

Out of a Sense of Responsibility for Austria.

Government Programme 2020–2024

Summary



Preamble

Austria is a wonderful country. Characterised by a diversified and beautiful nature and landscape. Based on an innovative economy. Situated in the heart of Europe. Famous for its art and culture. And built on its democratic culture and the diligence and active participation of its citizens. All this is what Austria stands for. All this opens up opportunities for Austria's future. Also and especially in politically, economically and globally uncertain times. Making use of existing opportunities means exploring new avenues.

The Government's work in the next five years is based on the awareness that the two government parties are different, but are nevertheless joining shoulders in taking over responsibility, thus enabling the country to benefit from new solutions. It is the big challenges in history that are forging new coalitions. This has been our tradition, from the establishment of the Austrian Republic through its reconstruction to the present day.

And the challenges of today call for a new coalition of responsibility. This is what has made Austria so economically successful and so unique. Overcoming differences between urban and rural areas, between all groups of society. Giving each other and the country the necessary stability in order to tackle the big issues. The new People's Party and the Greens are embarking on a new stage of the Austrian path. Making use of opportunities means taking over responsibility.

At a time when Europe is threatening to increasingly lose importance and influence on the stage of the world powers, at a time when the dangers for public safety and order have fundamentally changed, and at a time when we are already noticing the first effects of the imminent climate crisis, it needs a Government addressing the big issues of our time.

We are committed to a strong, united Europe concentrating on the main challenges for our continent. We must protect Europe's external borders and secure that all people can live in peace and safety. And we must maintain and improve the framework conditions to ensure that the citizens and companies creating our wealth, will benefit from lower taxes and less bureaucracy and that at the same time, our social network will be strengthened, providing assistance to those who cannot help themselves.

We are the first generation feeling the impacts of the climate crisis, and at the same time the last generation who can still take counteractive measures. Environmental protection and a strong economy must not be contradictory. Our business location can become even more dynamic, we can create more and better jobs, if we invest in sustainability: We can preserve creation and combat the climate crisis. Both means preserving a worthwhile—economically and ecologically intact—Austria for the generations to come. But sustainability also means paying attention to a balanced budget.

That the new People's Party and the Greens continue the Austrian tradition of moving beyond separating interests in order to explore new ways, also benefits the political climate: adding to the confidence in politics as such and in the democratic institutions. The constitution, a state adhering to the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights—and our values and traditions. They constitute the basis for the confidence of the people in politics. It is important to protect and maintain that fundamental basis.

Moreover, we stand up for equal opportunities—for all citizens, men and women. Respect for each other and for common regulations. We want a society actively working for all people—and in which all actively participate.

All these positive achievements and qualities of our country make up Austria and last but not least our identity which we must preserve. Immigration takes place according to our requirements and on the basis of clear rules; we therefore follow a consistent course with regard to migration and integration. A prerequisite for a successful integration is learning the German language, rapidly being self-sufficient and accepting the European and our Austrian laws and values: the separation of religion and state, gender equality and rejection of any form of violence. Anyone who does not act in accordance with our legal system, will thus have to face the consequences.

On that basis, the new People's Party and the Greens want to join forces to form a government embarking on the major challenges of our time. For that purpose we have defined common goals—being fully aware that it needs new ways in all political fields:

1. A noticeable relief for the working population
2. Combating climate change and maintaining the Paris climate goals
3. A sustainable and competitive business location
4. Social security and fight against poverty
5. A consistent course regarding migration and integration
6. The best education for all
7. Sustainable finances, necessary investments and a balanced budget
8. A greater transparency in the public sector

With this programme we are assuming responsibility—for the people in Austria, for the parliamentary system and good cooperation, for the benefit of compromise and exchange for democracy. We are assuming responsibility in a situation where no one else has the strength to shoulder it in the interests of all Austrians. And last, but not least, we are assuming responsibility as a forerunner in the European Union and the global community: This Federal Government and this Programme will strengthen Austria's position in Europe and in the world as a balancing, moderating force in conflicts—and is intended to serve as a role model for others. Together we are creating the future.

1

State, Society & Transparency



Constitution, Administration & Transparency

Legal security, proximity to citizens and transparency are essential elements for public confidence. This is true of the division of responsibilities within the state, of financial flows between state levels, of the subsidy system—and it is true of government action in general. We do not want transparent citizens, but a transparent state. For achieving this aim, we are prepared to leave behind old paths and to implement new, state-of-the-art solutions.

- Building on the preparatory work, we want to continue negotiations on streamlining competences between federal, regional and local authorities.
- Preparing a new financial equalisation scheme by pooling in the best possible manner competences regarding responsibility and financing, rules and criteria for decision-making and implementation and in order to meet the climate targets
- Introducing eco-social award criteria that are binding for national procurement
- Strengthening fundamental and human rights
- Leading the public administration into the future: Increasing deregulation potentials, reducing information, reporting and noticing obligations, and increasingly creating one-stop-shops including also local authorities
- Reforming the principle of cumulative sentencing in administrative criminal law, having regard to specific and general preventive aspects
- Strengthening voluntary work and civil society engagement
- Modern subsidy system by preparing a national support strategy involving the regional authorities and improving data quality
- Ensuring sustainable public procurement
- Modernising and advancing the rights of ethnic groups
- Reforming the electoral law
- Abolishing official secrecy and introducing freedom of information as an enforceable right
- Modernising the law on political parties as a cornerstone for the functioning of the democratic state, providing the Court of Audit with a right of review and inspection of party finances
- Extending the Court of Audit's scope of review also to companies with a 25% or higher public participation, except for companies listed on the stock exchange
- Greater transparency for recruitments

Justice

The Austrian judiciary and its entire staff plays an important role in ensuring a well-functioning state adhering to the rule of law. An efficient and high-quality judiciary ensures legal security and legal peace in Austria thus securing the necessary confidence of the citizens. It is thus the pillar of every state adhering to the rule of law and of every democracy. Against this background, we as Federal Government are committed to a sufficiently equipped judiciary. This is a prerequisite for securing the independence of the judiciary and for strengthening the rule of law.

