

Government at a Glance 2023

Country Notes

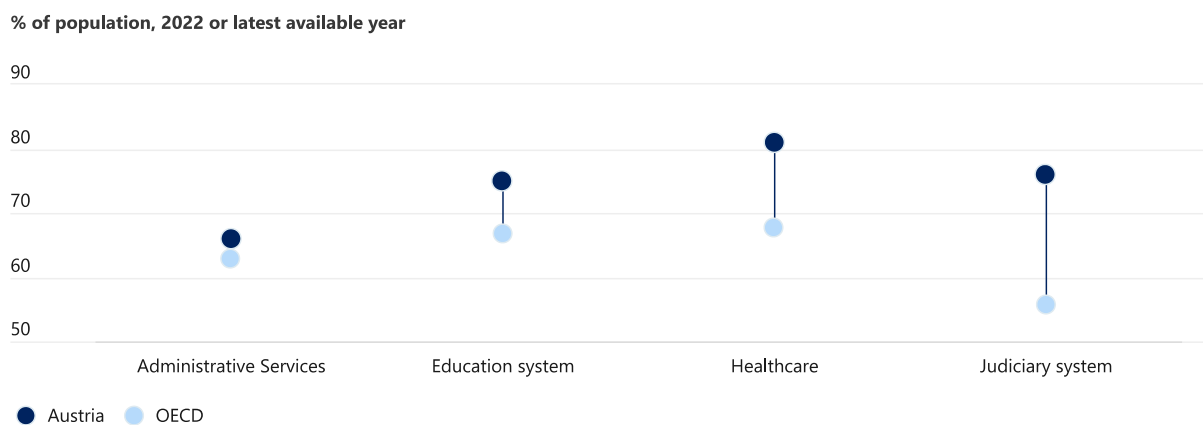
Austria

Trust and satisfaction with public services

Trust in public institutions and satisfaction with public services are important yardsticks of the quality of public governance. They reflect people's perceptions of government competence in designing and delivering policies and services, and expectations on the behaviour of public institutions and their representatives. Although high trust in public institutions is not a necessary outcome of democratic governance, trust and satisfaction with public services facilitate effective governance, as they correlate with high rates of compliance with policies, participation in public life and social cohesion.

Austria is among the top performers on satisfaction with public services. Satisfaction with the health care system is the highest (81%) followed by satisfaction with the judiciary system (76%), which is 20 percentage points above the OECD average (56%). Satisfaction with the education system (75%) is also above the OECD average (67%). Conversely, satisfaction with administrative services (66%) is only slightly above the OECD average (63%).

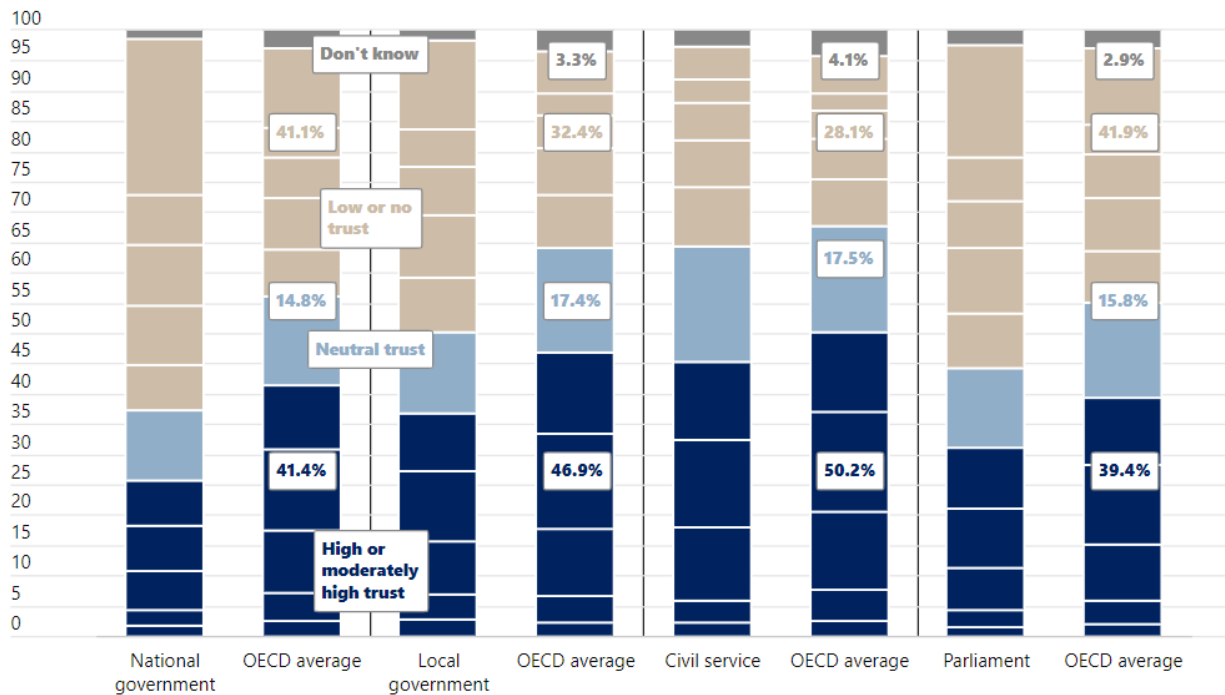
Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022



