

Long-term and Cross-cutting Issues in European Governments and Parliaments

Austria

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Preface

This country report is one part of a comprehensive report presenting the results of an inquiry concerning the institutions, methods and procedures used by governments and parliaments throughout Europe for dealing with long-term and cross-cutting issues. The study was conducted by the *EURES institute* on behalf of the *Office for Technology Assessment of the German Parliament (TAB)*.

Especially the concept of `Sustainable Development` requires a long-term and cross-cutting perspective. Therefore governments and parliaments in many countries are looking for new approaches to deal with these issues. In this context the project aimed at collecting a wide range of information about the institutions and the methods used by them for tackling long-term and cross-cutting issues.

Consequently, this report can also be used as a handbook. It should foster an international exchange of information and experiences concerning these questions. We are confident that the provided information is of practical use for organisations and experts involved in long-term and cross-cutting issues. Unfortunately some parts of the report exist only in a German version. A desirable complete English translation would require to find a source for additional funding

This country report contains:

- A brief country profile (Kurzbericht) concerning (a) the general political framework (political system and political culture) and (b) a summary of the way the country basically tackles long-term and cross-cutting issues (German)
- A country study on long-term and cross-cutting issues prepared by a country expert (English)
- A compilation of detailed characterisations of long-term and cross-cutting institutions within the country (English)

More information both concerning the project and the other parts of the report is provided on <http://www.eures.de/r38>.

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10 Österreich

Fläche:	83.858 km ²
Einwohner:	8.072.000
Bruttosozialprodukt je Einwohner (1997) in US\$:	27.920

10.1 Kurzbericht

10.1.1 Übersicht

Das politische System Österreichs ist gekennzeichnet durch ein im europäischen Vergleich überdurchschnittliches Maß an Korporatismus. Dabei sind Verbände und Parteien stark miteinander verwoben. Die Einbeziehung der korporatistischen Interessen (in erster Linie Wirtschaftsverbände und Gewerkschaften) ist ein formales Element des politischen Entscheidungsprozesses.

Vor diesem Hintergrund ist der Politikprozess vergleichsweise ineffektiv und eher auf Kurzfristigkeit angelegt. Die adäquate Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen ist nur bedingt mit dem traditionellen Muster politischer Problemlösung kompatibel.

Der wichtigste Ansatz im Umgang mit Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen war die Entwicklung eines `Nationalen Umweltplanes` nach 1992. Von den anfänglich ehrgeizigen Zielsetzungen ist im Verlaufe des politischen Abstimmungsprozesses jedoch wenig übriggeblieben. Innovative Institutionalisierungen waren mit dem Plan letztlich nicht verbunden. Ein aktueller Anlauf zur Erarbeitung einer `Nationalen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie` steht noch am Beginn.

Österreich ist somit im Rahmen dieser Studie ein eher weniger interessantes Land. Eine weitergehende Analyse der Schwierigkeiten und Hemmnisse im Umgang mit Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen könnte jedoch möglicherweise interessante Erkenntnisse zutage fördern.

10.1.2 Der politische, kulturelle und institutionelle Kontext¹

Demokratietypus:	Konsensuell
Staatsoberhaupt/ Regierungssystem:	Präsident / Parlamentarische Demokratie
Partizipation ges. Interessen / Politikstil:	stark institutionalisierter Korporatismus / Konsensuell
Direktdemokratische Elemente:	Fakultatives Referendum (bei Verfassungsänderung) sowie Möglichkeit des Referendums bei Zustimmung des Parlamentes
Staatsaufbau / Stellung der subnationalen Ebenen:	Föderalistischer Staatsaufbau / geringer Einfluss der regionalen und lokalen Ebene
Politische Kultur:	Starker Korporatismus; Parteien- und Verbändestaat

Politisches System

Herausstechendes Merkmal der österreichischen Demokratie ist die starke personelle und institutionelle Verschränkung des politischen Systems mit den Vertretern der gesellschaftlichen Interessen. Gleichzeitig formiert sich das politisch-administrative System in hohem Maße

¹ Vgl. im folgenden v.a. Länderstudie Österreich; (Pelinka 1999).

entlang der Konfliktlinie Kapital/Arbeit. Aufgrund der zahlreichen Mechanismen des politischen Ausgleichs spricht man von einer ausgeprägten *Konsens-* oder *Konkordanzdemokratie*.

Der Bundespräsident wird direkt vom Volk gewählt und verfügt über verhältnismässig weitreichende politische Kompetenzen. Allerdings ist das Amt des Bundespräsidenten traditionell von einem weitgehenden Verzicht auf seine verfassungsmässigen Rechte gekennzeichnet, so dass in Österreich klar das parlamentarische Element dominiert.

Als Ort der exekutiven Gewalt kann damit die österreichische Bundesregierung bezeichnet werden. Traditionell vorherrschend war seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg die Regierungsbildung durch Große Koalition der beiden die zentralen Interessen (Kapital und Arbeit) vertretenden Parteien. Die Exekutive zeichnet sich somit durch eine vergleichsweise hohe Interessenheterogenität aus. Wichtigste Arena der Kompromissfindung ist somit die Regierung selbst. Dazu kommt, dass die Verfassung den korporativen Interessenvertreter innerhalb des Gesetzgebungsverfahrens weitreichende Einfluss- und Mitwirkungsmöglichkeiten zubilligt. Hier erfolgt ein weiterer Interessenab- und -ausgleich.

Das österreichische Parlament teilt sich in Nationalrat und Bundesrat, wobei die Länderkammer - der Bundesrat – über eine ausserordentlich schwache Stellung verfügt. Dem Nationalrat fallen die üblichen Gesetzgebungs- und Kontrollfunktionen zu. Dabei ist die Aufteilung des Parteienspektrums in zwei „Lager“ im Parlament wiederzufinden (allerdings mit Auflockerungstendenzen seit Ende der 80er Jahre). Vor diesem Hintergrund agiert das Parlament weniger als eigenständiges politisches Organ denn als „Vollstreckungsinstanz“ der von Bundesregierung und korporativen Akteuren aufwendig ausgehandelten Vorlagen.

Der österreichische Korporatismus ist im europäischen Vergleich überdurchschnittlich ausgeprägt. Besondere Merkmale sind: (1) Die enge Verschränkung von Parteien und Verbänden, (2) ein dichter Organisationsgrad der Verbände, der sich zum einen in verhältnismässig hohen Mitgliederzahlen, aber auch in einem umfassenden System von Kammern mit gesetzlicher Pflichtmitgliedschaft äußert sowie (3) weitreichende Mitentscheidungsmöglichkeiten innerhalb des politischen Prozesses (s.o.). Der *Politikstil* ist *konsensorientiert*.

Der Föderalismus ist zwar in der österreichischen Verfassung verankert, de facto sind aber die Bundeskompetenzen so umfassend, dass der politische Handlungsspielraum der Bundesländer und der Gemeinden gering ist. Für diesen Befund spricht ebenfalls, dass der Bundesrat als Länderkammer eine deutlich untergeordnete Rolle im Institutionengefüge Österreichs spielt.

Politische Kultur

Aufgrund der weitgehenden (auch personellen) Verschränkung der verschiedenen demokratischen Institutionen (Parteien, Fraktionen, Regierung, Interessenverbände) lässt sich Österreich als ausgesprochener Parteien- und Verbändestaat charakterisieren.

Diese traditionelle Verbundenheit der politischen Akteure hat zur Bildung von verhältnismässig stabilen „policy-communities“ mit starken Verflechtungen und persönlichen Bekanntschaften geführt. Unter diesen Bedingungen kann ein hohes Maß an politischer und gesellschaftlicher Stabilität und Konfliktlösungskapazität erzielt werden. Gleichzeitig findet jedoch in solchen über lange Zeiträume stabilen policy-communities auch eine Art politischer „Sozialisation“ statt, die dazu führt, dass politisch brisante Themen von der Agenda ferngehalten und lediglich bestimmte Formen der politischen Problemlösung reproduziert werden. In der Folge zeichnen sich diese Strukturen durch ein geringes Maß an politischer Innovation, Lernfähigkeit und Transparenz aus. Die Effektivität des politischen Systems kann als unterdurchschnittlich angesehen werden. Politik findet in kleinen Schritten statt.

In Österreich äußert sich dieses an einer seit ca. 10 Jahren zu beobachtenden politischen Veränderungsdynamik, die letztlich auf einer wachsenden gesellschaftlichen Unzufriedenheit fußt. Die Gesellschaft ist einem tiefgreifenden sozio-ökonomischen Wandel unterzogen, den die Institutionen und Akteure der korporativen Konkordanzdemokratie nur unzureichend zu bewältigen in der Lage sind. Die Mitgliedschaft in der EU seit 1995 hat diese Dynamik noch einmal verschärft. Die traditionellen Trennungslinien des Parteien- und Verbändestaats werden dabei zunehmend als problemunangemessen in Frage gestellt. Offensichtlichster Ausfluss dieser Entwicklung ist die sukzessive Auflockerung des Parteiensystems mit bemerkenswerten Erfolgen auch für vergleichsweise radikale politische Richtungen.

10.1.3 Die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen

Entwicklung

Bis weit in die 80er Jahre hinein wurden Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen in erster Linie innerhalb der Institutionen des Parteien- und Verbändestaats behandelt. Seit etwa Mitte der 80er Jahre ist eine Erweiterung des Parteienspektrums – Platzierung der Grünen, wachsende Bedeutung der FPÖ – sowie eine zunehmende Abkehr von den etablierten politischen Institutionen zu konstatieren. Damit sind auch Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen immer mehr auch außerhalb der korporativen Strukturen zu finden.

