

# YesWePlan!

## Country Situation Report

### AUSTRIA

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1. BASIC DATA					
Total population	8.858.775		... of which are female	50,80%	
Number of Architects*	5741 <sup>1)</sup>		...of which are female	15,20%	
Number of Civil Engineers*	1486 <sup>1)</sup>		...of which are female	1,20%	
Graduates in Architecture	2019	1.013	...of which are female	2019	52,02%
	2018	1.055		2018	54,98%
	2017	1.099		2017	50,96%
	2016	1.261		2016	49,41%
	2015	1.003		2015	53,04%
	2014	1.310		2014	52,21%
	2013	1.036		2013	49,03%
	2012	1.049		2012	50,52%
	2011	868		2011	47,93%
	2010	806		2010	50,37%
	2009	680		2009	48,09%
	2008	210		2008	42,86%
Graduates in Civil Engineering	2019	475	...of which are female	2019	32,84%
	2018	531		2018	20,34%
	2017	525		2017	25,33%
	2016	520		2016	22,50%
	2015	495		2015	26,06%
	2014	506		2014	22,13%
	2013	492		2013	19,92%
	2012	498		2012	14,26%
	2011	439		2011	17,77%
	2010	400		2010	21,00%
	2009	334		2009	16,77%
	2008	150		2008	16,67%
Students in Architecture	2019	1.962	...of which are female	2019	57,85%
	2018	1.995		2018	57,89%
	2017	1.940		2017	56,60%
	2016	1.952		2016	57,38%
	2015	1.966		2015	54,43%
Students in Civil Engineering	2019	1.030	...of which are female	2019	28,25%
	2018	1.162		2018	25,13%
	2017	1.287		2017	28,36%
	2016	1.177		2016	30,77%
	2015	1.308		2015	26,07%
For Comparison: Number of medical doctors	447.280		...of which are female	48%	
For Comparison: Number of Lawyers	6.389		...of which are female	22,5%	

\* Architects and Civil Engineers are defined as professionals with a master degree in Architecture or Civil Engineering that are authorised to conduct the profession according to the legal requirements of their country.

1) In Austria, all licensed architects are self-employed and registered in the chamber. Employment is only permitted under conditions that guarantee professional independence.



## 2. FACTS

### 2.1 The professions of Architects and Civil Engineers: Regulation and Organisation

The professions of Architects and Civil Engineers both fall into the professional category of “ZiviltechnikerIn” and are based on a federal law (Ziviltechnikergesetz 2019) regulating the access to and conduct of the profession as well as the organisation of the Chamber.

Architects and Civil Engineers in Austria are self-employed liberal professionals with a mandatory membership in one of four regional Chambers of Architects and Chartered Engineering Consultants, depending where their office is seated. Professional access requirements for both professions are a master degree plus 3 years of professional practice plus a professional access examination. After the fulfilment of these requirements, the professional has to take an oath and is then officially authorized by the Austrian Federal Ministry.

The authorization enables them to provide planning, testing, supervising and consulting services for their entire area of their expertise. They are also entitled to act as trustees and as representatives before public authorities and are allowed to issue certain public documents in their areas of specialisation. They are not entitled to the execution of workings. Architects and Civil Engineers can make use of various business forms. They have to follow a Code of Conduct and are obliged to CPD, independency, impartiality and secrecy. The combination of employment and an active license is only allowed in certain constellations that do not endanger the independence of the professional. In all other cases, the license has to be put on rest during employment.

The Federal Chamber of Architects and Chartered Engineering Consultants is the umbrella organisation of the four regional Chambers, in which the professionals are members. All Chambers are corporate bodies of public law and are represented by honorary elected professionals (election every 4 years). They are divided in two sections, one for Architects and one for Chartered Engineering Consultants and have different expert groups and committees. One of them is the Committee of Female Architects and Chartered Engineering Consultants which is the main driver of any activities concerning equality measures. There is no official equality policy.

