

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

Austria

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1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Disproportionate to its population of only 8.8 million, Austria has had great cultural influence in the world, as the former center of the powerful Habsburg Empire. Especially the City of Vienna is often acknowledged as one of the finest international centers of culture. Possessing a rich heritage, it is often associated with high culture and classical music, including great icons such as Mozart and Strauss or the renowned Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. This vision of Austria as an old ‘cultural superpower’ (*Kulturgroßmacht*) has been nurtured to this day and remains a source of tourist attraction (Wimmer, 2006).

Austria is one of the wealthiest countries in the world by GDP per capita, which amounted to €44,870 in 2019, significantly higher than the EU average of 29,900 (Table 1). The country’s residents enjoy a high standard of living, with Austria ranking among the twenty most developed nations in the world according to the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2019). A member of the European Union since 1995, the country is committed to the principle of neutrality. Austria was not a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) during the Cold War and is still not part of NATO. Also, it is the seat of important global organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency, OSCE,¹ and OPEC². Austria is a country with limited “hard power” but with a long tradition of classical diplomacy (Brix, 2013).

In terms of diplomatic engagement, in the past couple of years Austria has fallen three places on both Soft Power and Diplomacy rankings. In the field of soft power, the reason could be the so-called “Ibiza scandal”³ in 2019 which brought down the government in the first no-confidence vote since the country’s independence in 1955 (Portland, 2019). Not only has this up-ended Austria’s political landscape, but it has somewhat weakened its reputation and credibility around the world.

Table 1: Austria’s geopolitical and geo-economic position

	2019	% change since 2015
Population (millions) / ranking	8.85 / 97 th	8.58 / 3%
GDP ranking	27 th	29 th
GDP per capita	€44,780	12
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.50	0
Education economy (%GDP)	4.80	-0.10
R&D economy (%GDP)	3.19	0.14
Media economy (%GDP)	0.30	0

Sources: Eurostat, World Bank

¹ OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

² OPEC - Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.

³ The Ibiza scandal broke in 2019 when a hidden camera video showed the president of the ruling Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) saying he was willing to compromise himself with Russian interests in exchange for funding. The video was taken in 2017 in a villa in Ibiza and upon its publication it created mass political unrest in Austria and led to the fall of the coalition government (Holroyd, 2020).

		2019	Change over 2015	
Geopolitical position	Hard power rank	66 th / 0.9568 ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾	>25	-
	World trade rank (\$ million)	28 th / 449,567	28 th / 390,888	-
	Soft power rank	16 th / 67.98	13 th / 62.00	↓
	Diplomacy rank	36 th	33 rd ⁽²⁰¹⁶⁾	↓

In its support for culture, Austria does not deviate significantly from the EU average of around 1 % of total government expenditure (Table 2). The same is true of its national spending on education. On research and development, however, Austria's spending is above the European standard. As a percentage of GDP, Austria invests relatively large amounts in R&D with 3.19%, surpassing all the EU27 countries and the UK (2.14%) (Table 1). To illustrate, R&D funds equaled €11.679 billion in 2017, which puts Austria near the top of the list. In the same year, Austria could boast the second highest research intensity in Europe, outperformed only by Sweden (BMBWF, 2017).

Table 2: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays

	2019	% change since 2015
Culture	1.10	0.10
Education	9.90	0.30
Research & Development	1.60	0.04
Media	0.60	0

Source: Eurostat

2. External cultural policy: an overview

For decades, ‘international cultural policy’ (*Auslandskulturpolitik*) has played an important role in Austria's foreign policy. After the Cold War, the promotion of culture and heritage served to rebuild the country's reputation. However, it was not until the 1970s that the idea of a truly global Austria was introduced. In the following decade, the focus then shifted from Austria's relationship with the West to a careful exploration of its cultural and historical ties with Central and Eastern Europe (Brix, 2013). The end of the Cold War marked another milestone with a targeted expansion of Austria's institutional presence abroad. Then-Foreign Minister Mock increased the budget for cultural diplomacy and identified it as “one of the pillars of Austrian foreign policy” (qtd. in Brix, 2013). The agenda was consolidated a couple of years later with the introduction of the first official external cultural policy strategy (*Auslandskulturkonzept*).