Wie in zahlreichen anderen europäischen Ländern hat auch in Österreich die aufkommende Debatte um nachhaltige Entwicklung im Gefolge der Rio-Konferenz zu einem Impuls im Hinblick auf die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen geführt:

Nach UNCED wurden auf Basis der Initiative des Umweltministeriums zur Erarbeitung eines `Nationalen Umweltplans` Arbeitsgruppen aus Vertretern verschiedener Ministerien, Forschungsinstitutionen und Sozialpartnern eingesetzt. 1997 folgte - nach regierungsinterner und sozialpartnerschaftlicher Abstimmungsprozesse - die Verabschiedung des Plans im Parlament. Die Hoffnungen vieler Beteiligter, mit dem `Nationalen Umweltplan` ein ehrgeiziges, die Regierungspolitik im Hinblick auf eine Langzeit- und Querschnittsorientierung bindendes Instrument entwickeln zu können, wurden jedoch weitgehend enttäuscht.

Ein weiterer Versuch, nachhaltige Entwicklung als politisches Leitbild zu etablieren, ist die momentane Bemühung des Umweltministeriums zur Erarbeitung einer `Nationalen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie`. V.a. in Bezug auf die Querschnittsorientierung soll diese über die Reichweite des `Nationalen Umweltplans` insofern hinausgehen als sie nachhaltige Entwicklung als integratives Konzept bestehend aus ökologischen, ökonomischen und sozialen Anforderungen versteht.

Gesellschaftliche Akteure

Relevanz der gesellschaftlichen Akteure im Hinblick auf Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen

Nationales Parlament	● ●
Nationale Regierung	● ● ●
Medien / Öffentliche Debatte	● ● ● ●
Forscher und Forschungsinstitutionen	● ● ● ● ●
NGOs	● ● ● ● ●
Unabhängige Stiftungen / Think Tanks	● ● ● ● ●
Wirtschaft	● ●
Gewerkschaften	● ●
Regionale Regierungen und Institutionen	●
Europäische Union	● ● ● ● ●
OECD	● ● ● ●
Weltbank	● ● ●
andere internationale Organisationen	● ● ●

Bewertung: Michael Schmidt

Interesse gesellschaftlicher Gruppen an Langzeit- und Querschnittsthemen

	<i>Umweltthemen</i>	<i>Soziale Entwicklungen</i>	<i>Technologische Entwicklungen</i>	<i>Strukturelle ökonomische Entwicklungen</i>	<i>Nachhaltige Entwicklung (integrierter Ansatz)</i>
Öffentlichkeit	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ●
Forschung	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Parlament	● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ●
Regierung	●	● ●	●	● ●	● ●

Bewertung: Michael Schmidt

Unter den Bedingungen eines vergleichsweise starren und innovationsfeindlichen politischen Systems spielen Regierung und Parlament bei der Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen eine eher untergeordnete Rolle. Von dieser Seite sind letztlich wenig Impulse zu erwarten.

Forschungsinstitutionen und NGO's sind dagegen wichtige Akteure, die versuchen, von außerhalb des sozialpartnerschaftlichen Politikprozesses die politische Agenda zu beeinflussen. Gerade Neue Soziale Bewegungen haben es jedoch nicht leicht, politische Entscheidungen in ihrem Sinne zu gestalten, da sie in der Regel kein Teil der korporativen Politikzirkel sind und sie somit nur unzureichend Zugang zum politischen System haben.

Bemerkenswerterweise kann die staatliche Administration vielfach als verhältnismäßig progressiver Akteur bezeichnet werden. Diese war lange Zeit durch Proporz und Patronage geprägt und damit Spiegelbild der österreichischen Interessenverschränkung. Seit geraumer Zeit bricht dieses System jedoch an vielen Stellen auf – auch weil „neue“ Politikfelder wie `Umweltpolitik` oder `Technologiepolitik` nicht ohne weiteres in die Verantwortung eines der korporativen Blöcke fallen. Hier bilden sich also zunehmend Interessenkoalitionen und Netzwerke quer zu den traditionellen Trennlinien der österreichischen Politik.

Schwierigkeiten und Hemmnisse

Politische Entscheidungen in Österreich sind unzusammenhängend und an den Interessen der am Politikprozess beteiligten Akteure ausgerichtet. Das politische System ist gekennzeichnet durch exklusive policy-communities, die neue Themenstellungen, insbesondere wenn sie quer zu den etablierten Zuständigkeiten und Interessengegensätzen liegen, nur schwer aufnehmen und bearbeiten können. Mit dieser Struktur sind Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen nur bedingt kompatibel.

Unter diesen Voraussetzungen werden diese in erster Linie von außen an das politische System herangetragen. Für nicht in den Politikprozess einbezogene gesellschaftliche Interessen stellt sich das österreichische System jedoch eher geschlossen dar.

10.1.4 Ansätze, Organisationen und Erfahrungen

Der zentrale Ansatz zur Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen ist der 1997 verabschiedete `Nationale Umweltplan`. Die Erarbeitung und Umsetzung des Plans ist jedoch nicht mit gesonderten Institutionalisierung der Langzeit- und Querschnittsorientierung verbunden.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung ist der `Österreichische Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung` (ÖRNE) etabliert worden. Ihm fällt allerdings in erster Linie die Koordinierung und Forcierung der kommunalen Anstrengungen zur „Lokalen Agenda 21“ zu.

In die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen sind aufgrund ihrer im europäischen Vergleich sehr großen Bedeutung auch die sozialpartnerschaftlichen Institutionen involviert. Obgleich sie nicht zu den Institutionen zählen, auf die diese Studie vornehmlich abzielt, sind sie unter den österreichischen Bedingungen doch erwähnenswert. Zu nennen sind v.a. die `Wirtschaftskammer Österreich` (WKÖ) sowie die `Bundesarbeitskammer`.

Besondere Bedeutung kommt den Forschungs- und Beratungsinstitutionen in Österreich zu. Direkte Verbindung zur Regierung hat dabei das `Institut für Technikfolgenabschätzung` (ITA). Weitere in diesem Zusammenhang nennenswerte Organisationen sind: `Das `Österreichische Forschungszentrum Seibersdorf` (ÖfzS), das `Institut für höhere Studien` (IHS), `Johaneum Research` sowie die `Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften`.

Vergleichender Überblick über die Institutionen

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Abkürzung</i>	<i>Abkürzung (englisch)</i>	<i>Bedeutung</i>	<i>Innovationsgrad</i>
Bundesarbeitskammer	BAK		X X X X X	X
Global 2000 (NGO)			X	X X X
Institut für höhere Studien	IHS		X X X	X X X
Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften	ÖAW		X X X	X X
Österreichisches Forschungszentrum Seibersdorf	ÖfzS	ARCS	X X	X X X
Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung	WIFO		X X X	X X X
Wirtschaftskammer Österreich	WKÖ		X X X X X	X

Bewertung: Michael Schmidt

Genannte Institutionen mit detaillierter Beschreibung

Bundesarbeitskammer
IHS, Institut für höhere Studien
ITA, Institut für Technikfolgenabschätzung
ÖAW, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften
OeFZS, Oesterreichisches Forschungszentrum Seibersdorf
WIFO, Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung
WKÖ, Wirtschaftskammer Österreich

Weitere genannte Institutionen

EVA, Energieverwertungsagentur
FORBA, Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt
IFZ, Interuniversitäres Forschungszentrum für Technik, Arbeit und Kultur
Institut für Gestaltungs- und Wirkungsforschung, Technische Universität Wien
Joanneum Research Forschungsgesellschaft mbH
ÖÖI, Österreichisches Ökologieinstitut für angewandte Umweltforschung
ZSI, Zentrum für soziale Innovation

10.1.5 Fazit

Die Behandlung von Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen in Österreich folgt dem Muster des traditionellen korporatistischen Politikprozesses. Die Notwendigkeit der Kompromissfindung insbesondere innerhalb der Regierung sowie zwischen Regierung und Sozialpartnern führt in der Regel eher zu kurzfristigen Lösungen und zu einer Externalisierung der Folgen und Risiken.

Auch wenn seit geraumer Zeit Auflockerungserscheinungen innerhalb der Gesellschaft und des politischen Systems zu verzeichnen sind, bleibt doch der Befund einer vergleichsweise geringen Innovationsfähigkeit des politischen Systems Österreichs in Bezug auf Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen. Die Debatte um nachhaltige Entwicklung hat in diesem Zusammenhang zwar zu einem grundsätzlichen Impuls geführt, die starren und eher auf Kurzfristigkeit ausgerichteten politischen Entscheidungsstrukturen jedoch nicht grundsätzlich verändert.

Langzeit- und Querschnittsinstitutionen, die als besonders innovativ gelten können, finden sich in Österreich kaum. Insofern ist das Land im Hinblick auf die Zielsetzung dieser Studie als weniger interessant einzustufen. Dennoch könnte eine weitergehende Analyse der Schwierigkeiten und Hemmnisse im Umgang mit Langzeit- und Querschnittsfragen in Österreich insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund des dominanten Elementes des `Korporatismus` aufschlussreich sein.

10.2 Steven Ney / Michael Schmidt: The Austrian Policy Process: Continuity and Change. Approaches Towards a More Sustainable Development in Austrian Policy Making

10.2.1 Introduction

Understanding the way Austrian policy-makers deal with cross-cutting policy issues implies looking at the institutional mechanics of the Austrian policy process as a whole. While this may be true for many continental European polities, it is particularly true for post-war Austria where the type of institutional configuration political scientists refer to as 'corporatism' or 'neo-corporatism' (Schmitter and Lehbruch, 1979) has found near perfection.

