

**Bundesministerium für Justiz
Museumstraße 7
1070 Wien**

Our ref.
2015/2622

Your ref.

Date
08.04.2015

**Statement about proposal to change the Penal Code in Austria 2015
(98/ME XXV. GP)**

We realise that the recent draft of an amendment to the Austrian Criminal Code contains clauses that would bring about the termination of the practice of applying the Tatausgleich (Victim-Offender-Mediation) in cases of Domestic Violence.

Austria's practice is highly esteemed. Methodically it is carefully designed, and it has been well researched. This research has shown the beneficial effects it has especially for women victims but also in the way of preventing further 'intimate' violence. It serves as an inspiration and a good practice model for other countries.

When the Norwegian Mediation Service considered and later prepared for taking up Victim-Offender-Mediation in cases of Domestic Violence, we paid a study visit to Vienna to have a closer look at the work being done there. What we have seen and experienced from the Austrian practice field, together with the thorough evaluative research that has been carried out in your country, has played an important role and made us confident to move forward in our efforts to establish Victim-Offender-Mediation as one of more measures to fight Domestic Violence. Today Norway has developed its own way of applying Victim-Offender Mediation (i.e. a restorative justice process) to cases of domestic violence, and it has become more and more appreciated by the police, the prosecutors and the social field.

On this background, we would regret very much if the Austrian Criminal Code and thus the Austrian practice should come to a halt. We would therefore strongly implore the lawmakers to find appropriate legislative means and ways of keeping and continuing this practice of applying the 'Tatausgleich' in the field of domestic violence.

Yours sincerely,

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