**Submission by Austria**

**AT Input to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls to the UN General Assembly on violence against women and girls in sport**

1. **What are the different forms of violence that women and girls in sports may experience (e.g. physical, psychological, economic, online violence, coercive control, as well as extreme form of discrimination that amounts to violence)?**

Psychological violence, physical violence, neglect, sexualized violence without physical contact, sexualized violence with physical contact, sexualized violence with physical contact in children and adolescents with disabilities.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Sexual abuse, psychological abuse (degrading and humiliating remarks as well as situational disregard), online or digital violence, hate speech, physical abuse, economic abuse, bullying and microaggressions.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. **What human rights of women and girls in sports are violated as a result of the exposure of women and girls in sports to violence or the risk of violence?**

Article 3: Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 7: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 23: the right to work (safe and equal working conditions), and protection against discrimination; to fair and favorable conditions of work, particularly fair pay and equal remuneration for work of equal value

Article 25: human right to health[[3]](#footnote-3)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which regulates the rights and protection of underage athletes.[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. **Which actors are responsible for committing acts of violence against women and girls and increasing the risks of violence against women and girls in sports?**

* Trainers/Staff
* Teammates
* Parents/family
* Spectators (hate speech)

Often attachment figures/role models, i.e. victim and perpetrator know each other. It is often a longer process of manipulation, a gradual influencing of children, often people who exploit their position of power to subjugate weaker ones through sexuality, often exemplary, committed and highly respected personalities, masters of manipulation.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. **What are the principal causes of the violence that women and girls experience in sports, including the structural causes of such violence?**

Within the structures of organized sport, there are framework conditions at various levels that can create a climate that fosters sexualized assaults. Of course, this does not mean that they inevitably lead to assaults. But they do make it easier for potential perpetrators to abuse the trust of young and adult athletes.

* Competence and age gap with unfavorable power relations: Adults usually have the experience and training to support children and young people in the best possible way, but are also in a position of power and authority over children and young people.
* Relationship of trust and performance orientation: The relationship between athlete and coach is particularly close in high-performance sport. The coaches evaluate and encourage. When sporting success depends on the goodwill of coaches, performance-oriented dependency relationships develop between coaches and athletes.
* Unlike in many other areas of life, sport focuses on the body. Touching as part of safety techniques and for learning complex movements are important components of injury prevention and enable rapid learning progress.
* Particularly emotional situations: Emotions play a very important role in sporting events - not only for the athletes themselves, but also for everyone involved.
* Going beyond your own limits: In sport, it is not uncommon for success and improved performance to take precedence over well-being and health. Sometimes, however, harmful training methods and behaviors are applied in everyday sporting life and are accepted by the social milieu surrounding the sport as being necessary for top performance. The pressure from outside actors is often great and absences from training are associated with considerable negative consequences.
* Gender hierarchies: Many management positions in clubs, associations and training activities are still held by men. There is a lack of female coaches and trainers in many sports.
* Individual settings: Even though training usually takes place in training groups, there are numerous situations in which coaches and athletes can be alone: individual training sessions, debriefings, car rides, etc. Coaches can exploit specifically these situations.
* Participation in brutal initiation rituals, which often involve peer pressure, often takes place with the knowledge or connivance of superiors and officials.
* There is only one International Olympic Committee, only one international and national soccer, tennis or gymnastics association, etc. This results in exclusive organizational structures in sport and the sports federations therefore have a monopoly position. There is no possibility of changing employers.

<https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf> p. 24-26.

1. **Which groups of women and girls in sports are more exposed to violence and on what grounds?**

* Women of colour, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and those in vulnerable positions, ethnic minority and disabled athletes, elite athletes; minorities are particularly at risk due to multiple forms of discrimination[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. **What are the responsibilities of State and non-State actors in preventing acts of violence against women and girls in sport, including in adopting measures to investigate it, and to hold those responsible for it accountable, and to provide assistance and protection to survivors of violence?**

* Develop comprehensive policies and programs
* Share practices and build partnerships inside and outside of sport
* Educate athletes on how to recognize signs of and report gender-based violence
* Propose educational programs
* Develop standards for sports clubs and implement safeguarding policies
* A jointly communicated, clearly negative stance on the part of sports organizations and people working in sport that sexualized assaults will not be tolerated
* Raise awareness of the issue and create an awareness of the problem
* By addressing the topic inside organizations, to develop and implement a package of measures specifically tailored to the association, club or sport
* By providing technical assistance, resources and training, especially where the state lacks institutional capacity

[3343\_unwomen\_unesco\_vawg\_handbook\_6a\_singlepage.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf) p. 77,

[2023-01\_Handreichung\_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf (safesport.at)](https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf) p. 35ff

In Austria (legally speaking)[[7]](#footnote-7):

* The legal provisions on sexual violence enshrined in the Criminal Code (StGB)
* Under certain circumstances, the Equal Treatment Act (GlBG) may become relevant
* The Association Liability Act (VbVG), which has been in force since 2006, stipulates that associations can be fined for criminal acts committed by their decision-makers and employees.

1. **What measures do State and non-State actors have in place to ensure that incidents of violence against women and girls in sports can be effectively reported, and that they are thoroughly investigated and sanctioned?**

See question 6.

1. **To what extent are women and girls in sport, as well as the associations that represent them being effectively involved and consulted in the design and implementation of policies that are meant to end severe discrimination and violence against women and girls in sport at the national, regional, and international level?**

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1. **Please provide examples of good practice that have been adopted by State and non-State actors with regards to ending violence against women and girls in sports?**

* The "vera\*" confidential advice center for those affected by violence, harassment and abuse of power in the arts, culture and sport was established in 2022 and is operated by the SAFE SPORT department (100% SPORT association) for sport: <https://vera-vertrauensstelle.at/kontakt-sport/>
* Together with the "Prevention of sexualized violence in sport" working group set up for this purpose, a handout for all those working in sport was drawn up containing comprehensive information on the topic. <https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf>
* The SAFE SPORT online course on the prevention of sexualized violence can be completed by all people in and around sport: <https://safesport.at/academy/e-learning/>.

1. **What are the lessons learned from policies and legislations that have been adopted and implemented with regards to women and girls in sports and their implications on the safety, security, dignity, equality and participation of women and girls in sports?**

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1. **Please provide recommendations as to how violence against women and girls in sport can be prevented and what needs to be done to better respond to the needs of survivors of such violence?**

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1. <https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf> p.20 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343\_unwomen\_unesco\_vawg\_handbook\_6a\_singlepage.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf) p. 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights | United Nations](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf> p. 27f [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [3343\_unwomen\_unesco\_vawg\_handbook\_6a\_singlepage.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/3343_unwomen_unesco_vawg_handbook_6a_singlepage.pdf) p. 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://safesport.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-01_Handreichung_Einzelseiten-Bildschirm.pdf> p. 29f. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)