In the following, we will briefly outline the corporatist institutional structures that determine issue definition, agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy implementation in Austria. What is more, the paper will look at the dominant policy style, meaning the formal and informal norms and practices, that characterise Austrian policy-making (Section 2). After providing a general outline of the organisational and ideational context in which Austrian policy-makers operate, we will examine the way in which they have approached cross-cutting policy issues. Specifically, we will look at environmental policy and sustainability (Section Three). In the final section, we will provide a short assessment of how Austrian policy-makers have dealt with cross-cutting issues and how this is likely to change in the future.

Without giving too much away, we can point to (what at first glance appears to be) a paradox of Austrian policy-making. On the one hand, the fairly rigid organisational set-up of the Austrian policy process provides a high degree of continuity: not only is pool of potential institutional actors small, the fluctuation of personnel within these organisations is also rather limited. Thus, conditions for the emergence of highly cohesive policy communities (Richardson 1996; Rhodes 1990) are ideal. On the other hand, it is precisely the tightly knit, ideologically cohesive policy communities that appear incapable of adequately tackling long-term and cross-cutting issues.

This inability to deal with new policy issues is a symptom of what we consider to be the relative decline of the Austrian policy-making model in the face of socio-economic and socio-cultural change. The Austrian polity is currently undergoing major changes, even though the pace may seem glacial. The changes point towards a break-up of the highly integrated policy communities and the consensual policy-style they have given rise to.

10.2.2 The General Institutional Context in Austria: Neo-Corporatism in Transition

Although corporatist and neo-corporatist concepts (Schmitter, 1974; Lehbruch and Schmitter, 1979) provide a somewhat limited analytical framework for studying liberal democracies in general, they do, however, help us understand the specificities of Austrian policy-making (Parsons, 1995). What, then, does corporatism entail? Philippe Schmitter (1974) defines 'corporatism'

"...as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organised into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered categories, recognised or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders, and articulation of demands and supports" (Schmitter, 1974 quoted in Parsons, 1995: p.257).

What types of interests does the corporatist system institutionalise? In general, corporatist systems organise policy-making in terms of dominant cleavages of industrial societies: that is,

corporatist systems provide the institutional framework for mediating between the state, capital, and labour.

Up until about a decade ago, this cleavage permeated just about every aspect of Austrian society. Institutions, no matter what their nominal affiliation or function, unambiguously fell on one or the other side of the corporatist divide. Thus, Austrian corporatism politicised society while simultaneously socialising politics.

How does this pan out in terms of actual institutions in the Austrian policy process?

The Main Actors and the Special Role of Government and Parliament

The Austrian polity houses five sets of different policy actors.

The Government

Like in any other country, the formal responsibility for governing lies with the government of the day. Since Austria ostensibly is a parliamentary democracy, the Austrian government emerges from the relative power balance between political parties within the lower house of the Austrian parliament (the *Nationalrat*).

The Austrian party system currently reflects both continuity and change. Traditionally, the two major parties roughly reflected the institutionalised social cleavages of the corporatist system. Here, the Social-Democratic Party of Austria (*SPÖ*) was the political articulation of labour whereas the Austrian People's Party (*ÖVP*) more or less politically represented capital. More recently, however, the Green Party (*Die Grünen*) and the ultra-right, crypto-fascist Freedom Party (*FPÖ*) have come to represent those voices who have been excluded from corporatist policy processes.

Since, like many continental polities, the Austrian voting system contains elements of proportional representation, no party since the early 1980s has been able to form a government by itself. What is more, up until very recently, the corporatist societal compromise was also reflected in government: from 1986 until 2000, a grand coalition of *SPÖ* and *ÖVP* governed Austria.

At present, the Austrian government consists of a coalition between the right-wing *ÖVP* and the ultra-right wing *FPÖ*.

The Federal State Bureaucracy

Despite a similar federal structure, regional governments play a relatively small role in the policy process (unlike, say, in Germany). The policy-relevant bureaucratic structures, then, are the federal ministries. Austrian federal ministries closely resemble state bureaucracies in any other continental European country, that is they are organised along 'Weberian' lines. Specifically, this implies that:

- ministries are staffed by professional career civil servants;
- ministries are structured hierarchically;
- ministries are legitimised legalistically.

Additionally, however, the Austrian state bureaucracy developed an intricate system of corporatist patronage (called *Proporz*) after World War II. Ostensibly intended to bar Nazis from public office, the (unofficial) system required that all civil servants (regardless of seniority or position) commit to one of the two corporatist blocs. In practice, this has meant that both entry

and advancement in the Austrian civil service is conditional on membership in either the social-democrat or conservative party.

Corporatist patronage also emerges at the institutional level. In the past, this has meant that entire federal ministries 'belonged' either to the socialists or the conservatives. In general, the parties distributed the ministries according to the interests of the corporatist blocs: that is, the ministries dealing with social policy, industrial policy, etc. were associated with the socialists while ministries with economic and business portfolios usually were under conservative patronage.

Increasingly, this system of '*Proporz*' has come under attack. Politically, the constituencies (often explicitly) excluded from the system (such as the ultra-right FPÖ) have, unsurprisingly, claimed that the system amounts to little more than political nepotism and petty corruption. By pointing to the alleged political inefficiencies and undemocratic nature of corporatist patronage, parties on both ends of the political spectrum have been able to mobilise considerable portions of the Austrian electorate. Arguably, Jörg Haider's success rests on his ability to skilfully point out the political, economic and democratic deficits that result from Austrian corporatist patronage.

More importantly, however, the change in policy-making itself has significantly contributed to undermining the Austrian '*Proporz*' system of patronage. Like elsewhere, the expansion of state responsibilities in Austria has gone hand in glove with increasing state fragmentation. Today, Austrian federal ministries are far more heterogeneous organisations in terms of function and composition than two decades ago. What is more, as in other polities, new policy challenges (such as those cross-cutting issues that are the subject of this essay) have given rise to policy networks and policy communities that cut across formal ministerial boundaries. Furthermore, it is difficult to clearly ascribe responsibility for the more recent policy challenges (such as the environment, S&T, or technological risk) to one or the other corporatist bloc. This leads to such curious situations in which neither bloc feels responsible for picking up a potential policy issue (such as environmental issues up to the mid 1980s, therefore allowing the rise of the green party) or both blocs claim responsibility for a policy area (such as Science and Technology, see below).

The Social Partnership

The social partnership is at the heart of the Austrian corporatist state. Not only does it institutionally embody the post-war corporatist compromise, it also is the locus of Austrian policy-making.

Although the social partnership has no formal constitutional basis, the social partners are institutions of public law. Ostensibly, they represent different socio-economic classes: the most important social partners are the Chambre of Commerce (*Wirtschaftskammer*), the Chambre of Labour (*Arbeiterkammer*), and the Agricultural Chambre (*Landwirtschaftskammer*)². Everyone who participates in the Austrian labour market (regardless of nationality) is member of at least one chambre and is subject to a pay-roll tax.

Like any self-administered professional body, the Austrian social partners are responsible for regulating their particular profession. Unlike professional bodies elsewhere, Austrian social

2 There are countless chambres representing social-classes, estates, and professions. In terms of policy-making, however, these three institutions are the most important. It is these three chambres that are represented in policy-making gremia, most notably the Beirat für sozial-und wirtschaftspolitische Fragen, which for many years functioned as a de facto government. The other chambres concentrate on more traditional functions such as regulating and policing the particular profession.

partners have been an integral part of the policy-process since World War II. Their roles includes consultation, policy formulation, issue definition and decision-making. Although their significance has been in decline for over a decade, the Austrian social partnership is still a major political force: representatives of the different chambers continue to populate consultative and decision-making bodies.

The Parliament

The Austrian Parliament traditionally has been completely dominated by the social partners. Up until very recently most members of parliament could easily be attributed to certain groups within the political parties which, in turn, were connected to one of the social partners. The independence of the individual members was therefore severely limited. Since the mid 1980s the percentage of members related to one of the social partners has been steadily declining but the institution as such still does not play the same important role in the policy process as in many other democratic states. Because of its history of being nearly insignificant there is still very little co-operation with other institutions like ministries.

Interest Representation

Above and beyond the social partnership, we can also find more 'conventional' forms of interest representation in Austria. Formally, these differ very little from pressure groups in other countries. In addition to groups representing more traditional interests, such as, most notably, the plethora of trade unions (under the umbrella of the Trade Union Congress, the *ÖGB*) or business related pressure groups (most notably the *Industriellenvereinigung*), the last two decades have seen the rise of groups representing so-called new social movements (most notably environmental pressure groups such as *Greenpeace* and *Global 2000* or, more recently, the *Demokratische Offensive*).

The more traditional interest groups, that is groups representing labour or business interests, maintain very close ties to the corresponding social partner organisations and political parties. Interlocking membership (particularly at management level) and close policy coordination ensure that the organisations operating within one of the two corporatist blocs are seen to act in unison. In that sense, then, the boundaries between the different institutional actors in Austria have become increasingly blurred: in the past, it was not uncommon for a member of the Austrian parliament to hold (and exercise) offices in other leading organisations (such as, typically, trade unions and social partner institutions). The proximity of the government to social partner organisations, political parties and interest groups in Austria is so close³ that policy-makers have great difficulties in credibly dispelling repeated allegations of nepotism, favouritism, and corruption. What is more, the interlocking nature of the Austrian corporatist political system has effectively undermined constitutional checks and balances.

The General Policy Process in Austria

How, then, do these policy actors interact in the policy process?

At a very general level, the Austrian policy process follows a synoptically rational sequence of stages. In interviews, Austrian policy-makers described the policy process as follows:

- *Issue definition*: in general, the government picks up policy issues and policy problems from society as a whole. They instruct the responsible ministerial civil servants to formulate a first policy draft. Here, the state bureaucracy will define and filter the issue at hand.