The latest strategy, “Foreign Culture Concept 2015-2018”, demonstrates Austria's proactive approach to external cultural policy. Austria is promoted as an innovative and creative country

boasting high achievements in the arts, culture, and science⁴. The rich tradition is intended to serve as a basis for future innovations (Lungstraß & Ratzenböck, 2020). Secondly, Austria assumed the role of a mediator in the further progress of European integration. And lastly, Austria hopes to make a lasting contribution to trust-building and peacekeeping. The protection of democracy, human and women's rights, and freedom have become an important part of Austria's ECP (Pavlovsky, 2019).

The regional focus is on Austria's neighboring countries and the Western Balkans. In 2015, the country in focus was Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2016, Croatia in 2017 and Albania in 2018. The geographic priority partly stems from the heritage of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. One of the guidelines of the policy is "with history in mind" emphasizing the existence of German-speaking communities in this part of the world and Austria's responsibility to support them (Riegler, 2018). However, because of the very unbalanced economic relations, the approach is not always well-understood or well-received locally. This could be seen with the example of the Austria-Croatia cultural year where most of the programming focused on the Austrian production in the local context, instead of a balanced cultural exchange (Marić, 2018).

The main actors are the "Cultural Policy Department" (Section V) of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMEIA) and Department IV/10 "European and international cultural policy" of the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport (BMKOE) (see Figure 1). Together with BMEIA, the Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) is jointly responsible for centers for Austrian studies and chairs (professorships), science and education attachés, and the OeAD (Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research) (Lungstraß & Ratzenböck, 2020). The nine federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) as well as local structures are also active in cultural exchange. The Division for international cultural policy oversees a number of Austrian cultural representations abroad:

- 30 Cultural Fora
- 82 Embassies, 10 general consulates, 340 honorary consulates
- 65 Austrian libraries
- 10 offices of the Austria Institute
- 2 Offices of Science and Technology
- 1 Cooperation Office for Science, Education, and Research in Lviv, Ukraine
- OPEN Austria office in San Francisco
- Austrian Historical Institute in Rome

Other supporting actors include the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the network of the Austrian Economic Chambers, and the Austrian National Tourist office.

In a post 9/11 world, Austrian external cultural policy expanded its scope to communicate Austria's initiatives in the dialogue between cultures and religions more strongly including endeavors to position Vienna as a leading center for international dialogue. For example, Austria was the first European country to officially recognize Islam in 1912. Since 2003, the Austrian Foreign Ministry has been initiating a series of forums and conferences discussing European Islam (including efforts to standardize Islamic religious education) (Brix, 2013). More-

⁴ Programme "Creative Austrians. Innovators for the society of the future".

over, the Ministry established a Task Force “Dialogue of Cultures” in 2007 as a facilitator of various intercultural and interreligious activities. The Task Force cooperates with the Austrian external network in the implementation of dialogue projects. Also, the Task Force is active in the multilateral context, including the EU, UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, and the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in Vienna (Lungstraß & Ratzenböck, 2020). Within the framework of EUNIC⁵, Austria further supports cultural cooperation with the Western Balkans. In supporting intercultural dialogue, Austria could play a principal role in mediation and conflict resolution processes. Such strategy in international positioning would indirectly increase competitive advantage of a small country like Austria.

