

European Rule of Law Mechanism: 2026 Rule of Law Report Austrian Input

Vienna, January 2026

I. Recommendations of the 2025 Rule of Law Report: follow-up and feedback

In the 2025 Rule of Law Report, it is recommended to Austria to:

“Address the need for involvement of the judiciary in the procedures for appointment of court presidents of administrative courts, taking into account European standards on judicial appointments and the selection of court presidents.”

As already outlined in the 2025 Austrian Input, ordinary legislation with regard to the selection of presidents of administrative courts on the federal and federal province (*Bundesland*) level establishes special committees or leaves room for establishing ad hoc committees. These provisions stipulate the involvement of the judiciary in the mentioned committees. Sec. 2 Federal Administrative Court Act ([Bundesverwaltungsgerichtsgesetz](#) – BVwGG), for example, establishes a committee that includes the presidents of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Administrative Court and the Supreme Court of Justice, or a person authorised by them. In practice, there are no significant differences between the federal administrative courts and the federal province (*Bundesland*) administrative courts.

Hence, the judiciary has constantly been involved in the (special) committees and has therefore been always involved in the procedures for the appointment of court presidents of administrative courts since 2014.

This system is in line with the Austrian constitution.

“Take forward the reform to establish an independent Federal Prosecution Office, taking into account European standards on the independence and autonomy of the prosecution, including to ensure the independent operation of the specialised anti-corruption prosecution.”

The establishment of an independent Federal Prosecution Office is part of the government programme of the current Federal Government. The Federal Government passed a resolution to this effect in July 2025. In order to implement this plan, the Federal Constitution must be amended inter alia, which requires a two-thirds majority in the National Council. Negotiations are therefore currently under way at the political level in order to achieve the broadest possible consensus.

“Take forward efforts to introduce effective rules on assets and interests’ declaration for Members of Parliament, including effective monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.”

Political discussions are currently ongoing to take legislative action regarding the handling of gifts of honour received by Members of Parliament. The European Commission will be kept up to date on this matter.

See also below under chapter 4 on further transparency measures in the Austrian Parliament.

A political agreement was reached in the President’s Conference of the National Council that no specific working group will be established in the current 28th legislative period of the National Council regarding the recommendation to take forward efforts to introduce rules on assets and interests’

declaration for Members of Parliament. Should relevant legislative measures in this context be taken, they will be reported to the European Commission.

“Adopt a legislative proposal to strengthen the framework on lobbying, including the transparency register.”

A national reform has been postponed due to negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on Transparency of Interest Representation on behalf of Third Countries. With the implementation of the directive, the Austrian Lobbying and Interest Representation Transparency Act ([Lobbying- und Interessenvertretungs-Transparenz-Gesetz](#) – LobbyG) will have to be amended.

Austria actively ensures transparency regarding influence on the legislative process through its comprehensive consultation mechanism (*Begutachtungsverfahren*), which covers both the pre-parliamentary and parliamentary stages. By publishing draft bills and written statements received from stakeholders directly on the Parliament’s website, the system creates a fully documented public record of the debate. This practice effectively establishes a transparent legislative footprint, revealing the inputs of interest groups to the general public without requiring a separate tracking mechanism.

For more information on the pre-parliamentary and parliamentary consultation procedure please see also under chapter 4 - which shows a constantly high public feedback in consultations -, the Austrian Inputs to previous Rule of Law Reports as well as information on the Parliament’s website (in German only): [pre-parliamentary and parliamentary consultation procedure](#).

An explicit legal basis entered into force on 15 July 2024 for the long-standing practice of (also) publishing comments submitted on ministerial draft bills on the Parliament’s website as part of the pre-parliamentary consultation procedure.

Reference is also made to the Commission’s Anti-Corruption Workshop in Vienna on 11 December 2025 mentioned in chapter 2 as well as the 2025 Austrian Input on this recommendation.

“Take steps to ensure proper implementation and enforcement as regards the fair distribution of state advertising.”

The transparency obligations of Art. 25 of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) are essentially already fulfilled in Austria by the Federal Act on Transparency in Media Cooperation as well as of Advertising Orders and the Funding of Media Owners of a Periodical Medium ([Medienkooperations- und -förderungs-Transparenzgesetz](#) – MedKF-TG). For advertising measures previously exempt from the MedKF-TG that are exclusively aimed at foreign target groups, as well as for municipalities with fewer than 10.000 inhabitants and their controlled legal entities, the publication obligations apply directly by virtue of Art. 25 EMFA. These entities must publish their total annual expenditures and the expenditures per provider electronically and in a user-friendly manner; the Austrian Communications Authority (KommAustria) monitors and reports on this in accordance with Art. 25, para. 3 EMFA. This will be clarified in a forthcoming amendment to the MedKF-TG.

II. Developments in the four pillars of the Rule of Law Report

1. Justice System

Independence

Appointment and selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents

The process to reform the current system of evaluation of judges is still ongoing.