- Providing the judiciary with the necessary resources, enabling it to conduct high quality proceedings expeditiously
- Evaluating court fees and reducing them where appropriate, in particular in case of appeals and private prosecution.
- Implementing a modern and state-of-the-art service for citizens and businesses
- Optimising expert assessment and interpretation services
- Facilitating access to the law for all citizens
- Obligatory digital procedural management for the entire judiciary by the end of 2022, having regard to the required need of resources
- Adapting civil and business law regulations in order to strengthen the position as a business location
- Criminal-law policy based on scientific findings in order to prevent offences, combat crime and strengthen the protection of victims
- Specification and supplementation of criminal offences for an effective fight against religiously motivated political extremism (political Islam)
- Ensuring the necessary and state-of-the-art security standards in all prisons through structural technical and personnel-rated measures
- Promoting “detention in the home country” by adhering to human rights standards
- Advancing family and matrimonial law
- Strengthening the protection of victims and the protection against violence and hatred on the Internet
- Strengthening the position of prosecutors' offices for conducting independent investigations
- Increasing the fight against corruption
- Commitment to a balance between business location and consumer protection
- Creating investment incentives for renovations and the construction of new residential buildings
- Housing policy aimed at making residential space affordable, making it easier for tenants to buy their homes and reducing rent costs
- Allocating funds for housing only on condition of an environmentally-friendly construction of dwellings

Art and Culture

Art and culture play an essential role in securing Austria's global significance. When it comes to its artistic and cultural heritage, or contemporary art, or folk culture, building culture or the fine arts—Austria is among the best in all artistic and cultural fields. One must always bear in mind in this respect that artistic positions may render a valuable contribution to increasing public awareness for current social challenges such as climate change or integration and may help to develop problem-solving strategies.

- Strengthening Austrian art and culture and make them more visible internationally
- Establishing a Federal Museum Holding with clearly defined economic tasks and advancing the Bundes-theater-Holding GmbH

- Securing and advancing the cultural heritage
- Promoting contemporary art and culture
- Continuing and extending provenance research
- Guaranteeing the right framework conditions for art and culture in Austria
- Introducing a modern copyright contract law
- Advancing the social protection of those active in art and culture
- Strengthening the culture of remembrance and commemoration under the roof of Parliament

Media

We are committed to a media policy securing and promoting fundamental values such as pluralism, independence, freedom of the media and the press as well as innovation. Moreover, we consider it a central task to react to the new framework conditions resulting from a progressive digitalisation and globalisation. Digital technologies change the way in which contents are produced, disseminated and consumed. This entails opportunities but also big challenges calling for completely new answers and approaches.

- Strengthening Austria as a media location besides Internet giants through the promotion of funding, adjustments of the e-commerce Directive and through facilitating economic cooperations
- Commitment to an independently financed public-service broadcasting

- Promoting the cooperation between the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) and private broadcasters
- Enhancing the fight against hatred on the Internet and the protection against disinformation
- Reforming the collecting societies in the interest of artists and other authors

Sport

Activity and sport are essential elements of every-day life in Austria. As Federal Government we therefore support sport in all its aspects: From learning basic physical abilities in child gymnastics, to individual sports activities, professional or volunteer work in numerous associations and organisations up to optimal framework conditions for top athletes during Olympic games and world championships; from the promotion of sport as an effective means of integrating migrants to the inclusive training of persons with and without disabilities; from traditional disciplines to new trend sports.

- Advancing the structure and organisation of sport in Austria
- Ensuring optimal careers for top athletes
- Promoting mass sport / club sport and recreational sport
- Developing an Austrian Programme for the Advancement of Sports Facilities on the basis of criteria agreed with the federal states and municipalities
- Developing a coordinated concept together with the federal states and those responsible for sport, for supporting bids to host major international sports events in Austria
- Guaranteeing gender equality in sport
- Inclusion and integration through sport

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Business & Finance



Finances & Budget

Securing stable economic framework conditions

- The Federal Government is committed to the economic policy objective of ensuring a balanced federal budget depending on economic developments and requirements
- The Federal Government is committed to the economic policy objective of reducing the debt ratio of the republic further towards the Maastricht target of 60%. Irrespective of this, the necessary climate and future-related investments will be secured. With this the Federal Government combines fiscal stability and responsibility for future generations.
- With its budgetary policy the Federal Government pursues economic, ecological and social objectives. In doing so, it relies among others on European and international obligations, in particular the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Green Bonds by the ÖBFA (Austrian Federal Financing Agency) and evaluation of a “Community Foundation for Climate Protection”

Promoting capital market participation and private pension insurance

- Creating a holding period for the exemption from the capital gains tax for price gains from securities and fund products
- Creating suitable framework conditions for private pension schemes in addition to the state pension system
- Improving the financial literacy of young and old people

Measures at EU level for a strong capital market

- Proposal for a banking union reformation at EU level (banks with a balance discipline should not assume liability for other banks recording substantial losses)
- Proportionality: not all regulations relevant to large international banks necessarily apply to smaller domestic banks
- Action against “Green Washing” in determining sustainability classifications

Expediting ecological measures

- “Green Supporting Factor” at EU level: Banks should have to set aside less equity capital for loans if they make an effective contribution to expedite the transfer to a sustainable, climate-neutral economy
- Procurement law as an important instrument to combat climate change: extending the best-bidder-principle to include binding ecological criteria

Less bureaucracy on the capital market

- In cooperation with supervisory authorities, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice evaluate on a regular basis possible over-compliance with EU Directives in respect of the capital market (Gold-Plating).
- Ongoing dialogue with the Vienna Stock Exchange (Wiener Börse) in order to cut unnecessary red tape for initial public offerings in Austria (especially also for SMEs)

Framework conditions for gambling

- Commitment to combat illegal gambling and greater protection of players
- The Federal Government wants to disentangle the various roles of the Federal Ministry of Finance in the field of gambling.

Tax reform & Relief

Tax relief

- Reducing the first, second and third levels of the income tax rate: from 25% to 20%, 35% to 30% and 42% to 40%
- Extending the tax-free profit allowance: Investment requirement only in case of a profit of 100,000 euros and over
- Corporate tax rate reduction to 21%
- Capital gains tax exemption for ecological or ethnic investments
- Like benefits for the participation by employees in the company's capital, we also want to create a possibility for the staff to benefit from the company's profits
- Securing the social protection of farmers and allowing for a three-year-distribution of profits in agriculture
- Introducing a profit return for accountants analogous to the solution for artists
- New codification of the Income Tax Act for a fairer and simplified fiscal law

Eco-social tax reform

- Flight ticket levy: Uniform regulation of 12 € per flight ticket
- Making the NoVA more ecological (increase, spread, revision CO₂- formula with no upper limit)
- Stepping up the fight against fuel tourism and heavy goods transport from abroad
- Making the commuting allowance more ecological and effective, making the existing truck toll system more ecological and creating stronger incentives for CO₂-free cars for official use
- Preparing the most efficient economic instrument for gradually achieving true-cost-pricing regarding CO₂-emissions in the non-ETS sectors as of 2022, e.g. through CO₂ pricing via existing duties or a national emissions trading system
- Defining relief measures for companies and private individuals in the various sectors in order to make sure that there is no additional burden for businesses and private individuals, securing at the same time the CO₂ steering effect