### 2.2 Legal framework of Gender Equality

Article 7(2) of the Austrian Constitution includes a commitment to gender equality to promote de facto equality between women and men, in particular by eliminating existing inequalities. With this, the federation, the Länder (regions) and municipalities commit to aim for the equal status of women and men. A more detailed legal basis is provided by the „Equal Treatment Act”, a federal law that prohibits any form of direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace (payment, CPD, benefits, etc.) including sexual harassment but also in other areas such as education, social benefits, access to goods and services and living space. The law covers not only gender discrimination but also discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, ideology, age and sexual orientation. For the enforcement of the equal treatment act the



Ombud for Equal Treatment is installed with a central office in Vienna and four regional offices. The tasks of the Ombud are regulated in a separate law. There are no special regulations on gender equality in the professional law for Architects and Civil Engineers.

### 2.3 Official pay gap

The pay gap 2020 - the difference between male and female income - calculated as an average of branches and regions is 15.2%. 25 February is Austria's equal pay gap day.

Sources:

<https://www.equal-pay-day.at/at/epd2020/>

[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/index.html)

*Fact Sheet: Gender Pay Gap in Austria and the European Union, Chamber of Labour AK Europa 2019*

### 2.4 Income transparency

The Equal Treatment Act obliges employers with over 150 employees to create a remuneration report for analysis every two years. This report has to include data about the number of women and men in the different remuneration categories, the average remuneration in the groups, the

Remuneration for part-time workers on fulltime basis, etc. The report is anonymous and confidential but can offer the possibility to initiate a procedure for the enforcement of claims according to the Equal Treatment Act. Additionally, the Equal Treatment Act contains the obligation that any job advertisements have to be formulated in a gender-neutral form and name the minimum wage offered for the job and the willingness to over-pay.

Otherwise there is no obligation to remuneration transparency and employees have no right to be informed about the remuneration level of colleagues, in some cases confidentiality in regard to remuneration is part of employment contracts.

For Architects and Civil Engineers as self-employed professionals there are no transparency rules. In public procurement procedures the estimated procurement value is public but even this allows very little conclusion regarding the income of an Architects'/Civil Engineers' office and many do not work for public contractors (only).

### 2.5 Maternal, Parental and Care leave

Maternity leave: Employed women are not allowed to work 8 weeks before birth (if the birth is early or late this shortens or extends the protection period) and 8 weeks after birth. They do not receive payment from the employer but an allowance from social health insurance (calculated based on the income of the last three months). For Architects and Civil Engineers, who are self-employed, the allowance depends on the insurance system they have chosen (private group insurance or public self-employed insurance). In both cases, the amount is about 55 EUR/day and in the second case, it is possible to get operating help instead, meaning



a person to substitute the absent mother in the office. Only in case of self-insurance, there is no claim.

Parental leave (*"Karenz"*) starts right after the end of maternity leave and is a period without payment from the employer but with a protection against termination of the employment contract or dismissal. It can be shared between parents twice - minimum duration for one parent is two months - and ends when the child is two years old.

During parental leave, childcare allowance is paid by the social health insurance. There are two models to choose from: The childcare allowance account which provides up to 12.366,20 EUR or 15.449,28 EUR (if parents share), where parents can choose the duration (smaller amounts for a longer time and higher amounts for a shorter time) and the income-related childcare allowance (maximum 2.000 EUR/month) until the child is 12 months or 14 months (if parents share) old. The system is not limited to employees but also relevant for self-employed Architects and Civil Engineers.

Care leave offers the opportunity to take one additional paid week off work in order to take care of ill children (+ a second week if the same child that is ill again is under the age of 12). It is thus only not relevant for self-employed.

Registered self-employed Architects and Engineers can get reductions/redemptions from Chamber fees in case of childbirth.

## 2.6 Childcare services

Austria provides considerable means for children in childcare facilities. In some regions the costs are fully taken over by the municipality, in some regions the costs depend on parents' income. An average of about 100 EUR to 450 EUR can be estimated for all-day care depending on region, income and holder of facility.