Table 3: Key ECP statistics for country

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	~ 98 ⁶
Total number of institutions abroad	112 ⁷ <small>30 Cultural Fora, 65 Austria Libraries, 10 Austria Institutes, 2 Offices for Science and Technology (OSTA), 1 OPEN Austria, 1 Cooperation office, 2 ÖAI, 1 Austrian Historical Institute in Rome</small>
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	~ 730
Government financial support (€)	> 5,542,000 (ECP project budget) ⁸
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€)	~ 75,700,000
Comparative ECP ranking	minor

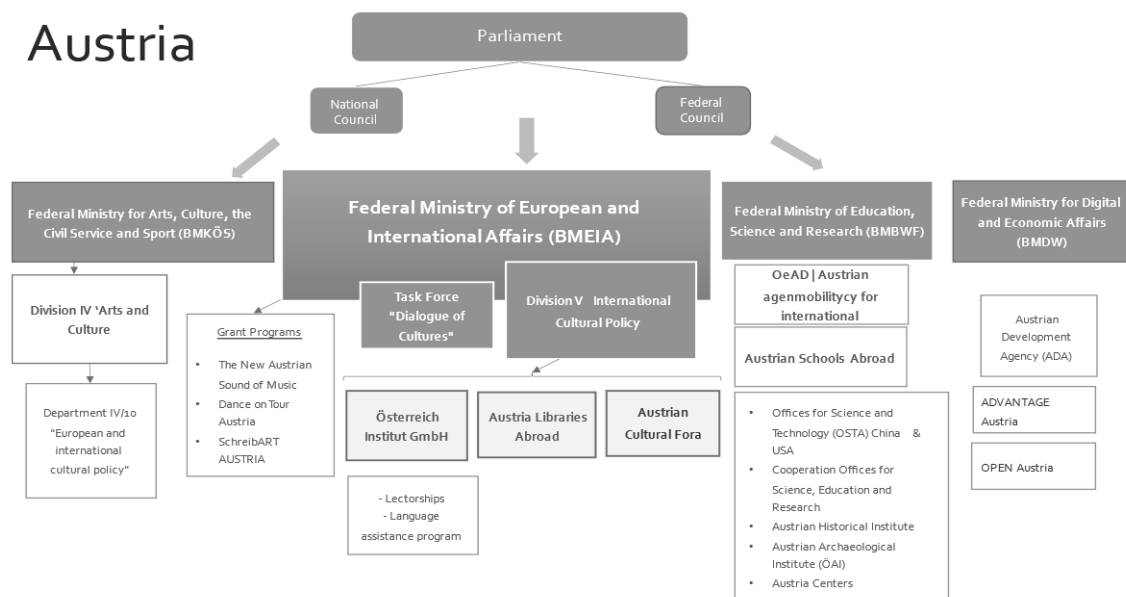
⁵ EUNIC - European Union National Institutes of Culture, established in 2006.

⁶ Based on the number of countries with diplomatic posts, Global Diplomacy Index. (2020).

⁷ In addition, there are 82 embassies and 10 consulates with a budget for culture activities.

⁸ Operational budget for Austrian external cultural policy in 2019 (without infrastructure and staff costs). Thereof, 4.78 million were invested in the cultural network abroad and cultural and scientific events. BMEIA (2020).

Figure 1: Institutional map of Austrian ECP



3. ECP fields

3.1. Culture and the arts

The department for international cultural policy (*Sektion V*) in the Foreign Ministry is the main coordinating body of the extensive cultural network (Austrian Cultural Fora, Austrian Libraries, Austria Institute). In 2019, the network had the capacity to organize 6,500 events at over 2,300 locations (BMEIA, 2020). For the same year, the project budget amounted to €5.5 million (ibid.). However, this does not include personnel and infrastructure costs.⁹ The greater share of the ECP budget is directed to the cultural forums. The Foreign Ministry carries out additional ECP activities through its cultural cooperation offices (currently only one in Lviv, Ukraine¹⁰), and together with other partners coordinates the “Office of Science and Technology” in Washington, DC.

⁹ Information obtained from correspondence with a representative from the international cultural policy department (BMEIA). February 16, 2021, Video conference.

