

GREVIO 1st thematic evaluation round: Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice

NGO submission on AUSTRIA

Prepared by VIMÖ and ILGA-Europe

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This submission is prepared by VIMÖ¹, the Association of Intersex People Austria, with support from ILGA-Europe², the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, in response to the first thematic review of Austria by GREVIO in 2023.

We respond to selected questions from the first thematic review questionnaire below. For more information or to follow up, please contact info@vimoe.at

Article 14, question 10

- a. VIMÖ provides direct services in schools to provide lessons for children with accessible materials, including with childrens' books on intersex and trans people and toolkits on trans and intersex issues in child-friendly language (5 lesson programmes for children and youth from January 2023 to June 2023; these are not funded by the Austrian government). There is a school programme that teaches children about LGBTIQ issues funded by the Ministry of health run by Rosa Lila Panther*innen.
- d. VIMÖ has previously done a review of educational materials a few times in recent years - generally on request of individual teachers. The Ministry of Education has convened a working group that will publish findings in the beginning of July 2023 which includes guidelines on how to include trans, intersex, and non-binary issues.
- e. VIMÖ school trainings do include information on gender-based violence targeting trans and intersex girls, including topics of respect, bodily diversity, and the right to be free from violence.

¹ See <https://vimoe.at/>

² See <http://www.ilga-europe.org/>

Article 15, question 11

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence?	Is this training mandatory?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and the duration of the training
Midwives	No, these are supplemental trainings, not part of the main curricula	No	There are no official guidelines or protocols from the government, with the exception of a decree regarding the alternative gender marker ³ - this decree is however not accompanied by a full implementation guide.	Austrian Ministry of Health	Basic information package (which includes definitions trans, intersex, non-binary, gender-based violence; history of GBV against trans, intersex, and non-binary people, information on the alternative gender marker law in Austria, basic medical issues regarding trans, intersex, and non-binary people's medical needs and realities, and the value of community and peer support); discussion of how this information is relevant to the specific profession and the role of professionals in this field in supporting trans, intersex, and non-binary people.
Teachers				Unfunded; participants pay a fee to attend	
Medical students					
Healthcare staff (e.g. nurses)					
Psychologists and therapists					
Social workers					
Youth center staff					
Sex educators					
Businesses	No, these are supplemental trainings, not part of the main curricula	No	VIMÖ has developed a guideline for companies on how to support their trans, intersex, and non-binary staff and customers. ⁴	Unfunded; participants pay a fee to attend	How to include trans, non-binary, and intersex employees, including employment policies and facilities, managing different gender markers, and office dynamics.

Article 15, question 12

VIMÖ has developed, designed, and implemented all of the trainings listed in question 11.

³ <https://vimoe.at/2020/10/02/oktober-2020-erlass-zum-geschlechtseintrag-im-volltext/>

⁴ Guideline available from: https://vimoe.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Vimoe_Leitfaden_Unternehmen.pdf

Article 20, question 22

We are unaware of any measures taken by the government to ensure that trans, intersex, and non-binary women victims of violence have equal access to healthcare services.

For intersex women victims of violence, the healthcare system in Austria is very pathologising and treats intersex people as having an illness or a disorder, resulting in over-medicalisation. It is likely that even in the context of healthcare services unrelated to one's intersex variation, that doctors would attempt to "treat" the variation.

All asylum seekers and refugees have access to health insurance in Austria and can access the medical system as soon as they are registered, but access is particularly difficult for trans, intersex and non-binary people when attempting to access hormones or surgeries. Trans, intersex, and non-binary refugees and asylum seekers do not have access to therapy generally because it is very difficult to get therapy in foreign languages; further these services are not covered by insurance and can thus be financially inaccessible. Not being able to access hormones, surgeries, or therapy has a knock-on effect when seeking services as victims of violence, because of systemic transphobia, interphobia

VIMÖ and partner organisations have supported more than 100 individuals to connect them with specifically friendly healthcare providers who treat LGBTI racialised people, sex workers, and refugees and asylum seekers with dignity and respect; without this service, the likelihood of victimisation in healthcare settings frequently leads these populations to avoid healthcare services altogether.

Article 20, question 24

We are unaware of any measures taken by the government to ensure that trans, intersex, and non-binary women are fully informed about their ability to give or withhold consent for sterilisation or abortion.

Article 22, question 25

There are no shelters that allow trans, intersex, or non-binary women victims to access their services; we anticipate that these groups would be rejected by the existing services and there is no evidence to the contrary nor programmes to create opportunities for access to services for these groups. There are no dedicated services for trans, intersex, or non-binary victims of gender-based violence.

Article 25, question 28

- a. We are not aware of sexual violence referral centers that are accessible for trans, intersex, or non-binary people. Hospitals in general in Austria are not friendly or affirming to trans, intersex, or non-binary people.
- b. There are at least 6 rape crisis centers in different cities across Austria that will provide services for trans, intersex, and non-binary victims of sexual violence. We are not aware of any specific training on trans, intersex, or non-binary issues for the staff at these centers, however.
- c. Some LGBTIQ centers in Austria offer specialised services related to HIV and peer support, though these programmes do not specifically target victims of gender-based violence.

Articles 49 and 50, question 44

There is a new reporting system for LGBTIQ people in Austria, though VIMÖ has found that trans, intersex, and non-binary people are not using this system in general because of negative experiences of violence, discrimination, or harassment by law enforcement officers and police. Queer Base, an NGO focusing on LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees, holds trainings for law enforcement on working with LGBTIQ victims of violence; these trainings are not mandatory, but the programmes are encouraged by the government.