The year before entering school attending *"Kindergarten"* is compulsory and cost-free for all children for a minimum of 16 hours per week.

In 2018/19 Austria offered 9.342 institutional childcare facilities: 4.565 *"Kindergarten"* (mainly 3-6 years), 2.185 *"Kinderkrippen"* (up to 3 years), 1.005 *"Horte"* (after school facilities) and 1.587 aged-mixed facilities. Three quarters of Kindergarten-facilities are maintained by local authorities, facilities for smaller children and aged-mixed facilities are mainly privately maintained.

The percentage of pre-school children in childcare was considerably increased during the last decade (including *"Tageseltern"* who take care of a small number of children in their homes): For 3-year olds from 73.4% to 86.7%, for 4-year olds from 92.2% to 96.4%, for 5-year olds from 93.8% to 97.5%. For 0- to 2-year olds the percentage is 29% (including *"Tageseltern"* who take care of a small number of children in their homes).

Source: *Kindertagesheimstatistik 2018/2019*

[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/index.html)



## 2.7 Public supporting measures for women in technical professions

Examples:

In 2010 the City of Vienna took a decision to implement the legal possibility for promotion of women within public procurement procedures. This means that contractors with over 20 employees and a contract value over 50.000 EUR have to fulfil certain requirements in regard to gender equality/promotion of women but also that regarding award criteria gender equality aspects can be taken into account:

<https://www.wien.gv.at/wirtschaft/gewerbe/vergabe-frauenfoerderung.html>

With the initiative FEMtech, the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology supports women in research and technology. By increasing the share of women and by improving their professional position in these facilities, FEMtech strives to render a contribution towards the increased realization of female innovative potential and more equal opportunities for women and men in society. FEMtech supports activities designed to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of women in research and technology. Activities include: FEMtech's database of female experts, FEMtech's female expert of the month, FEMtech's networking meeting, and FEMtech knowledge ([www.femtech.at](http://www.femtech.at))

Mentoring programmes for women in different professional branches – among them Architecture – were offered by the Federal Chancellery and might be restarted after the Corona crisis.

## 2.8 Gender equality programmes in Education

Examples:

“Technik bewegt” is a programme taking place each November that brings Architects and Civil Engineers and other Chartered Engineering professions into school classes to raise the interest of girls (and boys) in these professions: <http://www.bink.at/technik-bewegt>

FEMtech Career – Equal Opportunities in Applied Research aims to increase the number of female scientists employed in industrial research and to improve their career opportunities. Companies and research institutions receive funding to implement structural measures with the aim to grant women access to higher positions as well as to improve general working conditions.

Girls’ Day offers different programmes for girls from 10 to 16 to give them a better understanding of possible career paths especially in technical professions.

FEMINT combines several approaches of the Ministry of Education, Science and Research to interest girls and women in STEM subjects

FIT – Women in technical professions is a programme of the labour market service to interest women to change to technical careers.

Platform women – girls – technics in the Federal Chancellery: <https://www.meine-technik.at>  
Network of initiatives for technical education of girls and women:

<https://www.technischebildung.at/paedagoginnen/maedchenfoerderung>



## 2.9 Working hours

Normal working hours for employees are 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week (without breaks). In certain cases, it is legally possible to prolong the time to 12 hours per day and 60 hours per week. During 4 months, the average maximum is 48 hours per week. In a four-day week, the normal working hours can be prolonged to 10 hours. Different models of flexible working time are possible that are defined in either collective agreements or employment contracts. In 2019 in Austria only 10.7% of men but 47.7% of women worked part-time. A survey of the Bundeskammer ZT among the self-employed Architects, Civil Engineers and other Chartered Engineering professions in 2019 showed that male participants of the survey work on average 50.6 hours per week, female participants 45.1 hours per week. Around 65% of women and only around 35% of men with an Architects or Civil Engineers Degree that work in the offices of the participants work part-time.

