

Foreword

This report for Austria forms part of the OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (also referred to as the School Resources Review, see Annex A for further details). The purpose of the review is to explore how school resources can be governed, distributed, utilised and managed to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. School resources are understood in a broad way, including financial resources (e.g. expenditures on education, school budget), physical resources (e.g. school infrastructure, computers), human resources (e.g. teachers, school leaders) and other resources (e.g. learning time).

Austria was one of the education systems which opted to participate in the country review strand and host a visit by an external review team. Members of the review team were Deborah Nusche (OECD), Thomas Radinger (OECD), Marius R. Busemeyer (University of Konstanz) and Henno Theisens (The Hague University for Applied Sciences). Deborah Nusche co-ordinated the review between January 2015 and January 2016 and Thomas Radinger co-ordinated the review between February and June 2016. The biographies of the members of the review team are provided in Annex B. This publication is the report of the review team. It provides, from an international perspective, an independent analysis of major issues facing the use of school resources in Austria, current policy initiatives, and possible future approaches. The report serves three purposes: i) to provide insights and advice to the Austrian education authorities; ii) to help other countries understand the Austrian approach to the use of school resources; and iii) to provide input for the final comparative analysis of the OECD School Resources Review.

The scope for analysis in this report includes public primary and lower secondary education (including Volksschule, Hauptschule/Neue Mittelschule and AHS Unterstufe). At the request of the Austrian authorities, the focus areas of the Review of School Resources in Austria were: i) funding and governance of school education; ii) organisation of the school offer; and iii) management of the teaching workforce. This report reflects the situation of the Austrian education system at the time of the review visit in June 2015. The review team provided the Austrian Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs (BMBWF) with an initial draft report at the beginning of November 2015 to inform the negotiations of the education reform commission comprised of representatives of the federal government and the provinces. The negotiations of the education reform commission resulted in a proposal for education reform that was presented 17 November 2015 and envisaged to be finalised by June 2016 (see Annex 1.1).

The involvement of Austria in the OECD review was co-ordinated by Bernhard Chabera and Andrea Schmölder of the Department of International Multilateral Affairs at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs. An important part of the involvement of Austria was the preparation of a comprehensive and informative country background report (CBR) on school resources authored by the Federal Institute for Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School System (BIFIE) and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS). The OECD review team is very grateful to the main authors of the CBR and to all those who assisted them in providing a high-quality informative document. The CBR is an important output from the OECD project in its

own right as well as an important source for the review team. Unless indicated otherwise, the data for this report are taken from the CBR. The CBR follows guidelines prepared by the OECD Secretariat and provides extensive information, analysis and discussion in regard to the national context, the organisation of the education system, the use of school resources and the views of key stakeholders. In this sense, the CBR and this report complement each other and should be read in conjunction for a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of school resource use in Austria.

The OECD and the European Commission (EC) have established a partnership for the project which partly covers participation costs of countries which are part of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. The participation of Austria was organised with the support of the EC in the context of this partnership.* The EC was part of the planning process of the review of Austria (providing comments on the Austrian CBR, participating in the preparatory visit and providing feedback on the planning of the review visit) and offered comments on drafts of this report. The involvement of the EC was co-ordinated by Klaus Körner, Country Desk Officer for Austria as regards education and training, working within the "Country Analysis" Unit of the Directorate for "Lifelong Learning: horizontal policy issues and 2020 strategy", which is part of the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission. The review team is grateful to Klaus Körner for his contribution to the planning of the review and for the helpful comments he provided on drafts of this report.

The review visit to Austria took place between 24 and 30 June 2015. The itinerary is provided in Annex C. The visit was designed by the OECD (with input from the EC) in collaboration with the Austrian authorities. It also involved a preparatory visit by the OECD Secretariat on 9-10 April 2015 with the participation of Klaus Körner from the EC. The review team met with Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs, and other officials of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs; the Ministry of Finance; Statistics Austria, the Chamber of Labour (AK), the Chamber of Economy (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ), the Federation of Austrian Industries, the Court of Audit, the Association of Municipalities, national Parents Associations, Teacher Unions and Pupil and Youth Associations, representatives of institutions providing initial teacher education, and researchers with an interest in the effectiveness of school resource use. The team also visited three provinces (Vienna, Salzburg and Burgenland) and six schools, interacting with the federal, provincial and municipal authorities responsible for school education as well school leaders, teachers, parents and students at each school. The intention was to provide the review team with a broad cross-section of information and opinions on school resource use and how its effectiveness can be improved.

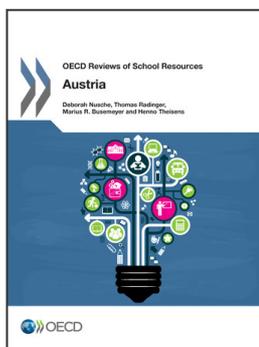
The OECD review team is grateful to the many people who gave time from their busy schedules to inform the review team of their views, experiences and knowledge. The meetings were open and provided a wealth of insights. The national co-ordinators Bernhard Chabera and Andrea Schmölder merit special words of appreciation for sharing their expertise and responding to the many questions of the review team. The courtesy and hospitality we experienced throughout our stay in Austria made our task as a review team as pleasant and enjoyable as it was stimulating and challenging. The OECD review team is also grateful to colleagues at the OECD, especially to Luka Boeskens for analytical support, to Eleonore Morena for key administrative, editorial and layout support and to Yuri Belfali for overall guidance.

This report is organised in four chapters. Chapter 1 provides the national context and background information on the Austrian school system. Chapters 2 to 4 look into three dimensions of

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resource use that were defined as priorities by Austria in collaboration with the OECD: the funding and governance of school education; the organisation of the school offer; and the management of the teaching workforce. Each chapter presents strengths, challenges and policy recommendations.

The policy recommendations attempt to build on and strengthen reforms that are already underway in Austria, and the strong commitment to further improvement that was evident among those the OECD review team met. The suggestions should take into account the difficulties that face any visiting group, no matter how well briefed, in grasping the complexity of the Austrian education system and fully understanding all the issues. This report is the responsibility of the review team. While the team benefited greatly from the Austrian CBR and other documents, as well as the many discussions with a wide range of Austrian personnel, any errors or misinterpretations in this report are the team's responsibility.



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