As reported during the country visit in March 2025, the topic of periodic evaluation of judges was taken up by a Dialogue Group of the ENCJ, in which Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium were involved, and discussed at a meeting held in Vienna in February 2024. Valuable insights were gained from this international exchange of experiences. Especially the report from the Netherlands, whose judicial system provides for a very modern and primarily feedback-based type of evaluation was very interesting. On this basis, the discussions continued.

In March 2025, the Ministry of Justice held a meeting with all relevant stakeholders to report on this exchange of experiences and to discuss ideas for an innovative and valuable evaluation system. Representatives from the Netherlands also took part in this event. The meeting, in particular the reports on the Dutch system, was extremely informative and insightful. After further discussions, a consensus was reached among all participants from the Austrian judiciary to further develop the status quo with a focus on regular feedback.

In the second half of 2025, four workshops were held with judges and judges' candidates to determine what kind of feedback is important for their professional and personal development and what tools would be useful for this purpose. The results of these successful workshops will be evaluated and the feedback tools identified will be tested in practice.

Quality of justice

Accessibility of courts

The "JustizOnline" service platform, established in 2020, ensures modern and user-friendly access to the justice system and is being gradually expanded with additional digital services. A significant improvement in accessibility in 2025 was the introduction of the platform in English and the provision of additional forms (particularly for requests under the Freedom of Information Act). Furthermore, a dedicated section for court publications was created, which will be expanded gradually in the coming years.

Resources of the judiciary

Financial resources: Following significant budget increases for the period 2020-2024, the budgets for 2025 and 2026 should be viewed in the context of overall government budget consolidation measures. Nevertheless, the budget for the judiciary was increased by EUR 87.301 million for 2025 compared to 2024-2027. The payment target for 2026 is EUR 10.410 million higher than that for 2025.

These budget funds cover the rising costs associated with ongoing inflation, which are reflected in both personnel and material expenses (especially in the area of health-related measures).

According to the restrictive budget execution, prioritisation is necessary in construction projects. However, necessary renovations of individual court buildings as well as safety-related adaptations will be carried out on an ongoing basis. One major project which began in 2025 is the building expansion of the Regional Court for Criminal Matters in Graz. This project is expected to be completed in 2026/2027.

Following the significant decrease in court fee income in the year 2024, lower earnings are also expected in 2026. The main reason for this is the continued decline in land registry fees due to the tense situation in the property market resulting from higher interest rates and stricter lending guidelines. Additionally, the temporary suspension of land registry and mortgage registration fees for residential property which was part of the 'Housing and Construction Offensive' stimulus package expires at the end of June 2026.

As already stated in previous reports, the Austrian judiciary, like many other public and private employers, is increasingly faced with the problem of recruiting a sufficient number of suitable staff. In order to ensure that posts are filled as far as possible despite the given circumstances, the Federal Ministry of Justice has implemented various short and long-term measures to attract and recruit staff and to strengthen the long-term loyalty of employees to the justice system (project "Personaloffensive").

Due to the various measures taken, the Austrian judiciary has succeeded in filling almost all permanent positions in the courts and public prosecutor's offices. On average, 99.7% of permanent positions have been filled so far in 2025. Overall, +645 permanent positions were added to the judiciary during the last legislative period (2020 to 2024), including +70 permanent positions for judges, +88 for public prosecutors and +40 for trainee judges.

Training of justice professionals

The 2025 bi-annual "Richter:innenwoche" (Judges' Week) dealt with the topic 'Transparency and Data Protection – Significance in every day court practice'. The aim was to approach the topic from different angles in an interdisciplinary discourse. The focus was laid on the recently adopted Freedom of Information Act as well as on personality rights in court proceedings and the importance of public access to and transparency in court proceedings.

A new webinar series on money laundering and terrorism has been launched in December 2025 to strengthen in-depth knowledge for judges as well as prosecutors.

In the area of diversity education, the seminar "Diversity competence in management positions" („Diversitätskompetenz in Führungspositionen“) addressed specifically staff in management positions. Complementary to the already established programme on judicial and contemporary history, a two-day seminar especially for judges and public prosecutors with an excursion to the Hartheim Castle learning and memorial site and the Gusen and Mauthausen concentration camp memorials took place in October 2025.

With regard to SLAPP, those responsible for further training at the higher regional courts and the training organisers of the Judges' Association have been instructed to include the topic in relevant seminars.

Digitalisation

In 2025, significant progress was again made in the introduction of digital proceedings throughout the judiciary, despite budgetary restrictions and personnel reductions. Appeal proceedings in criminal matters at the higher regional courts, as well as custody proceedings at the level of the district courts are now managed digitally. The piloting phases in inheritance and insolvency proceedings are ongoing and a full rollout is planned for 2026. The digital transformation of appeal proceedings at the level of

the Supreme Court and proceedings at the Procurator General's Office is planned for the upcoming year.

By completing these major steps, 90% of the new cases (approx. 2 million cases p.a.) are being managed digitally. Furthermore, the milestones of 5 million digital proceedings and 1 million hearings in digitally managed proceedings were reached in the course of this year. These advancements in the digital transformation of the judiciary are also reflected in the number of electronic file inspections, surpassing 2 million inspections within the year 2025. The Justice 3.0 systems are used at all 160 justice authorities (including correctional facilities) by more than 7.600 users on a daily basis.