Source:

[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/index.html)

*Mitgliederbefragung 2019, Bundeskammer ZT*

## 3. EXPERT OPINIONS

### 3.1 History of professional Gender Equality

The first eight women became Members of the Austrian Parliament in 1919; in 1966, the first female Minister was appointed. Only in 1975, the reform of the Austrian Family Law set out legal equality between women and men: Women are allowed to work without the consent of their husband, to decide where to live and to choose their family name. The Equal Treatment Act of Women and Men with regard to Remuneration was adopted in 1979. Since then, the law has been considerably expanded and all phases starting from the conclusion of a contract of employment to career advancement and ending with the termination of a contract can be investigated for possible discrimination. The offenses of harassment and of sexual harassment were also included.

In 2004, the types of discrimination were expanded, where the result of which is that, besides discrimination on the grounds of gender, discrimination based on ethnicity, age, religion or ideology and sexual orientation (with a couple of legal exceptions) in employment and occupation was also included. In 1982, Austria ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 1990 the first Ombud women for Equal Treatment was installed and brought a new momentum to the Equal Treatment Act. The gender mainstreaming tool of gender budgeting has been enshrined in the Constitution since 2009 and in 2010 the National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Labour Market 2010-2013 was published. Since 2011, a women's quota for supervisory boards in state-affiliated companies is established and companies are legally obliged to draw up income reports (see also 2.4). In 2017, the Act on Equality between Women and Men in Supervisory Boards was adopted.



*Sources:*

*Gender Equality in Austria – Milestones, successes and challenges, Austrian Federal Chancellery 2018*

*Auf dem Weg zur Gleichbehandlung – Festschrift für Ingrid Nikolay-Leitner, Susanne Feigl, Sandra Konstatzky*

### **3.2 Societal obstacles preventing comprehensive Gender Equality**

Austria still follows very traditional role models. A recent study from 2020 confirms that in Austria the share of women in part-time employment – also compared to other countries - extremely increased during the last decades. Even highly educated women have increasingly turned away from the dual breadwinner model. This means that also education does not diminish the gender gap. Therefore, the most common Austrian family model is a modernized male breadwinner model in which women do not stay at home but work part-time. With a model like this, the pay gap within the family increases and the manifestation of gender roles gets even more fixed, e.g. women have to take parental care as they earn less. The study shows that between 30% and 41% of women – depending on age group - are not back to fulltime employment even when their youngest child is already between 10 and 15 years old. Women without children hardly work part-time at all. This means that part-time work is normally not a decision of work-life-balance but of compatibility.

As part-time work leads to a long-term financial loss and, a reduction of career chances and a higher danger of poverty the gap between mothers and women without children is constantly widening. The reasons for this situation are manifold: Very important concerning understanding the frameworks is the fact that still a very considerable number – depending on educational background - of women (!) believe that pre-school children suffer if their mothers work. Other aspects are the parental leave regulations, the gender pay gap and the childcare models. The OECD country report for 2015 underlined that the separation of gender roles in Austria goes well beyond what is found in comparable European countries (OECD 2015) and recommended steps to enable earlier return to full-time work of mothers and fathers' participation in care and household duties. A key recommendation was to provide "more opportunities to leave the separate gender role model in order to broaden work-life balance options". The reason that there has never been full common political and public agreement in Austria on this topic is based on a widespread conservative way of thinking also related to the high percentage of about 55% of Catholics in Austria. There a number of very conservative right-wing fraternities and networks with a lot of political influence still do not accept female members. On the other hand, it has to be mentioned that especially very young women express the opinion that measures regarding gender equality are not needed (anymore).