Activities at the international level

- Advocating CO₂ levies internationally and at the European level
- Advocating a tax on kerosine and marine diesel internationally and within the EU

Combating fiscal fraud

- Acting decisively against alternative international forms of taxation and against any form of abuse, fiscal fraud and tax evasion, efficient collection of tax arrears
- Adhering to the introduced digital corporate tax at least until significant progress will be made in international discussions (at EU and OECD level) supported by Austria, on the introduction of a digital location

Location, less bureaucracy & Modernisation

Specialist offensive for Austrian companies

- Comprehensive strategy for filling specialist vacancies, focussing first on the Austrian labour market, then on the labour markets of EU member states and finally on the labour markets in third countries
- Upgrading vocational training and modernising the Vocational Training Act (making dual training programmes more attractive and modernising apprenticeship occupations)
- Reforming the Red-White-Red Card (Rot-Weiss-Rot-Karte; RWR-Karte)

Location and industrial policy

- Developing a location strategy for the future— Austria 2040: comprehensive strategy by politicians, businesses, science and social partners to actively identify those future-oriented industries where Austria can play a pioneering role at the international level
- Promoting entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship education, culture of the 2nd chance, regulatory sandboxes)
- Increased orientation of national measures towards the “Green Deal” of the EU Commission (flagship project greening, circular and recycling economy, IPCEI programmes)
- Creating a new type of stock corporation for innovative start-ups and founders at an early stage

Positioning Austria’s economy internationally

- Better coordination of all existing efforts in promoting foreign trade
- Commitment to an active, fair trade policy based on Austrian and European standards and regulations
- Joint efforts with European partners for a de-escalation of international trade conflicts
- Implementing investment monitoring and protecting critical industries

Reducing red tape and modernising the administration

- Developing and coordinating a plan to increase the efficiency and quality of the administration (reducing red tape) in the first six months in each ministry
- Implementing “Advertising before Penalising“
- Implementing the Once-Only-Principle for companies to reduce data reporting between companies and the administration
- Reducing Gold-Plating: Avoiding or reducing national tightening of EU requirements without any factual justification.
- Expediting procedures by maintaining a high-quality standard
- Abolishing the publication requirement in the daily newspaper “Wiener Zeitung”

- Simplifying payroll accounting

- Less bureaucratic and digitalised service vouchers

OPCs & SMEs

Legal certainty and relief for the self-employed and SMEs

- Reducing the minimum share capital of limited companies to 10,000 euros
- Legal certainty regarding the borderline between self-employment and employment
- Easier deductibility of working rooms
- Increasing the exemption limit for low-value assets to 1,000 euros, with the aim of a further increase for low-value assets with a special energy efficiency class to 1,500 euros
- Promoting the principle “Repair instead of Discard” through tax incentives or other incentive measures, thus supporting trades and crafts
- Facilitating business transfers (including a two-year “grace period”)
- Strengthening the role of women as entrepreneurs, specific programmes to support them in the set-up situation

Innovation through risk capital

- Increased incentives for private risk capital for innovative start-ups and SMEs: permitting loss adjustments over several years; examining the fiscal deductibility of start-up and growth financing; institutional investors such as pension funds, insurance funds and insurance companies should be able to invest in long-term, innovative investment forms
- Harmonisation and strengthening of the public risk capital: increased cooperation between the Federation and the Österreichische Kontrollbank (OeKB); simplifying the awarding process of the Österreichische Entwicklungsbank AG (OeB); increasing the availability of growth capital for start-ups and SMEs (financing volume 2 mio. to 20 mio. euros) in cooperation with private investors

Social entrepreneurship

- Targeted public financing instruments and extending and opening existing financing programmes for social entrepreneurs

3

Climate Protection, Environment, Infrastructure & Agriculture



Climate Protection & Energy

The alarming climate change is one of the biggest challenges faced by our generation—in ecological, economic and social terms. The Austrian Federal Government is well aware of its responsibility to take the necessary steps and set the right course in order to meet this challenge at all levels and to fulfil the goals of the Paris Climate Protection Agreement. For us, climate protection measures constitute an important opportunity for justice as well as for the sustainable development of companies and jobs in Austria. We must make use of those opportunities—Austria has the best prerequisites for doing so. Together we can reach the goal of a climate-neutral Austria by 2040 at the latest and can play a pioneering role in climate protection in Europe.

- Climate neutrality in Austria by 2040. Austria will be climate protection pioneer in Europe
- By 2030: 100% of electricity (on the national balance sheet) will be generated from renewable energy sources with clear development targets for all technologies
- Preparing a new Climate Protection Act with binding emission reduction paths—Austria proceeds on the Paris path with a Paris-compatible CO₂ budget
- Obligatory and independent climate check for all new and existing legal provisions, regulations and Government/States agreements, and funding directives and investments
- Entire Government takes over responsibility for climate protection—implementation through a climate cabinet
- Climate-neutral administration—the public sector shows the way: binding climate protection directives inter alia, for mobility management, renovation of buildings, 100% green electricity
- Sustainable and innovation-friendly procurement will become standard—our aim is a 100% regional and seasonal procurement, increasing at the same time the organic share.
- Increasing the renovation rate and quality of buildings by advancing among others, housing subsidies and building regulations, renovation concepts. Making zero-emission buildings the standard on a step-by-step basis.
- Phase-out of fossil fuels for space heating as of 2020: end of all oil and coal heating systems by 2035, no new installation of gas-fired boilers in new buildings as of 2025; thermal strategy for a complete decarbonisation of the heating market
- Preparation of a Renewable Energy Development Act and advancement of the Energy Efficiency Act for suitable framework conditions for the further development of environmentally sound renewable energies
- 1-million-roofs-photovoltaic programme
- Cross-sector climate and recycling management strategy for industry
- Austria consistently maintains its position in the group of climate protection pioneers in Europe and advocates CO₂ levies at the European level with the aim of giving preference to domestic products, and supports an adjustment of the EU goals by 2030 and 2050 with a view to achieving the Paris goals.
- Proceeding on the Austrian anti-nuclear power path consistently & advancing the fossil-fuel phase-out in Europe

- Technology offensive, digitalisation and innovation: Austria will be the hydrogen nation number one.
- Ensuring security of supply and network safety to keep the blackout scenario a scenario

Transport & Infrastructure

Mobility is a basic human need, the transport of goods a prerequisite for our economy. A future-oriented location needs an innovative, efficient and well-functioning mobility and transport system. At the same time, we are well aware that we have to adapt the transport system to new demands: digitalisation, energy efficiency and decarbonisation in accordance with the Paris climate goals are indispensable. It needs clear framework conditions and dedicated implementation programmes to achieve the required turnaround regarding CO₂ emissions in the transport sector. Measures are therefore being developed with the aim of avoiding, transferring and improving traffic and of clearly increasing the share of environmentally-friendly modes of transport (walking and cycling, public transport and shared mobility).