The use of AI applications is expanded gradually, to offer state-of-the-art tools for support and research tasks. In 2025, AI-based applications for transcribing dictations (speech-to-text) and translating documents were piloted. In addition, a chat-service with anonymised court decisions utilizing a large language model (LLM) was also piloted successfully and a rollout is planned for 2026.

The use of electronic legal communication (ELC) for interacting with the judiciary has been mandatory for lawyers, notaries, banks, insurance companies and other institutions since 1990. Among other things, it is now also possible to submit a structured list of claims in insolvency proceedings to optimise the collaboration between the court and mandated insolvency officers.

Following amendments of Sec. 48a Court Organisation Act ([Gerichtsorganisationsgesetz](#) - GOG), with effect as of 1 January 2025, the obligation to publish all decisions in the federal legal information system was extended to all legally binding decisions of the Higher Regional Courts, resulting in an increase of the published decisions by those courts by a factor of around 10.

Specialisation and training for the judiciary to deal with commercial cases, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and mediation as regards commercial cases

The Austrian judicial system is based, among other things, on the principle of the generalist judge. As part of their judicial training, Austrian judges, like public prosecutors, receive comprehensive training in all judicial and prosecutorial areas (Sec. 4 para. 1 [Richteramtsanwärter/innen-Ausbildungsverordnung](#) – RiAA-AusbVO) and can then consequently work in all of these areas.

As far as court organisation is concerned, Vienna has two special courts responsible for commercial matters, namely the Vienna Commercial Court and the Vienna District Court for Commercial Matters. In all other federal provinces (*Bundesländer*), commercial matters are dealt with by so-called "Vollgerichte" (generalist courts), whereby some of the higher regional courts have specialised commercial and company law panels.

Training on commercial matters is part of both initial judicial training as well as continuous judicial training.

Candidate judges do not only complete theoretical classes on commercial law but also are assigned to courts dealing with commercial matters, where they – as part of the on-the-job initial training – assist the competent judges, participate in trials, draft decisions etc.

As to continuous training, the relevant 13 Austrian judicial training providers (FMoJ, the four Higher Regional Courts, the four Senior Public Prosecutor's Offices, the Supreme Court, the Federal Administrative Court, the Association of Austrian Judges and the Association of Austrian Public Prosecutors) are organising numerous (national) online and face-to-face training events dealing with commercial law topics. In this context, it is worth highlighting the yearly "Certification Training Course on Commercial Law for Judges and Public Prosecutors", each opened for up to 25 judges and public prosecutors and consisting of 6 (mainly) two-day modules and, inter alia, dealing with topics such as

business administration, accounting systems, tax law, financial instruments, company register, insolvency law, commercial criminal law, financial criminal law etc.

The participation in these training events is free of charge and considered as service. Candidate judges are also invited to participate in these continuous training events on a voluntary basis.

2. Anti-corruption framework

The institutional framework capacity to fight against corruption

Authorities in charge of prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption and the resources allocated to each of these authorities

Following an increase in the expenditure budget for 2024, which was partly due to several additional tasks taken on by the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) since January 2024, the expenditure budget in 2025 (EUR 14.646 million) remained stable.

On 1 December 2025, the staff of the BAK included 174 employees (December 2024: 174), fourteen of whom are on maternity leave or work in other organizational units outside the BAK.

As regards cooperation with EPPO, it mainly takes place on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the cooperation with EPPO takes place on a principle-based level as employees of the BAK were able to visit the authority on-site after its establishment and learn about its working methods.

Information on the implementation of measures foreseen in the strategic anti-corruption framework

Regarding the Austrian National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), reference is made to previous Austrian Inputs.

At the end of 2025, the 2023-2025 action plans for the NACS were evaluated.¹ The draft evaluation report has been completed and is scheduled to be adopted by the Coordinating Body on Combating Corruption in its meeting on 28 January 2026. Without prejudice to the final report, the following figures can preliminarily be provided:

In terms of preventive measures, 229 indicators were defined in the action plan of the Federal Chancellery and the federal ministries for 2023-2025 (see [here](#)). Of these, 203 were fully met, 14 were partially met and 12 were not met. In the area of criminal prosecution, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry of Justice, 14 indicators were defined. Ten of these indicators were met, two were partially met and a further two were not met.

¹The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) was first adopted by the Austrian Federal Government on 31 January 2018, and most recently adapted on 11 October 2023. Two action plans, namely the Federal action plan and the action plan of organizations and authorities with voluntary participation, are developed based on the NACS. They contain objectives and measures to prevent and combat corruption, which are drawn up independently by the participating actors. The latter provide for the operationalisation of the measures in a three-year cycle, at the end of which the measures are evaluated to determine whether the objectives have been achieved. The evaluation is carried out by the participating actors, coordinated by the BAK, and summarized in an evaluation report. It is based on quantitative and qualitative indicators and assesses the status of the operationalisation of the action plan. The quantitative indicators represent figures and values for the clear measurability of the activities of a set measure. The qualitative evaluations refer to the content of the planned measures, based on a qualitative assessment of the defined packages of measures with regard to their suitability for achieving the respective objectives in the context of short descriptive texts.