*Sources:*

*Essay The return of the male breadwinner model? Educational effects on parents' work arrangements in Austria, 1980–2009 by Caroline Berghammer*

*Study „Childrearing in Austria: Work and Family Roles“ by Buber-Ennser, Isabella Journal of Research in Gender Studies, 2015*

*Study „The Part-Time Revolution: Changes in the Parenthood Effect on Women's Employment in Austria across the Birth Cohorts from 1940 to 1979“ by Caroline Berghammer and Bernhard Riederer, European Sociological Review, 2020*



### 3.3 Challenges for female Architects and Civil Engineers

Studies come to the conclusion that the main reasons for the stable gender inequality in the field of planning services are at the same time structural principles of the profession: The culture of long working hours, the dominance of homosocial male networks, discriminating gender norms and – in the field of Architecture – also the creativity based professional ideology:

Gender norms still seem to be firmly anchored in everyday awareness and thus not very accessible to reflection and change. Therefore, they very much help maintaining social hierarchies. As an example, women are often still seen in the creative role, while men stand for technical expertise. Such mostly latent norms are relevant for the professional position of women in the office itself but even more so in external relation with clients and others. This can be the cause of latent or open discrimination, such as clients or workers at the building site doubting the competence of a female Architect or Civil Engineer. In extreme cases, this can even lead to bullying and sexual harassment. So very often female professionals have to show more competence than their male colleagues in order to be treated equally. As studies show, this is the case in many technical male-dominated professional areas.

Studies have also shown that female Architects and Civil Engineers still take over their traditional gender norm roles concerning family and children to a much higher degree than men and defer their careers/career plans. Caused by these dynamics the share of work in planning offices is often developing in a way that female Architects and Civil Engineers, even if they have major positions in planning offices, play a minor role in external relations and thus the professionally extremely important networking is often monopolised by men. This is also visible in the bodies of professional Chambers.

The creativity-based ideology – especially regarding the profession of Architects – adds to this problem as it is often a main focus of the professional self-perception. Although this is (also) attributed to women, in the male-dominated professional life of Architects and Civil Engineers the control of creativity is often in the hand of male office principals and managers.

#### *Sources:*

*Study "Vereinbarkeit von Architekturberuf und Familie - Strategien, Modelle und Erfahrungen" by Sivilia Forlati, Anne Isopp, Sabina Riß-Retschitzegger including essay „Das Berufsfeld Architektur im Strukturwandel von Arbeit und Familie“ by Christoph Reinprecht and „Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Kindern bei ArchitektInnen“ by Ulrike Papouschek*  
*Report on „Unternehmerinnen in Österreich 2017 - Unternehmerinnen in männerdominierten Bereichen /Unternehmerinnen und Digitalisierung“, Eva Heckl, Karin Petzlberger, Karin Gavic – Austrian Institute for SME research*

### 3.4 Pay gap: Reasons and future tendencies

A main reason for the pay gap is, that the share of part-time working women in Austria is - with over 47% in 2019 - extremely high. There is still a lack of childcare-facilities and schools with long opening hours and the distribution of paid and unpaid working time is very unequal: Women work on average 65 hours per week - 2 hours more than men - and 25 hours of their work per week is unpaid (men: 16 hours). Additionally, income transparency – which would be



an important factor when it comes to reducing the gender pay gap - is not very far developed in Austria.

### 3.5 Parental leave in practice

On an average, women stay at home for 2.5 years and work in part-time jobs until the youngest of the children is 15.

Men who apply for parental leave stay at home for about four months, but afterwards only 5% work in part-time jobs.

Whereas 74% of women stayed at home with their child/children in 2018, this can be said only of 8% of men.

### 3.6 Care leave in practice

Concerning couples only 23.3% of men with children under 15 years apply for childcare leave. Care leave is related to employment and thus not relevant for self-employed Architects and Civil Engineers. Nevertheless, in practice, the question of care leave situations is similar, but numbers are not available.

Source:

[https://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/index.html](https://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/index.html)

### 3.7 Importance of supporting networks

Supporting relatives and social environment for women in general in the care of their children are very important. As described in 3.8 the compatibility of profession and family is especially difficult for authorized (self-employed) Architects and Civil Engineers. Although childcare places are increasing in Austria (see also 2.6), there are not enough places for small children and altogether the institutions often cannot offer the flexibility, which is extremely important for self-employed professionals. Therefore, they often need to find their own individual and flexible (additional) childcare solutions such as relatives, child minders etc. This is especially the case in the country. Partly there is also a lack of willingness of parents to put very small children in institutional care.

