

Guiding Questions for the focus areas of the X Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing: Education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building

National Legal Framework

1. In your country/region, how is the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age guaranteed in legal and policy frameworks?

The human right to education is enshrined in the rights of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. These rights were adopted and incorporated into the present Constitution by Austria in 1958. In Austria, therefore, the right to education is a fundamental right given constitutional status.

In July 2011, the Federal Government adopted the Federal Seniors' Plan and the Austrian Lifelong Learning Strategy "LLL: 2020". These documents include the political goals and policies.

Austria's Lifelong Learning Strategy is guided by five core principles: life phase orientation (all ages), placing learners at the centre (flexibility of learning), lifelong guidance (facilitating the learning process), and competence orientation (recognition of informal learning), and promotion of participation in lifelong learning (enhancing the motivation to learn).

The four basic principles are gender and diversity, equal opportunities and social mobility, quality and sustainability, performance and innovation.

The Austrian Strategy for Lifelong Learning promotes learning opportunities for persons in the retirement phase. The goal is to increase participation in education within this target group.

Availability, Accessibility and Adaptability

2. What are the key issues and challenges faced by older persons in your country/region with regard to the enjoyment of all levels of quality education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services¹?

In order to ensure access to education and training for older persons, in the planning and design of educational centres in their living environments and the special training for people who work in this field must be taken into account Accessibility for all is a matter of public concern. However, this does not mean that education programs should only target older people, as this would be a limitation and could lead to social exclusion. Therefore, a program to promote intergenerational learning activities was introduced.

Continuous learning is essential, given the (very early) retirement age in Austria. Measures to prevent or reduce early retirement must be accompanied by measures in the field of employment, including education and training, to ensure that employees can meet their needs. However, it is important to reach people after their retirement and educationally disadvantaged groups. In Austria, organisations that run

projects in the field of lifelong learning for older people or intergenerational projects can obtain state funding.

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that education, training, life-long learning, and capacity building services are available and accessible to all older persons, adapted to their needs, suited to their preferences and motivations, and of high quality?

The federal seniors' plan and the LLL-2020 strategies include the following measures to promote learning opportunities for persons in the retirement phase

- *increase participation in continuing education,*
- *quality development*
- *information and guidance about educational opportunities*
- *creation of low-threshold and local educational opportunities*
- *especially of inter-generational projects and offers in the field of new communication technologies.*

4. In your country/region, are there studies and/or data available on the access of older persons to the right to education, training, life-long learning and capacity building in older age?

- *The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) - a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks*
- *Statistical data on education provided by Statistics Austria*
- *Results of research projects commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection*
- ***Equality and non-discrimination***
- *In your country, is age one of the prohibited grounds for discrimination in relation to education in older age?*

Like all other rights, education must be non-discriminatory, meaning that neither ethnicity, color, gender, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, property, birth or any other status is a reason for withholding education allowed.

Accountability

5. What mechanisms are necessary, or already in place, for older persons to lodge complaints and seek redress for denial of their right to education, training, lifelong learning and capacity building?

In Austria, the federal government and the provinces (Länder) support social institutions that act as a contact point for complaints and counselling .In addition, the Austrian Senior Citizens Council is a contact point.