

Austria

Maintaining and developing the necessary conditions for a diversity of cultural expressions to flourish is a key mission of Austrian cultural policy. Since the entry-into force of the Convention, Austria has initiated a range of measures to supplement existing cultural policy instruments, e.g.:

- to support emerging artists at the beginning of their career, by introducing specific scholarships, mentoring-programmes, promotion and coordination platforms, and funding schemes;
- to foster cultural participation and access to culture, in particular of the younger generation, and specific target groups (e.g. socially and/or economically disadvantaged persons, migrants), by free admission to cultural institutions, educational and partnership initiatives, and specific support programmes;
- to improve working conditions in the cultural sectors, by establishing an interministerial cooperation model to elaborate the specific need of artists, professionals and practitioners in the cultural sector;
- to safeguard a local cultural infrastructure in disadvantaged geographical areas, by supporting the digitisation of movie theatres;
- to encourage the development of viable and competitive enterprises, by introducing training, education and advisory services, networking platforms and financial support as well as an internationalisation offensive;
- to enhance the diversity of media, by introducing new funding schemes for commercial and non-commercial broadcasters;
- to promote international cultural exchange, by presenting Austrian art and culture abroad, initiating exchange programmes and artists in residencies as well as new bilateral cultural cooperation programmes;

Specific attention has been given to encourage the active participation of civil society in the elaboration and implementation of cultural policies – on federal, province as well as municipal level. Additionally, coordination mechanisms dedicated to the Convention have been established to ensure inter-institutional cooperation and the involvement of civil society. Activities and actions to raise awareness for the Convention range from presentations at events, to information meetings for political decision-makers, to the production of specific information material and the set up of an online platform on the Convention, to a stock-taking exercise and analysis of possible courses of action to further the implementation in selected policy fields as well as a survey to showcase concrete implementation examples.

While many challenges remain, the Convention introduced a new perspective and general framework for reference in Austria, which is reflected in the growing awareness for the cross-cutting nature of culture and its added value for economic and societal development.