Trust in public institutions in Austria is below OECD average. Only about one in four Austrians have high or moderately high trust in their national government (26%), less than the average across the OECD (41%). Trust in the civil service (45%), local government (37%) and parliament (31%) are higher, although slightly below the OECD averages.

Figure 2. Trust in public institutions, 2021

% of population reporting high or moderately high trust in various public institutions, Austria, 2021



Achieving results with good governance practices

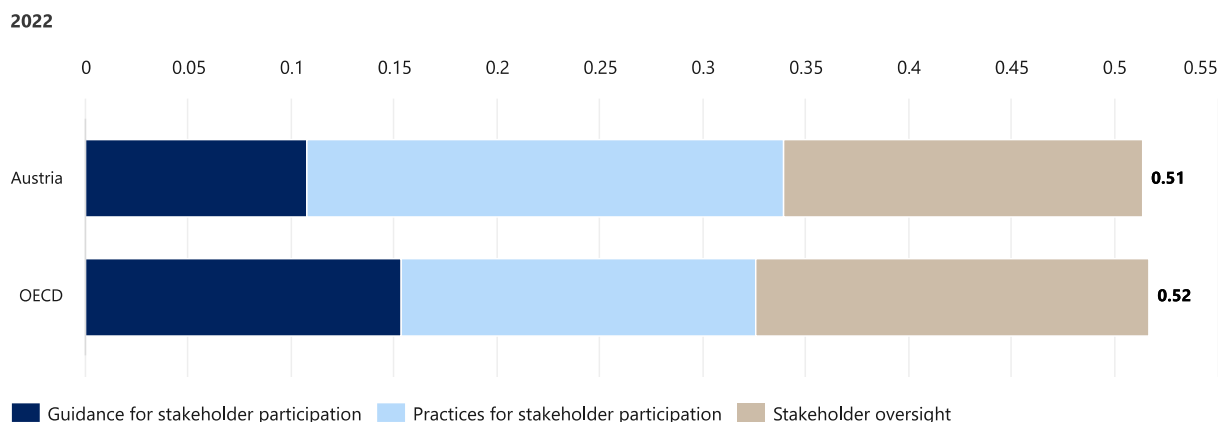
In an age of multiple crises, governments need to adopt more advanced practices to build trust in public institutions and enhance democratic resilience. Actions include building on democratic strengths, such as enhancing citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making; reinforcing key competences to handle crises, such as budgeting and public financial management processes to address the green and digital transitions; and protecting against threats to democratic values, such as maintaining effective public integrity rules and promoting ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making helps to improve the design, implementation, and public acceptance of policies, infrastructure and services. The OECD Infrastructure Governance Index (IGI) on stakeholder participation provides an overview of countries' performance in developing national guidance for stakeholder engagement, promoting their effective participation, and ensuring stakeholder oversight over infrastructure projects.