- 1 billion euros for local public transport, for improving the framework conditions in public transport, especially expanding and improving public transport in and around agglomerations
- 1 billion euros for regional transport to ensure comprehensive public transport supply in rural areas
- Reducing the energy tax on railway electricity earmarked for cheaper tickets
- Decarbonisation of road traffic: leading role of the public sector (emission-free vehicles become standard) and comprehensive package of measures to support emission-free road traffic in Austria
- Strategy to use alternative sources of energy for mobility and freight transport with a focus on the climate balance (e-mobility, hydrogen, synthetic fuels)
- Bicycle package and pedestrian traffic offensive for active, gentle mobility and for increasing the share of bicycle traffic from 6 to 13%
- Increasing traffic safety: safe cycling and walking, enabling speed reductions in town centres and in front of schools, improving truck safety
- Mobility as a service: public transport must be easily accessible and usable; we therefore need a multimodal digital mobility platform together with a ticket shop run by public authorities, which is open for all under fair conditions
- Mobility Master Plan 2030 for an impact-oriented integrated strategy for aviation, water, rail and road transport designed to support Austria's climate targets and economic goals, and for a strategic orientation of the transport sector towards environmentally-friendly mobility for all and compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Guaranteed mobility: Ensuring all-day public transportation throughout Austria largely on an hourly basis
- 1-2-3 Austria ticket and national booking platform for all public transport ticket systems
 - Ticket for students: affordable variant for young trainees and students

- Fair kerosene taxation and effective ETS system at EU level for aviation and shipping
- No Gigalines on Austrian roads
- Less transit traffic through higher flexibility in defining tariffs, support of Alpine Crossing Exchange and truck corridor toll system, masterplan for goods transport and much more.
- First-aid-courses in all schools to be prepared for emergencies

Environmental & Nature Protection

Good air quality, clean drinking water, fertile soils and biodiversity constitute the basis of human life. Austria enjoys the privilege of a varied and beautiful natural landscape. Our environment is, however, also under pressure—land sealing, extinction of species, soil erosion or air pollution are the challenges to be addressed and solved together. This requires full support from all sides because the protection of the basis of our lives is a priority issue. It needs a new course: instead of using more and more resources, it needs intelligent production and consumption. With an ambitious environment policy we ensure life quality, thus paving the way for health, good nutrition, wealth, a promising location and a world worth living for future generations.

- Efficient recycling management through creating among others, the legal framework conditions for promoting re-usable packaging and repair through a set of measures: tax benefits for repair services and for selling repaired products; action plan against the waste of food
- Further reduction of plastics: consistent implementation of the European Plastics Directive and fight against microplastics, reduction of plastic packaging by 20% will be enshrined in the law.
- Sufficient disaster funds: protection against natural hazards through the expansion of flood protection facilities & protective forests with a focus on ecological flood protection
- Water protection: Drinking water has top priority—no “sellout” of the water resource, revision of the Nitrate Action Programme, concrete targets for pesticide reduction; measures in the field of water ecology
- Soil protection strategy throughout Austria for an economical land use with the aim of reducing the land use to 2.5 ha net/ per day by 2030
- Promoting and extending waste-land recycling and better management of vacancies
- Preparing a biodiversity strategy and financing a biodiversity fund to secure biodiversity in Austria
- Initiative together with the federal states for creating new and expanding existing national parks
- Air: Advancement of the national clean air programme, and action programme for reducing transport emissions
- Noise protection initiative in road traffic

Agriculture

The Federal Government acknowledges the importance of agriculture, forestry and family-farming businesses in Austria. They make an enormous contribution to the provision of renewable resources, to the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity and to the protection of soil and water quality. These services rendered by our farmers and recognised by society will continue to be a decisive factor in the fight against climate change. Austria's agriculture is based on small-scale, top-quality farming—for us factory farms are no alternative.

But farmers also need a fair and sufficient income as well as fair prices for their high-quality products.

- Securing the subsistence of farmers through increased rural product marketing, social security arrangements and relief for small- and medium-sized farms
- Simplifying the social insurance scheme for farmers and reducing taxes and duties
- Improving food labelling: obligatory denomination of origin for the primary ingredients milk, meat and eggs in (public and private) mass catering and in processed foods
- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as a basis for our family-farming businesses: Securing CAP funds for Austria in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework from 2021 until 2027 at least at the same level, in particular for rural development; and national compensation in case of a reduction of EU funds
- Austrian Agri-environmental Programme ÖPUL with biological products, nature protection and animal welfare as a contribution to reaching the Paris climate targets
- Strengthening organic farming: Ambitious approach to advance the Bio Action Plan and expansion of organic farming
- Defending the high European social and environmental standards in international trade agreements: No to Mercosur.
- Promoting the protection of animals in agriculture and launching an offensive to improve the welfare of animals during their transportation
- Austrian woods as an important economic factor: Promoting active, sustainable forest management
- Extending the network of natural forest reserves and supporting the extension of a system of inter-linked biotopes
- Relying on digitalisation as a potential for Austria's agriculture and forestry through the preparation and implementation of a digitalisation strategy

Tourism

Tourism is of considerable relevance to Austria in many respects. It is a strong economic engine and driving force of affluence, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Every one in five full-time jobs in Austria is secured by the tourism and leisure industry, especially in rural areas. Both in summer and in winter, our tourist companies are making Austria an attractive travel and leisure destination. The focus is not only on international competition but also on encouraging Austrians to spend their holidays at home. Tourism is nevertheless facing a number of challenges such as a noticeable climate change which is also threatening the competitiveness of tourism. It is important to take the necessary steps now in order to maintain our high standards not only today but also tomorrow. With Plan T—Masterplan for Tourism, we have set the course to meet the numerous challenges in tourism.

