



**Input
of the Austrian Disability Council**

**Submitted to inform
the Special Rapporteur's forthcoming report
to the 79th session of the UN General Assembly
in October 2024.**

Vienna, 14.06.2024

The submission at hand is mostly based on documents from the Austrian Disability Council, the umbrella organization of over 85 Member Associations representing approximately 1.4 million persons with disabilities in Austria.

The Austrian Disability Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review process by providing additional information on the SDG implementation regarding individuals with disabilities in Austria.

1. Please inform how persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are meaningfully consulted and their participation ensured during the follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda at the regional, national and sub-national levels.

In general, it should be noted that in Austria there is a lack of a national, systematic and coordinated strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as stated by the Court of Audit in its 2018 report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Austria.

The report stated that there was no systematic involvement of persons with disabilities, representatives from the scientific community or civil society during the entire process of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).¹ Further points of criticism included the lack of a clear political prioritization², the lack of centrally organized, coherent governance of the implementation process³, as well as insufficient involvement of and cooperation between the federal government, the regions and the municipalities⁴.

a. Is there a specific mechanism for follow-up and review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the country? How are persons with disabilities included in this mechanism?

The set of indicators used in Austria to assess SDG attainment does not reflect the substantive goals of the 2030 Agenda.

In Austria, Statistics Austria, as the national statistical institute, has taken over the creation of the national SDG indicator set. Around 260 indicators are currently available, with the time series starting in 2010.⁵

Although explicitly mentioned in the official SDG wording of the individual targets (and also implicitly included via the commitment to the UN CRPD), Statistics Austria is deliberately failing to include respective indicators concerning persons with disabilities.

SDG 8.5 is just one out of many examples for the malfunctioning system:

¹ cf. Bericht des Rechnungshofes: Nachhaltige Entwicklungsziele der Vereinten Nationen, Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 in Österreich (2018), p. 34;
https://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/rh/home/home/Entwicklungsziele_Vereinten_Nationen_2030.pdf Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

² cf. *ibid.*, p. 34.

³ cf. *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ cf. *ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ cf. Statistik Austria: SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators) <https://www.statistik.at/services/tools/services/indikatorensysteme/sdgs> Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

The wording of target 8.5 explicitly names persons with disabilities:

*"By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and **persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value"*

Statistics Austria lists the following national indicators for target 8.5:

- Gross hourly earnings excl. overtime and extra hours
- Gross annual income of the self-employed, difference between women and men
- Mental stress in the workplace
- Unemployment rate (ILO definition)
- Employment rate

Apart from the fact that it is questionable whether these narrow indicators are even adequately suitable to measure the fulfilment of this target, it is characteristic that not even one indicator takes people with disabilities into account, even though "persons with disabilities" is expressly mentioned in the wording of the 8.5 target.

In a conclusion, SDG8.5 will – according to Statistics Austria and the Austrian government - be considered as completely fulfilled, even though decent working conditions for people with disabilities were not achieved at all.⁶

Another example is SDG4 (to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), there is no indicator covering inclusive education for persons with disabilities.⁷ Last year, the Austrian Disability Council sent repeated inquiries to the competent authority, the Ministry of Education regarding the implementation of the targets 4.5 and 4 (a). The responsible ministry employees were not able to name any concrete measures which were considered to implement targets 4.5 and 4 (a) of the SDGs.

The same applies to SDG11 in relation to accessibility.⁸

Target 11.7 reads: *"Providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities"*

For target 11.7 no suitable indicator exists. The only indicator provided: "Rate of publicly accessible green spaces in Vienna" is under no circumstances suitable for measuring the achievement of the above listed target 11.7 throughout Austria.

⁶ cf. Statistik Austria - Die Informationsmanager - Ziel 8: Menschenwürdige Arbeit und Wirtschaftswachstum - <https://www.statistik.at/services/tools/services/indikatorensysteme/sdgs/ziel-8-menschenwuerdige-arbeit-und-wirtschaftswachstum> Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

⁷ cf. Statistik Austria: Agenda 2030 für nachhaltige Entwicklung in Österreich – SDG-Indikatorenbericht Endbericht, Mai 2020 (2020), p. 53
https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/publications/Agenda_2030_fuer_nachhaltige_Entwicklung_in_Oesterreich_-_SDG-Indikatorenbericht__Endbericht_2020.pdf Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

⁸ cf. *ibid.*, p. 74.

As a result, all these targets have been reduced at the expense of people with disabilities.

2. Please describe the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in gathering data and producing Voluntary National Reviews or Voluntary Local Reviews. Please share good practices in this regard.

- a. The Council of Ministers decided on 12 October 2022 that Austria would present its second Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum in July 2024. The Austrian Disability Council welcomes Austria's participation in the voluntary reporting procedure. Nonetheless it has to be stated that as of June 2024, the Austrian Disability Council as the national representative of persons with disabilities in Austria was and is not involved in this report. What steps are being taken to facilitate their participation? Are there any awareness-raising campaigns implemented to inform persons with disabilities of these processes?**

Although announced differently⁹, no systematic steps were taken to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations. Additionally, to our knowledge no such campaigns exist.

- b. Are there any platforms in place for persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to contribute to the reporting process? How are they accessible? Is there a reasonable accommodation fund in place to secure the participation of persons with disabilities?**

In Austria, we have "SDG Watch Austria", an association of more than 230 civil society and non-profit organizations. It is jointly committed to the ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs in Austria. The Austrian Disability Council is one of these 230 organizations.

