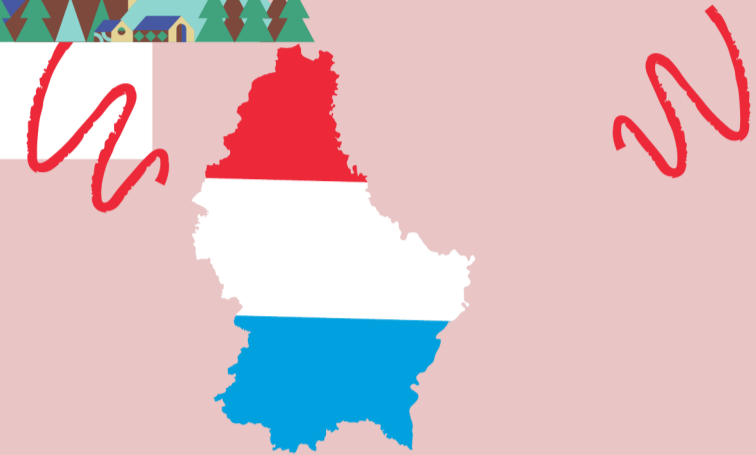




YOUTH AND THE GENDER PAY GAP IN AUSTRIA: LESSONS FROM LEADING EUROPEAN POLICY

Comparative analysis of Austria and Luxembourg's Youth Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

The gender pay gap (GPG) is a pervasive challenge across European labor markets, undermining social justice and economic potential. Austria faces one of the highest youth GPGs in the EU, reaching 18.3% in 2023, a rate significantly exceeding the EU average. This persistent inequality stands in stark contrast to Luxembourg, which has not only minimized but even reversed its youth GPG to -0.9%, demonstrating that targeted, robust policies can effectively reduce this disparity. Austria's situation points to "deeper systemic barriers" including gender-blind apprenticeship systems, weak enforcement of pay transparency laws, and the exclusion of youth with intersectional disadvantages from policy design. And the question is how can Austria actually adapt successful youth-oriented policies from Luxembourg to address the structural and intersectional drivers of its gender pay gap among young workers?

The central claim is that Austria's persistent youth GPG is maintained by a confluence of gender-blind labor practices, a lack of strict enforcement, and inadequate integration of youth and intersectional concerns in national strategies.

OBJECTIVE

To provide actionable recommendations tailored to Austria's historical and contemporary socio-economic landscape, with a particular focus on its young workforce and mitigating the early career gender pay gap

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, comparative and theory-informed policy analysis. It is based on in-depth document analysis of Austria's "Österreichische Jugendstrategie, Umsetzungsbericht 2024" and Luxembourg's "Plan d'action national pour la jeunesse 2022-2025", both aligned with the EU Youth Strategy.

RESULTS

To address its persistent youth gender pay gap of 18.3%, Austria can adapt Luxembourg's successful integrated and equity-oriented approach by incorporating explicit, binding labor market equality objectives, establishing a formalized inter-ministerial taskforce, introducing binding pay transparency and equality certification, and embedding an intersectional framework within its national youth strategy



ANALYSIS

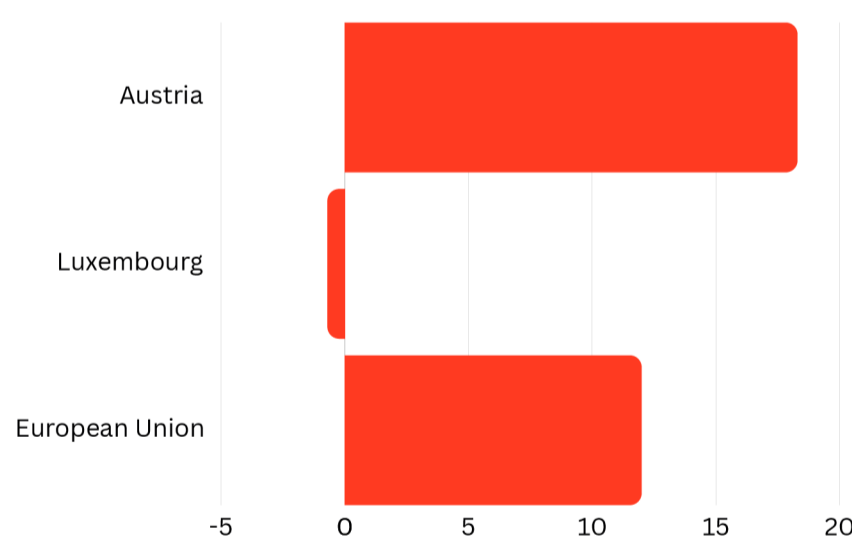
Austria's National Youth Strategy

- Lacks explicit recognition of the youth gender pay gap (GPG) or its intersectional dimensions, relying on voluntary, promotional, and sectoral initiatives.
- Primarily assumes that human capital improvements will naturally lead to equal outcomes, treating economic equality as a separate policy silo without binding equity goals or youth-specific GPG monitoring.
- Contributes to Austria's 18.3% youth GPG in 2023, making it second to last in the EU

Luxembourg's National Youth Strategy (2022-2025)

- Adopts an integrated, equity-oriented approach with robust institutional mechanisms and strong interministerial coordination.
- Includes targeted interventions (e.g., STEM mentoring for girls, scholarships) and systematically embeds employment-oriented measures, such as the Garantie pour la jeunesse.
- This cohesive, binding model leads to a remarkably low, even reversed, overall GPG of approximately -0.7%, with significantly narrower wage disparities for young workers

GENDER PAY GAP



GENDER Equality

CONCLUSION

Austria's Youth Strategy is incomplete; it aspires to empower but struggles to confront systemic wage inequalities or compounded disadvantages.

- Luxembourg's approach offers a model for transformative change.
- Bridging the gap between participation and equality requires more than aspirational statements; it demands legal safeguards, binding equality objectives, and systematic tracking of outcomes disaggregated by gender and other intersecting factors.
- The choice for Austria is clear: align ambition with enforceable action to ensure the next generation enters a labor market defined by opportunity, dignity, and equal worth for all.

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