



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

Distr.: General  
27 February 2007

Original: English

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Thirty-seventh session**

**Summary record of the 765th meeting (Chamber B)**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 23 January 2007, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Gaspard . . . . . (France)

**Contents**

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the  
Convention (*continued*)

*Sixth periodic report of Austria*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)**

*Sixth periodic report of Austria*  
(CEDAW/C/AUT/6; CEDAW/C/AUT/Q/3 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Austria took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria), introducing the State party's sixth periodic report, said that equal opportunities, equal pay, equality in employment, equality in science and research and the protection of women against violence were key gender policy goals pursued by the Government, which had taken office on 11 January 2007. A number of related developments and activities were in progress. The new Minister responsible for women's affairs would work in association with the Prime Minister's Office and would therefore be well placed to pursue gender-policy objectives across all areas. Women's professional opportunities would be improved by, inter alia, adopting targeted labour-market policies and increasing the full-time employment rate and proportion of women in the business and scientific communities, in politics and in social partnership structures. The staff and funding of the Ombud Office for Equality Issues would be reinforced and the unit's independence further guaranteed.

3. Steps to reduce the pay gap between women and men included: encouraging girls to choose occupations in which women were little represented; facilitating the promotion of female apprentices; ensuring gender-neutral job evaluation and higher ratings for women-specific jobs; backing women's (including female immigrants') career advancement; supporting women who returned to the labour market after maternity; and combating female poverty through, inter alia, a minimum wage amounting to €1,000 per month, based on a national collective agreement for all sectors. The income ceiling for entitlement to childcare benefits would be raised to €16,200 annually. The quality of childcare would be improved and their number increased, and men's involvement in housework would be encouraged. Other priority areas were: women's promotion to senior posts; improvement of women's health; advancement of women through counselling;

prevention of violence against women and protection of women from violence; combating trafficking in women and providing support to women affected by such offences.

4. Equal treatment of women and men with regard to employment was mandatory in the private sector and the federal services under two specific Acts (adopted, respectively, in 1979 and 1993), which provided for support by, inter alia, equal treatment officers and the Ombud Office for Equality Issues. Those provisions were enforced by the Equal Treatment Commission and the Labour Court. The legal basis for equal treatment had been considerably improved in 2004 through the adoption of amendments implementing European Union legislation. The text of the equal treatment legislation and comprehensive information regarding equal treatment had been published in a brochure entitled "Your Legitimate Right".

5. In order to promote gender mainstreaming at the federal level, an inter-ministerial working group had been set up in the summer of 2000 with a view to facilitating the exchange of pertinent information, including details of domestic and foreign best practices, developing appropriate strategic criteria and monitoring and evaluating progress. On the occasion of International Women's Day in 2004, the Government had decided to introduce gender budgeting, with a view to analysing the impact of budgetary measures on women and/or men, set up internal steering groups and conduct specific projects in the ministries. The Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Issues had commissioned a pilot study on the application of gender budgeting to the budget for drug-related measures. The aim was to provide all ministries with a methodological model for adopting a gender-budgeting approach in the early stages of budget planning.

6. Austria had been one of the first European countries to respond to the urgent call of the World Health Organization to focus on women's health and had issued its first women's health report in 1995. Since gender-disaggregated statistics and related indicators were crucial to health planning, Austria's second report on the subject, published in 2005, had included gender-disaggregated health statistics which could be compared with data from other countries within and outside the European Union.

7. Gender mainstreaming in education built on the co-educational system, which had been mandatory in

State schools since 1975 and had won full acceptance in general in Austrian schools. The quest for new forms of co-education based on education for gender equality, which had been a focus of research and discussion since the 1980s, was part of a “new learning culture” in which gender differences and ways of addressing them were deliberately taken up in the classroom.

8. Under the 2002 legislation on the Austrian Development Cooperation and in line with the three interrelated pillars of development, human rights and security, gender equality and women’s empowerment underpinned the poverty eradication activities of the Austrian Development Cooperation. In particular, Austria was implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, by: contributing to an important programme of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in South-Eastern Europe designed to facilitate bilateral and subregional consultations among female political decision-makers; supporting civil society groups in peace- and reconstruction-related monitoring and advocacy work in the same region; supporting similar efforts in Africa; and, at the national level, drawing up a national action plan for increasing the number of women in peace operations conducted by the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations, improving the training provided to all personnel involved in peace missions and highlighting the role of women at all stages of a peace process. Security required freedom from violence, and Austria, in line with its domestic policy focus on eliminating violence against women, endorsed the Secretary-General’s report entitled “In-depth study on all forms of violence against women” (A/61/122/Add.1); related initiatives would be undertaken by the new gender entity that would emerge from the current reform.