¹⁰ The city of Lviv, or Lemberg in German, was annexed by the Habsburg Monarchy in 1772. Under the empire, it changed its character significantly. It soon became the fourth largest city of the Habsburg Monarchy and was made the capital of the newly created Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria.

Table 4: Key statistics on culture and the arts

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	Austrian Cultural Fora: 28 Austrian Libraries Abroad: 28	Austrian Cultural Fora: 27 Austrian Libraries Abroad: 28
Number of cultural cooperation agreements	32	-
Number of institutes	Austrian Cultural Fora: 30 Austria Institute: 10 Austrian Libraries Abroad: 65 Cooperation offices: 1 Embassies: 82 Consulates: 10	Austrian Cultural Fora: 29 Austria Institute: 8 Austrian Libraries Abroad: 65 Cooperation offices: 2 Embassies: 80 Consulates: 8
Number of FTE staff	Austria Institute: 48 -	Austria Institute: 26 Austrian Cultural Fora: 122
Number of artists in exchange programmes ¹¹	50	50
Budget (€ million)	Austria Institute: 3.72	Austria Institute: 2.97 ¹²

In the early 1990s, Austria's cultural presence abroad relied on eight "Cultural Institutes". In 2002, these were rebranded into "Cultural Fora" and gradually expanded to 30 branches. The majority of them are located in countries of historical strategic importance for Austria, like Southeast Europe. The Fora are the main implementing institutions of Austrian foreign culture with over 6,000 projects in 90 countries and physical presence in 28 countries. The operating expenses totaled to €9.5 million in 2015. About one third of the funds was spent on cultural activities with an objective to build "cultural bridges in the world" (Goda & Čiefová, 2019; Rechnungshof, 2018). The branches of the Austrian Cultural Fora have a large degree of autonomy to adapt their cultural program to the local context (Pavlovsky, 2019).

Another institutional actor is the "Austrian libraries" which have been established in cooperation with local partners (universities and libraries) since 1988. Today there are 65 libraries in 28 countries, predominantly in Central and South Eastern Europe, the Black Sea region, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, usually in locations with no other Austrian representation. In some countries, there are several Austrian libraries, three in Bulgaria, four in Croatia, six in Poland, and eight in the Czech Republic (Goda & Čiefová, 2019). The libraries function as contact points and facilitate access to literature, science, and general information about Austria.

Austria Institute (*Österreich Institut GmbH*) (est. 1997) is a special government agency set up to offer language education abroad and promote cultural exchange. *Österreich Institut* has a self-sufficient business model and generates over 70 % of its income from teaching activity. In 2019, it had at its disposal €3.7 million including a federal subsidy of €0.4 million (BMEIA, 2020).

¹¹ Artist-in-Residence-Program of the Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport (BMKÖS).

¹² Austria Institute Group [Österreich Institut G.m.b.H.] expenditures, including subsidiaries.

The cultural program included the bilateral Austria-Ukraine year, as well as many other events, predominantly in the field of film and music promotion, involving over 9,000 science and culture professionals. More information about its language promotion work is given in the following section.

KulturKontakt Austria (KKA) (est. in 1989) was a cooperation association for cultural and educational exchange with new democracies in Austria's eastern and southern neighborhood. It offered "artist in residence" programs for young Austrians abroad and hosted foreign artists in Viennese studios (Brix, 2013). In 2020, with the exception of the "Artists-in-Residence Program", KulturKontakt was merged into the project-span of OeAD, Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD, 2020). Within the framework of the Artist-in-Residence Program, the Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture hosts 50 foreign artists of various disciplines each year.¹³