Austria is close to the OECD average in the IGI on stakeholder participation (0.51 compared to 0.52, with 1 being the maximum possible value). Austria's score on stakeholder engagement practices exceeds the OECD average (0.23 against 0.17), while guidance and oversight for stakeholder participation fall slightly below the OECD average (0.11 and 0.18 against 0.15 and 0.19, respectively).

Figure 3. Index on stakeholder participation in infrastructure decision making

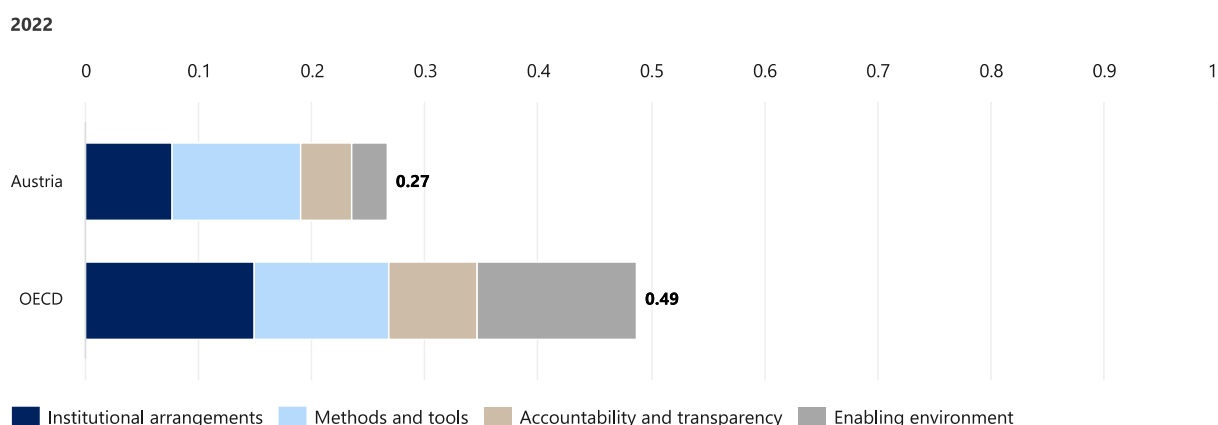
From 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest), 2022



Budgeting management processes, such as green budgeting, can help address the climate crisis and achieve environmental goals. While there has been a rapid increase in the number of countries implementing green budgeting mechanisms, these could be used more effectively. Green budgeting mechanisms include institutional arrangements to assess the environmental impacts of budgetary and fiscal policies, methods for evaluating their consistency, mechanisms to enhance transparency and accountability, and an enabling budgetary governance framework.

Austria fares below the OECD average on green budgeting. Austria's score the OECD Green Budgeting Index amounts to 0.27, compared to 0.49 on average across OECD countries (1 is the maximum possible score, meaning full application of green budgeting). Austria's highest score is on methods and tools (0.11 out of a possible total of 0.25) at about the same level than the OECD average (0.12)

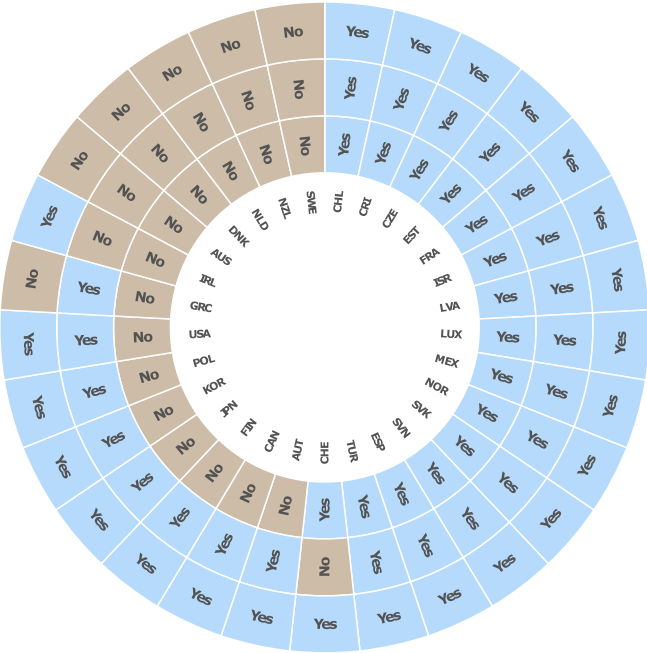
Figure 4. OECD Green Budgeting Index, 2022