All organisations and authorities that voluntarily defined objectives and measures for corruption prevention as part of the second action plan also participated in this current evaluation. In total, these organisations and authorities defined 214 quantitative performance indicators in the 2023-2025 action plan. Most of these indicators were fully met (187), while 21 were partially achieved. Six indicators were not achieved.

As an example, one indicator is explained in more detail in the following: The Federal Chancellery and the federal ministries have set the joint goal of enhancing the integrity of persons with top executive functions (PTEFs) in accordance with a recommendation by GRECO in its fifth evaluation round (cf. objective 1.32 in the federal action plan). To this end, the Federal Chancellery and the federal ministries defined general measures in the action plan and implemented these in specific measures. These include increasing and promoting awareness of compliance through training and other awareness-raising measures (the indicators to measure the achievement of or compliance with these objectives include the number of training courses per ministry: ≥ 1 and the number of PTEF-information-measures per ministry: ≥ 1).

Prevention

Measures to enhance integrity in the public sector in particular as regards high-level officials

Extensive compliance-trainings for every civil servant and PTEF in the Federal Chancellery were conducted (see also para. 62 of the Austrian comments to Draft Compliance report GRECO RC5(2024(15-P2)). The trainings were conducted in 2025 for every new PTEF and every new civil servant of the Federal Chancellery (including those, who were civil servants in another Austrian ministry before). Furthermore, a Code of Conduct for ministers was drafted at technical level.

Regarding measures to enhance integrity in the public sector concerning high-level officials, regulations that were implemented with the Civil Service Employment Regulations Amendment 2024 ([Dienstrechts-Novelle 2024](#)), introducing a mandatory management training (Sec. 32 of the Civil Servants Employment Act and parallel regulations) are now taking effect at the enforcement level with the first training courses having started. First experiences are currently being collected and the regulations are subject to ongoing development.

The Federal Academy of Public Administration in Austria offers a wide range of training courses on compliance and integrity. Courses are available for all professional levels, from apprentices and basic training through to professional continuing education and training, as well as for high-level officials. One notable example of a course designed to enhance integrity among high-level public officials is “Compliance and Promoting Integrity for Management”.

In addition, the Federal Academy of Public Administration promotes integrity and ethical conduct by providing digital learning resources. Since November 2020, it has offered the e-learning course “The RESPONSibility rests with me – A QUESTION OF ETHICS” (developed in cooperation with the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns), which has received over 50.000 visits and been accessed by 4.648 federal employees via the academy's internal learning system. Building on this, the academy launched a project in December 2023 to develop new e-learning modules on whistleblower protection and compliance, which were rolled out in August 2024 with input from experts across federal, state and municipal levels; the modules also include a knowledge quiz to reinforce learning. Furthermore, in cooperation with Akademie Burgenland, the academy offers a dedicated course for (prospective) supervisory board members, covering key legal foundations, economic competencies, and compliance to strengthen integrity safeguards in oversight functions and promote experience exchange and networking.

The Federal Government's NACS action plan contains several objectives and measures to this end (cf. reference to objective 1.32 mentioned above).

In this context, the BAK held lectures in the Federal Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection as well as in the Federal Ministry of Justice in 2024 and 2025.

The BAK is also part of the Ministry of the Interior's management training course ('Successful Leadership – Reflect, Recognise, Develop'). Under the title 'LEADERSHIP.POWERs.INTEGRITY' ('FÜHRUNG.MACHT.INTEGRITÄT'), the BAK offers an advanced one-day elective module on corruption prevention and integrity promotion.

In 2025, the BAK newly established the *Integrity Club* to ensure interorganizational knowledge transfer within the Integrity Officers Network (IBN). The Integrity Club provides a framework for exchange and networking within the IBN. The kick-off event took place on 18 September 2025, held under the motto "Integrity officers in dialogue: What do we mean when we talk about integrity?". At the second Integrity Club on 3 December 2025, entitled "The BAK Backstage", the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption and its diverse areas of responsibility were presented in an interactive setting.

In 2025, more than 60 integrity officers from over 35 organizations across the public administration sector and from the state and state-affiliated sector (federal ministries, federal authorities, courts of auditors, Austrian universities, Parliamentary Administration, courts, state governments, state offices, magistrates, association of cities, Vienna Health Association, Tyrol Clinics, etc.) took part in the IBN Integrity Club meetings.

As regards the Corruption Prevention Officers Network (KPB) the year 2025 was marked by intensive training and further education activities. The focus was on measures to prevent and combat corruption, with students in basic police training (PGA) representing the largest target group. In addition to this, a new, cooperative training approach was adopted in 2025 as part of the annual KPB training measures. For the first time, this was aimed not only at the KPB, but also at the management bodies of the respective state police departments and all district and city police commands. In June 2025 a seminar series destined at assuring quality control on the one hand and training regarding the issues dealt with by BAK's department 4 - the Investigation and complaints office for allegations of police ill-treatment [*Ermittlungs- und Beschwerdestelle Misshandlungsvorwürfe* (EBM)] (cf. 2025 Austrian Input) – on the other hand, was launched. The seminar was held in the federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) of Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland.

