme makes an important contribution to two gender equality goals in the context of the labour market policy: overcoming gender segregation and reducing the gender pay gap. Craft and technical occupations are not only better paid than traditionally female occupations, but offer better career opportunities and are particularly in demand on the labour market. Over time, it has become apparent that it is difficult to motivate women for non-traditional professions. It is therefore particularly important to highlight the advantages of technical training during counseling and to offer training opportunities. Nearly 1,300 women completed training in the craft and technical area in 2018 within the FiT-programme.

**Job Advisory Centres for Women (Frauenberufszentrum - FBZ)**

In order to offer job-seeking women intensive and individual counseling, the Job Advisory Centres for Women (FBZ) offer a comprehensive range of counseling and services for women interested in further qualification. The FBZ supports the access for women to the services of the AMS, ensures a continuous professional guidance for the women and facilitates the quick integration into the adequate qualification offers. In addition, increased cooperation with companies in the region promotes women's labour market integration. On the one hand, the FBZ offers in various modules specific counseling and coaching, such as the compilation of an individual competence balance sheet or career planning, and on the other hand it offers group workshops, which serve an in-depth discussion for women with regard to qualification options and career planning as well to promote their self-esteem. After the pilot phase of 2010-2012, Job Advisory Centres for Women have been established nationwide. In 2018, around 11,200 women used the services of the Job Advisory Centres for Women throughout Austria.

**Gender Mainstreaming and disability Policy**

The **gender perspective** has to be included in all plans related to disability policy. In order to ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully in employment, the approaches of disability mainstreamingand the specialization of job offersshould meaningfully linked.

„**Disability Policy” in Austria**

Because of Federalism in Austria and in terms of constitutional law **disability affairs** are a **horizontal issue**. Federal and provincial laws contain legal rulings, which are of significance to people with disabilities.

**Responsibilities:**

* **federal government**: vocational inclusion
* **provincial issues**: social inclusion

On 6 July 2005, the National Council adopted a „**Disability Equality Package**”, including the Federal Disability Equality Act as well as Amendments to the Disability Employment Act and to the Federal Disability Act. This equalisation package is a milestone in the Austrian disability policy. It offers for the first time enforceable protection against discrimination for people with disabilities – men and **women** with disabilities as well as young and older people with disabilities – and enshrines legal consequences if the prohibition of discrimination is violated (at all areas of life, also at work).

On 5 October 2010- in connection with adoption of the First Austrian State Report for the United Nations with regard to the implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention in Austria – the federal government stated its intention to draw up a „**National Action Plan for People with Disabilities**“ (NAP on Disability) in Austria. This action plan was to contain the guiding principles of Austrian disability policy until 2020.

The **„Inclusion Package“ –** a labour market policy package for people with disabilities – offersexpansion of the legal protection for people with disabilities, support for employers (e.g. inclusion subsidies/inclusion subsidies plus), further development of established measures (e.g. Individual funding/technical work equipment, Work Assistance, Personal Assistance on Workplace) and increases the financial resources for this target group.

**Measures**

The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection and the “Social Affairs Ministry Service” offer a whole range of **measures** for the “Inclusion of people with disabilities in working life” (for employees and employers):

1. **Individual Funding**
* **Training and Employment**:
* grants for training costs
* adaptation and establishment of training- and workplaces
* technical work equipment
* **Wage Subsidies**:
* inclusion subsidies/inclusion subsidies plus
* remuneration subsidies
* job safeguarding subsidies

**2. Project Support** / **„Work Assistance Network“ („NEBA“)**

Assistance services for young people with disabilities, impairments and disadvantages for orientation, qualification and job finding.

**Transition Education – Vocational Training – Employment**

* **Youth Coaching**

Advice concerning vocational training, career orientation and employment, but also support in case of learning difficulties, problems at home or a lack of social life („Case-Management“)

* **Production School**

This concept enables young people with multiple problems an access to further educational or professional training, apprenticeship, integrative vocational training in a company or to inter-company vocational training

e.g. Production School „ProVita”/„Education moves girls”, „Spacelab\_girls“

* **Vocational Training Assistance**

Support on the path to the world of work: selecting the right job, assistance with learning the training contents and final examination

**Support of People with Disabilities in Main Working Age**

* **Work Assistance**

Consulting and support with searching for and obtaining a job, the securing and retaining of a job

* **Job Coaching**

Job Coaching offers direct and personalised support in the workplace - it promotes professional and social competences

1. **Personal Assistance on Workplace**

*How is technological change impacting on women’s experiences of work in your national context? (E.g. increasing access to ICT’s, robotics, machine learning, automation).*

*What are some of the good practices for supporting women to benefit equally from technological advances? (laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers).*

**Gender Mainstreaming**

Austriahas committed itself to upholding the strategy of **Gender Mainstreaming** as a guiding principle and a method of policymaking, administration and implementation of measures.