However, the SDG Watch Austria has an omnipresent focus on sustainability. All other topics are given a back seat as the following two examples demonstrate:

⁹ cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich - Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 in und durch Österreich 2020-2022 – 11 <https://www.bmkoes.gv.at/dam/jcr:d786ee22-259f-48ab-8140-a9243cf42c33/Beilage%20zum%20MR%20Beschluss%2054-6%20vom%2012%204%202023.pdf> Last accessed: 13/06/2024.

SDG Watch Austria shares events on its homepage. Of the last 15 events, all 15 had a focus on sustainability and economy. There is none on the topic of people with disabilities.¹⁰

In May 2024, SDG Watch Austria organized a breakfast for its members.¹¹ This event was not accessible (no sign language, no easy language, etc.). It can be concluded that the events organized by SDG Watch Austria have, due to a lack of awareness, no intention of inclusion and participation of people with disabilities.

The focus of the event was "Just Transition" - the just transition to a good future on a healthy planet. The main topics were socio-ecological steering mechanisms, the creation of a sustainable working world, the circular economy, democracy and transparency. People with disabilities were not on the agenda and would not have been included in any of the proposals developed without our presence at the event.

c. How are the views of persons with disabilities incorporated in these reports?

To our knowledge the views of persons with disabilities are not incorporated at all.

3. Is the data gathered for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development being disaggregated by disability? If so, how is it accessible for persons with disabilities?

No. The national indicators are largely based on data from Statistics Austria. Statistics Austria does not collect data on a disaggregated basis, which is why the data gathered for the follow-up and the review of the 2030 Agenda are not disaggregated by disability. The Austrian report on the implementation in and across Austria 2020-2022 even admits that disaggregation could only be implemented in isolated cases¹².

4. Please provide information on whether capacity-building programmes are in place, including specific funding, to allow persons with disabilities to meaningfully engage and participate in the process of follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional, national and sub-national level.

¹⁰ cf. SDG Watch Austria - Veranstaltungen <https://sdgwatch.at/de/veranstaltungen/> Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

¹¹ cf. SDG Watch Austria – News / Blog – Nachlese: SDG Mitglieder-Frühstück <https://sdgwatch.at/de/was-wir-tun/blog/2024/05/15/nachlese-sdg-mitgliederfr%C3%BChst%C3%BCck/> Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

¹² cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich - Umsetzung der Agenda 2030 in und durch Österreich 2020-2022 – page 114 <https://www.bmkoes.gv.at/dam/jcr:d786ee22-259f-48ab-8140-a9243cf42c33/Beilage%20zum%20MR%20Beschluss%2054-6%20vom%2012%204%202023.pdf> Last accessed: 13/06/2024.

Generally speaking, there are very little capacity-building programmes in Austria across all topics and among these few that exist, the vast majority is privately funded. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no publicly funded capacity-building programmes in Austria focussing on SDG's to allow the participation of persons with disabilities.

For organizations of persons with disabilities, and organizations working on disability rights:

1. Please describe the barriers experienced in participating in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the international, regional, national and/or sub-national levels. Please share any good practices in participating in these processes and advocating for the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities.

There were hardly any formats regarding the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda on the regional and sub-national level apart from one yearly event. The event is listed for 2024 where an exchange would have been possible.¹³

The last SDG Dialogue Forum 3.0 took place in October 2023 with the following focus discussions:

- Skills for 2030 - Skills for sustainable development
- Leaving no one behind - Social cohesion and solidarity in times of multiple crises
- Protecting the biosphere - Sustainable development within planetary boundaries
- Resilience in food security in the Global South

The focus discussion "Leave no one behind" focused primarily on the issue of poverty. People with disabilities were therefore not considered.¹⁴

In Austria, people with disabilities are usually mentioned and thought of in the context of the social sphere. The awareness that the agendas of disability are not limited to the social sphere but are a cross-cutting issue and that all SDGs apply equally to persons with disabilities, is still lacking in the implementation process of the SDG's in Austria.

2. Please share any experience or barriers encountered related to the participation or involvement in the annual High Level Political Forums, and in particular the SDG Summit of 2023 and the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

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¹³ cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich - Veranstaltungen zur Agenda 2030 [Veranstaltungen zur Agenda 2030 - Bundeskanzleramt Österreich](#) Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

¹⁴ cf. Republik Österreich, Ban Ki-Moon Centre, SDG watch Austria – SDG Dialogforum 3.0 Veranstaltungsbericht https://sdgwatch.at/files/1370/veranstaltungsbericht_sdg_dialogforum_2023.pdf Last accessed: 06/06/2024.

3. Describe whether you are currently aware and engaging in the process leading to the Summit for the Future 2024 and its outcome documents and the Social Summit in 2025. Please identify your thematic priorities, if any, when engaging in these processes.

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4. In light of the global crises facing the world, including armed conflicts, natural disasters, and health crises, and the financial implications of these crises, do you find that this has impacted programmes to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in your country? How have your efforts to advocate for the implementation of the sustainable development goals for people with disabilities been affected?

As the Austrian Disability Council our answer to this question focusses on the implementation of the SDGs within the scope of persons with disabilities only. It can be said that even before the last acute crises such as the Covid 19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the rolling inflation, just to name some of the most pressing, no programme to implement the SDG's existed in Austria. Therefore, there was nothing which could have been impacted.