The BAK's 32nd advanced training course took place in March and April 2025 with 20 participants. The main topics covered, included white-collar crime, ethics and value management, service and disciplinary law, criminal law relating to corruption, and the Code of Criminal Procedure. In addition, information was provided on the tasks of the BAK in connection with the reporting offices under the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) and the Investigation and Complaints Office for Allegations of Abuse (EBM), including the corresponding reporting obligations. Current topics relating to the securing of data as evidence and the Freedom of Information Act were also addressed. This project is co-financed by the EU's Internal Security Fund.

The BAK also regularly informs the public about its prevention measures via its website and social media.

Measures to enhance general transparency of public decision-making

Reference is made to the Anti-Corruption Workshop organized by the Commission on 11 December 2025 in Vienna, which i.a. touched upon lobbying and identified interest representation in the legislative process as an important aspect.

A new regulation for gifts of honours for the Federal Chancellery to ensure appropriate further use of gifts of honours became effective in 2025. In addition to the Code of Conduct for ministers, work on an asset declaration system is ongoing.

As regards political party financing, in 2025, the Independent Political Parties Transparency Panel (UPTS) issued ten decisions based on the Political Parties Act ([Parteiengesetz 2012](#) – PartG). The Panel imposed monetary penalties with a total amount of over EUR 350.000 on political parties. The decisions concerned for instance donations not reported to the Federal Court of Auditors in time, a delayed submission of an annual statement of accounts, but also the assumption of the costs for managing the social networks of a political party or the failure to indicate the coverage of the costs of advertisements in a newspaper or for the creation and operation of a webshop in the annual statement of accounts.

For the decisions (in German only), please see [here](#).

The Federal Administrative Court decided in 2025 (contrary to the opinion of the UPTS) that the association “Österreichischer Seniorenbund” is not part of the “Österreichische Volkspartei” (see [here](#)).

The Political Parties Act after the latest amendments in 2025 (e.g. regarding the reporting obligation of donations as well as the definition of affiliated organisations and donations) can be found [here](#).

Regarding Lobbying, in 2024, the Federal Ministry of Justice has started to inform the relevant district administrative authority of entities who failed to comply with their annual reporting obligations. The district administrative authority can fine those entities in accordance with administrative criminal law. In 2024, 23 lobbying firms and 25 firms who employ in-house lobbyists have been reported to the district administrative authorities. In 2025, 25 lobbying firms and 14 firms who employ in-house lobbyists have been reported to the district administrative authorities. The district administrative authorities have to inform the Federal Ministry of Justice when they open and close administrative criminal law cases because of violations of the Lobbying Act, but are not required to disclose the outcome of the case. Comprehensive statistics on the measures taken by district administrative authorities are not available; in some cases, fines have been imposed.

The compliance unit of the Parliamentary Administration continues to offer voluntary and confidential counselling to Members of Parliament, but also to the Parliamentary Administration’s staff in relation to integrity (including on how to deal with gifts and other advantages) and conflict of interest matters. Taken together, in 2025, the compliance unit was asked for such counselling by 23 Members of Parliament and 62 civil servants.

The compliance unit continues to provide staff trainings as well as trainings and workshops to Members of Parliament and parliamentary groups. In 2025, the following trainings were held:

Training	Addressees
Quick introduction to Compliance matters	New members of staff of the Parliamentary Administration
In depth Compliance training	New members of staff of the Parliamentary Administration
Compliance training	Newly appointed executives of the Parliamentary Administration
Quick introduction to Compliance matters	Newly appointed Members of Parliament and Members of the Federal Council
Training on conflict of interests	Executives of the Parliamentary Administration
Training on how to deal with gifts and other advantages	Members of Parliament, Members of the Federal Council and Parliamentary Assistants (Parlamentarische Mitarbeiter und Mitarbeiterinnen)

The compliance unit also regularly assesses compliance risks and suggests preventive measures to the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration to combat risks.

See also above on the possible legislative action regarding the handling of gifts of honour received by Members of Parliament.

Measures to prevent conflicts of interest in the public sector

The Code of Conduct for ministers drafted at technical level includes also measures to prevent conflicts of interest. Furthermore, compliance trainings are conducted, which also regard conflicts of interest (COI). In addition, every COI in the Federal Chancellery must be reported to the compliance department, which develops adequate measures to deal with the reported COI. In 2025 three COI were reported to the compliance department of the Federal Chancellery.

Measures to ensure whistleblower protection and encourage reporting of corruption

As regards the legal basis and role of the different institutions and offices in whistleblower protection as well as trainings and other awareness raising activities, reference is made to the 2024 and 2025 Austrian Input.

The Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA) ([HinweisgeberInnenschutzgesetz](#) – HSchG) requires an annual meeting of all external reporting offices to promote the exchange of experience. On 8 April 2025, the second meeting of all external reporting offices under the WPA took place and was attended by 36 participants. Under the direction of the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) as the general external reporting office, expert representatives from other external reporting offices, the federal provinces (*Bundesländer*), and from the federal ministries came together to exchange their experiences in handling reports and the corresponding procedures. Furthermore, the upcoming legal evaluation of the WPA in 2026 was discussed. The participants debated initial ideas and agreed on the further course of action to incorporate their practical experience into this process.

The BAK participated in various compliance events last year and will continue to do so in 2026. This includes raising awareness and promoting the reporting offices. Participation in further events (discussion forums, workshops, etc.) is planned.

On 16 October 2025, a valuable exchange took place between the external whistleblower office of the BAK and the Latvian anti-corruption authority (KNAB). The online meeting focused on the practical implementation of the EU Directive on the protection of whistleblowers, and on the exchange of best practice examples in dealing with whistleblowers and processing incoming reports.

Moreover, the BAK keeps statistics on incoming reports. From 1 January until 31 December 2025, 120 reports have been received (total number of submissions, regardless of whether the Act applies or not).

Since starting its operations on 25 August 2023, the Federal Disciplinary Authority kept statistics on the receipt of reports. As of 22 December 2025, a total of 650 reports had been received. A total of 406 reports were submitted in 2025, which signifies an increase of 265 %. This year, 37 reports were submitted anonymously. In general, the reporting system is particularly user-friendly and follows a clear structure. The acceptance of reporting increases annually.

The Federal Chancellery promoted whistleblowing intensively in 2025. Dedicated sections are available on the webpage of the Federal Chancellery, as well as on the intranet and the topic is promoted in every single compliance-face-to-face-training. Safeguards to guarantee anonymity, in case of the whistleblower wanting to stay anonymous, are far-reaching. The name of the whistleblower as well as the circumstances, that could lead to their name are kept anonymous. In 2025 the Federal Chancellery received eight reports. All of them were profoundly investigated and responses given to the whistleblower, where his or her contact details were available.

The Federal Ministry of Justice operates its own web-based internal reporting platform. Accordingly, it is intended exclusively for all members of the Austrian judiciary: Judges, prosecutors, prison officers, etc. The platform serves on two levels: On the one hand, as an information tool on compliance/integrity issues and, on the other hand, as a reporting tool (including corruption cases) that affects members of the Austrian justice system (whistleblower reporting). An information brochure for using this platform is available on the intranet of the justice system and every employee also receives a printed version. To date (as far as can be ascertained) none of the reports received have met the requirements of the WPA. The web-based internal reporting platform has a coordination mechanism in place with the whistleblower reporting tool of the Central Public Prosecutor's Office for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption (WKStA).

The Federal Ministry of Defense operates its own independent whistleblower office. A communication strategy safeguards that the whistleblower system is periodically being promoted in staff trainings, as well as in relevant internal publications. Also, the whistleblower system is accessible at the Federal Ministry's public website, ensuring external access for relevant external whistleblowers. The whistleblower office works effectively and has collected around 230 reports, including add-ons and new claims since its establishment. Regular meetings between whistleblower officers and managers/commanders of all levels of responsibility are safeguarding that the „lessons-learned“ from whistleblower cases are being properly translated into sustainable measures in order to further improve integrity at all levels of the administration and the armed forces. Protection is being vigorously applied by providing whistleblowers an anonymous and safety-certified digital platform, adequate case-processing, a high standard of confidentiality, and statutory enforcements mechanisms against measures of retaliation.

In 2025, the impartial internal reporting unit according to the WPA in the Parliamentary Administration

received 2 reports. In both cases follow-up measures were initiated due to the relevance of the information for the Parliamentary Administration. Reporting was encouraged by providing comprehensive information on the Parliament's website as well as giving new staff an introduction to the electronic reporting tool, the applicable rules and protective measures for whistleblowers.

Specific measures to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in sectors with high risks of corruption

The Federal Chancellery conducted a comprehensive risk analysis including persons with top executive functions (PTEFs). In this risk analysis, fields with high risks of corruption are identified and measures taken to reduce these risks. See also para. 27 of the Austrian comments to Draft Compliance report GRECO RC5(2024(15-P2), 30.9.2024.

Concerning measures in public procurement law to enhance transparency and oversight, Austria refers to the measures already outlined in the 2024 Austrian Input. Most of the mentioned measures have been followed up in 2025.

In particular regarding the therein mentioned process of the evaluation of the national contract award notices, it can be pointed out that this process is still being followed up and the developments and results are still being observed. A positive trend toward better and complete data can be noted. The already mentioned project aiming to create an e-procurement-strategy in Austria - funded by the European Commission - has been launched in 2025 together with the European Commission and the OECD and that the final results are expected in 2027.

Furthermore, it should also be pointed out that in December 2025 amendments to the legal framework in public procurement law have been adopted by Parliament, particularly (with focus on the subject area of interest here) regarding the implementation of eForms.

Concerning measures regarding the public procurement review bodies, Austria has rigorously transposed the Remedies Directives of the European Union (Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EC as amended by Directive 2007/66/EC).