**Institutional measures**

Concerning the “Individual Funding”/Training and Employment (adaptation and establishment of training- and workplaces, technical work equipment) modern **technological innovations** bring facilities in education, vocational training, job finding and employment for men and **women** with disabilities.

**Technology/„Design for All“**

The concept „**Design for All**“ includes technological innovations both in constructional areas, Rehabilitation Technology and in the field of Information- and Communication Technology, e.g. lifts to manage stairs, guidance systems in the public traffic for blind people, braille, robot hands, systems on the base of induction for persons hard of hearing and much more.

*How is the rise of more flexible forms of labour, including the ‘gig’ and ‘on demand’ economy impacting on women’s experiences of work in your national context?*

*What are the implications for job security for increased flexibility and women’s caring responsibilities and for harassment and violence?*

**Women with disabilities**

According to Article 6 of the UN Disability Rights Convention, Austria must take all necessary measures to ensure that women with disabilities can enjoy all human rights and basic freedoms fully and equally. Alongside strain caused by their disabilities, women are additionally burdened by gender specific discrimination (**multiple discrimination**).

**Women with disabilities in working life**

Statistical data show that women with disabilities are not only in a markedly worse position than non-disabled women, but also with regard to disabled men. Women with disabilities are **disadvantaged** in the areas of education, vocational training, employment (frequently poorly paid, typical women’s occupations, and receive lower social benefits when unemployed) and old age (low pensions). Women with disabilities are more frequently affected by poverty than men with disabilities.

Women with disabilities are still less likely to have completed some sort of vocational training than men with disabilities, which not only has a negative effect on their careers opportunities and financial situations, but also has an unfavorable effect on their psychosocial condition. It would be necessary to **create new careers and training opportunities** for woman with disabilities.

*How is demographic change in your national context impacting on women’s experience of work?*

*What economic and social policies are needed to ensure the growth in the care sector creates decent work opportunities for women? What are some emerging promising practices? (laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers).*

**Demographic change**

The **demographic change** in Austria has wide impacts to working life – workers today in general are longer employable. Enterprises need new forms of personal- and generation management and have to be productive also with older workers and use their expertise.

**AUSTRIA/Project “fit2work”**

The project **„fit2work“** is not only an information portal, but a „**Support Service**“ for workers and enterprises. Main target is to hold older workers longer fit and in working process (Transition Employment – Retirement).

**„Fit2work“-services** are: support, health support, workplace health promotion, integration management, case-management, coaching, social work, psychological support, psychotherapy and other therapeutic services.

**Gender Mainstreaming**

**Gender Mainstreaming** should increasingly take into account of the occupational integration of men and **women** with disabilities, in this context especially of **elderly women**.

*What measures are necessary to ensure that women benefit equally from the transition to sustainability in your national context? What are some of the promising practices to ensure that green jobs do not replicate existing gender inequalities in other sectors (e.g. occupational segregation, gender pay gap)?*

**Disability Mainstreaming and Gender Mainstreaming**

In the interests of **Disability Mainstreaming** and **Gender Mainstreaming** all services and subsidies offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the “Social Affairs Ministry Service” are open to people with different kinds of disabilities (some only with 50% level of disability).

**Gender Budgeting**

In the support scheme, which are part of the Austrian Government’s Employment Strategies and measures, Gender Mainstreaming and **Gender Budgeting** are always taken into consideration in accordance with the relevant scheme of the European Union.

**Aspects concerning long-term care**

First, it should be mentioned that the Austrian federal constitution attributes public responsibilities in **long-term care** to both the Federation and the nine federal states.

In accordance with the Federal Constitution Act (“Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz”, B-VG) and its division of competences within the state, the federal states are predominantly responsible for matters regarding long-term care.

