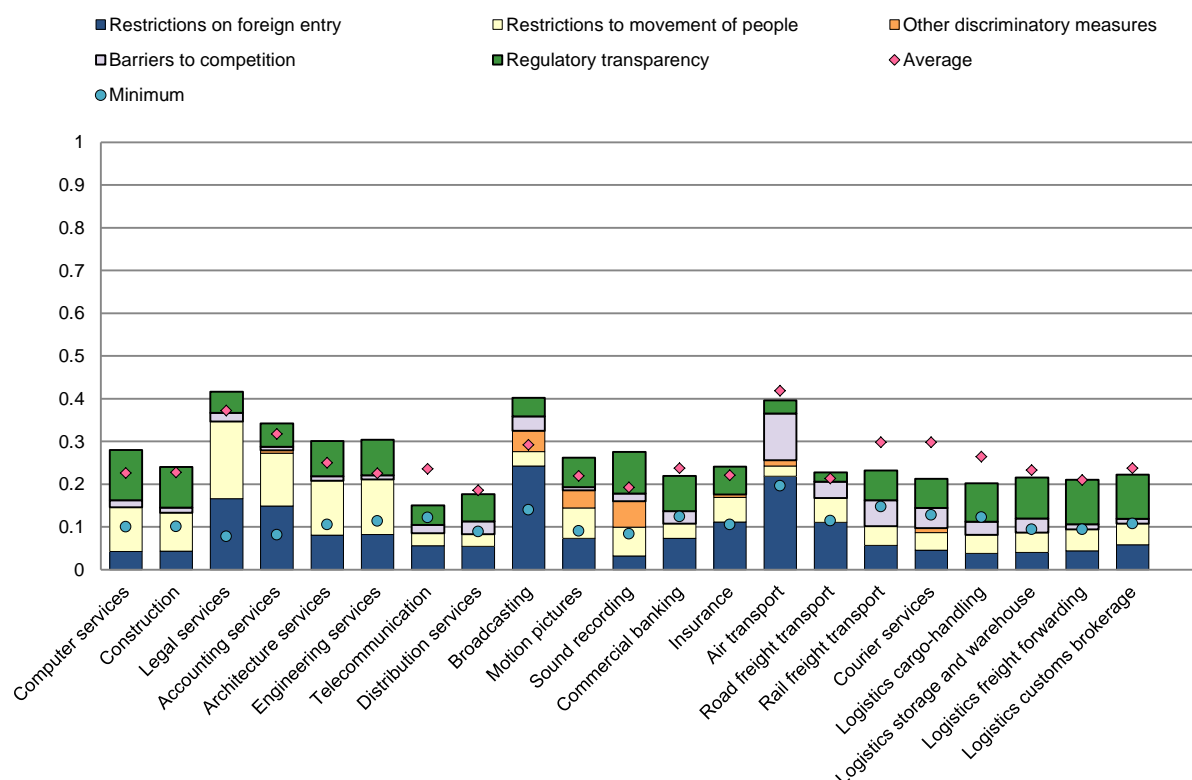


OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Austria

Austria exported services worth USD 58.5 billion and its services import value was USD 45.6 billion in 2015. Travel and transport are Austria's largest services exports and other business and transport the largest services imports. Austria's score on the STRI in the 21 sectors is shown below, along with the average and the lowest score among the 44 countries included in the STRI database for each sector.

STRI by sector and policy area



Note: The STRI indices take values between zero and one, one being the most restrictive. They are calculated on the basis of the STRI regulatory database which contains information on regulation for the 35 OECD Members, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Russia and South Africa. The STRI database records measures on a Most Favoured Nations basis. Preferential trade agreements are not taken into account. Air transport and road freight cover only commercial establishment (with accompanying movement of people).

Horizontal policy measures

Austria has a lower score than average on the STRI in 9 out of 21 sectors (maritime transport is excluded for landlocked countries). Austria applies labour market tests for workers seeking to provide services in the country on a temporary basis as intra-corporate transferees, contractual services suppliers or independent services suppliers. These categories may stay in the country for up to 12 months on their first entry permit, while certain types of intra-corporate transferees, such as senior level persons in charge of supervision or direction are exempted from such labour market tests. Acquisition of land or real estate by foreigners is subject to authorisation. The standards for cross-border transfer of personal data are set at the EU level. Transfers to non-EEA economies can only take place when these ensure an adequate level of protection that is substantially similar to that required in the EU or when private data processors, both senders and receivers, establish various safeguards approved by the data protection authorities. Moreover, it is relatively burdensome to register a company in Austria, measured by the number of working days and the number of mandatory procedures required. A large number of documents is needed to obtain a business visa. Finally, there are no legal

obligations to consult with stakeholders during the preparation of laws and regulations at the federal level although it is a common practice to have such consultation procedures.

The sectors with the relatively lowest STRI scores

Telecommunication, courier services and cargo-handling services are the three best performing sectors in Austria, relative to the average STRI across all countries. In the absence of sector-specific restrictions, the STRI in the telecommunications sector results almost entirely from the general regulatory environment. Competition in the courier services sector is affected by the presence of a major firm controlled by the government which receives preferential tax treatment in its role as designated postal operator. Also in the cargo-handling sector a major supplier is owned by the government.

The sectors with the relatively highest STRI scores

The sectors with the highest STRI scores are broadcasting, sound recording and engineering. In broadcasting, Austria requires that the majority of the shares in broadcasters must be owned by Austrian or EEA nationals. The EU Audio-visual Media services directive requires that broadcasters reserve at least half of transmission time for European works.

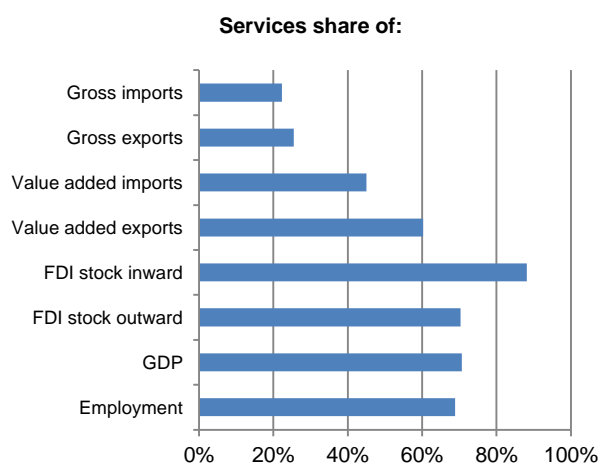
Eligibility for some subsidies for audio-visual work is limited to productions with significant Austrian participation. This is recorded as restriction applying to both broadcasting and sound recording.

Commercial presence in Austria is required to provide engineering services. The manager as well as the majority of board members of an engineering company must be licensed professionals. In addition, foreign engineers are required to take a local examination and no temporary licencing system is in place in the sector.

Recent reforms

There are no policy changes that affect the score on the STRI during the period 2015-2016.

Efficient services sectors matter



Services account for 25% of Austria's gross exports, but 60% of value-added exports, indicating that Austria's exports of goods rely intensively on services inputs. Cost effective state of the art services are therefore of utmost importance for the competitiveness of the Austrian industrial sector. The services share of inward investment is relatively high. Services account for 69% of employment, which implies that earnings and aggregate demand depends crucially on productivity in the services sector. The STRI profile suggests that Austria can further improve efficiency by focusing on sectors that are essential inputs to other goods and services providers such as professional services.

More information

- » Access all of the country notes, sector notes and interactive STRI tools on the OECD website at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org