

**Submission of the joint working group of Austrian NGOs and DPOs on  
'disability and development'**

**for the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the UPR working group**

This submission was developed by the thematic working group 'disability and development'<sup>1</sup> of Global Responsibility, the Austrian Platform for Development and Humanitarian Aid<sup>2</sup>. The working group consists of Austrian non-governmental development organisations, Disabled People's Organisations, academia and human rights institutions.

The submission focuses on the implementation status of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with regard to Austria's Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.globaleverantwortung.at/start.asp?ID=225276&b=1290>

## **Summary**

Since Austria's last Universal Periodic Review, which included an explicit reference to persons with disabilities and poverty<sup>3</sup>, steps have been taken to better include persons with disabilities in Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). However, the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities relating to development cooperation and humanitarian aid have not yet been implemented in a comprehensive way.

The so-called twin-track approach which combines specific projects supporting persons with disabilities with disability mainstreaming in all programmes has not been fully realised. Disability is not among the cross-cutting issues in ADC, a fact that results in continuous exclusion, oversight or lack of access for persons with disabilities in development and humanitarian programmes. To ensure the realisation of the human rights-based approach, it is essential to treat inclusion, participation, non-discrimination and equality as inherent aspects of all areas of development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

The severe cuts to the Austrian aid budget which occurred since 2010 have had adverse effects on programmes, as the space for new and comprehensive approaches shrinks.

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<sup>3</sup> See recommendation 93.33

## **I. Implementation of recommendations from Austria's 1<sup>st</sup> review**

1. Austria was given one specific recommendation during the 1<sup>st</sup> UPR cycle linking development cooperation and the rights of persons with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> During the four years since the last review, severe cuts to the Austrian aid budget have resulted in the fact that Austria is moving farther away from its target of reaching 0.7% of the GDP by 2015. In 2013, the Austrian ODA-rate was 0.27%<sup>5</sup>; the OECD Development Assistance Committee recently also criticised that Austria's country programmable aid is disproportionately low – in 2012, only 15% of its aid budget was programmed at country level.<sup>6</sup>
2. The continuous cuts to the aid budget do not only threaten Austria's aid performance and credibility, but also provide an excuse for non-fulfilment of international obligations and non-implementation of human rights standards. Cuts in budgets also mean cuts to concrete programmes in the areas of development and humanitarian aid which might have to be discontinued or do not even start. The impact that these politics have on persons with disabilities and other vulnerable people is detrimental and goes against international obligations and promises.
  - Revision of the budget framework to revoke the cuts to the aid budget which are planned for the next years
  - Development of a concrete (step-by-step) plan increasing Austria's aid budget, as envisaged in the current 'Government Programme 2013 – 2018'

## **II. Implementation of pertinent articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

### **A. Art. 11 Situations of risk**

3. Some efforts have been made by the government's responsible entities<sup>7</sup> to include persons with disabilities in humanitarian aid and disaster response, mainly by supporting selected NGO projects.
4. Comprehensive inclusion – 'disability mainstreaming' – has not been realised. This means that persons with disabilities remain at particular risk of being left out in disaster preparedness, emergency and post-emergency situations. A screening of the

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<sup>4</sup> 93.33 Bring ODA up to the internationally committed 0.7 per cent of GDP, especially to support developing countries in the areas of poverty reduction, gender equality, children, persons with disabilities and climate challenges. (Bangladesh) <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/ATSession10.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=63165>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/austria%20full%20report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> among them the Ministry of Interior; Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs; Austrian Development Agency

respective policy documents<sup>8</sup> on humanitarian aid, security and disaster response shows that disability is sporadically mentioned instead of being treated as a cross-cutting issue which must be taken into account in all policies, programmes and funding calls. Inclusion remains more or less a voluntary ‘add-on’.

5. To summarise, inclusion is not yet standard in Austria’s International Humanitarian Aid and emergency work, (potentially) leading to the exclusion of and jeopardising persons with disabilities. Concrete steps are necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities are protected and actively included in all emergency interventions.
  - Protection of and support to persons with disabilities and other structurally vulnerable people in all humanitarian programmes and interventions
  - Access for and participation of persons with disabilities in all disaster risk reduction planning and programmes
  - Increase of the annual budget for the Foreign Disaster Aid Fund from 5 to 20 million Euros, as planned in the current ‘Government Plan 2013 – 2018’

## **B. Art. 32 International cooperation**

6. A number of steps have been taken in the last few years to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in programmes of the Austrian Development Cooperation in order to react to the recommendations of the UPR working group and the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
7. The Austrian Independent Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities specifically includes experts on development cooperation. This is commendable and could be replicated in other signatories’ monitoring mechanisms.
8. The Austrian Independent Monitoring Committee published a position paper on the implementation of the CRPD in Austrian development cooperation and humanitarian aid<sup>9</sup>, which provides concrete recommendations to the ADC actors. However, these recommendations have not been fully internalised yet by ADC actors.
9. Austria’s position on Post-2015 includes explicit recognition of persons with disabilities and the need to make programmes inclusive.
10. The National Action Plan Disability 2012-2020 which was developed as a tool to implement the CRPD includes a chapter on development cooperation with a list of

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.entwicklung.at/en/publications>, screened documents include: Policy Document on International Humanitarian Aid (2009), Strategic Guideline on Security and Development (2011), Funding Guidelines NGO Individual Projects East (2011)

<sup>9</sup> <http://monitoringausschuss.at/stellungnahmen/entwicklungszusammenarbeit-12-april-2012> - English translation available on request

measures to be implemented by government entities. However, most measures are limited to a short period of time or to specific projects. Also, no budgetary provisions were made for the implementation of the Action Plan. Indicators to measure progress and results do not exist.

11. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has established a focal point on disability to improve disability inclusion in programmes and provide guidance for ADC personnel.
  12. In 2011, a working group ‘disability in the ADC’ was established which brings together representatives from ministries, ADA, civil society and academia for the purpose of sharing experiences and discussing steps to improve inclusion in ADC. The working group, however, does not have any implementing power.
  13. In 2014, a ‘Persons with Disabilities Manual, Guideline on including persons with disabilities in ADC project cycle management’<sup>10</sup> was published. While this is an important step, its use is not mandatory. A truly compulsory application of these guidelines in all areas of ADC, as it is done with gender, would be necessary.
  14. Participation of persons with disabilities in accordance with art. 4(3) of the CRPD is not yet realised in ADC consultations.
  15. In spite of these steps, the twin-track-approach which demands specific support for persons with disabilities as well as disability mainstreaming in all programmes and thematic areas so far is not fully realised.<sup>11</sup>
- Comprehensive application of the human rights based approach in the Austrian Development Cooperation, with disability as a cross-cutting issue and mandatory application of the twin-track-approach
  - Development of a concrete Action Plan ‘Inclusion in the Austrian Development Cooperation’
  - Participation in accordance with art. 4(3) CRPD to be applied in all policy areas, including in consultations on development cooperation and humanitarian aid

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Manual\\_Persons\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Manual_Persons_with_disabilities.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> This was also criticised by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in September 2013.