The Federation is responsible for care allowance (“Pflegegeld”) and care-leave allowance (“Pflegekarenzgeld”), which is regulated in the Federal Care Allowance Act (“Bundespflegegeldgesetz”, BPGG). Furthermore, responsibility applies to the social insurance coverage of carers as defined in Article 7 of the Care Agreement 1993 (“Pflegevereinbarung 1993”) and substitutes care as a contribution to relieving the burden on the main carers in the case of impediment (according to Section 21a of the BPGG). The Federation and the federal states offer support for 24-hour care assistance (according to Section 21b of the BPGG). The care fund, of which the legal basis is the Care Fund Act (“Pflegefondsgesetz”, PFG), is administrated by the Federation. In all other respects, the competence for long-term care provision belongs to the federal states.

Due to this division of competences, the Federation will make any effort, particularly in its area of competence in the long-term care sector, but also in cooperation with the federal states, to improve and develop the situation for people, especially women, in care professions.

*What are the promising practices emerging from your country to ensure the realization of women’s rights to work and women’s rights at work, in the context of technological and demographic change, as well as continuing globalization and the shift towards sustainability? (laws, economic, labour market and social policies, programmes)*

In the area of **long-term care**, the Federation is granting a significant benefit to the costs of the federal states for securing and expanding care services. According to the Care Fund Act, a special-purpose grant will be paid to the federal states biannually from 2011 to 2021. A total amount of 3.249 billion euros will be distributed over this period. As beneficiaries, the federal states have to use this grant for improving care services, which includes employing carers and improving their working conditions. Therefore, future amendments to the Care Fund Act will have an impact on professional carers, among other things.

As demographic projections show a population growth because of the increase of life expectancy and the decrease of fertility rates, the biggest rise is to be expected in the areas of health and long-term care due to the ageing population. Therefore, a stronger demand for employees in the care sector is most likely to occur. This will mostly affect women since, according to the Care Service Statistics 2017 (“Pflegedienstleistungsstatistik”) by Statistik Austria, the average proportion of women among professional carers is around 87%. This percentage is not expected to change significantly. In particular, as according to the Care Service Statistics 2014 the percentage of female carers was around 85%. In comparison to 2014 to 2017 it shows only a slight change.

With regard to globalization, data are only available for 24-hour care assistance due to the competence of the Federation. Around 99% of women working as 24-hour care assistants live abroad. Their countries of origin are mainly Romania (around 49%) and Slovakia (around 31%). In case the wages in the countries of origin rise or working conditions improve, it will also have a direct impact on employment and care services in Austria. Regarding institutional and home care no data is available for the Federation. In this context, it should be emphasized that only around 6% of care-dependent persons are taken care of by care assistants within the framework of 24-hour care assistance. Therefore, this is not an indicator for all professional carers and this conclusion cannot be applied to those in institutional and home care.

*`Gig´ and `on Demand´ Economy*

*How is the rise of more flexible forms of labour, including the `gig´ and `on demand´ economy impacting on women’s experiences of work in your national context?*

The 24-hour care assistance as well as home and mobile care can be seen as flexible forms of labour in the care sector and therefore as part of the ‘gig’ and ‘on demand’ economy. Since mobile care is a competence of the federal states, the impact on women’s work experience cannot be conclusively assessed. As of June 2019, around 67,000 people are employed in the entire care sector, but only meet the working hours for around 48,000 full-time equivalents, which indicates a high proportion of part-time work within the care sector.

*Transition to sustainability*

*What measures are necessary to ensure that women benefit equally from the transition to sustainability in your national context? What are some of the promising practices to ensure that green jobs do not replicate existing gender inequalities in other sectors (e.g. occupational segregation, gender pay gap)?*

From the perspective of the Federation, it cannot be assumed that green jobs replicate existing gender inequalities within the care sector, as (professional) carers are mostly female. According to the Care Service Statistics 2017 (“Pflegedienstleistungsstatistik”) by Statistik Austria, the average proportion of women among professional carers is 87%.

*Demographic change*

*What economic and social policies are needed to ensure the growth in the care sector creates decent work opportunities for women? What are some emerging promising practices? (laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers).*

Since 1 January 2014, employees (of private companies and organisations, public sector employees and the unemployed) have the opportunity to take **full care leave (unpaid) or part-time care leave** (whereby they lose part of their wages). Certain conditions have to be adhered to.