³ This is probably less true now than it has been in the past.

- *Consultation process:* The draft is then released into the corporatist policy community for comment and consultation. In the past, this has meant that relevant fora within the social partnership, the interest groups (particularly unions and business interests), as well as independent experts deliberate and comment the policy draft. In practice, this consultation process is an essential element of policy formulation. In this phase, the two corporatist blocs state their 'demands' and outline the conditions in which they will support the policy.
- *Government deliberation:* This, in essence, is the decision-making phase. At this stage, the government attempts to harmonise the (often contradictory) demands of the different social partners. It is here that much of the political 'horse-trading' takes place. What is more, in the past this 'horse-trading' took place behind closed doors in proverbially 'smoke-filled rooms'. As the significance of the social partnership declines, however, the conflicts between social partners and the government are increasingly becoming the subject of public scrutiny.
- *Parliamentary Ratification:* By the time a policy proposal is put to the vote in the Austrian parliament, policy actors have taken all important decisions pertaining to the policy. The bill enters parliament in such a form that both corporatist blocs (who up until very recently constituted the parliamentary majority) are seen to act in consensus. In the past, parliament has merely rubber stamped the outcome of the deliberative process between the social partners: as a rule, a policy proposal that does not have the consent of the wider social partnership, is not put to the vote⁴.

Austrian Policy Style

The institutional structure of the Austrian policy-process has given rise to a specific set of policy norms and practices.

In general, policy-making in Austria is incremental and disjointed. Since policy-makers need to elicit consent from the social partners, policy change tends to be piecemeal based on the lowest common political denominator. What is more, policy issues and policy problems in Austria are highly recurrent: the disjointed and incremental approach means that policy merely provides short-term or, at best, medium-term amelioration of the underlying problem. The rigid interest constellations within the social partnership in conjunction with the *de facto* veto powers of organised interest make more radical policy changes politically unfeasible. Policy, if it is to pass the social partnership, needs to secure consensus across the corporatist divide. In order to produce any policy output at all, Austrian policy-makers have to 'fly by the seat of their pants': political considerations often crowd out more objective basis for policy.

The Austrian policy-style, then, strongly resembles the mode of policy-making identified by scholars such as Charles Lindblom (1959, 1965) or Aaron Wildavsky (1974). However, whereas these researchers sought to describe the way US policy-makers deal with a multi-venue, multi-actor polity, the Austrian incrementalism does not emerge from excessive pluralism. On the contrary, the Austrian policy process has, in the past, been highly exclusionary: the number of institutional actors is clearly delimited, the barriers to entry both at institutional and at individual level are exceptionally high, and there is small turnover of leading policy-makers.

The incremental and conservative nature of policy-making, rather, emerges from the organisational and ideational structures of Austrian policy communities. In general, any type of tightly knit policy community is likely to develop an incremental, consensus-seeking and conservative policy style. Two socio-institutional forces drive policy communities in this

⁴ Again, this is arguably less true now. The new coalition government between the ÖVP and the ultra-right FPÖ has circumvented the social partnership in many of the more controversial policy issues (e.g. pensions policy). However, it is too soon to say with any certainty whether this is an enduring change in Austrian policy style or merely a blip.

direction. Whereas the high institutional barriers to entry restrict the potential pool of dissenting institutional voices, the continuity of policy-actors over a long-time period socialises individuals into the policy community. As a result, Jordan (1990) argue, as policy actors cohere emotively and ideologically, policy-makers develop exchange relationships

“...in which policy-makers in both government and groups share an interest in the avoidance of sudden policy change. Working together [they] learned what kind of change was feasible and what would so embarrass the other members of the ‘system’ as to be unproductive. Members of the system begin to debate in the same language and arguments are treated seriously only when discussed on these common criteria” (Jordan, 1990, pp. 325-326).

In specific policy areas, the Austrian corporatist system has given rise to these cohesive policy communities⁵.

These policy communities have instituted what Jeremy Richardson (1996) calls ‘the politics of the piddling’ in key policy areas such as social policy, economic policy, or industrial policy. Austrian policy communities have successfully minimised surprises in policy-making (thereby, some argue, foregoing institutional innovation): Austrian policy communities ensure predictability of policy proposals, policy responses, bargaining positions, bargaining itself, and, most significantly, policy outputs (if not policy outcomes). In short, much of Austrian policy-making is like ballroom dancing: no matter what the precise piece of music, the partners follow a set repertoire of steps. Sudden and unplanned changes to these steps are likely to lead little more than to sore toes and a very unhappy partner.

In sum, policy change in Austria takes place in small steps at (what some commentators call) a glacial pace. The structural and ideational realities of Austrian corporatism mean that Austrian policy-makers can merely react to policy issues (since rigid interest structures do not allow for forward-looking policy) and have to base this policy response on consensus (due to the *de facto* veto power of the social partners). In terms of Richardson’s (1982) typology of policy styles, the Austrian policy style is located in quadrant 2 of Figure 1.

5 The colloquial Austrian term for such a close policy community is, suitably enough, a mountaineering term: “Seilschaften”.

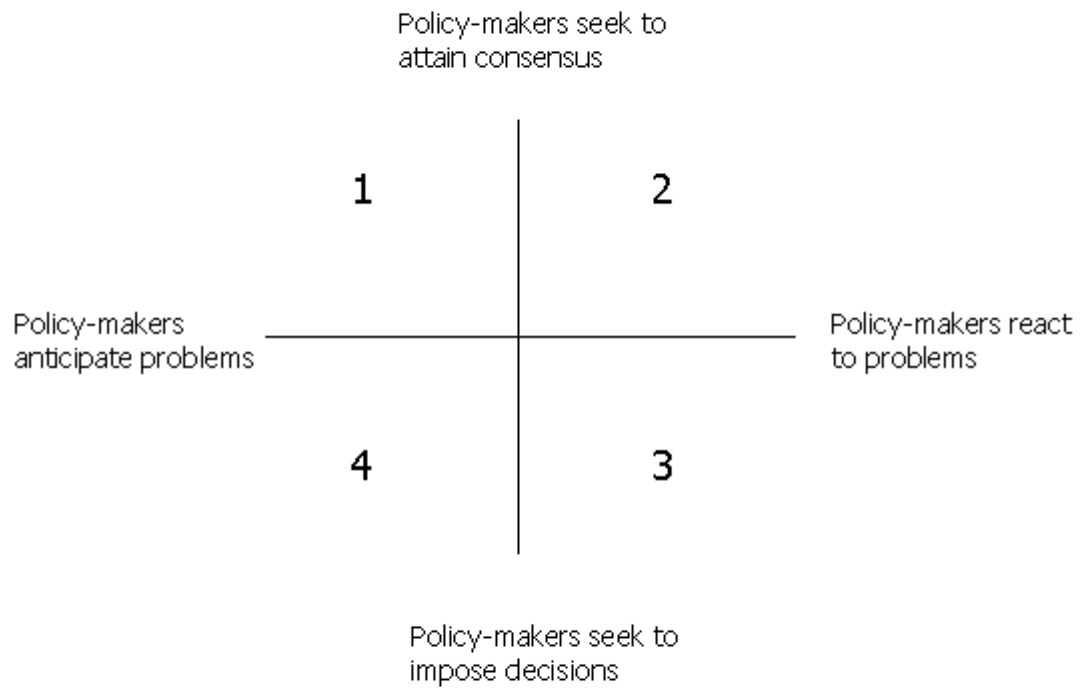


Figure 1 Dimensions of policy style (Richardson 1982)

Change

However, like many European polities the Austrian political system has undergone structural and ideational change in the past decade and half.

Short-Term Changes

The most prominent expression of these changes is the new coalition government (between the ÖVP and the FPÖ) itself. For the first time in nearly 30 years, the socialist party is not directly a member of the Austrian government⁶. Part of the recent electoral success of the far-right FPÖ is based on Haider's campaigning of pointing to the sclerotic tendencies of Austrian corporatism and portraying himself as the solution.

In the short- and medium-run, this new power constellation may potentially cause fundamental changes to Austrian governance. In the short time that the new government has been in office, it is already clear that policy-makers are circumventing conventional institutional channels and are disregarding established policy practices. For example, in order to pass the controversial pension reform, the new government simply ignored the established policy venues of the social partnership and created (and staffed) their own consultative committee. Furthermore, the new government is less worried about achieving consensus among the social partners and more willing to use parliamentary majorities to impose policy (thus shifting from quadrant 2 to either 3 or 4 in Figure 1).

However, it is unclear at this point to what extent these changes are of a permanent nature. A plausible line of argument maintains that the corporatist system will co-opt the new policy-making style: in time, the new government will learn to dance the corporatist waltz.

Long-Term Changes

Although it is unlikely that the FPÖ will as dramatic an impact on Austrian policy practices as it claims⁷, general socio-economic changes will, in the long-run, undermine the structural and ideational integrity of the corporatist system. We can list the changes as follows:

Internal Challenges and Changes:

- *Structural:* Like many industrialised countries, Austrian socio-economic structures are undergoing rapid, profound, and sustained change: labour markets are adjusting to new demands from a more international economy; household compositions are changing due to altered demographic and cultural realities; enterprise structures are transforming, and technology (like anywhere else) has changed the way Austrians go about their business. In a very real sense, these changes undermine the legitimacy of corporatist policy-making institutions. Designed to serve an industrial society, corporatist structures are becoming less relevant to an increasing number of Austrian citizens.
- *Ideationally:* Changes in Austrian socio-economic structures have given rise to changes in the way many Austrians perceive the world. Although socio-cultural shifts may have been less pronounced in Austria than elsewhere in Europe (e.g. in Germany or Britain), Austrian society has become far more ideologically heterogeneous in the past decade and a half. For example, environmentalism as a political movement has done exceptionally well,

⁶ Although the SPÖ still is the strongest party in Austria.