In September 2025 the Austrian Federal Competition Authority (AFCA) in cooperation with the OECD held a two-day workshop, designed to train officials from Austria's contracting authorities and procurement oversight bodies on bid rigging prevention and detection, through theory, examples and exercises. The workshop titled "Fighting Bid Rigging in Public Procurement: Enhancing Compliance and Competition for Public Contracts" aimed at members of the judiciary on the first day and, on second day, at representatives of Austrian social organisations, the business community, and the private sector.

The content of the workshop was based on the OECD [Recommendation](#) and the [Guidelines for Fighting Bid Rigging in Public Procurement](#), which consolidate good practices on making public procurement processes more competitive and less vulnerable to collusion. The audience learned about the experience of law enforcement agencies and took part in a hypothetical exercise to put the theory into practice.

The event was organised in the context of the OECD project "[Fighting bid rigging in public procurement: improving compliance and competition for public contracts](#)" financed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support. ([OECD Events: BWB Bundeswettbewerbsbehörde](#))

The Federal Ministry of Defence has consistently intensified its focus on measures, designed to ensure transparency and integrity in defence procurement, and continues to do so. Oversight and procedural checks and balances were steadily improved by introducing the „four-and-more-eyes-principle“ at

critical junctions of procurement processes. Procurement officials' responsibilities and their respective accountability are laid out in a clear and transparent manner.

Planning and realisation competences are strictly separated. Planning is based on strategic documents from which the necessary capabilities can be deduced in an objective and conclusive manner, allowing the structured planning of long-, mid- and short-term requirements. On the other hand, the realization organisation is divided into system-specific competencies, which are subject to comprehensive internal control measures. Great attention has been given to the separation of essential user and contract award in order to create clear responsibilities in the procurement process and avoid conflicts of interest. Risk-based standards of behavior were included in the Federal Ministry's specific Code of Conduct. Relevant trainings, online as well as in-class, are being planned and stepped up.

Well-balanced and risk-based internal audit procedures are playing a crucial role in accompanying procurement processes. Since 2023 the mandatory establishment of a separate external procurement audit committee was enacted by statutory law, which advises the Federal Minister of Defence on relevant measures to safeguard lawful defence procurement. In 2025 a Compliance Strategy was established and is being currently implemented, with a view to further enhance compliance and integrity, including but not limited to sectors of defence procurement as well as construction. A newly established and dedicated compliance team guides the process in coordination with a multi-stakeholder-working group to ensure the consistent and coordinated implementation of this strategy.

At the Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure the compliance-department provides ongoing, case-related, independent and confidential legal advice within the department on compliance as well as on administrative, administrative procedural and constitutional issues. These advisory services are also interlinked with the other legal advisory services provided by the departments in the Legal and Compliance Division to provide comprehensive internal legal advice. This pooling of expertise enables the department to offer comprehensive legal advice. Compliance is thus conceived and implemented in the broadest sense at the Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure.

The Corruption Prevention Guide at the Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure covers topics such as anti-corruption law, forms of corruption (gifts, events, conflicts of interest and sponsorship), processes and responsibilities, how to behave in suspicious cases, and questions for self-reflection. It also contains information on the consequences of violating relevant rules of conduct under service, labour and criminal law. Experience gained from training courses and past consultations has been incorporated, thereby taking current issues into account.

The joint seminar series launched in 2024 by the Federal Competition Authority in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (cf. 2025 Austrian Input) with focus on antitrust and procurement law as well as corruption was continued in 2025. Four seminars took place in Lower and Upper Austria, and Styria. Further lectures will be held in 2026.

Measures for the prevention of corruption in relation to the issuing of official permits

Integrity in administration forms the basis of public trust in the constitutional order of the Republic of Austria and all its institutions.

Measures for the prevention of corruption in relation to the issuing of official permits include transparent proceedings. Miscellaneous permits underly the general procedural rules (AVG, ZPO) and in certain sectors special rules, such as auctions in the telecom sector, e.g. in the spectrum (see [Telekommunikationsgesetz 2021](#) – TKG 2021, Sec. 13 et seq.).

On compliance training for senior management at the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism reference is made to the 2025 Austrian Input.

The Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure takes particular care to ensure that all processes are efficient and transparent and that it always acts in an ethically irreproachable manner. Regulations – such as those laid down in EU law, national laws or ordinances – must be complied with at all levels and without exception. Effective instruments for preventing mismanagement and corruption are part of the ministry's Compliance-Management-System. These instruments include appropriate training measures and courses on corruption prevention. In addition to general training and further education measures for all employees, those specifically aimed at management bodies are particularly important, as they play a key role in corruption prevention due to their exemplary function.

At the Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure, the compliance-department offers quarterly training courses on the topic of 'Corruption prevention in everyday working life' for all employees of the department. In addition, special, needs-oriented training courses are offered for individual organisational units.

Repression

Official data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, final judgments, and the application of sanctions for corruption offences

The annual report on the activities of the criminal justice system (security report/Sicherheitsbericht; chapter 2.4) contains a separate chapter on corruption statistics. All available data can be found there, e.g. how criminal proceedings ended (dismissals, indictments, diversions, convictions, acquittals). Furthermore, these observations are also related to the single criminal provisions as well as to regional differences. The report is available to the general public (see [here](#)).