9. Austria’s gender-equality priorities during its European Union Presidency in the first half of 2006 had been: the formulation, for the European Union, of women’s health indicators (adopted by the Council of the European Union in June 2006) in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action; the discussion of women’s health as a key topic during the meeting of European Union health ministers in April 2006; the organization, jointly with the European Commission, of a conference of experts and European Union social partners on “Closing the gender pay gap” in May 2006; and, as part of the human rights policy of the European

Union, a campaign to highlight and support the work of women human rights defenders.

10. The legislation on protection from domestic violence had been strengthened, as had the criminal law that protected minors from sexual abuse. The distinction between rape and sexual coercion had been removed both within and outside marriage and cohabitation. Since 1 January 2006, victims of violence, dangerous threats and sexual offences had been entitled by law to psychosocial and legal assistance in proceedings against the perpetrators. The victim’s consent was no longer required for the prosecution of perpetrators who were members of the victim’s family, and stalking had been made a criminal offence.

11. Action against human trafficking had been a priority during Austria’s Presidency of the European Union, and an expert conference on the implementation of the European Union action plan on trafficking in human beings had been organized in cooperation with the European Commission in Brussels on 28 and 29 June 2006. Through comprehensive provisions against human trafficking for sexual exploitation, removal of organs and labour exploitation, Austria had incorporated the relevant international legislation into domestic law in 2004. Moreover, human trafficking victims, protected under the Settlement and Residence Act, were entitled to psychosocial and legal assistance during court proceedings. Austria had been the driving force behind the comprehensive operational strategic planning for the police (COSPOL) project against human trafficking and expected to cooperate with other European countries and Europol in drawing up strategic and operational plans for implementing that project.

12. In addition to the anti-trafficking measures listed in the periodic report in response to the recommendation formulated in the Committee’s previous concluding comments (A/55/38, para. 228), the Government had set up an inter-ministerial task force on human trafficking in November 2004. Chaired by a representative of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the task force coordinated the activities of all the ministries concerned, discussed national and international developments, sought solutions and had drawn up a national action plan soon to be adopted. Austria was a party to all international instruments against human trafficking, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons,

Especially Women and Children, and had been one of the first European countries to ratify the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Over the next three years, the Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe would provide approximately €5 million for projects against trafficking in women and girls.

13. Like the majority of European States, Austria was still far from achieving equal representation of women and men in economic and political decision-making. Although progress had been made, executive positions remained largely a male preserve. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry responsible for women's issues and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, women headed only 16 per cent of Austrian enterprises with more than 50 employees and sat on only 3 per cent of company boards of directors. On the other hand, in almost 83 per cent of respondent enterprises, at least one woman held a top position. Approximately 100,000 businesswomen managed their own enterprises. The rate of start-up companies managed by women had increased from 27 per cent in 1996 to 38 per cent currently. The disparities were due not to inadequate training but rather to compliance with traditional role models and a lack of opportunities to reconcile work and family life. Moreover, since women received insufficient support during the recruitment process and in the early career stages, it was vital to set up mechanisms that would provide such support. Accordingly, cross-mentoring programmes had been successfully launched in the private and public sectors. In order to overcome occupational stereotypes, a free-of-charge "talent check" for girls had been developed and was underpinned by a related poster campaign for the schools.

14. Gender-disaggregated statistical information was contained in a 2002 report entitled "Gender-specific disparities" covering lifestyles, education, gainful employment, income/standard of living, health, leisure, sharing of family duties and related institutional support, and including comparisons with other European Union countries. The first part of a publication entitled "Women in Austria, 2003-2006" contained Austria's sixth periodic report to the Committee, a 2005 report on women's health and a 2006 report on women in decision-making. The second

part of the publication would include a comprehensive report entitled "Women and men in Austria".

#### *Articles 1 to 6*

15. **Ms. Šimonović** welcomed Austria's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Recalling that, in its concluding comments on the country's preceding periodic report, the Committee had appealed to the Government to make efforts to withdraw its reservation to article 11 of the Convention in respect of night work, she asked what were the obstacles to a full withdrawal of the reservation, especially since new legislation in 2002 had repealed the general ban on night work for women and seemed to provide equal rights for women and men in the area of employment.

16. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** stressed that gender-based discrimination cut across all other forms of discrimination and constituted a structural phenomenon in any society. Accordingly, referring to the content of the Equal Treatment Act, the mandate of the Equal Treatment Commission, the fields of competence of its three Senates and the extension of grants for non-discrimination, all described in CEDAW/C/AUT/Q/6/Add.1, she asked why gender-based discrimination was addressed in the context solely of work, whereas discrimination based on race or ethnicity was combated in all spheres of life. That was a restricted view of equal treatment. Notwithstanding the emphasis placed by European Union directives on employment-related issues, equal treatment, particularly in the areas of social welfare and education, was as necessary with respect to gender as it was with respect to race and ethnicity. Moreover, referring to temporary special measures, she said that article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25 differentiated between steps taken on a provisional basis — in order, for instance, to ensure the appointment of an appropriate number of women to public office or higher education teaching posts — and general social measures, whose goal was to ensure equality.

17. **Ms. Zou Xiaqiao** expressed concern at the successive reassignments of responsibility for gender issues from one federal ministry or department to another in recent years. In view of those changes, she wondered how consistency and effectiveness could be ensured when it came to implementing and monitoring gender policy and the Committee's recommendations. She would welcome information on the organizational impact of the changes in question at the local level and, if the question was not premature, on the staff and

powers of the newly formed ministerial structure for women's affairs.

18. **Ms. Chutikul**, noting that each ministry had specific procedures for dealing with gender issues, asked who at the federal level was responsible for overall coordination and evaluation. She enquired as to indicator-based assessment capacity, the existence of a federal plan of action with a time frame and linkages between the federal and provincial levels. Referring to the Council of Ministers resolution of 11 July 2000 on gender mainstreaming in all policymaking areas, and to the ministries whose human resources policy was cited in the report by way of example, she wished to know why gender mainstreaming seemed to be restricted to human resources and not extended to substantive aspects of the work of the ministries, what happened in the ministries not cited and who monitored the progress achieved. She would appreciate an explanation of the statement that a restrictive recruitment policy implemented for cost-saving reasons in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management made it difficult to raise the proportion of women occupying managerial posts. Lastly, she noted that women in the arts did not seem to be represented in the delegation and asked whether women musicians were still banned from the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

19. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, referred to gender stereotypes. She asked whether educational material, textbooks in particular, had been scrutinized to eliminating any prejudices, whether violations against gender equality provisions on radio and television broadcasts, including advertising, were sanctioned, and whether there was a law to that effect or a code of practice for advertising as a whole. Enquiring as to any campaigns launched by the Government on the need for men and women to share household duties and noting that stereotypes and women's economic dependence seemed to be encouraged by family allowances for mothers limited to traditional household tasks, she wondered whether the majority of women who worked part-time actually did so by choice or because of a lack of adequate child-minding possibilities.

20. **Ms. Maiolo** asked what tangible measures the Government had taken to address the issue of gender stereotypes at a practical level in the school, the family and the media.

21. **Ms. Holzer** (Austria), referring to Austrian provisions relating to night work, said that some European Union legislation on night work had entered into force on 1 August 2002 and a transition period for full implementation of the law had been necessary in view of Austria's obligations under International Labour Organization conventions.

22. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria) added that the reservation was still partly valid on the basis of provisions designed to protect women from exposure to lead in underground mines and from major physical exertion, but Austria would continue to keep the Committee informed of the relevant considerations and create as soon as possible the conditions necessary for withdrawing the reservation completely.

23. **Ms. Nikolay-Leitner** (Austria), addressing the question of protection against discrimination on the basis of gender as opposed to that of ethnic origin, said that Council of the European Union Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004, implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services, would take effect in Austria by the end of 2007.

24. **Ms. Kohl** (Austria), addressing the question of temporary special measures for promoting gender parity, said that a comprehensive system, which included such measures, was in force at the federal level. The Ministry of Health and Women's Issues, for example, applied gender quotas in recruitment and measures for the advancement of women, such as gender-sensitive training for heads of units and job training for female staff members. Other measures, such as the use of gender-neutral language in all official material, were aimed at safeguarding women's dignity in the workplace. Women could, and did, file complaints with the Equal Treatment Commission regarding non-compliance with such measures.

25. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria) said that, although the redefined areas of responsibility of the various ministries would be adopted later in the month, the association between the Prime Minister's Office and that of the Minister for Women's Affairs in the Federal Chancellery meant that gender issues would be closer to the centre where Government coordination took place. The Minister's dynamic personality and political connectedness could be expected to have a positive effect.