3.2. Language

At 10 locations of the Austria Institute (Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Brno, Moscow, Rome, Sarajevo, Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw), around 11,000 people attend German language courses every year. All institutes offer certification for the internationally recognized Austrian Language Diploma in German (ÖSD). In 2019, more than 4,000 language learners have obtained these qualifications, twice as many than four years prior. The number of language courses increased as well, from 1,767 in 2015 by approximately 23% to 2,170 in 2018 (Rechnungshof, 2020). The highest number of learners was recorded in Poland in the three locations Warsaw, Cracow, and Wroclaw (4,800 in 2018) (ibid.). Nevertheless, Austrian German is better known as a 'neighboring language' in countries in the Western Balkans, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, etc. Most learners want to learn the German of the target country for educational and professional purposes, but cultural ties to Austria also play a role (Hartmann & Holzmann, 2020).

As a provider of German language training for immigrant workers, *Österreich Institut* indirectly supports the Austrian economy. The language portal, www.sprachportal.at, a joint platform of the *Österreich Institut* and the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF),¹⁴ offers a wide range of German learning materials (ÖAI, 2020). Although there are differences in the German language variety, Austria indirectly profits from ECP activities of Germany. For both countries, however, a lack of teaching staff is a major hurdle to language program expansion. Within the German language assistance program (*Sprachassistenzprogramm*), Austria currently supports 10 countries with teachers. Another important actor engaged in promoting German language abroad is the network of eight Austrian schools (discussed below).

¹³ Correspondence with a representative from the Ministry of Culture (BMKÖS), February 1, 2021, Email.

¹⁴ The Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) is an organization active in the integration of migrants.

Table 5: Key figures on language promotion

<i>Austria Institute</i>	2019		2015
Number of countries where courses are offered	10 locations in 8 countries		8 locations in 6 countries
Number of students enrolled	In-class	11,936	10,871
Number of candidates for Austrian-German language qualifications (ÖSD) ¹⁵	4,014		1,928
Number of language teachers	ca. 190		ca. 150
Budget (€ million)	<i>See above</i>		<i>See above</i>
Government financial support (€ million)	<i>See above</i>		<i>See above</i>

3.3. Primary and secondary education¹⁶

The eight Austrian Schools Abroad (ÖAS) were established in the countries with a shared historical, political, and cultural legacy. The oldest ÖAS in Istanbul was founded as early as the 19th century. Other locations followed after the opening of the ‘Iron Curtain’: in Prague (Czech Republic), Guatemala City (Guatemala), Shkodra (Albania), Queretaro (Mexico), Triesen (Liechtenstein), and two schools in Budapest (Hungary). Unlike Austria Institutes, the Austrian schools have a wider geographic presence, for example in Central America (Goda & Čiefová, 2019). Since the 1990s, the Austrian Ministry of Education (BMBWF) has supported these schools more actively (Brix, 2013).

Apart from offering general education according to Austrian curricula, the ÖAS support Austria’s international positioning. Also, with the school projects in countries like Guatemala, Mexico, and Albania, the Austrian Ministry of Education contributes to Austria’s development cooperation. More broadly, the focus is on promoting German as a foreign language and to encourage young people to take a lasting interest in Austria.

The Austrian external school network includes a mobility program for Austrian teachers who are delegated to eight ÖAS and 12 additional schools with a connection to Austria (bilingual and partner schools). In total, there were 179 seconded teachers to Austrian and partner schools abroad. The schools are primarily attended by students from the host country - over 3,300 of them and around 200 graduates every year (Table 6). Austrian teaching staff is also delegated to European schools. Currently, 22 Austrian teachers work in Brussels, Luxembourg, Frankfurt, Munich, and Varese. Additionally, BMBWF sends teachers to other social projects or bilingual schools.¹⁷ There are other measures to promote German as a foreign

¹⁵ Austrian Language Diploma German / Österreichische Sprachdiplom Deutsch (ÖSD) exams taken at Austria institutes.

¹⁶ Information obtained from correspondence with a representative from the relevant department in the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF), February 22, 2021, E-Mail.

