



United Nations General Assembly Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons

Eleventh working session
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Guiding Questions for Defining the Normative Content of the Issue Examined at the Tenth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group: Education, Training, Life-Long Learning and Capacity-building

Definition

- 1) What are the definitions of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building in the national legislation in your country? Or how should such a right be defined, considering existing national, regional and international legal framework?**

Education should enable and encourage people to be active in all areas of public life. Additionally the ability to target information processing are key factors to manage present and future tasks and live democracy.

The central concern of senior citizens policy is to secure the quality of life of older persons and their opportunities to participate in all areas of society.

Austria has built its legal basis and definition regarding the rights of older persons, education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building from the following documents:

Concerning Education, Austria upholds the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), specifically Article 26, which states that "*Everyone has the right to education*". Additionally, the European Convention on Human Rights (1953), and its first Additional Protocol, Article 2, which states "*Nobody should be denied the right to education*" was ratified by Austria in 1958 and put into constitutional rank in 1964.

Additionally, Austria's decision finding process was highly influenced by the establishment of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and the Political Declaration adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002. The plan contains a total of 10 obligations, including Commitment Nr.6 "*Promoting lifelong learning*"

Also on the European Level, certain documents influenced Austria's political decision making, namely: the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000), the creation of a European area of lifelong learning (2001) and the Council Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006/2018).

Scope of the right

- 2) What are the key normative elements of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building, including such elements as availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability? Please provide reference to existing standards where applicable.**

The normative elements of Austria's rights of older persons are the implementations from MIPAA, which were accepted by a Ministerial Decision.

Austria adopted in 2011 a Lifelong Learning Strategy: LLL 2020, which is linked to EU-wide and national lifelong learning efforts.

Especially Action line 9 focuses on the enrichment of the quality of life through education in the **post-employment phase of life**.

Additionally Austria developed a Federal plan for senior citizens under the motto "Aging and the future". The legal basis is the so called Federal Senior Citizens Act, which was also adopted in 2011.

The general objectives for post-employment education in Austria derived from the above stated international and national documents, programs and strategies and aim to assure and enrich of the quality of life of by:

1. Increase in participation in continuing education
2. Quality Assurance
3. Advice and information
4. Creation of an educational infrastructure for low-threshold, local participation
5. Promotion of e-Inclusion

State obligations

- 3) What are the measures that should be undertaken by the State to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building, regarding the normative elements as provided above?**

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, measures for senior citizens have been in place for some years. The most important quality criteria for successful measures are:

- Award of research contracts
- Commissioning the development of quality criteria and the award of good practice projects
- commissioning or promoting continuing education courses
- Promotion of regional model projects
- Publishing information materials

Special considerations

- 4) What special measures and specific considerations should be considered in developing the normative content of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building?**

It is of utmost importance to avoid duplications of work and research. For almost 20 years the MIPAA includes up to date normative recommendations on education and life-long learning. Austria supports an update of the action plan, however we believe the essential core elements are still valid and should find more consideration in other bodies and treaties.

5) How should the responsibilities of non-State parties such as private sector be defined in the context of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building`

In Austria it is very important to meet all above mentioned quality criteria for measures, linked to the field of education, training and life-long learning. Non-State parties have a high interest in organizing and planning their initiatives and projects considering these criteria, as they can also be a legitimation for public funding.

Implementation

6) What are the best practices and main challenges faced by your country in the adoption and implementation of the normative framework on education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building for older persons?

Austrian experience shows that the key to success lies in raising awareness. Active aging must already be addressed in earlier life stages and arrive in the total population. This requires measures in the area of education and regionally organized model projects. As mentioned above, these model projects have to fulfill the given quality criteria and be sufficiently financed.

Financing these projects often presents a great challenge. Nevertheless, Austria shows that especially small projects in direct proximity to older persons have an enormous impact and gain relatively quickly high priority in the post-employment phase of life.

Especially projects with a technical focus and knowledge exchange are requested very often. The aim is to deviate from traditional teaching methods and, if possible, to organize an exchange of knowledge at new training locations. This includes not only places closer to where older persons live, but also places that are usually not used for educational purposes, such as parks, beaches or forests. Additionally, knowledge and competences can often be passed on across generations.