Financial contributions allow individuals and entities to support political candidates and parties. However, political finance needs to be adequately regulated to reduce risks of undue influence and policy capture.

In Austria, publicly owned enterprises are not allowed to finance political campaigns and parties. This is also valid for foreign persons, states or enterprises as soon as the amount of the donation exceeds €500. Anonymous donations are not permitted above €150. The receipt of an anonymous donation below this limit does not need to be registered or reported separately, but the total amount of such donations has to be reported in the yearly statement of accounts.

Figure 5. Regulation to ban financing political parties and election campaigns, 2022

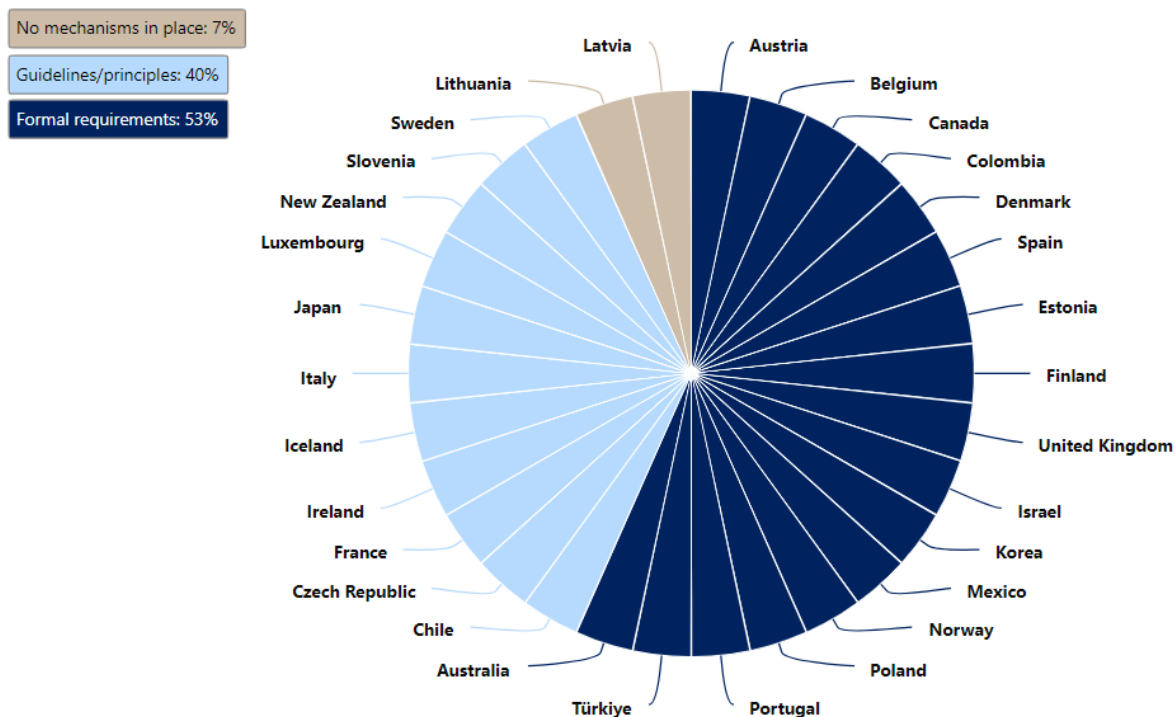


Inner ring: Ban on anonymous donations, and all contributions made to political parties and/or candidates must be registered and reported.
Middle ring: Ban on contributions from publicly owned enterprises.
Outer ring: Ban on contributions from foreign states or foreign enterprises.

