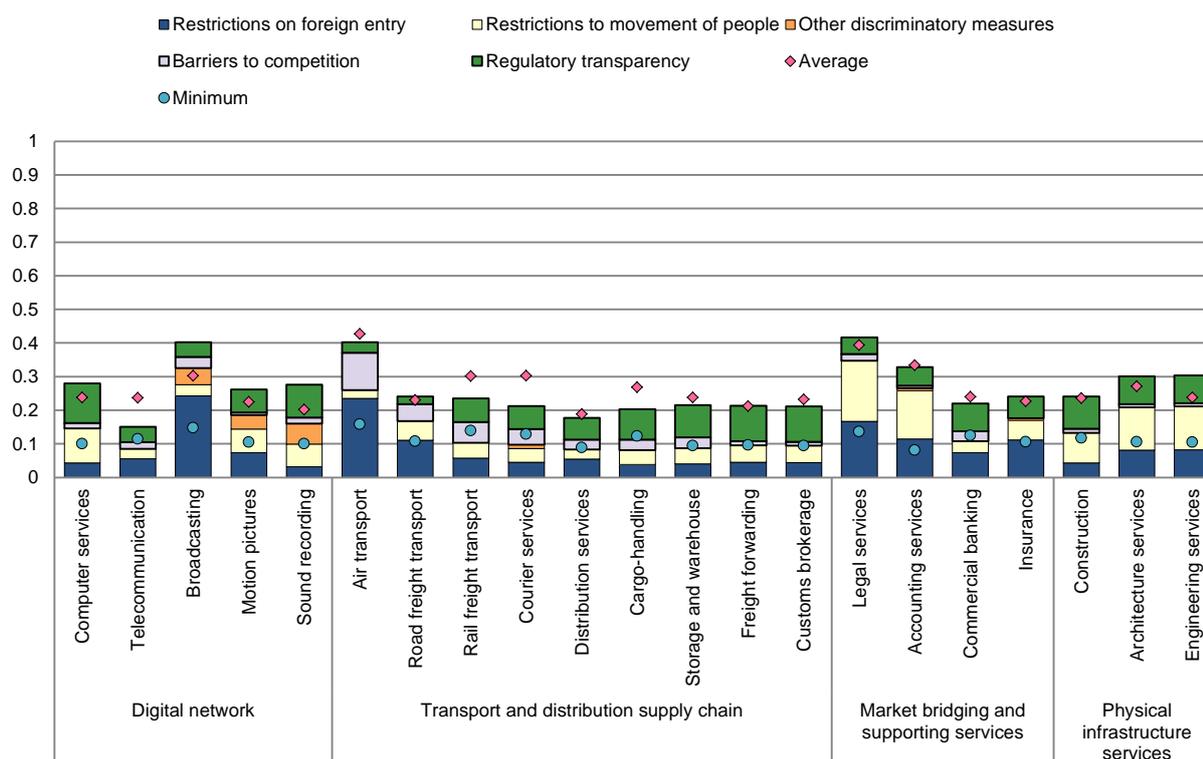


OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Austria

Austria exported services worth USD 60 billion and its services import value was USD 49 billion in 2016. Travel and transport are Austria's largest services exports and transport and other business services 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). Maritime transport services are not covered for landlocked countries.

Horizontal policy measures

Austria has a lower score than average on the STRI in 10 out of 21 sectors. Labour market tests are applied for workers seeking to provide services in the country on a temporary basis as intra-corporate transferees, contractual services suppliers or independent services suppliers. Managers and specialists entering the country as intra-corporate transferees can obtain a work permit for three years, while workers of other categories may stay in the country for up to 12 months on their first entry permit. 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. More than eight documents are 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 logistics cargo-handling services are the three sectors with the lowest score 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.

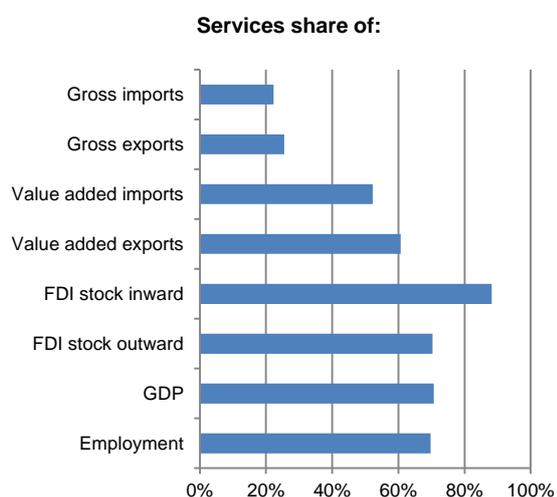
The sectors with the relatively highest STRI scores

Engineering, broadcasting and sound recording services are the three sectors with the highest score relative to the average STRI across all countries. 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. In broadcasting, Austria requires that the majority of the shares in broadcasters must be owned by Austrian or EEA nationals. The EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive requires that broadcasters reserve a majority proportion of their transmission time for European works. Eligibility for some subsidies for audio-visual work is limited to productions in which the directors and majority of the cast and crew are Austrian nationals. This is recorded as restriction applying to both broadcasting and sound recording.

Recent reforms

As of October 2017, a new permit of intra-corporate transferees is available for non-EU/EEA nationals. The period of validity has been extended from one year to three years for managers and specialists. Moreover, the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection may, by regulation, fix quotas for the employment of non-EU/EEA intra-corporate transferees. In the telecommunications sector, parts of the fixed line telephony market have been deregulated in May 2017.

Efficient services sectors matter



Services account for 25% of Austria's gross exports, but 61% of value-added exports, indicating that Austria's exports of goods rely intensively on services inputs. 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 information and communication technology revolution opens new opportunities for inclusive growth in a services economy like Austria. Innovation and adoption of technology relies on access to knowledge and to the networks, people, goods and services that carry the knowledge around the world. In this context, Austria could benefit from more open markets for services trade through the temporary movement of natural persons.

More information

- » Access all of the country notes, sector notes and interactive STRI tools on the OECD website at <http://oe.cd/stri>
- » Read more about services trade policies and their impacts in this publication: [Services Trade Policies and the Global Economy](#)
- » Contact the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate with your questions at stri.contact@oecd.org