- Implementing “Plan T—Masterplan for Tourism”: Guidelines for a sustainable further development of Austria as a tourist location
- Accommodation: Adjusting amortisation periods to actual period of use
- Examining the reduction of non-wage labour costs to combat the shortage of specialists
- Advancing the Austrian National Tourist Board (Österreich Werbung) and strengthening the Österreichische Hotel- und Tourismusbank
- Supporting regions particularly affected by climate change by promoting year-round tourism activities and avoiding excessive tourism
- Increased involvement of the local population in the decision-making process regarding tourism
- Concept with concrete measures to combat the “dying of inns and taverns”
- Increased offers of environmentally-friendly forms of travelling and on-site mobility
- Continued provision of federal funds for maintaining our mountain huts and farms
- Facilitating school sport weeks through better framework conditions for school events

4

Europe,
Integration,
Migration &
Security



Austria in Europe and the World

Europe

- The EU shall concentrate in the next five years on major flagship projects, providing innovative answers to the big challenges of our time (e.g. migration, climate protection, business and job location, digitalisation, research and development, domestic market and social cohesion)
- Many big issues concerning the future can no longer be solved by individual member states but only by a strong European Union.
- Strong commitment to the subsidiarity principle at EU level: Strengthening the EU in dealing with the key issues of shaping the future, from climate protection to employment, having regard to the subsidiarity principle
- Our aim is a Europe that is taking joint action in addressing issues with a clear European-added value, while giving the member states the freedom to solve other issues at the national or regional levels.
- Europe is a community of responsibility and solidarity. Those who do not comply with its common rules, have to expect sanctions.
- EU as a pioneer in the field of climate protection (see climate chapter)
- Rejecting the MERCOSUR Trade Agreement in its present form
- Reforming the EU competition law in the interest of Europe and for strengthening the European economy on a sustainable basis
- Continued efforts to introduce of a digital tax for international conglomerates at international and European levels
- Commitment to a new treaty for Europe
- Implementing a clear EU accession perspective for the Western Balkans
- Austrian efforts for reducing red tape at the European level and streamlining European institutions
- Continued efforts for a visa liberalisation for Kosovo

Foreign policy

- Austria takes an active role, presenting itself, its interests and positions in international organisations, and positions itself as a reliable partner in multilateralism, for example in international organisations such as UNO, ESCE, Council of Europe and EU.
- Austria will actively position itself in the coming legislative period as an international pioneer for the protection of human rights and in the peace process.
- Preparing a perennial human rights strategy, including an upgrading of the protection of human rights in all federal and regional government departments
- Following up on the key issues of adhering to the rule of law, combating human trafficking, combating racism, strengthening women's rights, the civil society, human rights activists

- Reviewing additional measures designed to strengthen the entrepreneurs' responsibility for human rights
- International contribution to combating the persecution of minorities
- Fight against the death penalty and torture on a world-wide basis, active commitment to international disarmament and a world without nuclear weapons
- Continuing Austria's worldwide action in the fight against anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism—also at the European level
- Climate protection/ Green diplomacy for a future/ world that is worth living, including the establishment of an Austrian climate ambassador
- Increased target-oriented coordination of the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 systematically including stakeholders in particular from the civil society, science and the private sector
- Pursuing a foreign policy in the interest of Austria's economy
- Candidacy for the UN Security Council for 2027—2028 as a national objective in the sense of a continued multilateral commitment
- Austrian EU-initiative for a "Pact for the Future" between the EU and Africa
- Ensuring professional support of Nazi victims and their successors in proceedings for implementing the citizenship law

Development cooperation

- Development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and developmental education are essential development policy instruments to enhance people's life perspectives in an environment of social and political stability and sustainable development—within the meaning of the Agenda 2030
- Step-by-step increase of development funds towards 0.7% of the GNP
- Significant increase of on-site assistance: increasing allocations for humanitarian assistance (e.g. for refugee camps on the spot but also for the Auslandskatastrophenfonds (Relief Fund for Disasters Abroad))
- Commitment to a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of development cooperation measures as this is done in all development sectors
- Significant increase of the Austrian contribution to the Green Climate Fund
- International initiatives for combating the climate crisis, which increases hunger and poverty, e.g. building water supply systems, growing heat-resistant crops, etc.
- Partnership projects between Austrian regions and municipalities and crisis regions as well as education partnerships

Migration and Asylum

Migration

- Taking a holistic approach in the sense of an Austrian comprehensive migration strategy
- The aim of the new migration strategy is a clear separation between asylum and labour migration. To facilitate labour migration, a new Red-White-Red Card is introduced, permitting an easier, more rapid and digitised use.
- Assisting the UNHCR and other relief organisations in crisis regions to manage refugee crises on the spot
- Advancing on-site assistance in order to create perspectives and reduce the causes of migration
- Strengthening the European external border control and making further efforts for a more rapid increase in Frontex staff to 10,000
- Promoting agreements with safe third countries regarding SAR (search and rescue) centres and reception centres (in cooperation with UNHCR) for migrants rescued at sea on the basis of international law and the Geneva Convention on Refugees
- Protecting Austria's internal border as long as the EU's external borders are not fully protected
- Comprehensive commitment to protect and support those affected, victims of human trafficking and exploitation, women, girls in particular and children in general in the countries of origin, transit and destination

Asylum

- Austria is committed to an asylum policy which in all aspects of asylum proceedings adheres to the rule of law, respects the minimum standards of the Geneva Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights and EU law, and is based on an orderly process with clear rules and regulations.
- Austria remains fully committed to finding a common European solution in dealing with the asylum issue based on a coherent legal framework and uniform standards for legal proceedings, admission and return in compliance with human rights principles.
- Negotiating readmission agreements with countries of origin including incentives and sanctions
- Austria endeavours to further improve the quality of asylum proceedings and to accelerate them on appeal, with the aim of an average six-month duration through a considerable staff increase.
- This is to guarantee rapid, fair, high-quality proceedings based on the rule of law at first instance and on appeal
- Introducing accelerated, modern asylum procedures near the border within the area of internal border controls
- Increasing the quality of first-instance decisions
- Implementing the Federal Agency for Care and Assistance (Bundesagentur für Betreuung- und Unterstützungsleistungen (BBU))

- Creating among others, a quality advisory board to further ensure the independence of legal advice including the civil society, legal experts, the UNHCR and the Ombudsman Board
- Effective quality controls through comprehensive monitoring and quality assurance measures in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM
- Consistent deportation of third country nationals who have committed criminal offences and are no longer granted protection status
- Introducing an additional form of detention in compliance with the Austrian constitution (preventive detention (Sicherungshaft) to protect the general public
- Introducing prevention lessons on a national basis provided by prevention officers in secondary schools
- Extending the existing headscarf ban to female pupils until they reach the age of 14 (reaching religious majority)
- Priority Initiative “job integration for persons entitled to asylum and subsidiary protection”
- Special measures to promote the mobility of persons entitled to asylum on the labour market and in apprenticeship training (e.g. catalogue of criteria)
- Improving and expediting validations
- Promoting voluntary work at the regional level