Strengthening information integrity has become particularly complex in the digital age. While digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) provide enormous opportunities, including in expanding and protecting the exercise of some democratic rights and freedoms, their use also brings challenges for governments such as ensuring that they enhance people’s willingness and ability to engage constructively in democratic life and that they benefit society as a whole.

Austria has formal requirements in place, in the form of laws and regulations, to ensure ethical use of AI.

Figure 6. Mechanisms used to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence in government, 2022

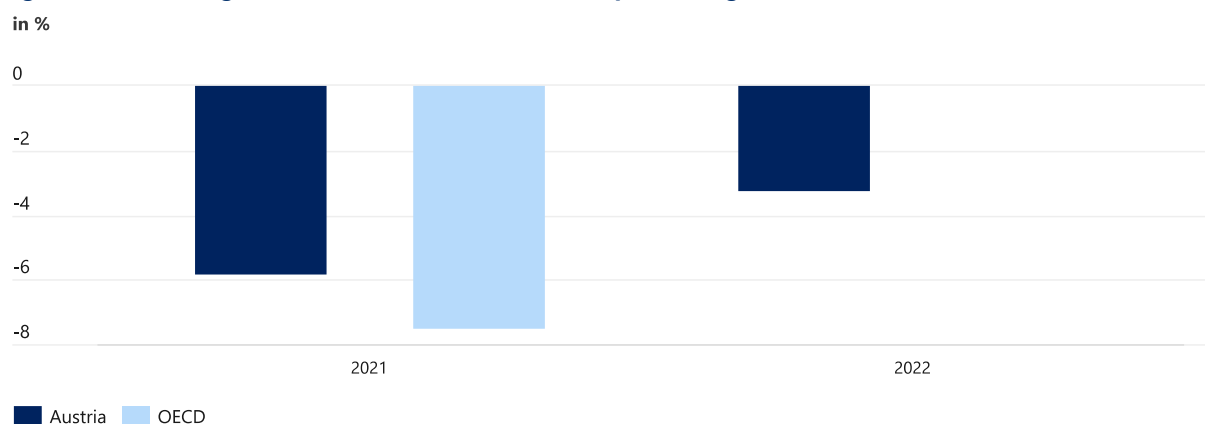


What resources public institutions use and how they are managed

After stark deterioration due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required emergency measures and direct support mechanisms to business and people, public finances show positive signs, but the recovery remains fragile. The fiscal balance is the difference between a government’s revenues and its expenditures in a year. When the government spends more than it collects, it has a fiscal deficit. When it spends less, it has a fiscal surplus.

Austria had a fiscal deficit of –5.8% of GDP in 2021, which is below the OECD average of –7.5%. In 2022, the deficit was reduced to –3.2% of GDP. In 2021, the public debt was 101.6% of GDP, below the OECD average (120.8%). The debt rate was reduced to 82.8% in 2022.

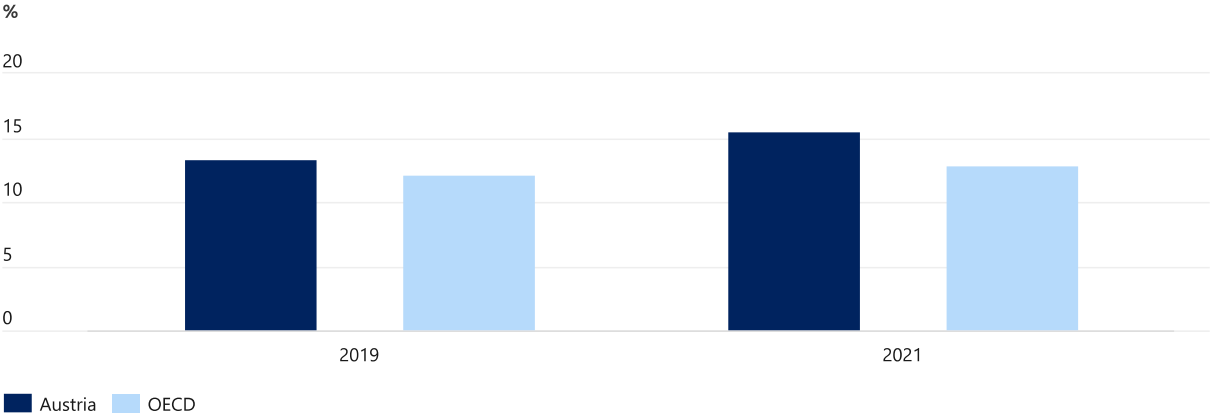
Figure 7. General government fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP



Public investment can enhance productivity and economic growth and help implement long-term policies, such as green energy infrastructure to support action on climate change. In turn, governments procure large amounts of goods, services and works to help them implement policies and deliver public services.

In 2021, Austria spent more than the OECD average on procurement, 15.6% of GDP compared to 12.9%. Austria's investment spendings as a share of GDP was 3.5%, comparable to the OECD average (3.4%) in 2021. In 2022, investment spending increased to 4.0% of GDP.

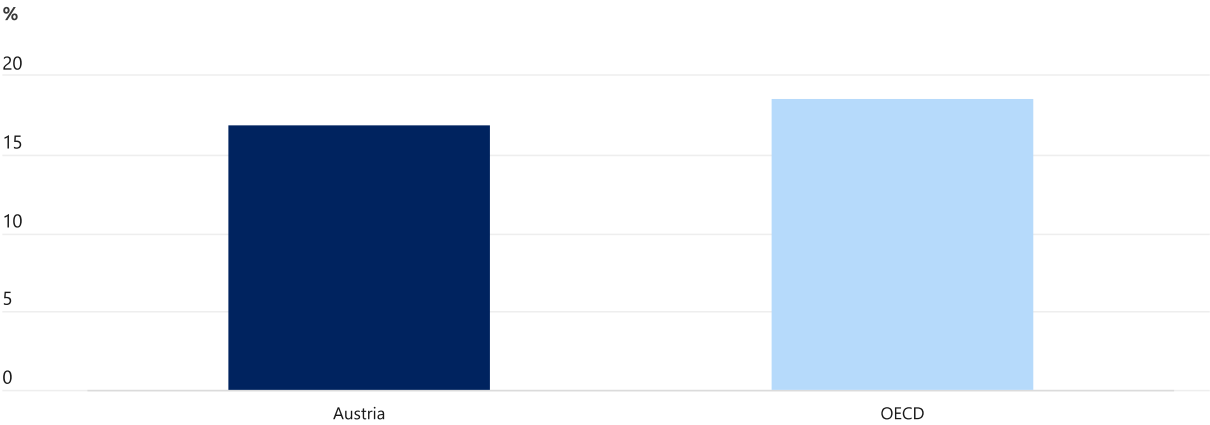
Figure 8. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP



The size of public employment varies significantly among OECD countries, ranging from around 10% to just above 30%.

The public employment as a share of total employment was 17.0% in Austria in 2021, slightly below the OECD average (18.6%).