⁷ Indeed, the FPÖ is currently having to contend with serious allegations of professional misconduct, (not so petty) corruption, and abuse of public office.

stealing votes from both established parties. What is more, the diversification of socio-cultural world-views has meant an increase in social cleavages. In today's Austria, social distance is no longer primarily a function of income⁸. Thus, the social cleavages institutionalised by Austrian corporatism no longer reflect the diversity of socio-cultural worldviews within society.

External Challenges and Changes:

- *EU Membership:* The most significant change in the Austrian polity was joining the EU in 1995. EU membership has opened the Austrian system to a whole new level of policy-making replete with a new set of highly pluralist policy actors. Not only does the EU provide common policy definitions and policy instruments, it has provided the means for the Austrian state bureaucracy to break up highly integrated policy communities. Moreover, exposure to different types of policy communities at European level or at Member State level has brought Austrian policy-makers into contact with different policy styles.
- *The Opening of Eastern Europe:* Many commentators agree that Austrian policy-makers, despite political rhetoric to the contrary, have not taken full advantage of the opportunities that the fall of the Iron Curtain has offered Austria. However, the impending eastern extension of the EU has caused significant shifts in alignment within Austria. Whereas before, the right-wing, business-friendly side of the corporatist divide was associated with nationalism and xenophobia, the (somewhat exaggerated) threat of low cost eastern European labour has driven social-democratic labour organisations to singing the praises of immigration control and ethnic labour market barriers.
- *Globalisation:* The international flow of capital and the increasing trend to foreign capital ownership will, in the long-run, also undermine corporatist institutions. New structures of ownership, with their emphasis of labour and capital mobility, are at odds with corporatist interest representation.

10.2.3 The Austrian Approach to Treating Long-term and Transversal Issues Related to Sustainable Development

During the period between World War II and the late 1960s long term and cross-cutting issues were almost entirely dealt with by the Austrian Social Partners. Since the political changes of the 1980s and the emergence of two new political parties the pressure on politicians to come up with short term success stories has somewhat increased. By the same token the treatment of cross-cutting issues has also become more difficult. Whereas in the traditional system the same social partners would be represented on all levels of government, guaranteeing instant co-ordination, now there are starting to be many more different groups pursuing a number different goals. The growing number of obligations from international agreements is further limiting the scope of possible strategies for long term policy making. Still there is enough continuity within the state bureaucracy to develop surprisingly ambitious long term concepts with potentially far reaching implications.

Adopted Approaches and Difficulties

The two approaches presented below were both developed by the Austrian Ministry of the Environment under the heading of "sustainability". Both of them are designed to make a long

⁸ Proponents of the Austrian corporatist system (justifiably) point out that this is one of the major achievements of the post-war socio-economic system.

term impact and both of them are based on the notion that the desired outcomes can only be achieved through the co-operation of several institutions from all levels of government.

The Austrian National Plan for the Environment ("Nationaler Umweltplan")

The conceptual work on the Austrian National Plan for the Environment (NUP) was started after the Rio Conference in 1992 on the basis of an initiative by the Austrian Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry created seven expert working groups with participants from other ministries, researchers and social partners. The eventual goal was to devise a long-term strategy for moving towards a sustainable development. More specifically, the tasks of the working groups included

- the adoption of a cross-cutting approach to improving sustainability;
- the definition of quantitative and qualitative long-term objectives related to the state of the environment;
- realistic measures for the achievement of environment related objectives;
- medium and long term concepts for the implementation of the suggested measures;
- making the NUP an integral part of any relevant political discourse in Austria.⁹

The structure of the NUP attempts to fulfil the promise of a cross-cutting and holistic approach to sustainable development. The core part of the program, containing the specific objectives and measures to be adopted, is divided into seven parts. The first two parts,

- "management of resources" and
- "users and consumers",

constitute a horizontal approach across all sectors of the economy. The focus lies here with the behaviour of firms or consumers and any actions they may perform which have an impact on the environment. The other five parts,

- "Energy",
- "Industry",
- "Transport",
- "Agriculture, Forest and Water" and
- "Tourism",

follow a vertical/sectoral approach.

Each of the seven sections consists of a detailed analysis of the current state of affairs, objectives for the future development, and measures to be adopted. The matrix of measures for each sector and horizontal area is surprisingly detailed. It contains, amongst other things, the specific problem at hand, the sustainability criteria, the approach taken, the suggested measures, the actors and levels of government involved, the urgency of the problem, a

9 The original quote (in German) reads as follows: "Der Auftrag ... lautete, zur Operationalisierung und Implementierung des Prinzips der Nachhaltigkeit für umweltrelevante Politikfelder in Österreich langfristig und strategisch ausgerichtete ökologische Ziele qualitativer und quantitativer Natur nicht nur durch einen medien- und sektorenüberschreitenden Ansatz zu definieren, sondern mittel- wie langfristig integrierte Konzepte zur Umweltvorsorge zu erarbeiten und darüber hinaus auch in der politischen Öffentlichkeit fest zu etablieren." (NUP, Einleitung S.3)

timetable and the "foreseeable effects". An example of such a matrix of measures for the sector "Industry" is given in Annex 1.

In theory, the NUP fully acknowledges the importance of a balance between the fundamental socio- political goals of ecology, economy and social welfare. In practice, however, the concept is very specific about solutions to the ecological problems at hand but it hardly touches on the possible adverse social or economic effects of the measures proposed. The mitigation of these effects seems to be implicitly taken for granted in some of the proposed approaches. A good example are the proposals connected with an increase in prices for non-renewable resources. The suggested measures include an "ecological tax reform" which implicitly seems to assume a win:win:win situation in terms of environment, economy and social welfare. On the other hand, the implementation concept of the NUP foresees the involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and therefore guarantees some consensus amongst business, social and environmental interests.

The "life cycle" of the NUP originally foresaw that the content and the impact of the programme should be evaluated after two years. The evaluation procedure was supposed to take one year to complete. After that, a new version of the programme was to be drafted, usually within another year. In effect, this meant that an updated version of the NUP would be published regularly every four years. In reality the original version of the concept was watered down considerably in order to allow a consensus amongst the affected ministries. When the revised version of the NUP finally passed through parliament in 1997 the sophisticated and ambitious concept for the implementation of the programme had all but disappeared from the text.

Originally, the implementation of the NUP was to be supervised by a single organisational entity, the "Nationales Komitee". This committee was to receive regular reports on the progress of the implementation of the programme from the responsible institutions like federal ministries, provinces and districts. All the provisions of the NUP, including the detailed schedule for the implementation of certain measures, were designed to be legally binding. The regular evaluation of the programme was to be carried out by the "Umweltbundesamt" (for a detailed description of this institution see section 3.3. below).

The NUP, as it was adopted in 1997, does not contain any legally binding implementation plans. All goals and suggested measures are merely suggestions for the competent authorities. There are several proposals for co-operation between various authorities but all of them rely on the initiative of the actors involved. There is no monitoring of the progress of the programme because there is no central supervising authority and none of the authorities involved in the implementation of the NUP are obliged to report on the progress of their work. As a direct consequence of the above, the evaluation of the programme has been cancelled. There are no plans to revise – or rather revive – the NUP in the near future. Instead, policy making in the field of long term sustainability issues closely resembles the description of the Austrian policy process in section 2.2 above.

The Austrian Sustainability Strategy ("nationale Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie")

After the failure of trying to develop the NUP into a long term strategy the Austrian Government, especially the Ministry of the Environment, is currently working on a new long term concept for moving Austria in a more sustainable direction. The new concept will be called "the Austrian Sustainability Strategy" (NNS) and will be quite different from the NUP. Most importantly, the NNS will be more balanced with regards to the three pillars of sustainability. Whereas the emphasis of the NUP was almost entirely on the protection of the environment, the NNS will also highlight the issues of economy and social welfare. It is also unlikely that the new strategy will present such a wide and detailed range of measures as the original NUP.

The drafting of the NNS will be carried out with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including experts, NGOs, consumer groups and "normal" citizens. There is no official schedule for the completion of the new strategy or for its discussion parliament.

Institutions

The following section lists the most important institutions for long term and cross-cutting policy making related to sustainable development. The institutions are presented roughly in order of importance for the Austrian policy process (most important institution first).

Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft¹⁰ (BMU)

The BMU is the responsible ministry for the environment, water, agriculture and forests. It was created in its current form in the spring of the year 2000 after the right wing government under chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel took office. Before that, there were two separate ministries; one for agriculture and forests and another one for the environment and family matters¹¹. The current structure of the Ministry consists of ten organisational entities, three of which are directly related to environmental matters. Issues of long term policy making are dealt with by Section II/4 U. Most issues of relevance in environmental policy fall into the competency of the BMU including areas like waste management, environmental impact assessment, water management and involvement in international/global initiatives. Curiously enough the ministry is also responsible for awarding state subsidies to environmental NGOs which gives it a certain weight in steering the activities of those "independent" organisations. The most important areas primarily covered by other institutions than the BMU are land use planning (responsibility of the communities, see below), transport (Ministry of Transport, see below) and genetically modified organisms (ministry of Social Security, see below). Like in many other countries, the Austrian Ministry of Environment is highly innovative and it is the origin of nearly all large scale federal initiatives towards a more sustainable development but it clearly lacks the political weight and the legal competencies to implement the desired strategies.

