
Austria: humanitarian legacies are on the rise. They support cultural, social and charitable initiatives

In 2023, Austrians donated €110 million to charitable projects. According to estimates by the Fundraising Association Austria, one-tenth of donations come from legacies. On today's International Wills Day, the humanitarian youth organization "Jugend Eine Welt" also stressed the importance of legacy gifts and opportunities to help. "For social organisations like "Jugend Eine Welt", legacy gifts are often the only way to finance urgent measures and important projects", the administrator of "Jugend Eine Welt", Reinhard Heiserer, said in a press release. An important factor, that is steadily increasing, is legacy gifts for development aid and educational opportunities in the Global South. Mr Heiserer said: "We are always very moved and grateful when someone decides to continue a social commitment beyond death". Legally valid wills deposited with a notary can govern to which organisations and purposes the cash contributions, savings accounts or valuables bequeathed are to be donated. The "Vergissmeinnicht – Do not forget me" initiative, which currently brings together nearly 100 Austrian non-profit organisations in the areas of social affairs, health, human rights, development cooperation, animal protection and the environment, art and culture, and science and education, provides information on the regulation of legacies. Among its members are "Jugend Eine Welt", Caritas, Aid to the Church in Need, the St. Elizabeth Foundation of the Archdiocese of Vienna, and the House of Mercy.

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