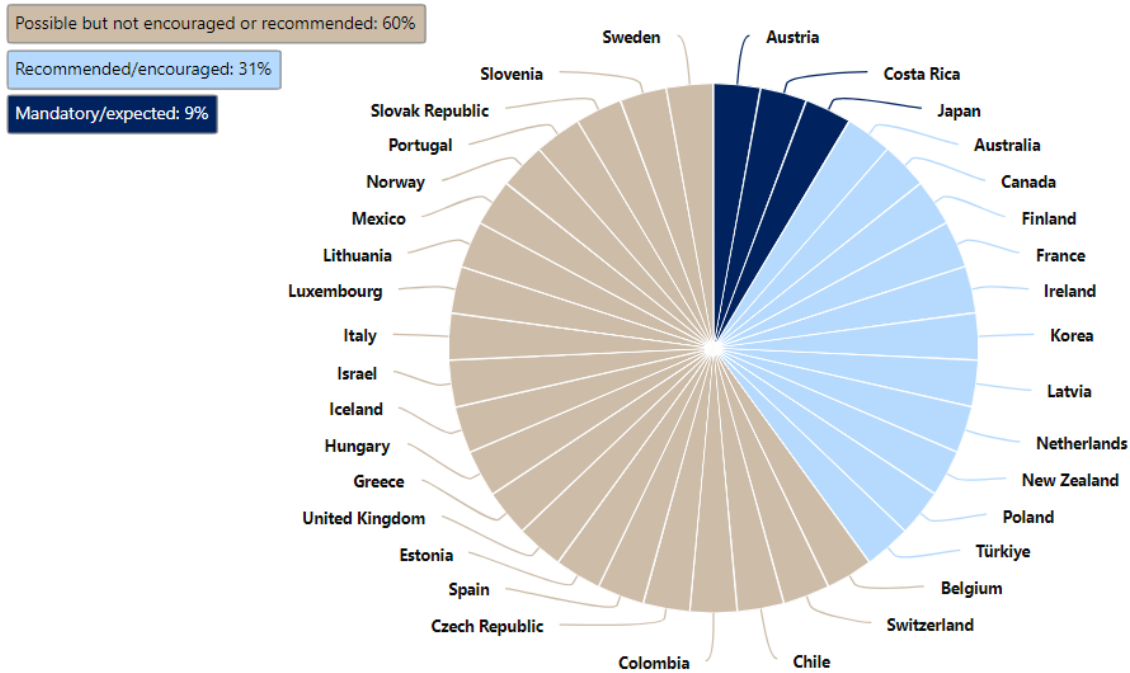
Figure 9. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021



Governments use different mechanisms to harness and develop the capacity of their workforce. For example, internal mobility in public administrations helps to pool human resources across government and attract and retain civil servants.

Austria is one of the three countries where internal mobility is mandatory or expected for most civil servants. Additionally, internal mobility is possible but not encouraged or recommended for senior level civil servants. Austria currently lacks individual learning plans for public employees.

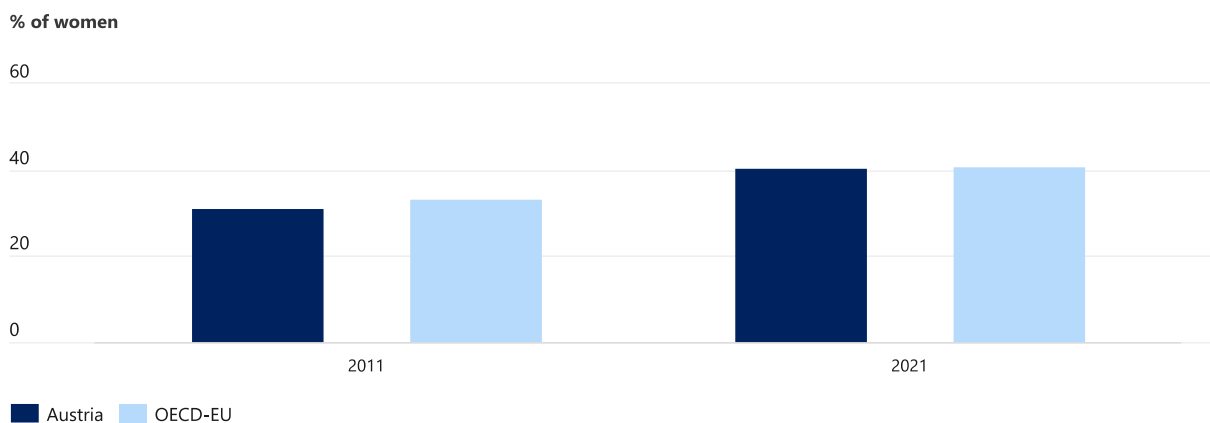
Figure 10. Mobility of civil servants across public administrations in central government, 2022



Equal representation of women and men in the public sector is a key indicator of progress towards gender equality, diversity and better representation. In 2020, a majority of employees in the public sector in OECD countries were women (58.9%), with large differences among countries. However, women are often under-represented in managerial positions.