Social Partners – Beirat für Wirtschafts- und Sozialfragen (BWS)

The BWS is a small committee with representatives from the four main social partners namely the Austrian Chambers of Labour, Commerce, Agriculture and the trade union. Historically it has been one of the most powerful institutions in Austrian policy making (see sections 2.1 to 2.3 above). The BWS meets in regular intervals to select topics of importance which are then assigned to subcommittees for in-depth study. Eventually the four social partners enter into negotiations on the details of the problem at hand and agree to a common position on the subject. These common positions are then publicly presented, adopted by the government and transposed in parliament. The range of topics treated by the BWS include federal budget policy, industrial policy, regional structural policy, long term energy supply, opening hours, social policy, economic growth, waste management, environment and many others. Its influence on environmental policy has arguably been not as dominant as in some other policy fields like social policy. A possible explanation lies in the specific interests of the four groups represented in the committee. The chambers of commerce and agriculture are traditionally not very sympathetic to any ideas that influence their chosen way of production and the chamber of labour and the trade unions are mostly concerned with social policy and employment.

¹⁰ Ministry of agriculture, forests, environment and water

¹¹ The latter one has now become part of the new ministry for social security and generations.

Provinces / Landesumweltreferentenkonferenz

The nine Austrian provinces ("Länder") possess a certain degree of autonomy in matters related to sustainable development. Most importantly, the "Länder" can block the construction of any major piece of transport infrastructure, power plant or factory on the grounds of environmental concerns. They are also quite influential with regards to long term regional economic development. A recent decision in Austria requires each "Land" to appoint a co-ordinator for sustainable development ("Nachhaltigkeitskoordinator"). Usually, this is not a full time job and is carried out by a government official. The work of the co-ordinator is, first, to act as a central figure to all initiatives on sustainable development undertaken within the province and, second, to represent the province abroad on these matters. Once a month the "Nachhaltigkeitskoordinatoren" from the nine provinces meet with the federal representative (the minister of the environment) in order to co-ordinate the Austrian regional and federal policies on sustainability. This institutionalised process is called the "Landesumweltreferentenkonferenz".

Communities

The Austrian communities ("Gemeinden") are in some ways as influential as the provinces. Their most powerful tool is the responsibility for land use planning on the local level which gives them the sole right to determine how any piece of land may or must be used. Furthermore they play an important role in the implementation and enforcement of regulations on noise emissions, atmospheric emissions, solid waste, fresh water and waste water treatment. Plausible long term strategies for sustainable development on the community level are rather the exception than the rule.

Umweltbundesamt (UBA)

The UBA was established for the purposes of

- measuring pollutants;
- analysing the state of the environment in Austria;
- co-ordinating various international initiatives for the environment;
- supporting the implementation of federal environmental legislation and, more generally,
- creating the factual basis for environmental policy.

The legal status of the UBA is that of a limited company which is owned 100% by the Austrian government. Most of its products, like data on pollutants, are purchased by the BMU. The UBA does not devise its own policy initiatives, it rather supports the BMU in its work.

Universities and Research Institutes

The Austrian Universities and research institutes play an important role in supporting the development of long term strategies for sustainable development. Members of these institutions are regularly invited to participate in expert working groups for the BMU, the BWS, the ÖRNE, the ÖROK and the Austrian Parliament. The most important research institutes not directly connected to the Austrian Universities are the Forschungszentrum Seibersdorf, the Institut für höhere Studien (IHS), the Institut für Technikfolgenabschätzung, Johaneum Research, the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften and the Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut (WIFO).

Austrian Council for Sustainable Development ("Österreichischer Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung")

The Austrian Council for Sustainable Development (ÖRNE) grew out of the problems and necessities connected with the implementation of local Agenda 21. The main purpose of this institution is therefore the coordination of activities and the negotiation about the measures to be taken. The ÖRNE consists of approximately 50 people almost entirely from the state bureaucracy and the social partners but there are also a few non-government experts from the research side. Meetings are held once a month. The existence and workings of the ÖRNE make it a good example of the Austrian way of policy making as described in sections 2.1 to 2.3 above. Each step of the way – in this case "the way" is the implementation of local agenda 21 – has to pass through "the system" (state bureaucracy and social partners). Needless to say that this system is neither very efficient nor very transparent.

NGOs

The main players amongst the NGOs in Austria are the international organisations World Wide Fund for Nature and Greenpeace and the Austrian organisation GLOBAL 2000. In addition there are several smaller organisations and local citizen initiatives. Most of the NGOs are subsidised by the BMU. The yearly negotiations for financial aid from the ministry are regularly used to co-ordinate the agendas of the NGOs with the plans of the BMU. This appears to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand it is, of course, to the advantage of both sides to improve the co-operation between the government and the non-government side, on the other hand there could be concerns about an infringement of the independence of the NGOs. The influence of these organisations on long term policy making is rather small partly because they are not represented in the important bodies for the development of long term strategies. Their most successful work is often related to specific projects.

Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit und Generationen (BSG)¹²

The BSG covers the two very different fields of social affairs and health. The latter area includes the subject of genetically modified organisms which is regarded to be highly relevant for long term environmental policy. Some of the responsibility is shared with the BMU and the office of the Austrian Chancellor, most notably the decisions on allowing the usage of genetically modified crops in agricultural experiments.

Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie (BMV)¹³

While many Austrian Ministries deal with matters connected to sustainability, the BMV plays the most crucial role in implementing relevant long term policies. The current Austrian Transport Master Plan was designed with a view to increasing the efficiency of transport by, first, providing new infrastructure for road and rail and, second, strengthening the competitive position of rail transport versus road transport. As there are no real long term commitments the general approach of the BMV to so-called "long term policy making" can be described as short sighted and pragmatic, following the ups and downs of daily politics. Innovative ideas and approaches are kept to a minimum. The treatment of cross-cutting issues, like environment and social welfare, is rarely sufficiently co-ordinated with other institutions.

12 Ministry of social security and generations

13 Ministry of transport, innovation and technology

Umweltausschuss des österreichischen Nationalrats¹⁴ (UON)

The UON is a subcommittee of the Austrian federal parliament on environment related matters. It consists of 25 members from all four parties represented in the parliament and the minister of environment. The purpose of the UON is the detailed discussion of environmental legislation proposed by the government. To assist the members of the committee in difficult matters, outside experts are sometimes invited to provide their expertise. The UON rarely comes up with independent legislative initiatives, but its function is rather to relieve the strain from the general assembly of having to discuss the details of legislative proposals. The Austrian parliament does not make use of any committees of experts like, for example, the German Bundestag's "Enquete Kommissionen". In general, the co-operation of the UON with other institutions, be it ministries, research centres or NGOs, is considered to be rather weak.

Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz (ÖROK)

All activities of large scale land use planning in Austria are co-ordinated by the ÖROK. The voting members of the conference are the chancellor of Austria, all federal ministers, the governors of the nine provinces ("Landeshauptleute") and the two presidents of the Austrian union of communities ("Gemeindebund") and the Austrian union of cities ("Städtebund"). Amongst other activities, the ÖROK also commissions and undertakes research on different subjects related to spatial planning.

Akteursnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit

This network of actors for sustainable development consists of approximately 130 people from different fields (researchers, business, state bureaucracy, NGOs, local initiatives, etc.). It holds regular meetings four times per year. The network was established in 1998 on the basis of an initiative by the ministry of environment. Its purpose the exchange of ideas, co-ordination of activities and dissemination of information on sustainable development. Further information can be found on their website www.nachhaltigkeit.at

Gentechnikkommission

The Austrian Commission for genetically modified organisms goes back to an initiative of the Austrian government to learn more about the current developments in this field. The Commission should also play an important role in informing the public. It is directly subordinated to the office of the Austrian chancellor and was created to become a permanent institution. The makeup and the work of the commission are jointly co-ordinated by the Austrian chancellor, the ministry of health and the ministry of environment. Members are almost entirely from the social partners and the state bureaucracy. The Commission regularly sets up working groups of experts for in-depth information. A report on the work of the Commission is published every three years.

10.2.4 Assessment: Innovative and Promising Approaches

The Austrian National Plan for the Environment (NUP) in its original version was innovative in a sense that it adopted a literally holistic approach to the problem of environmental protection. Every single problem had been identified in great detail and the set of measures was designed in a way to involve all levels of government, consumers and producers. The central co-ordination unit had all the necessary competencies to ensure the implementation of the

14 Parliamentary subcommittee on the environment

proposed programme. From a purely environmental point of view this was a promising approach and for a while it seemed that there was a chance for its adoption by parliament.

It turned out, however, that the main strengths of the NUP – the mandatory schedule, the quantification of goals and duty for reporting to a central authority – were too much of an infringement of the autonomy of many government institutions, most notably the powerful ministries like transport, economic affairs and social affairs. The second weakness of the adopted approach was neglecting the economic and social concerns. Despite these two problems the NUP is still a most valuable document as a compendium of studies on the current state of the Austrian Environment and the urgency of certain measures to be taken in order to avoid a worsening of the situation.

The ongoing project of designing a sustainability strategy for Austria will certainly be an improvement over the NUP in terms of taking into account all aspects of sustainability and not just environment. At this point it is too early to say anything about the chances of implementation of the programme.

Two very "Austrian" approaches to long term and cross-cutting policy making are the activities of the "Österreichischer Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung" (ÖRNE) and the "Landesumweltreferentenkonferenz" (LUR) (for a description of those two institutions see section 3.2 above). The activities of the former are focused on the co-ordination of local agenda 21 activities. The ÖRNE is dominated by the state bureaucracy and the social partners. This approach is certainly not considered promising in terms of efficiency but it still gives a certain weight to the implementation of the local agenda 21. The activities of the LUR, on the other hand, are not as clearly defined. Most of the issues discussed are related to ongoing projects or immediate problems. Long term policy making is usually not the top priority.