¹⁷ The Concordia social project in Ploiesti/Romania and the ITHUBA vocational school project in Johannesburg/South Africa. Austrian teachers are also assigned to bilingual schools in neighbouring countries: Bilingual Business Academy

language. For example, each year, more than 100 teachers and students per school are reached, primarily through scholarships for seminars for German language teachers organized by the BMBWF, through one-week pedagogical stays of Austrian teachers at the cooperation schools,¹⁸ and providing resources for German-language school libraries with an Austrian focus.

Since 2018, the Federal Ministry of Education and the OeAD have sent Educational coordinators to Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Their primary task is to promote exchange and education cooperation with Austria. The network of educational coordinators consists of 5 regional cooperation offices in Tirana, Sarajevo, Chişinău, Odessa and St. Petersburg.

Table 6: Key figures on primary and secondary education

<i>Austrian Schools Abroad (ÖAS)</i>	2019	2015
Number of countries	7	-
Number of schools	8	-
Number of students	3,155	-
Number of staff / teachers	179	-
Government financial support (€)	1,161,000	1,165,000 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾

3.4. Tertiary education and science

Austrian external higher education policy does not feature transnational education or campuses abroad. However, the Ministry of Science and Research delegates Austrian lecturers to universities in Central and South-Eastern Europe to support German language departments. Moreover, the Ministry supports university Centres for Austrian Studies in countries with shared history or where closer higher education cooperation might positively impact Austria's international image as a modern Central European country (Brix, 2013). Nine Austrian centers in six countries abroad support research and knowledge about Austria and Central Europe (BMBWF, n.d.).

In 2018, 75,258 foreign students chose Austria as their study destination. However, a great majority of international students are from other European countries (67,568 in 2017/18). The incoming degree-seeking students are mainly German-speakers (from Germany and Italy) and followed by students from Austria's neighborhood (Statistics Austria, 2019). The Austrian higher education market has yet to become more internationalized.

OeAD-GmbH (Austrian Exchange Service) is the national agency for European and international mobility & cooperation. It has a physical presence in Lviv, Ukraine where it facilitates academic and cultural exchange. The OeAD also maintains cooperation offices in Shanghai (China) and Baku (Azerbaijan). Its annual budget is around €60 million, €50 million of

Bratislava (4 teachers), Bilingual High School in Mosonmagyaróvár (2 teachers) and Bilingual High School in Znojmo (2 teachers).

¹⁸ The cooperation schools are in Doboş and Livno (BiH), Chişinău (MD), Odessa (UKR), Tbilisi (GEO), Geghaschen (ARM), Moscow (RUS).

which is reserved for grants and scholarships. Every year, OeAD provides scholarships for more than 2,000 incoming students (OeAD, 2016, 2019a).

Dialogue is the guiding principle of Austrian science diplomacy, too. The most important role of scientific cooperation and academic mobility is to build bridges between nations using “the universal language of science” ([Wissenschaftskonzept] BMEIA, 2019). Austria is very active in the European Research Area with around 500 projects. It is also a member of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN). Fifty Austrian researchers are members of CERN’s permanent staff and further 200 scientists are associated with its programs. Vienna hosts the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) for climate and environmental research with 22 country members. Other examples of “Science for Diplomacy” include historical commissions (Austrian-Russian, Austrian-Czech, and Austrian-Ukrainian), but also bilateral dialogue with countries like Iran.

In similar fashion, the two Offices of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA) and the science and technology attachés in Washington, Beijing, Jakarta and Tel Aviv serve to strengthen bilateral relations in science, research and technology (BMEIA, 2019). Lately, there has been a stronger impulse to globally position Austrian science, as evidenced in the “Beyond Europe” internationalization strategy (BMBWF). Priority cooperation partners are China, India, Russia, and the US. In the United States, an important arm of the tech diplomacy is Open Austria in San Francisco. Launched in 2016 jointly by BMEIA and Advantage Austria,¹⁹ it serves as a networking hub and a promoter of the Austrian science and research landscape.