Austria aligns with the OECD-EU average on the representation of women in senior management positions in the national administration (40.5% against 40.8%). In turn, women’s representation in ministerial position (40%) is above the OECD average (36%), yet still below gender parity.

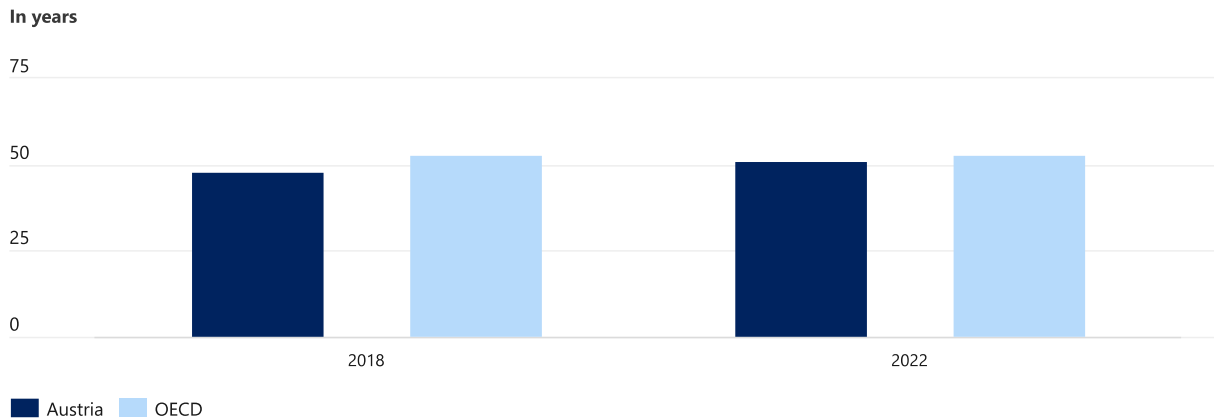
Figure 11. Gender equality in senior management positions in national administration, 2021



Young people are under-represented in public and political life across the OECD, with the risk that their voice and interests are not sufficiently taken in consideration in policymaking.

The average age of cabinet members in Austria is 51 years, 2 years younger than on average in OECD countries.

Figure 12. Average age of cabinet members, 2018 and 2022



About the report

Government at a Glance presents the most up-to-date internationally comparable data on how public administrations function and perform in OECD countries, accession countries, and other major economies. Country factsheets highlight key indicators against the OECD average. Data included in the factsheets are derived from the new Government at a Glance data portal, which allows for a more user-friendly and interactive way of comparing countries with each other and the OECD average. The factsheets do not provide a comprehensive picture of public governance performance, but rather a snapshot of key indicators in the three sections of the publication: a) trust and satisfaction with public services; b) achieving results with good governance practices and c) what resources public institutions use and how they are managed.

Figure notes

People who express satisfaction with public services: for the judiciary and the courts the data reflect the proportion of citizens who express having confidence in the institution. Data on satisfaction with administrative services come from the OECD 2021 Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. Data on satisfaction with the education and health systems and confidence in the judiciary are from the Gallup World Poll.

Data on public finance and economics are derived from the System of National Accounts (SNA) and were extracted on 5 May 2023.

Fiscal balance as reported in SNA framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.

Government gross debt is reported according to the SNA definition, which differs from the definition applied under the Maastricht Treaty. It is defined as all liabilities that require payment or payments of interest or principal by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. All debt instruments are liabilities, but some liabilities such as shares, equity and financial derivatives are not debt.

Public employment refers to employment in the general government as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA). Data on employment in general government were extracted on 17 April 2023.

Data on employment in general government for Iceland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Türkiye and the United States are from the International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT.

Data show women as a share of cabinet members who head ministries as of 1 January 2023 (excluding ministers without portfolios).

The data on age of cabinet members reflects the situation as of 20 December 2022.

OECD average refers to the unweighted average with the exception of public finance indicators.

For more information see

www.oecd.org/governance/government-at-a-glance.htm