Integration

- Demand-oriented extension of public integration offers and obligations (e.g. German language courses, value and orientation courses)
- Stepping up measures to integrate women as multipliers for integration
- Comprehensive promotion of German and special German education classes
- Greater transparency and stricter controls in (especially Islamic) child-care facilities
- Increased efforts by society as whole to combat the creation of parallel societies
- Preparing a national action plan against racism and discrimination
- Promoting diversity, diversity management and monitoring in public administration and in state-oriented companies
- Including inter-cultural competence in the training and self-understanding of qualified civil servants



Internal security

- Continuing the personnel offensive—2,300 additional jobs and 2,000 additional training jobs for the police
- Further and intensified cooperation with NGOs (Polizei.Macht. Menschen.Rechte; Police.Power. Humans.Rights)
- Preparing and adopting a national action plan for human rights in Austria
- Ensuring a consistent, independent investigation into accusations of abuse against police officers by a separate authority with a multi-professional set-up and with a complaints office
- Improving investigation methods
- Examining the possibility of improving legal protection if assemblies are prohibited
- Developing further measures to combat offences of violence, burglary, robbery and theft
- Preparing a concept of strategies to combat cyber-crime more effectively
- Stepping-up prevention programmes, protection against violence and protection of victims as well as work with offenders
- Continuing and advancing the initiative “GEMEINSAM.SICHER in Österreich” (TOGETHER.SAFE in Austria) thus strengthening the dialogue of individuals, communities and businesses with the police
- Strengthening and increasing the number of local police officers
- Preparing an action plan against right-wing extremism
- Preparation of a separate report on extremism by the BVT (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Fight against Terrorism)
- Establishing an independent state-legitimised documentation centre for religiously motivated political extremism (political Islam) and preparing a pertinent action plan
- Strengthening the Office for Religious Affairs by giving it a clear statutory mandate
- Taking measures to effectively combat associations disseminating subversive ideas (such as the Identitarians)
- Complete re-organisation of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Fight against Terrorism (BVT) in order to restore the confidence of the general public and partner services
- Strengthening upstream and downstream legal protection, e.g. by extending parliamentary rights of control

National Defence, Civil Protection and Disaster Prevention

National defence

- As a member of the European Union, Austria is part of a successful peace project and is not surrounded by enemies directly at its national borders. Austria's position at the heart of the EU gives it a comprehensive modified security and peace perspective. At the same time, we must take new threats seriously.
- The financial situation and condition of the armed forces require new concepts for a modern army with considerable potential. To this end, the tasks, structures and resources of national defence must be developed further and adapted to modern needs.
- Providing the armed forces with the necessary resources to fulfil their mission and providing the militia with adequate staff and equipment
- As a neutral country we are clearly committed to the Austrian Armed Forces as a security guarantee, to national defence in accordance with the Austrian constitution and to compulsory military service according to the outcome of the referendum of 20 January 2013
- Securing and advancing the core competences of the Austrian armed forces, having regard to the probability of threat scenarios
- In addition to their core competences, the armed forces should concentrate on priorities such as cyber defence, international peace operations and assistance services for disaster control
- The equipment should be specifically adjusted to these tasks. Heavy weapons have therefore been

reduced already during the last decades since they are no longer required to the same extent as during the Cold War. This policy will be continued.

- Creating a new soldier profile to permit attractive and versatile career opportunities in the armed forces
- Ensuring an attractive basic military service
- Reforming the fitness criteria. There shall be two fitness levels in future: "top fit" and "partially fit"

Crisis and disaster management

- Developing comprehensive legal framework conditions for public crisis and disaster management
- Creating a crisis communication network as a means for reliable, safe and crisis-proof communication
- Examining the possibility of disbursing funds from the Disaster Fund to ambulance organisations without reducing the funds for the fire brigade
- Establishing a national, interdepartmental situation centre for a comprehensive approach to the security issue



5

Social Security, New Justice & Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction

It is our social responsibility and the task of social policy to secure a livelihood, ideally through gainful employment. This includes the responsibility to continue combating poverty that is often accompanied by exclusion and shame. Therefore, it is the objective of our government in the coming legislative period to reduce the proportion of people at risk of poverty by half as a first step. In particular, the government will focus on combating child poverty. No child may be left behind in Austria.

- Supporting families with low income
 - in the course of the tax reform by lowering the starting rate for income tax from 25% to 20%
 - as well as by increasing the lower limit for the family bonus from 250 to 350 Euro per child and the total amount from 1,500 to 1,750 euros per child
- Fully funded therapy places in the field of psychotherapy
- Introducing a nationwide workable cold night emergency hotline (Kältetelefon)
- Reducing poverty among women and children: Closing the gap in the Maintenance Law
- Creating a one-stop shop for the working population and expanding active support (case management) to enable a quick return to gainful employment
- Supporting schools with special challenges—implementing a pilot programme at 100 selected schools throughout Austria based on an opportunity and development index
- Establishing a sub-Committee on “Poverty Reduction”

Honorary work, volunteering and civil engagement

- Introducing a quality seal for volunteering to certify voluntary work and civil engagement
- Establishing a coordination, counselling and service point for volunteers, non-profit associations, foundations and social enterprises
- Developing a national strategy for voluntary engagement by involving all relevant stakeholders
- Evaluating the Federal Law for the Promotion of Voluntary Engagement with respect to all volunteers and honorary workers in Austria
- Recognising the non-profit character when awarding public contracts and grants
- Improving legal certainty and predictability when providing services for the common good (in case of grants)

Care

Care dependency is one of the greatest unpredictable risks in life. More than 460,000 people in Austria receive a long-term care allowance (“Pflegegeld”) and more than 950,000 people care for their relatives. Demographic developments will cause a significant increase in these numbers over the next few years. It is therefore necessary to secure a fundamental reform of the care sector in coordination with the responsible federal states.

- Introducing a holistic care reform
- Expanding free and local counselling on care and assistance for people in need of care and their relatives / case management for questions related to assistance options, financing, legal issues; the design of individual care and assistance arrangements
- Providing care at home and on an outpatient basis as much as possible—and on an inpatient basis as much as necessary
- Human resources initiative for nursing professions
- Bundling financial flows: Establishing a task- force for preventive care between the federal government and the federal states
- Introducing a care-at-home benefit
- Guaranteeing support for caring relatives
- Community-Nurses in 500 communities
- Developing a long-term care allowance system which takes all needs into account
- Closing the gap in training: no diploma without a subsequent job
- Quality assurance, especially with regard to 24-hour-care
- Transferring palliative care and hospice to regular funding
- Seizing the digitalisation opportunities

Pensions

The Austrian pension system is characterised by security and clarity. Although there is always need for adaption, there is no need for a fundamental realignment. What is needed, however, is an effort to close gaps and remove injustices in the pension system and to ensure sustainability. It is our objective to enable the ageing population to age with dignity. This federal government aims at significantly reducing poverty in old age and, if possible, eradicating it. Furthermore, we want Austrians to be able to live longer without health problems; therefore we focus on prevention.