26. **Ms. Kölbl** (Austria) added that the Minister's recent statements appeared to indicate a commitment to: cooperating closely with NGOs, especially on temporary special measures; reducing the gender pay gap; improving the situation of women in the labour market; increasing the number of women in leading positions; combating violence against women; facilitating the reconciliation of family duties and work; allowing fathers to take on more household tasks; monitoring the effect of the various measures and laws; improving women's health; and strengthening the institutions involved in promoting gender equality. Referring to linkages between the new structure and the provinces, she said that there were traditional mechanisms for cooperation and information exchange between the Federal Government and the provinces through experts, notes and initiatives. The new Minister could be expected to intensify such contacts with a view to setting objectives and carrying out projects in the absence of a legal basis enabling the federal Government to influence legislation in the provinces.

27. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria) said that, in view of the legislative autonomy of the provinces, the Federal Government's influence was most effective if exercised through the provincial governors and administration, particularly with regard to the implementation of international agreements, such as the Convention. Problems relating to legislation could be submitted to the Constitutional Court, but that process was complicated.

28. **Ms. Kölbl** (Austria) said that the need for a national plan of action had been under consideration for years. No such plan currently existed, but the issue was being intensively discussed by NGOs and ministry units. The new Minister would certainly approach the question with an open mind, and it was hoped that a comprehensive national action plan, encompassing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, would be formulated during the current legislative period.

29. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria) observed out that the Committee's questions and comments could have a significant impact on Austrian policies.

30. **Ms. Sucharipa** (Austria), referring to the stagnating number of women in high-ranking posts in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, explained that

the Ministry traditionally had hired a high percentage of male civil servants and, moreover, in recent years the federal Government had pursued large-scale staff reductions. However, training and other measures aimed at increasing the number of women in high-ranking positions had been stepped up. In the lower ranks, the percentages of men and women were close to parity: 57 and 43 per cent, respectively.

31. **Mr. Kögler** (Austria) stressed that the cap on recruitment had made it difficult to increase the number of women in a number of departments, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where, however, most of the successful candidates in the last recruitment examination had been women.

32. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria), as a member of the candidate evaluation board, noted that, generally speaking, the female candidates had obtained higher marks.

33. **Ms. Stiegler** (Austria) said that, thanks to changed attitudes and amended laws, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra currently included a few female musicians. Referring to gender mainstreaming in the media, she noted that the legislation on the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, private radio broadcasting and private television broadcasting contained anti-discriminatory and equal treatment stipulations regarding, inter alia, advertising and tele-shopping.

34. **Ms. Nikolay-Leitner** (Austria), reverting to the subject of provincial and federal legislation, said that in certain respects provincial legislation was more advanced than federal legislation. For instance, six out of eight provinces had already adopted provisions banning discrimination not only with respect to ethnic origin, as in the federal Equal Treatment Act, but also on the other grounds mentioned in the European Union directive, namely, gender, age, religious belief and sexual orientation.

35. **Ms. Guggenberger** (Austria), addressing the two questions on combating stereotypes, said that, since the 1995 integration of the gender-equality principle into the curricula of all schools, gender issues had been addressed in an interdisciplinary way in the classroom and in textbooks and other educational material, and teachers had received appropriate training, guidelines and brochures. Two evaluation studies regarding the application of that principle had been carried out. The first, covering the period 1997-1999, had shown that,

while the principle had been perceived as important, its practical application had varied widely. A follow-up study had focused on teacher training and had been embedded in a 2001-2004 gender mainstreaming project for teacher training academies, where deficits with regard to implementation of the principle had been diagnosed in the first study. Building on positive project results, equal treatment of men and women had become a guiding principle in teacher-training academies.

36. Measures regarding educational material had included a 1998 decree requiring that the expert opinion recommending for or against approval should include a gender-equality statement. The Ministry of Education provided media education material, including downloadable articles on how gender was constructed in the media and on various other topics, such as health, beauty, role models, sexism, migration and racism. Furthermore, since home economics was an obligatory subject in secondary schools, 72 per cent of all boys received instruction on household management.

37. **Ms. Šimonović**, noting that long-established cooperation existed between the Austrian Government and NGOs, said that, according to an NGO report, there was nevertheless no specific body for cooperation with women's NGOs on violence against women. She wondered why. Observing that a considerable number of shelters for women were provided at the local level, she stressed that shelter availability was an obligation of the State party and requested data regarding the number of women needing a shelter and plans to increase the number of such facilities. After emphasizing the importance of gender-disaggregated data and of statistics on types and rates of conviction and on perpetrator-victim relationships, she asked whether the annual number of women murdered by their companions or former companions was known and whether there were plans to establish a database to produce statistical indicators for assessing progress in combating violence against women. Lastly, she would welcome information on any campaigns for raising social awareness of the issue of domestic violence and their economic cost.

