

Austria

Recent policy developments

- The ten-year strategic orientation for regional policy, ÖREK 2011, is the latest Austrian Spatial Development Concept framework. The four pillars include: i) regional and national competitiveness; ii) social diversity and solidarity; iii) climate change, adaptation and resource efficiency; and iv) co-operative and efficient governance.
- ÖREK 2011 also highlights the importance of compact settlement patterns, a “point-axial” system, polycentric structures, urban-rural functional spatial integration and networks of small- and medium-sized centres.
- STRAT.AT 2020 is the strategy for using European Union (EU25) funds for regional development, rural development and employment.
- Nearly half of Austria’s total Cohesion Policy allocation for the 2007-13 period went to research and development (R&D). This is one of the highest shares of any country in the EU in relative terms (the EU average is 25%). This was used to fund R&D centres and small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) networks, and to boost innovation in eco-technologies and renewable energy technologies.

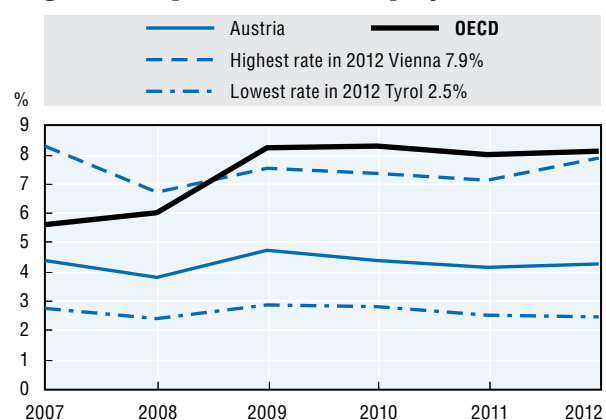
Government structure	Municipal-level governments	Intermediate-level governments	Regional or state-level governments
Federation	2 354		9

Regional development policy	
Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Federal Chancellery (Directorate for Territorial Co-operation)
Regional development framework	Regional development is a responsibility of the regions (<i>Länder</i>). The Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) includes the Federal Chancellery and the <i>Länder</i> . The ÖREK 2011 is the latest ten-year Austrian Spatial Development Concept framework. STRAT.AT 2020 is the partnership agreement for EU Cohesion Policy and rural development.

Urban development policy	
Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Federal Chancellery (Directorate for Territorial Co-operation)
Urban policy framework or strategy	There is no explicit urban strategy at the federal level, but the Austrian Spatial Development Concept covers urban areas, and includes the development of an Austrian agglomeration policy.

Rural development policy	
Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Federal Chancellery (Directorate for Territorial Co-operation); Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (including the Federal Institute for Less-Favoured and Mountainous Areas, BABF)
Rural policy framework or strategy	The Austrian National Strategy Plan (NSP) for Rural Development and a single Rural Development Programme (RDP) aim to deliver multi-functional, sustainable and competitive agriculture and forestry in thriving rural areas.

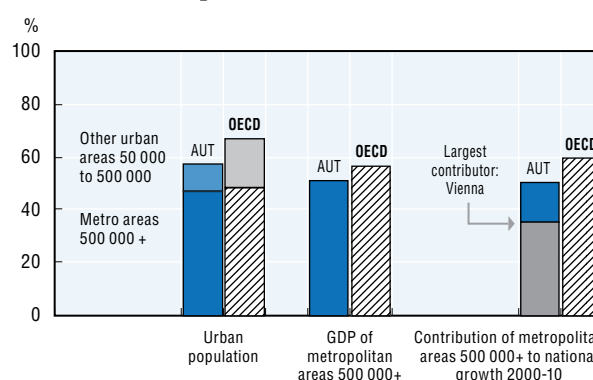
Regional disparities in unemployment trends



Unemployment rates vary between 2.5% in Tyrol and 7.9% in Vienna. The youth unemployment rate in Vienna reached 18% in 2012, twice the national average but, below the OECD average of 22%.

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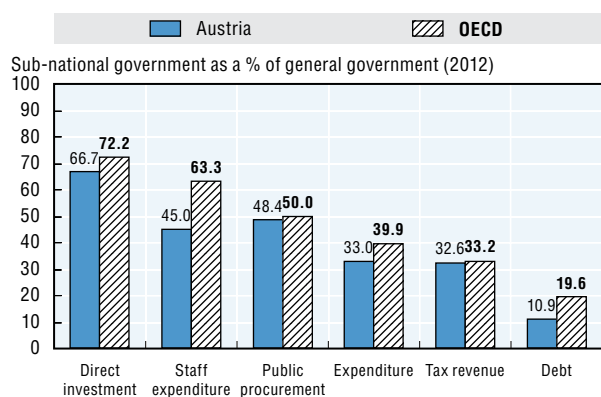
The importance of urban areas



In Austria, 58% of the population lives in cities of different sizes. The share of population in metropolitan areas (urban areas with more than 500 000 inhabitants) is 47%, compared to 49% in the OECD area.

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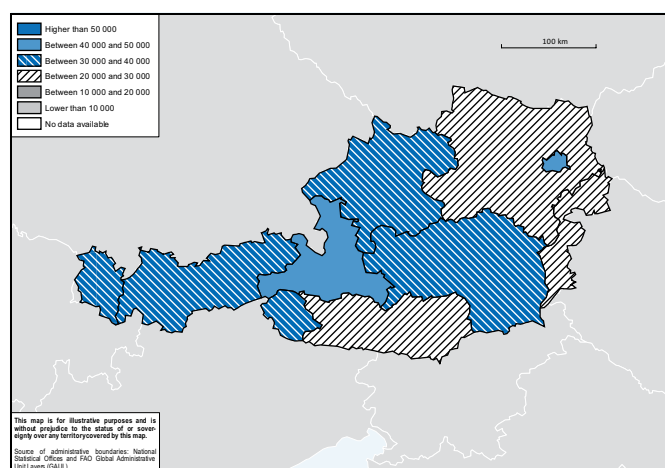
The role of sub-national governments in public finance



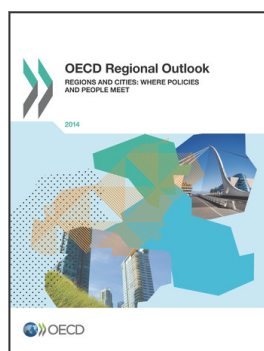
Health and social protection are the two largest spending items for SNGs in Austria: together they represent 42% of sub-national expenditure, compared to 30% in the OECD area.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933107351>

Regional differences in income levels



Between 2000 and 2010, Austria was the 2nd best OECD country in reduction of GDP per capita gap between the highest and the lowest region. In the previous decade, GDP growth in Austrian regions was above the OECD average, with the largest difference observed between Vorarlberg (+1.9% annually) and Carinthia (+1.2% annually).



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