One of the more historically important scientific institutions abroad is the Austrian Historical Institute (ÖHI) in Rome (est. 1881). The Institute carries out research on a broad range of topics, from history of art and archaeology to classical philology, Byzantine and Romance studies.

Table 7: Key figures on tertiary education

	2019	2015
Number of universities / colleges	n/a	n/a
Number of students		
Number of foreign students ²⁰	75,258 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	67,691
Number of students at trans-national higher education (TNE)	n/a	n/a
Number of government scholarships awarded	2,289 incoming students ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾	2,087 grants, 1,761 incoming students
Number of staff	230	211

¹⁹ Advantage Austria is the foreign trade organization of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber with a network of 100 locations in over 70 countries.

²⁰ Data based on Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students | UNESCO UIS. (2020). Retrieved 2 September 2020, from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>.

Budget (€ million)	65.28 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾ ²¹	59.95
Government financial support (€ million)	BMBWF: 11.62 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾	BMBWF: 14.65

Table 8: Science & Research

	2019	2015
Number of countries	21 ^(OeAD)	-
Number of institutes	- 2 Science and Technology Offices (OSTA) - 9 Austria centers - Austrian historical institute in Rome (ÖHI) - Austrian Archaeological Institute (ÖAI) - OPEN Austria	
Number of researchers / staff	ÖAI: 12 (Athens & Cairo branches) ÖHI: 7	-
Number of projects	n/a	n/a
Number scientists in exchange programs	-	333 incoming
Government financial support (€)	- Internationalization projects (OeAD): 24,263,000 ²² - "Beyond Europe" program: 1,734,000 ²³	- Internationalization projects (OeAD): 19,077,000 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾ - "Beyond Europe" program: 1,989,000 ⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾

3.5. Foreign Media

The Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF - *Österreichischer Rundfunk*) operates on an annual budget of around €1 billion and maintains 4 TV channels, 12 radio channels, the ORF.at network, and 9 regional studios (ORF, 2019, 2020a). By law, ORF is obligated to "promote Austrian identity from the perspective of European history and integration" (ORF, 2016). However, at present, ORF does not offer any international programs to the audiences abroad.

Austria is partly represented through its cooperation with other German-speaking media. Together with ARD, ZDF and SRG SSR, ORF has a share in 3sat and has been cooperating with ARTE since 2002.²⁴ The partner networks, 3sat, ARTE, ARD-alpha, have a potential to reach

²¹ Annual OeAD budget is around €60 million, thereof 50 million are reserved for grants and scholarships, (OeAD).

²² Funding of cross-border, bilateral and multilateral, international projects in the field of training, education, science and research.

²³ The "Beyond Europe" program aims at increasing Austria's international research and innovation activities with partners outside Europe.

²⁴ 3sat is a German-language public service television channel. It is a channel with a cultural focus jointly operated by public broadcasters from Germany (ZDF, ARD), Austria (ORF) and Switzerland (SRG SSR). ARTE (*Association relative à la télévision européenne*) is a European public service channel with focus on cultural programming. It is headquartered in Strasbourg,

80 million people (ORF, 2020b). ORF's share of total programming in 3sat was 25.3% in 2019, or 6 hours per day.

Although not a conventional international broadcaster, ORF 2 Europe (ORF 2E) can be received via the satellite in Austria and 26 other countries. Radio Austria International (*Radio Österreich International*) was the only foreign Austrian broadcaster. The station has operated since 1955 with the agenda to strengthen Austria's reputation abroad. The radio frequency was discontinued in 2003.