38. **Ms. Chutikul** asked whether the Federal Act Restructuring the Code of Criminal Procedure, which was scheduled to enter into force on 1 January 2008, contained provisions relating to human-trafficking victims, particularly women, children and illegal

immigrants; what social, medical, legal and other assistance, including recovery and reintegration programmes, were available to such victims; whether adequate resources were provided for that purpose; and whether the Government supported NGO efforts in that area through cost-benefit studies and appropriately trained ministry staff. Furthermore, she asked whether there were bilateral or multilateral agreements, other than at the European Union level, for combating human trafficking.

39. **Ms. Weinke** (Austria), referring to cooperation between the Government and NGOs on preventing violence against women, said that a body had been set up in the Ministry of the Interior in 1997. It consisted of representatives of ministries and NGOs, gave advice on measures against violence and formulated recommendations regarding cooperation between the police and the victim protection bodies. Moreover, the Government was in regular contact with NGOs through working groups, conferences and congresses for information exchange.

40. **Ms. Smutny** (Austria) added that cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and NGOs was steadily improving, especially through working groups preparing of new provisions. The Ministry of Justice participated in the prevention body and in an inter-ministerial working group on support for victims during criminal proceedings.

41. **Ms. Weinke** (Austria), referring to shelters for female victims of violence, said that 705 places were available countrywide. Under the Constitution, they were financed at the regional level but some were funded by the Ministry of Health and Women's Issues. Further efforts were planned for meeting the need for such shelters.

42. **Ms. Westermayer** (Austria) said that the Ministry of the Interior did not compile statistics on victims of domestic violence. In that connection, four female victims of domestic violence had been murdered in 2005.

43. **Ms. Smutny** (Austria) added that the Ministry of Justice compiled statistics on all criminal proceedings and convictions, including those concerning violence and equal treatment. The Ministry considered specific surveys to be more meaningful than purely statistical compilations. Those studies had addressed various relevant topics, such as combating violence against women, the cost of such violence and, recently, the

effectiveness of the Federal Act on Protection against Domestic Violence. The results of a current survey on psychological, social and legal support during criminal proceedings were expected in March 2007.

44. **Ms. Weinke** (Austria) said that awareness-raising measures taken or supported by the Ministry of Health and Women's Issues had in the past included brochures, updated in 2005 with detailed information on, inter alia, solutions available to women affected by violence and counselling centres. Intervention centres against domestic violence were expected to carry out awareness-raising activities, such as publication of printed material or website information. The prevention body funded some relevant projects. A travelling exhibition entitled "Behind the Curtain", which shed light on domestic violence, was currently touring the provinces.

45. **Ms. Smutny** (Austria), referring to human-trafficking victims, said that the Federal Act Restructuring the Code of Criminal Procedure was comprehensive. In particular, it provided for psychological, social and legal support for victims during criminal proceedings. Regarding assistance centres for the victims, the Ministry of Justice had disbursed €2 million in the period 2005-2006 to various institutions, some of which supported mainly or exclusively female victims. Moreover, victims were obligatorily informed of available assistance and of their right to be apprised of the offenders' release.

46. **Ms. Weinke** (Austria) said that assistance available to trafficking victims, such as the services provided by the Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women in Vienna, included housing in emergency shelters or so-called "transition flats" and emergency medical and psychological assistance, regardless of the victims' legal status in respect of residence.

47. **Ms. Westermayer** (Austria) said that the Settlement and Residence Act entitled migrants who were victims of trafficking and were prepared to appear in court to residence for the proceedings. Residence on humanitarian grounds was also available. Under witness protection programmes, victims might be transported abroad for safety. Moreover, human-trafficking victims could request asylum. Austria had bilateral agreements for information exchange with, for instance, Ukraine and Romania, and supported priorities set by international organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Furthermore, Austria contributed to the funding of international bodies, such as the International Organization for Migration and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

48. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** asked whether the new ministerial structure for women would be a unit headed by a minister under the Prime Minister or would constitute a full-fledged ministry. In the absence of an action plan, she wondered how comprehensive and coherent action was ensured.

49. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani**, referring to efforts to develop the talents of young girls in order to counteract social stereotypes, asked what measures were taken to help boys to overcome those stereotypes.

50. **Ms. Gumedé Shelton**, referring to the preference shown by the Ministry of Justice for surveys rather than statistics, stressed the importance of objective statistical figures and enquired as to the surveys' findings regarding the causes of violence against women and the required measures.

51. **Mr. Trauttmansdorff** (Austria) said that a full answer to the question regarding the nature of the new ministerial structure for women was not yet possible because the legislation defining the areas of responsibility of the various ministries had not yet been adopted.

52. **Ms. Kölbl** (Austria) said that, in the absence of an action plan on gender equality, the inter-ministerial working group for gender mainstreaming was responsible for exchange of information and decisions regarding criteria and best practices. The course that the new Government would take was not yet known.

53. **Ms. Holger** (Austria) stated that combating stereotypes called for measures to do away with segregation in the labour market. Accordingly, the public employment services implemented a number of top-down measures with a multiplier effect. They included "Girls' day", online career tests, talent checks, information initiatives, such as "Girls can do more", in the areas of trade and technology, and prizes for women's accomplishments in the areas of communications and engineering.

54. **Ms. Guggenberger** (Austria) said that, in view of problematic perceptions of masculinity among young men and their unwillingness to become nursery-school teachers and health-care workers, the Ministry of Education had made available a considerable volume



of theoretical and practical material on critically addressing gender stereotypes and hierarchies among boys. A “Boys’ day” project was under way, and the Ministry co-financed counselling centres for boys.

55. **Ms. Smutny** (Austria), referring to the use of statistics and databases by the Ministry of Justice, said that, although some statistics existed in relation to sexual offences and domestic violence, the Ministry preferred specific studies because the interpretation of strictly numerical data was difficult. For instance, it was not clear whether an increase in the number of human-trafficking cases was due to an actual rise in human trafficking or to improved legislation that led to a greater number of prosecutions. Nevertheless, the Ministry made use of databases compiled by the Ministry of the Interior and of information provided by NGOs with regard to violence against women. In addition to specific studies, a significant amount of statistical information would be available in the future.

56. **Ms. Westermayer** (Austria) added that, if the data protection commission agreed, the Ministry of the Interior would launch, in February 2007, a new database, usable by all authorities combating violence against women.

#### *Articles 7 to 9*

57. **Ms. Begum** ascribed women’s insufficient participation in public and business-related decision-making and in the labour market to stereotypes and inadequate education and training for girls. She wondered, *inter alia*, how many women from ethnic minorities held top positions in the federal and provincial administration. Noting that appropriate legislation, such as the Equal Treatment Act and the University Act, was in place but had failed to achieve the desired targets, she asked why discrimination was not combated through a broader use of temporary special measures for redressing the situation in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation 25.

58. **Ms. Belmihoub-Zerdani** said that, while some progress had been made in increasing women’s participation in decision-making, women’s rates of representation in the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court, among provincial governors and among mayors were too low in view of Austria’s history and important role in the European Union. Considerable efforts should be made to encourage the

participation of women in municipal elections because female town councillors would later become parliamentarians, ministers and governors. The Green Party, sole political party to have attained, and in fact surpassed, a 50 per cent rate of participation of women, should serve as a model in that respect. Despite adequate equal-opportunity provisions, women were underrepresented in high-ranking civil service posts. Austria should therefore consider temporary special measures in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

59. **Ms. Gumede Shelton**, referring to article 8 of the Convention, noted that, even after 10 years of implementation of the 1993 Equal Treatment Act in the federal services, the 2003 statistics showed that the number of women in international posts had remained low. She would like to know, therefore, whether the 2004 amendment to that Act had led to any marked improvements. Moreover, given the low percentage of women in ambassadorial and other Foreign-Service posts, she asked whether any studies had been conducted to identify the underlying causes of such underrepresentation and whether there was any monitoring and evaluation of the relevant policies. Furthermore, she would welcome information on current admission policies for women in the Foreign Service and requested statistical data for 2006.

60. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, asked whether in the recent parliamentary elections the number of women candidates for political office had increased and whether the gender distribution of electoral results had changed. She would welcome information on internal measures adopted by political parties (other than the Green Party) to promote women to leading posts and on steps taken by the authorities to ensure that women were properly represented in bodies advising the Government. Lastly, she asked whether the law compelled the provincial and municipal authorities to set up gender mainstreaming committees; and whether gender-equality policies were actively pursued at the provincial and municipal levels.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*