In addition, employees have the opportunity to change their working hours or to take leave from their employment for a certain period of time in order to look after dying relatives or to care of their seriously-ill children.

Since 1 January 2014, in order to provide financial support for caregivers in the case of care leave, part-time leave for caregivers or family hospice leave or part-time family hospice leave, there is a legal entitlement to care leave benefit under certain conditions (Section 21c of the Federal Long-Term Care Act).

This applies to persons who:

* have agreed care leave or part-time care leave with their employer;
* are taking family hospice leave or family hospice part-time leave to care for a dying close family member or to look after severely ill children;
* have stopped claiming unemployment benefit or unemployment assistance.

The basic amount of care leave benefit is dependent on income and is principally paid at the same level as unemployment benefit. As a person’s working hours are reduced and their income falls in the case of part-time care leave or part-time family hospice leave, care leave benefit is paid on a pro-rata basis. 72% of the recipents are women. Recipents have full social security coverage. Pension insurance contribution and health insurance contribution are paid by the federal government.

*Demographic change*

*How is demographic change in your national context impacting on women’s experience of work?*

Caring for the elderly is a central topic in the Austrian social policy. Not only people in need of care, but also their caregiving relatives require support in difficult situations, because the latter are making an extremely valuable contribution to society. Therefore one objective of Austria`s long-term care system is **to strengthen and support the position of caregiving relatives.**

Based on a study of the University of Vienna in 2018 (Nagl-Cupal et al. 2018) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs it can be assumed that around 950.000 adults in Austria are estimated to be involved in care and assistance provided for others. Care provided by relatives continues to be “feminine”. Approximately 73 % of all informal carers in domiciliary care are women. Barely 25 % of the caregiving relatives are employed (full-time / part-time). Home care is often stated as reason to terminate or restrict the level of employment.

The following measures are part of the “**Quality Assurance in Home Care”** initiated by the Ministry of Social Affairs to improve the situation of caregiving relatives, e.g. the compatibility of care and work:

**Home Visits by certified healthcare and nursing professionals**

**Since 2001** free and voluntary **home visits** as part of the quality assurance for home care are carried out by certified healthcare and nursing professionals to **inform and counsel** all those involved in the specific care situation in order to assure the quality of home care (recipients of long-term care benefit in cash and caregiving relatives). These home visits are offered **throughout Austria, free of charge** and **voluntary** and since 2015 also can be applied upon request. The focuses here is the provision of comprehensive information and advice to all of those involved in the specific care situation. Since the beginning of the programme on quality assurance in home care more than 238.000 home visits (as of 31st December 2018) have been already carried out, (home visits in connection with the 24-hour-care are not taken into account here).

**Free Dialogues/counselling for caregiving relatives**

Experience from home visits as part of the “Quality Assurance in Home Care” has shown that caregiving relatives often suffer emotional strain. Those caregiving relatives, who during a home visit explain, that they suffer from at least one psychological stress are offered a counselling session.

Coping with existing or looming issues arising from a burdening care situation is one content of the consultation. Furthermore, the counselling session focuses on existing problems, resulting from burdensome care situations. The sessions are provided by trained psychologists and available throughout Austria. The sessions are free of charge and also **available upon request.**

Due to the fact **women being the vast majority of caregiving relatives**, **particularly women are benefiting from the support measures mentioned above**. The aim of these measures is to increase the physical and psychosocial health of caregiving relatives, to reconcile care and work as well as to retain those carers longer at work.

Contact point to request these measures is the Competence Centre for Quality Assurance in Home Care for all long-term care benefit in cash recipients.

*What economic and social policies are needed to ensure the growth in the care sector creates decent work opportunities for women? What are some emerging promising practices? (laws, economic and social policies, institutional measures, regulation, actions by employers)*

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection currently a **study** is conducted **to determine the staffing requirements in nursing and social care professions in long-term care.**

The first step of the study, the stocktaking, is completed. Currently projections for the year 2030 are calculated. The significant last part of the study contains recommendations to cover future human resources requirements.

Increasing the attractiveness of nursing and social care professions is a concern of Austrian policy. The development of measures and strategies on micro-, meso- and macro-level are necessary to make these still female-dominated professions more attractive and decent.