- Combating poverty in old age, especially poverty among older women, through various forms of equitable sharing of family work and pension rights
- Providing more information on the consequences of part-time work and missing social contribution years
- Ensuring sustainable funding of the pension system: Implementation of measures that bring the de facto and the statutory retirement age closer together

- Strengthening and expanding support for occupational health management
- Strengthening prevention and occupational rehabilitation to enable long-term employability
- Expanding outpatient rehabilitation

Labour

In our capacity as the federal government, we will do everything we can to ensure that we maintain a good life for everyone in our country and that we protect it from challenges such as the ongoing digitalisation and the climate crisis. In light of these challenges, it is the objective of this federal government to think of the environment, economy and labour as one. The overall aim is for Austria to become one of the countries with the lowest unemployment rate in EU-comparison again. To attract employment, Austria pursues a targeted labour market policy, which creates positive employment incentives, promotes company-related qualifications and enables suitable workforce placement. Working for an income one can live on is an essential key to fighting poverty. However, at present there are areas in the Austrian economy, where the actual salaries are lower than the lowest salaries defined in the collective agreements of the industrial sector. This gap should be closed using suitable means, with the involvement of the social partners.

- Establishing a broad social dialog of the federal government with all relevant stakeholders (social partners, civil society, etc.) to address the future of labour, in particular the aspects of digitalisation, compatibility of family and work life, work and life quality
- Securing the need for skilled workers—strengthening company apprenticeship training
- Creating new apprenticeships and job profiles in the area of environmental and climate protection and modernising existing apprenticeship curricula
- Advancing short-term work with qualification
- Circular economy development package: Promoting socio-economic companies with a circular economy (ecological and social).
- New orientation of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS): Focussing labour market goals on a sustainable unemployment reduction e.g. through training and qualification
- Closing the gap with respect to low salaries through the involvement of social partners and, if required, through the involvement of the Federal Settlement Board (“Bundeseinigungsamt”)
- Creating incentives for equitable sharing of family work

Health

The Austrian healthcare system offers high-quality assistance for all Austrians regardless of their risk of disease and their financial means. To guarantee continued low-threshold access to the best possible medical care in the future, it is particularly crucial to expand local care facilities nationwide, with a special focus on prevention. Therefore, it is our objective to improve the coordination between the federal administration, the federal states and social security institutions, thus strengthening the federal target control with targeted offers for insured persons.

- Introducing stipends for country doctors and launching an initiative for medical specialists
- Introducing a “specialist for general practice”
- Establishing a system of school and community nurses for low-threshold treatment and needs-based care
- Strengthening and upgrading non-medical health professions
- Expanding the principle of benefits in kind in the field of mental health
- Expanding outpatient rehabilitation to relieve inpatient rehabilitation
- Ensuring the best possible conditions in the health-care system, expanding transparency and quality
- Promoting initial consultations on the telephone 1450
- Pursuing a prevention strategy for Austria in order to improve the personal health of every Austrian citizen
- Focusing particularly on women’s health—promotion of gender medicine
- Upgrading the mother-child-pass to a parent-child-pass up to the age of 18
- No expansion of the deductibles for medical appointments in the General Social Security Act

Women

Women's policy is gender equality policy. It focuses on equal opportunities for women of all ages at all levels of social, professional and family life. The objective is to ensure that women are self-determined, economically independent and lead their lives free from violence or fear of discrimination. Furthermore, women should be able to exercise their right to make their own decisions regarding their lives and their bodies. We will introduce appropriate measures to this end.

- Combating violence against women: Needs-based expansion of women's counselling and violence protection centers, national action plan, best possible implementation of the Istanbul Convention, convening of multi-institutional case conferences for high-risk cases
- Specifying the criteria with respect to the duty to file a complaint
- Substantially increasing the women's budget
- Achieving a 40% female quota on supervisory boards of publicly owned companies (more than 50% participation): The federal administration is setting a good example for the private sector.
- Ensuring equality between women and men on the labour market
- Awareness-raising campaign on violence against women and children
- Study on the use of time: Paid vs. unpaid work, sharing of family work, family costs / child costs

Persons with disabilities / Inclusion

In 2008, Austria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with the objective to guarantee the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. The federal government is committed to introducing clear measures for the best possible inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and the labour market and for the removal of existing barriers in all areas of life. In general, it is important to offer support services for people with disabilities in a simpler and easier way and to minimise the bureaucratic effort as much as possible.

- Ensuring inclusion in the educational system up to the tertiary system
- Employment initiative for persons with disabilities
- Wages instead of pocket money for persons with disabilities in day workshops
- Strengthening the inclusive educational system: Including children with special needs or disabilities in the regular lessons as much as possible and offering high-quality special education, where required
- Needs-based funding to ensure the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the National Action Plan

Family & Youth

Families represent the most important community. Families provide support, offer protection and confidence and help each other in difficult situations. The new federal government recognises the diversity of different family models that enable children to lead a good life. Every family should have the option to shape their own family life. The task of the federal government is to create the right framework conditions for childcare, compatibility of family and working life and the fight against child poverty.

- Expanding comprehensive and needs-based childcare
- Ensuring comprehensive provision and expansion of early help
- Reducing bureaucratic hurdles for access to family benefits, childcare benefits and paternity leave
- Raising the threshold for additional earnings of students to 15,000 euros to enable an early start to an independent and responsible life
- Reducing the active voting age for works council elections to 16 years



6

Education, Science, Research & Digitalisation

Education

Strengthening early childhood education

- Developing a framework plan for education and care for all early childhood education institutions
- Expanding high-quality early childhood education facilities (significant increase of special subsidies in early childhood education pursuant to the Article 15a Agreement starting with the 2020/21 kindergarten year)
- Creating a good transition: Strengthening and expanding cross-institutional cooperation for the transition from kindergarten to school
- Promoting training initiatives for teachers and diversity in teams

Promoting German language skills in the education system

- Expanding language development support and demanding German language skills. Comprehensive German language development and classes dedicated to German language development with ongoing scientific support and evaluation
- Promoting training and further education initiatives for teachers through a needs-based expansion of the “German as a first language”/“German as a second language” studies and establishing mandatory “German as a second language” modules for all students of the teacher education NEW

Strong schools require good organisation, needs-based resources as well as modern teaching and learning content

