

# AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

## Statement

by Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter  
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

at the open debate of the Security Council on  
"Women and Peace and Security"

New York  
29 October, 2008

Mr. President,

Austria associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of France on behalf of the European Union as well as with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Ireland on behalf of the Human Security Network and welcomes the focus of this open debate on the participation of women.

The inclusion of women in peace processes does not only ensure that their concerns are addressed in peace negotiations but also strengthens their position in the subsequent post conflict phase. Women are thus in a stronger position in national post conflict recovery efforts. Figures on women's participation in peace negotiations in recent years however show that we must significantly increase our efforts.

In light of the recommendations of the Women Empowerment Network of last year we are encouraged by the Secretary General's increasing appointments of women as Special Representatives as well as to leading positions in the Secretariat. We hope to see more female appointments in the near future. At the same time I would like to urge all Special Representatives and Envoys to make full use of the potential of women in peace processes and conflict resolution.

In this context I would also like to draw your attention to the Final Report of the Austrian Initiative on "The UN Security Council and the Rule of Law", which contains 17 concrete recommendations how the Security Council could strengthen the rule of law in its various fields of activity. In particular, recommendations No. 8 and 9 address the implementation of Res. 1325 and the need for more appointments of women as Special Representatives or Special Envoys, including as heads of UN operations. The report was recently issued as a UN document and is available in all official UN languages.<sup>1</sup>

We strongly encourage UN Special Envoys, Special Representatives as well as Security Council missions in their contacts with local authorities to stress the

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<sup>1</sup> UN Doc. A/63/69 – S/2008/270. Further information on the Austrian Rule of Law Initiative, including electronic copies of the final report and reports of previous panel discussions (in English) can be downloaded from the website of the Austrian Mission at <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/newyorkov>.

importance of gender mainstreaming and lobby for the active involvement of local women in peace and reconciliation processes. We further encourage peace keeping operations to hold regular meetings with their representatives as well as with local women in decision making to assess specific issues related to the situation of women. A Gender Checklist for EU peacekeeping operations initiated during the Austrian EU Presidency in 2006 and adopted the same year has successfully integrated these and the other main objectives of resolution 1325 in a coherent planning framework. Many elements of the EU Gender Checklist can serve as a model for peace missions in the framework of the UN and regional organisations.

It is also widely recognised that female staff play a distinctive role and do have a positive operational impact in peace keeping operations. This is true for all aspects of the mandate of peace operations, but in particular for sensitive tasks e.g. in the aftermath of sexual violence or when it comes to screening of women ex-combatants. More efforts are needed to attract more women for peace keeping missions, since according to the report of the Secretary General in July 2008, only 2,2% of military personnel and 7,6% of civilian police were female.

Austria is committed to the objectives of SCR 1325. Our activities are firmly based on a National Action Plan adopted by the Government in August 2007.<sup>2</sup> In line with the Austrian National Action Plan, a first progress report was adopted recently, highlighting concrete achievements during the first year with regard to the implementation of SCR 1325 at national, regional and international level. This ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation contributes to strengthening cross-departmental co-operation.

One important aspect is training: In 2008 pre-deployment training on human rights with a particular focus on the objectives of SCR 1325 has been undertaken for all for Austrian male and female soldiers participating in EUFOR/Chad. This month, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Stadtschlaining held the first specialisation course on women and armed conflict, bringing together experts involved in or preparing for different UN and regional peace building efforts.

A gender sensitive transitional justice process is an important element for sustainable peace. Crimes against women, in particular sexual violence or forced marriage need to be addressed in order to overcome a culture of impunity for crimes against women and widespread stigmatisation of the victims. For this reason we support, for instance, a UNIFEM project in Nepal to strengthen the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other transitional justice mechanisms to effectively look into the cases of violence against women and to provide recommendations as well as to promote victims' access to transitional justice mechanisms.

The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SCR 1325 should be used to define future priorities. On several occasions over the last year and most recently in her statement during the General Debate of the General Assembly, Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik proposed a 10-year review of SC-resolution 1325 by the UN, culminating in a Review Conference in 2010. Her initiative has already received broad support, in particular from female women leaders who, following their meeting in Brussels hosted by Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in March 2008, invited UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to convene a ministerial level meeting in 2010 to review the implementation of SCR 1325 and reinvigorate the commitment to tackling outstanding issues. Austria stands ready to work with the Secretary-General and other interested countries and stakeholders to use the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary to identify existing gaps and challenges and to reinforce the commitment of all States, the entire UN system, as well as regional organisations to effectively implement the undertakings of resolution 1325.

Austria will continue to actively work for the further implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820. We will continue to consistently advocate for gender equality and the full and active participation of women in political decision making and the promotion of peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well as for the systematic protection of women as victims in armed conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> Austrian National Action Plan on Implementing SC Res. 1325 can be downloaded from the website of the Austrian Mission at <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/newyorkcv>.