Table 9: Key figures on foreign broadcasting

		2019	2015
TV ²⁵ ORF 2 Europe	Number of countries broadcasted to	-	26
	Number of languages	-	1
	Number of channels	-	1
	Audience / potential reach (million)	~460	~460 ²⁶
New Media ORF.at	Social networks following	Facebook: 203,687 Twitter: 65,400 Instagram: 104,000	-
	Audience / unique visitors (monthly average /million)	93.5 (average visits monthly)	8.77 users (incl. Austrian users) 65.9 visits (average visits monthly)

France. It is a German-French cooperation: the members are Arte Deutschland in Baden-Baden and Arte France in Issy-les-Moulineaux near Paris and each provide 40% of the programming.

²⁵ Austria also participates in 3sat, ARTE, ARD-alpha (partner networks).

²⁶ Technical coverage via satellite (digital), potential audience reach in Europe, (ORF 2016).

4. Challenges and future outlook

The image of the great ‘cultural nation’ became an important part of the national identity after 1945 and how Austria presented itself to the world (Brait, 2011). Austria’s external cultural policy has always depended on its strong cultural infrastructure and rich heritage. Renowned institutions like the “Salzburg Festival” or the Vienna Philharmonic are the crown jewels of the Austrian cultural power. These assets are well-known internationally and it is only practical for Austria to continue to focus its efforts on the rich tradition in arts and culture. However, Austria has much more to offer than reiterations of “The Blue Danube” waltz or Gustav Klimt printouts. In order not to fall into the trap of stereotypes, Austria needs to better communicate its present-day cultural production.

The position of Austria in Europe is special. On the one hand, it acts as a member of the EU and a neutral ‘outpost of the West’ (Brix, 2013). More importantly, it is a strong regional epicenter to the countries east and south of its borders. The most important strategic shift in Austrian ECP was towards (re)establishing cooperation and networks with the Central Europe and Danube region. However, Austria will need to be wary of local dynamics like high sensitivities in the Balkans stemming from a long history of colonial oppression and interference from abroad. History as the deciding factor for the geographic and thematic focus of external cultural policy can be a double-edged sword, especially in the former Austrian monarchy. Currently, the primary ECP policy is to create stability and support the new democracies in the European integration process. All in all, dialogue seems to be the lynchpin of the Austrian ECP. “Dialogue of Cultures” is a praiseworthy initiative. But before leading by example, intercultural dialogue should also be an objective of the domestic cultural policy. For example, the visibility of migrant and minority communities as cultural producers and consumers is still very low in Austria (Lungstraß & Ratzenböck, 2020).

In terms of academic international mobility, Austria is not a very sought-after study destination beyond the German-speaking world. Still, compared to its nearest neighbor, Switzerland, Austria performs much better. Austrian institutions like the University of Vienna have a rich tradition of excellence and even offer English study programs at master’s level. However, there is still growth potential in the internationalization process. The relatively poor performance could also be explained by the fact that Austria has always been overshadowed by its other neighbor with a large share of German-speaking international students showing a preference for Germany.

Finally, while Austria has a very diverse and extensive cultural network abroad, there is still room for improvement in transversal cooperation. The “Foreign Culture Concept” is a good guiding principle, but Austria will need a better-coordinated action between all institutions. The limited financial means hamper Austrian ECP efforts. Its success, however, will depend on the thematic and geographic focus. The *Auslandskulturkonzept* until 2018 puts forward Austria’s neighboring states, and the countries of the Western Balkans. With targeted action, Austria has the potential to strengthen its position of a regional center.

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Imprint

The External Cultural Policy Monitor

Developed by Helmut K Anheier, Hertie School & UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, and ifa Competence Centre. Supervised by Helmut K Anheier. Coordinated by Sarah Widmaier for ifa.

Preferred citation

Markovic, Darinka (11/2021). "Austria. Country Report," in: Helmut K. Anheier and ifa (eds.). The External Cultural Policy Monitor. Stuttgart: ifa.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ifa.

Publisher:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)
Charlottenplatz 17,
70173 Stuttgart,
Postfach 10 24 63,
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www.ifa.de

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17901/ecp.2021.091>