10.2.5 Conclusions

The long term and cross-cutting treatment of issues related to sustainable development in Austria follows the same pattern of corporatist policy making which has historically dominated the Austrian policy process. The need for consensus amongst the important players – the government, the state bureaucracy and the social partners – is likely to lead to short term solutions to long term problems. This incremental policy style does not allow for the realisation of long term concepts. It is quite obvious that there is no lack of ideas for long term concepts but rather a problem with the rigidity of the system.

To illustrate the rigidity of the system and the status of the major players it should be noted that out of the 13 most important institutions presented in chapter 3 more than half are dominated by these institutions. As a consequence the Austrian parliament and the NGOs are not as influential as in some other countries.

Overall it can be concluded that the most promising approaches of the last decade, most notably the NUP, failed partly because the Austrian political system does not favour long term planning and rapid change.

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Annex 1 – Matrix of Measures for the Sector "Industry" (Example)

Matrix of measures: Austrias development towards sustainability	
Sustainability criteria	Material flows should not alter global buffer storages and not exceed local assimilatory capacity
Problem	Overloading the assimilatory capacity of ecosystems and progressive depletion of resources
Derived primary demand	Reduce the impact of geogenic deposits (resource conservation) and flows (adaptation to the assimilatory capacity)
Goal 1 of 4	Securing sufficient supplies of non-renewable resources for future generations
Derived detailed demand	Reduce fossil and mineral material flows in providing services
Environmentally relevant result	Reduction of waste volumes

Approach	Measures	Objectives	Competence	Control	Urgency	Time- table	Foreseeable effects
Switch to renewable raw materials and earmark raw materials for the provision of services (all stages of the lifecycle)	Stepwise price hikes for non-renewable raw materials by introducing consumption fees going beyond the costs for renewable raw materials or for optimal recycling costs	Target reductions for the material flows in Austria's economy by a factor of 10 in the next decades	federal (ecological tax reform)	Annual national material flow chart	vu	2010	General reduction of ecological damage due to emissions and wastes from industry and trade; reduction of all non-recyclable wastes to alleviate current disposal pressures and reduce the necessity for additional waste incineration facilities. Reduction of the material flows of finite raw materials by increasing raw material productivity through improved utilisation efficiency in producing raw and auxiliary materials
	Promote R&D to develop service provision technologies that conserve materials or use renewable raw materials, and to facilitate modernisation investments	Reduced application of non-renewable raw materials. Target goal: 2% annually	federal, provincial	Annual national material flow chart	vu	to 2005	
	Record corporate material balances to quantify raw materials used (type + amount), recyclable materials produced (composition + amount) and wastes (type and amount); use as an internal regulatory mechanism to improve economic efficiency	Reduced consumption of finite raw materials (target 25%) as well as of production-related emissions and non-recyclable wastes by 2005	federal, provincial, businesses	Eco-audits	vu	perma- nent	
	Increase emphasis on the factors durability and adaptability of new products in the guidelines governing stimulatory measures (eco-labelling, eco-design competition, etc.)	Reduced consumption of raw materials through better efficiency and rapid, inexpensive adaptation to energy- and material-saving consumer goods	federal, provincial	Environmental and consumer organisations	vu	perma- nent	
	Create uniform plant operating laws that not only regulate emissions, but also specify material and energy consumption standards per services unit	Reduction of finite resource consumption. Target goal: 2% annually	federal, provincial	federal	vu	1997	

Matrix of measures: Austrias development towards sustainability	
Sustainability criteria	Material flows should not alter global buffer storages and not exceed local assimilatory capacity
Problem	Overloading the assimilatory capacity of ecosystems and progressive depletion of resources
Derived primary demand	Reduce the impact of geogenic deposits (resource conservation) and flows (adaptation to the assimilatory capacity)
Goal 2 of 4	Securing sufficient supplies of non-renewable resources for future generations
Derived detailed demand	Assume full responsibility for providing services

Approach	Measures	Objectives	Competence	Control	Urgency	Time- table	Foreseeable effects
Obligatory assumption of full production and product responsibility over the entire lifecycle	Reform environmental liability laws	Phase out processes that generate environmentally harmful materials	federal	federal	u	1997	Introducing upper corporate echelons to the concept of environmental responsibility will accelerate the transition to sustainability and resolve many current ecological problems.
	Emission fees on materials (products and wastes) as a function of their human toxicity or environmental threat	Reduce the application of potentially mutagenic, carcinogenic, teratogenic and toxicologically materials by 50%; also reduce the amount of non-recyclable wastes stemming from this production by 90% by 2005	federal, provincial, businesses	audits	u	to 2015	
	Accept full responsibility over the entire lifespan of those products that cannot be integrated into natural cycles after final use	Reduction of non-recyclable wastes by 50% by 2010	federal, provincial, businesses	Product balance s	vu	permanent	
	Obligatory, consumer-friendly declarations on the maintenance and recycling potential of offered products	Improved consumer information and education	federal	Consum er protecti on	vu	permanent	
	Consider material and energy consumption standards per services unit when awarding eco-labels	Stepwise reduction of material and energy intensities (30% by 2000, 60% by 2010, and 90% by 2025) by increasing demand for products with eco-labels	federal, provincial	Guidelin es for awardin g eco-labels	vu	permanent	
	Introduce EIA concept (EIA for policies, plans and programmes)	Improved sectoral planing	federal	federal	vu	permanent	
Switch to renewable energy sources	Stepwise price hikes for fossil energy through consumption fees for finite resources (e.g., ecological tax reform) exceeding the price levels for renewable energy	Fulfillment of the Toronto goal as well as greatest possible shift to renewable energy sources based on timetable by 2040	federal (ecological tax reform)	Annual balance of CO2 emissio ns	vu	by 2010	Significant reduction in the use of fossil fuels

10.3 Survey Results: Organisations and Experiences

Bundesarbeitskammer**BAK**

4265 1540

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2. Relation to government / parliament

government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> primeminister <input type="checkbox"/> ministries <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	head of state <input type="checkbox"/>	parliament <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment.

3. organisational structure

permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> temporary <input type="checkbox"/> from permanent to	public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> academic <input type="checkbox"/> profit <input type="checkbox"/> nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/>	thinktank <input type="checkbox"/> committee <input type="checkbox"/> network <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="checkbox"/>
main persons involved	Mag. Herbert Tumpel, President; Werner Muhm, Director.	

4. Main activities

Direct influence on policy making on a great variety of issues, interest representation, lobbying.

5. Issues treated

Social Affairs, Economic Affairs.

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge ●●● creativity ●● interaction ●●●●●
selection	customer ● own ●●●● public ●●●●●	treatment of issues internal ●● experts ●●●● customer ● public ●●●●
		output customer ●●●●● expert ● public ●

Interest representation of all Austrian employees and direct participation in the policy formulation and decision making process (see section 8).

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

The BAK is part of the so-called social partnership in Austria. The social partnership consists of several institutions representing the interests of different parts of the population. Every working person in Austria is obliged to become a paying member of the organisation responsible for his area of work (eg. all doctors have to be members of the chamber of doctors, all workers have to be members of the BAK, all farmers have to be members of the chamber of farmers, etc.). Since 1945 the influence of these institutions on policy making has been enormous. The informal committees with representatives from all major social partners, as these institutions are called, has in the past been often referred to as a shadow government. The new Austrian government, which came to power in February of 2001, has been trying to weaken the role of the social partners in the policy debates and in decision making. Legally the social partners are public institutions ('öffentlich-rechtlich') for interest representation and member support.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Periodical publications on the state of the state of the social and economical situation of employees in Austria.

Institut für Höhere Studien

Institute for Advanced Studies

IHS
IAS

4268 599

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government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> primeminister <input type="checkbox"/> ministries <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	head of state <input type="checkbox"/>	parliament <input type="checkbox"/>
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Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs, Federal Ministry of Finances.

3. organisational structure

permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> temporary <input type="checkbox"/> from permanent to	public <input type="checkbox"/> academic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> profit <input type="checkbox"/> nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/>	thinktank <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> committee <input type="checkbox"/> network <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="checkbox"/>
main persons involved	Dr. Bernhard Felderer (Director).	

4. Main activities

Applied social scientific and economic research.

5. Issues treated

- Public Sector Finance and Administration
- Social Security and Welfare State Policies
- Science and Technology Policy
- Transition Economics

6. Working methods

main emphasis expert knowledge ●●●●●● creativity ●●●● interaction ●●●	selection customer ●●●●●● own ●●●● public ●●●●●●	treatment of issues internal ●●●●●● experts ●●●●● customer ●●●●● public ●●●●	output customer ●●●●●● expert ●●●●● public ●●●●●
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8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

Generally apply a neo-classical and Public Choice approach to analysing public sector issues.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Too numerous to cite here.

Institut für Technikfolgenabschätzung Institute of Technology Assessment

ITA

616 318

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government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> primeminister <input type="checkbox"/> ministries <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	head of state <input type="checkbox"/>	parliament <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. organisational structure

permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> temporary <input type="checkbox"/> from to	public <input type="checkbox"/> academic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> profit <input type="checkbox"/> nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/>	thinktank <input type="checkbox"/> committee <input type="checkbox"/> network <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="checkbox"/>
permanent staff	14	

4. Main activities

See web site.

5. Issues treated

See web site.

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge ●● creativity ●●● interaction ●●●●●
selection	customer ● own ●●●●● public ●●●	treatment of issues internal ●●●●● experts ●●●● customer ●●● public ●
		output customer ●●●●● expert ●●●● public ●●●●

7. Major Projects

Delphi Austria.

See web site.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

Wohnen und neue Medien.

See web site.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

Eurobarometer.