### 3.8 Working hours in practice

The survey of the Bundeskammer ZT among the authorised (self-employed) Architects, Civil Engineers and other Chartered Engineering professions 2019 (see 2.9) shows that the average working hours per week for self-employed female Architects and Civil Engineers are over normal working time but that in planning offices around 65% of female employees with professional degrees work part-time. This clearly shows the challenge of self-employed female Architects and Civil Engineers – mostly Micro-Enterprises or even one-person-companies – when it comes to combining professional life and children. An Austrian study – „Vereinbarkeit von Architekturberuf und Familie - Strategien, Modelle und Erfahrungen“ – has focused on



these problems and showed that for self-employed women this is a “feat of strength” that is tried to overcome by different strategies (working and living at the same venue, flexible child care models, life & work partnerships, stepping back in tasks and expectations, etc.). As the working time is limited but the necessary amount of work still has to be covered, this requires the reduction of breaks and social interventions, but often also of working aspects relevant to the professional position and equality (as described in 3.6). The relation between paid and unpaid work moves in the direction of more unpaid work.

### **3.9 Access to the profession for Newcomers**

For female graduates there are no support programmes from universities about becoming authorised (self-employed) Architects or Civil Engineers. As three years of professional practice and a professional exam are requirements for professional access as an authorised (self-employed) Architect or Civil Engineer, graduates normally start with employment contracts or free employment contracts. The Chambers of Architects and Chartered Engineering Consultants offer support for those who want to get the authorisation as independent, responsible and self-employed Architects and Civil Engineers in the form of (legal) counselling and by mentoring programmes. Before the examination, a course is offered at the Chamber. For the first three years after authorization, Chamber fees are reduced, as the market entry phase is not always easy, e.g. public procurement procedures often require references that newcomers cannot provide. Depending on the market situation the competition for contracts can require a lot of efforts. E.g., the participation in Architectural Design competitions cause a lot of time and effort, often without (adequate) remuneration. As the survey of the Bundeskammer ZT among the authorised (self-employed) Architects, Civil Engineers and other Chartered Engineering professions 2019 (see 2.9) clearly shows the average working hours per week in the profession are by far above normal working hours. Additionally, young female Architects and Civil Engineers can be hit unexpectedly by the structural discriminations within the profession as described in 3.3.

### **3.10 Solidarity in practice**

Committees of female Architects and Chartered Engineers have been installed in the Federal and all regional Chambers. They aim at enforcing such solidarity. There are also other (partly regional) small networks of female professionals in the branch that support each other concerning market access and professional conduct. Nevertheless, effective female networks are by far not as common and widespread as longstanding and effectively functioning male networks (see 3.3.). Partly this is also due to the fact that women do not want gender becoming a topic within their working space - especially in contact with their male colleagues. There is a fear that engaging in gender questions can harm the career. Especially among very young women, the view is widely spread that gender questions and female professional networks are not needed (anymore).

### **3.11 Future developments of professional Gender Equality**

As explained, in Austria role models are still very traditional. Many young women believe in these role models again and do not see their dangers even though they might be more emancipated than their ancestors might be concerning behaviour and attitude. This makes



changes difficult. There is no broad political and/or public consensus – also not among women - in regard to revolutionizing the role models in Austria.

Nevertheless, as Christoph Reinprecht explains in his essay *“Das Berufsfeld Architektur im Strukturwandel von Arbeit und Familie”* for changing the gender roles in planning it will be necessary to discuss and rethink the self-conception and the unwritten rules and action patterns in the profession, and to define new forms of work in the offices. We need to focus on what we can do as professional representative organisations in order to contribute to this process: Providing positive role models, supporting and strengthening female and/or thematic professional networks, making latent gender norms in the profession and their consequences visible and discuss them, support female Architects and Chartered Engineers in overcoming structural discrimination by concrete support and CPD measures, etc.

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