
Online consultation with Member States

Survey response 1

Information details

Name of the State:
Austria
The institution responding to the survey:
Foreign Ministry

Questions

1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
<p>Austria did not have an emergency situation, so that neither fundamental rights were suspended nor legislative processes were changed. It follows from this that civil society has not been subjected to any restrictions that go beyond the general pandemic measures that are continuously being examined by the Constitutional Court.</p> <p>In more detail: the measures taken in Austria to combat the pandemic continue to be implemented in compliance with the usual legislative procedures: Parliament passes – albeit under great time pressure – the necessary laws in the regular legislative process, and the administrative regulations are set by the responsible bodies. All fundamental rights restrictions brought about by COVID-19 measures are limited in time. They are continuously evaluated in order to ensure that the principles of proportionality and non-discrimination are met.</p> <p>In respect of some specific regulations issued by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection under Art. 11 of the COVID-19 Measures Act it is required to obtain the consent of the Main Committee of the National Council and to let such regulations expire at the latest after four weeks or ten days (as the case may be) after any such regulation has been issued. In order to extend the validity of such regulations it is thus required to once again obtain the National Council's consent.</p> <p>The Constitutional Court (VfGH) is continuously reviewing measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since April 2020, the VfGH has received applications and complaints against the protective measures taken in response to the pandemic. As of November 2021, there had been around 400 applications in total, out of which around 200 were completed (130 were completed in 2020).</p>
2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Online consultation with Member States

Survey response 1

Information details

Name of the State:
Austria
The institution responding to the survey:
Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology

Questions

1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

COVID Pop-up Hub

The digital "COVID Pop-up Hub", initiated by the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), is intended to promote the exchange of ideas on questions raised by the Corona crisis as well as to suggest possible solutions and further activities. The open discussion platform focuses on the areas of digital health, distancing, economic buffers and government intervention. The goal is to gather experiences and ideas in order to learn from them and jointly shape a more resilient future.

The COVID 19 pandemic is exposing many weaknesses in our economic and social system. For example, we have had to recognize that our social life has been impaired and health care systems overstretched, that supply chains have broken down and international cooperation has been scaled back. In many areas, problems arise for which there are currently no satisfactory solutions.

A Digital discussion room

As a think tank, the hub is intended to promote exchange and stimulate further activities. This platform is a digital discussion room. Everybody can participate and exchange information online with other interested parties and interdisciplinary experts on COVID-19 related topics. The BMK Pop-up Hub is a platform that collects cross-industry findings from the COVID-19 crisis and thus focuses on an innovative approach to new questions.

Learning from the crisis together

Aiming at learning together from the crisis and finding new relevant questions and solutions that will help to shape a more resilient future, the focus is deliberately placed on the broadest possible discussion in which everyone can contribute ideas, opinions and experiences and thus also help shape the future. The Pop-up Hub is the unique opportunity to bring together different experiences and to involve different stakeholders. In the COVID Pop-up Hub nexyo, Red Swan, Data Intelligence Offensive (DIO), Cbased and the AIT Austrian Institute of Technology work together on behalf of the BMK.

<https://popuphub.at/de/page/BMKpopuphub>

4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

Online consultation with Member States

Survey response 1

Information details

Name of the State:
Austria
The institution responding to the survey:
Mol - Federal Ministry of the Interior

Questions

1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

The six-year project POLICE.POWER.PEOPLE.RIGHTS ("Polizei.Macht.Menschen.Rechte") was implemented permanently within the Austrian Police force especially as regular dialogue fora among the police and civil society organisations on the Federal and Regional level in 2016.

There is a dialogue forum at the federal level ("Civil Society Dialogue Body" - ZDG) and "Regional Dialogue Forums" (RDF) in the federal states. They are composed of representatives of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the provincial police directorates, respectively, on the one hand, and representatives of civil society organizations (Non Governmental Organizations) on the other.

Civil society members of the Civil Society Dialogue Body are: Amnesty International Austria, BOJA (Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit), Black Voices-Volksbegehren, CARITAS Austria, Der Weiße Ring, Diakonie Austria, Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle Islamfeindlichkeit und Antimuslimischer Rassismus, Gewaltschutzzentrum Burgenland, Hilfswerk Österreich, HOSI (Homosexuelle Initiative Wien Individuelle Suchthilfe), Individuelle Suchthilfe, Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft, Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte für Wien, Kulturverein österreichischer Roma, LEFÖ Beratung, Education and Support for Migrant Women, NEUSTART Association, Austrian League for Human Rights, Austrian Council for the Disabled, Austrian Association of Municipalities, The Austrian Child Protection Centers, ÖIF (Austrian Integration Fund), Patient Advocacy, Queer Base, Self-Employed Human Rights Advisor, SOS Children's Village, SOS Mitmensch, Black Women's Community Association, UNHCR Office Austria, Ombudsman Board, Volkshilfe Austria and ZARA (Civil Courage & Anti-Racism Work).

The meetings of the "Civil Society Dialogue Body" provided for in the POLICE.POWER.PEOPLE.RIGHTS program took place and continue to take place during the Corona pandemic - albeit as video conferences. In POLIZEI.MACHT.MENSCHEN.RECHTE, topics relevant to human rights and related to police work are discussed and further developed together with civil society. The foundation is formed by "Orientation Principles of a Human Rights-Based Professional Image of the Police". The further development of topics takes place along an agreed, structured participation process that defines criteria for the inclusion of a topic as well as the type and timing of civil society involvement. The topics are worked on in interdisciplinary expert circles; the result is recommendations to the organization.

The ZDG has addressed the following issues since the pandemic began in March 2020: Human rights challenges related to the dispersal of assemblies and demonstrations, restrictions on press freedom due to obstacles to taking photos or videos, establishment of an independent investigative body for allegations of ill-treatment with the involvement of civil society, transparency towards citizens in the context of COVID-19 issued regulations and recommendations, health protection measures at land borders regarding asylum applications, racism and police violence, racism related to the recording of complaints, racism related to. Arrests and identification, Investigation, recording and training i.Z.m. Hate crime, violence prevention, accountability-friendly self-image of the police, mandatory identification, organizational and structural development of the police, dealing with poverty migrants, professional internships for VB/S - supervision, use of facial recognition software, bodyworn cameras, detention pending deportation, transfer to psychiatric wards without official acts according to §§ 8,9 UBG. §§ 8,9 UBG and § 46 SPG, treatment of transwomen as well as the resolution on LGBTIQ-refugees regarding trainings for interpreters and police officers and pushbacks.

In total, there have been six ZDG meetings (in online format) since the start of the pandemic.

The following RDF meetings were held in the LPDs during this period:

In LPD Styria, RDF meetings were held on October 14, 2020 (online), March 24, 2021 (online), and October 13, 2021 (face-to-face). In the LPD Tyrol, there were no RDF meetings in 2020. One meeting was held on 27 October 2021 (face-to-face event). In the LPD Vorarlberg, RDF meetings were held on July 7, 2020, February 23, 2021 and October 14, 2021.

In total, 70 people from organized civil society and 65 officials from the Ministry of Interior (total: 135) participated in the six ZDG meetings.

The goal of POLICE.POWER.PEOPLE.RIGHTS is to ensure that human rights are lived out as an integral part of the core identity/mission statement of the Austrian police force.

4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)