- Modernising curricula, in particular with regard to climate change and environmentally-responsible behaviour, linguistic education, economic education and financial literacy, political education including civic education as well as media literacy
- Introducing compulsory education and intermediate school-leaving certificates (“Mittlere Reife”). Command of basic skills in mathematics, German and English as a basic prerequisite for leaving school
- Digitalising the Austrian school education (digital devices for every student, installing the Austrian education cloud, developing digital school service portals, expanding digital competencies of teachers)
- Increasing school support staff (administrative and psychosocial) as required
- Supporting schools with special challenges—implementing a pilot programme at 100 selected schools throughout Austria which are generally considered eligible based on an opportunity and development index that is to be developed
- Ensuring the best possible inclusion of children with special needs or disabilities in regular lessons, and guaranteeing high-quality special education
- Providing more holiday care and summer lessons for those who require it with the objective to relieve parents
- Supporting schools and teachers in preventing violence

- Expanding all-day school forms to enable freedom of choice as required
- Maintaining confessional religious lessons and guaranteeing ethics lessons for those not attending confessional religious lessons (or those with no religious affiliation). Developing an “Ethics” teacher education programme
- Expanding the training of MINT-specialists

Strengthening the dual system of education

- Providing greater support in the choice of training and high-quality training places (upgrading ninth grade, educational and professional orientation, apprenticeship and matriculation examination, apprenticeship after the matriculation examination)
- Enhancing vocational training and modernising the Vocational Training Act: Revising over 200 existing

apprenticeship occupations and modernising every 5 years

- Creating the legal basis for higher vocational training (upgrading the craftsman title master (“Meister”)): Vocational training should be expanded in parallel with higher general education or there should be an improved recognition of apprenticeship training for tertiary studies.

Lifelong learning: Good educational programmes for adults

- Strengthening lifelong learning in the educational system (revision of the legal basis, strategic orientation, further development of existing service agreements)
- Expanding the deductibility of donations for associations in the field of education

Science and Research

Science: Creating the foundation for the society of the future in a responsible manner

- Securing the university budget until 2027
- Reforming the successive contracts arrangements at higher education institutions
- Systematically developing and strengthening excellence in the field of youth development

- Continuing the MINT initiative while taking into account upcoming challenges (e.g. climate change, ageing population)
- Enhancing existing admission requirements in a high-quality and fair manner, in particular for studies that are in high demand
- Carrying out a study throughout Austria among secondary school graduates on social dimensions, career and study preferences
- Pilot project “Flexible introductory and orientation phase” to improve study choice decisions

- Expanding student funding
- Maintaining the current system of tuition fees, with regular valorisation
- Creating a system of incentives, for example for students of Medicine, so that they remain in Austria after completing their studies
- Enhancing the university colleges of teacher education (e.g. development plan for university colleges of teacher education, evaluation of teacher education NEW, strengthening intercultural and equal treatment competencies)
- Enhancing the sector of universities of applied sciences (comprehensive survey package for targeted further development, increased planning security, higher funding rates, etc.)
- Committing to a technology and climate offensive in applied research
- Improving the governance of the most important Austrian funding institutes
- Creating an “Austrian Micro Data Center” to enable science to access data that had previously been inaccessible
- Merging the Geological Survey of Austria (GBA) and the der Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG) to form a National Centre for Climate Research and Services of General Interest
- Establishing a research and teaching focus on climate and environmental protection with a particular emphasis on knowledge transfer
- Strengthening the knowledge transfer between science, business and society

Research: Innovation and knowledge transfer to address the global challenges of our time

- Passing of the Research Financing Act (growth path that provides multiannual financing and planning security)
- Developing an ambitious RTI strategy 2030
- Strengthening basic research through an excellence initiative
- Securing a common approach by all responsible departments to ensure that Austria can participate successfully in future European research and innovation programmes (Horizon Europe, IPCEI, European Defense Fund, Digital Europe Transition Fund)
- Efforts at EU-level to strengthen and expand Horizon Europe (2021 to 2027)

Digitalisation & Innovation

Ensuring nationwide technology-neutral broadband coverage across Austria

- Expanding the 5G pioneering role further and promoting the application of new technologies (autonomous driving, Internet of Things, etc.) with telecom providers
- Committing to network neutrality in line with EU guidelines
- Developing the broadband strategy 2030 further and advancing the fibre optic expansion
- Rapid implementation of the planned multi-band tender round (5G) with accompanying evaluation in line with the coverage requirements

A state administration for the 21st century with a focus on citizens

- Expanding “digital administration”: All citizens and companies should, wherever possible, be able to conduct transactions with public authorities electronically (if desired). The Digital Administration (“Digitales Amt”) and oesterreich.gv.at will become central platforms for digital interaction between citizens and the administration (e.g. important ID cards, electronic communication with the authorities and digital identity while ensuring restricted use and personal data sovereignty)
- Introducing “Ö-Cloud”, implementing the once-only-principle for administrative proceedings for companies and citizens and introducing the digital check for new laws

- IT consolidation of existing federal systems (to increase synergy effects e.g. in procurement and uniform license management), development of a green IT concept for the federal authorities and further development of the Austrian Federal Computing Center (BRZ) into a competence centre for digitalisation of the federal administration

Open Data: Open data as an opportunity for transparency

- Developing an implementation strategy to establish the open by default principle for non-personalized data of the federal administration
- Preparing an action plan to increase administrative transparency

Creating the foundation for Economy 4.0

- Expanding Digital-SMEs: introducing digitalisation initiatives in all federal states (together with the Austria Business Service (aws) and the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKÖ))
- Establishing a national technology, innovation and growth fund co-funded by the state which will provide risk capital, thus supporting the sustainable establishment of key European technologies (based on existing instruments)

Technologies of the future— seizing opportunities

- Developing a research data/computer centre that has adequate computing capacity (in particular Graphic Processing Units) to continue providing cutting-edge research—especially in the field of data-based AI (based on the Vienna Scientific Cluster)
- Creating a masterplan for blockchain technology and crypto currencies
- Establishing “Innovation Labs” at important educational centres, thus creating access to media labs, prototype production, job opportunities, counselling, etc. for all members of higher education institutions as well as for apprentices and other trainees

Designing a future-oriented network policy

- Providing the Data Protection Authority with the necessary financial, human and material resources to ensure that it can fulfil its tasks comprehensively (in line with existing European commitments)

- Implementing manufacturer and operator independent technology impact assessments for major public digitalisation projects
- Ensuring voluntary participation in connected infrastructure applications of those affected and the establishment of a consistent principle of anonymous use of technical infrastructure systems

Creating a sustainable framework for artificial intelligence

- Developing an AI strategy for Austria based on the current 2019 expert report.
- The Federal Government creates among others the framework for the development and use of AI systems and algorithms and at the same time commits itself to protecting human dignity. This includes clarifying regulatory questions and defining research priorities.
- Efforts at EU-level to guarantee Austria’s contribution to Europe’s AI development (in business, administration, research and security policy)

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