See web site.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

Innovative approach in technology foresight.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Delphi Austria, E-government, EUROpTA, OECD G-8, Gentechnikpolitik, Eurobarometer, Stoßwellentherapie, Erythropoietin, Digitales Krankenhaus, Vorsorgende Technologien, 'Eco-Efficiency' im Chemiesektor, Strategische Umweltprüfung.

10. Cooperation with other institutions

EPTA members and associates, LSE, WIFO, SPRU, PREST, DTI, Uni Bremen, MPIfG Köln, ESTO, INAHTA, ISTAHC, TU Wien.

Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften

Austrian Academy of Sciences

ÖAW

6169 1543

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Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; Ministry of Economic Affairs; Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.

3. organisational structure

permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> temporary <input type="checkbox"/> from permanent to	public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> academic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> profit <input type="checkbox"/> nonprofit <input type="checkbox"/>	thinktank <input type="checkbox"/> committee <input type="checkbox"/> network <input type="checkbox"/> other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
specification	Scholarly Society.	
main persons involved	Dr. Werner Welzig, President.	

4. Main activities

Management and undertaking of all forms of scientific research, formulation of science and technology policy.

5. Issues treated

All issues relevant to furthering science and technology in Austria.

6. Working methods

main emphasis		expert knowledge ●●●●●● creativity ●●●●●● interaction ●●●
selection	customer ●● own ●●●●●● public ●●●	treatment of issues internal ●●●●●● experts ●●●●●● customer ●● public ●●
		output customer ●● expert ●●●●●● public ●●●●●●

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

Combines elements of a modern and forward-looking research organisation with elements of a traditional scholarly society.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Far too numerous to cite here.

Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung

Austrian Institute of Economic Research

WIFO

4269 2016

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Editor: Michael Greif, EURES Institute, Freiburg

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Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment.

3. organisational structure

<i>permanent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>temporary</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>from</i> <i>to</i>	<i>public</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>academic</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>profit</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>nonprofit</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>thinktank</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>committee</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>network</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>other</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>specification</i>	WIFO is a private, non-profit association specializing in economic research (business cycle forecasts, modelling, commissioned studies).	
<i>main persons involved</i>	Prof. Dr. Helmut Kramer, director; Mag. Gernot Hutschenreiter, deputy director; Mag. Alois Guger, deputy director.	
<i>annual budget</i>	8 Mio. EUR	
<i>permanent staff</i>	100	
<i>external consultants</i>	3	

4. Main activities

Main areas of research are macroeconomics, globalization, new economy (information and service society), sustainable development, perspectives of the welfare state, reform of the public sector. Activities comprise business cycle analysis, forecasts, modelling, analyses of specific topics relating to the research areas.

5. Issues treated

- Agriculture
- Trade
- Econometrics
- Economic Outlook: Medium-term
- Energy Economics
- Environmental Economics

- Financial Markets
- Forestry
- Industrial Policy
- Institutional Economics
- Macroeconomics
- Social Security
- Regional Economics
- Resource Economics
- Social Policy
- Sustainable Development
- Transportation
- Urban Economics etc.

6. Working methods

main emphasis		<i>expert knowledge</i>	● ● ● ● ●
		<i>creativity</i>	●
		<i>interaction</i>	● ● ●
selection		treatment of issues	output
<i>customer</i>	● ● ● ● ●	<i>internal</i>	● ● ● ● ● ●
<i>own</i>	● ● ●	<i>experts</i>	● ● ●
<i>public</i>	● ● ●	<i>customer</i>	● ● ● ● ●
		<i>public</i>	●
			<i>customer</i>
			<i>expert</i>
			<i>public</i>

The relationship with our customers (i.e. Federal ministries, social partners, regional bodies, EU, OECD) ist most important for our work.

7. Major Projects

Beschäftigungseffekte Umweltrelevanter Verkehrsinvestitionen

This project studies the potential for an environmentally friendly structural change in the transport sector.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

Evaluation of ESF-activities

The impact of ESF-measures is analysed based on empirical data

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

Assessment of the impact of EU-enlargement on regional developments

Analysis and forecast of the impact of EU-enlargement on regional economic development and employment

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

There are some innovative aspects regarding international co-operation, especially with institutions in the accession candidate countries.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Monatsberichte des Österreichischen Instituts für Wirtschaftsforschung, Austrian Economic Quarterly.

10. Cooperation with other institutions

ZEW, DIW, IHS, Joanneum research, Austrian Research Centers Seibersdorf, Hungarian Academy of Science, NIESR, Centraal Planbureau, ifo, NEI, Cambridge Econometrics, Etl.

Wirtschaftskammer Österreich Austrian Economic Chamber

WKÖ

4266 2017

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Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Infrastructure. By law the Austrian Economic Chamber has a role in the legislative process (consultation).

3. organisational structure

<i>permanent</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>temporary</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>from</i> <i>to</i>	<i>public</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>academic</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>profit</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>nonprofit</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>thinktank</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>committee</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>network</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>other</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>specification</i>	Public law institution, non-profit, business financed and business driven, represented in a variety of committees, advisory boards, task forces, as well as bodies established by law.	
<i>main persons involved</i>	Depending on issue and field of activity, elected business representatives or staff member.	
<i>annual budget</i>	approx. 155 Mio. EUR	
<i>permanent staff</i>	1200	
<i>external consultants</i>	as needed	

4. Main activities

The Austrian Economic Chamber represents the interests of the Austrian business community on the national and international level. Its membership comprises all Austrian companies and thus unites the country's 300.000 businesses in the trades & crafts, in industry, commerce, tourism, finance & insurance as well as transportation. It is funded by members, with 85 % of its expenditure covered by member contributions and most of the rest by revenue from marketable services. Its main areas of activity are:

- Representation of membership interests at all levels of government. By law governments are obliged to consult with Chambers on legislative projects and important regulation. In many laws a provision is made to involve Chambers in decisionmaking and administrative procedures.
- Information and advisory service to members. Typical issues include taxation, labour law, vocational training, industry-specific legislation, industry-wide advertising, and market research.
- Collective bargaining with unions. Trade associations engage in negotiations with their

respective sectoral country-wide union.

- Training and consulting services, mainly organised by a specialised department in each region (WIFI, Wirtschaftsfoerderungsinstitut).
- International trade support, provided mainly by a specialised department at the national level (AWO, Aussenwirtschaftsorganisation) with field offices around the world.

It is part of the Austrian Economic Chambers system which comprises 9 regional Chambers - one in each of Austria's federal regions - the Austrian Economic Chamber as the national umbrella organization, and 110 trade associations for different industries, whereby regional and industry-specific as well as national units co-operate closely. There is also a high degree of specialisation. Regional Chambers have local offices to provide services as close as possible to members. Its legal basis is public law (Wirtschaftskammergesetz) providing the framework for all Chambers, their co-operation, mandatory membership, and rules for setting membership fees. Although established by public law the Chambers are exclusively business driven. Every 5 years entrepreneurs elect from their own ranks officers for the trade associations and the Chamber in general elections (a total of more than 10.000 officers). In these elections free associations of entrepreneurs field their candidates to compete for the leadership of the Chambers and individual trade associations. Some of the associations of entrepreneurs are affiliated with political parties, others are independent platforms. The Austrian Economic Chamber is financially self-sufficient and managed through democratic self-government, making it fully independent from government.

5. Issues treated

- Economic reforms
- Economic structures
- Industry specific issues
- All issues that effect the Austrian business community

6. Working methods

main emphasis		<i>expert knowledge</i>	●
		<i>creativity</i>	● ●
		<i>interaction</i>	● ● ● ● ● ●
selection		treatment of issues	output
<i>customer</i>	● ● ● ●	<i>internal</i>	● ● ● ●
<i>own</i>	● ● ● ●	<i>experts</i>	● ● ● ●
<i>public</i>	● ● ●	<i>customer</i>	● ● ●
		<i>public</i>	●

Issues are selected for their relevancy to the Austrian business community, society and Austria as a location for economic activity. Depending on issue (e.g. sustainable economic activity, demographic development and education, working environment, social security system, up-take and integration of IT into the business process) the method of treatment varies and typically includes intensive interaction with internal and external experts and members. In accordance with its objectives the Austrian Economic Chamber typically identifies the long-term interests of the business community and plays an active part in establishing national policies on long-term issues. It is also directly involved in awareness-building, information, training and legislative affairs concerning long-term and horizontal issues. Think tank focussed on conditions for economic activity in Austria.

7. Major Projects

Preparing Austrian Business for and supporting Austrian Business in a global knowledge-based economy and society

Overall task that comprehends a vast variety of activities, including activities in the following fields: education, training, innovation, standardisation, working environment, social affairs, capital markets.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

See section 4.

The methodology corresponds to the characterisation in '6. working methods'

8. Particularly interesting and innovative aspects

The systematic involvement of elected business representatives across all lines of business and staff experts as well as the legal obligation to establish a consensus across different sectors favor a long-term view. This provides an early and informed input from many sources, provides for a high degree of representativity and allows consideration depending on how much a line of business, the national economy, the social system or the institutions of society are affected by a certain development. Department staff is routinely involved with long-term policy issues on a national, European, and international level. Government draws on their input.

9. Most interesting reports / publications

Wirtschaftspolitische Blätter (see <http://wko.at/bw/wipo.at>)

10. Cooperation with other institutions

In Austria: Bundeskammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte (<http://www.akwien.at>), Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (<http://www.oegb.or.at>). Präsidentenkonferenz der Landwirtschaftskammern (<http://www.lwk.at>).

In Germany: DIHT, ZDH, VDI In UK: Confederation of British Industry.

In Europe: UEAPME, Eurochambers, EuroCommerce, UNICE, etc..

Organisations	Austria
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