In 2025 (please note: provisional data as of 23 December 2025), the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) recorded a total of 944 cases that fall under the BAK's exclusive jurisdiction (Sec. 4 [Gesetz über das Bundesamt zur Korruptionsprävention und Korruptionsbekämpfung](#) - BAK-G). Thereof, the majority, namely 883 cases, concern alleged abuse of official authority (Sec. 302 Austrian Criminal Code ([Strafgesetzbuch](#) - StGB)).

Furthermore, the BAK recorded the following allegations: 14 cases of alleged corruptibility (Sec. 304 StGB), 4 cases of alleged acceptance of an advantage (Sec. 305 StGB), and 3 cases of alleged bribery (Sec. 307 StGB). In addition, the Bureau registered 0 cases of acceptance of an advantage for the purpose of exerting influence (Sec. 306 StGB), 0 case of illicit intervention (Sec. 308 StGB), 7 cases of alleged acceptance of gifts and alleged bribery of employees or agents (Sec. 309 StGB) and 21 cases of alleged breaches of official secrecy (Sec. 310 StGB). The remaining 12 cases concern other criminal offences, which are being investigated by the BAK (Sec. 4 BAK-G).

The basis for these statistics is the "principal offence" of each case, i.e. the criminal act that determines the sentence. However, a criminal investigation case may also include other punishable acts. It should also be noted that the BAK statistics only consider reports, allegations etc. that were received by the BAK in the reporting year. Cases from previous reporting years, where investigations have not yet been concluded, are not considered in the statistics of the new reporting year.

The BAK publishes a detailed annual report which contains, among other things, the statistics gathered by the BAK (see [here](#)).

Potential obstacles identified in law or in practice to the investigation and prosecution of high-level and complex corruption cases

In complex corruption cases, the processing and evaluation of large amounts of data and the associated resource commitment as well as the statutes of limitations can be challenging. Regarding statutes of limitations, it should be noted that penalties for corruption offenses were increased in

2023. This also entailed the extension of the statutes of limitations for these corruption offenses, which makes for a positive outlook regarding this matter.

Recent developments in the Austrian Parliament

Discussions on parliamentary groups level took place towards the end of the previous legislative period to create the possibility to live-stream sessions of parliamentary investigative committees. These discussions were continued during the current legislative period and are now ongoing in a Rules of Procedure expert group which deals with possible amendments i.a. of Sec. 17 of the Rules of Procedure for Parliamentary Investigating Committees ([Verfahrensordnung für parlamentarische Untersuchungsausschüsse](#) – VO-UA). Also, a draft bill on this matter was introduced by one parliamentary group ([540/A](#) [Untersuchungsausschuss-Livestream-Novelle 2025]).

Additionally, a new parliamentary investigative committee – the Committee on clarifying political influence on the investigations in the Pilnacek case (Pilnacek-Untersuchungsausschuss) – was established on 22 October 2025 due to a demand by a parliamentary minority consisting of Members of the FPÖ parliamentary group ([2/US](#) and [2/A-USA](#)). The constituent sitting of the investigative committee took place on 20 November 2025. All relevant files and documents according to the basic order to take evidence had to be submitted to the investigative committee by 17 December 2025 (cf. annex 2 to the [committee report 256 d.B. XXVIII. GP](#)). On 14 January 2026, members and functionaries of the investigative committee have inspected the site where the remains of former Director-General of the Federal Ministry of Justice, Christian Pilnacek, were found in October 2023 (this was the first time for an on-site inspection by an investigative committee pursuant to Sec. 50 of the Rules of Procedure for Parliamentary Investigating Committees). The hearings of experts and witnesses started on 15 January 2026.

The Constitutional Court had previously, in August 2025, confirmed the dismissal of the establishment of another investigative committee demanded by a parliamentary minority consisting of Members of the FPÖ parliamentary group – a Committee on clarifying political influence by ÖVP members of government (ÖVP-Machtmissbrauchs-Untersuchungsausschuss, [1/US](#)) – by the parliamentary majority in the Rules of Procedure Committee because the demand did not meet the constitutional requirements ([UA 1/2025](#); see also [here](#)).

3. Media pluralism and media freedom

Safeguards against government or political interference and transparency and concentration of media ownership

Safeguards against state / political interference

Considering the domestic measures accompanying Art. 5, para. 2 of the EMFA, an amendment to the Federal Act on the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ([ORF-Gesetz](#) – ORF-G) is being prepared. The plan is to stipulate that the premature dismissal of governing boards of public service media can only occur in exceptional cases, for clearly defined reasons, after prior notification, and subject to judicial review. The existing qualified majority and nomination rules within the Foundation Council further guarantee independence. For reasons of objectivity, the regulation is intended to apply not only to the Director General but also to directors and regional directors. Furthermore, the requirements regarding transparent, objective, and non-discriminatory procedures, as well as a sufficient term of office, are to be met through a mandatory public tender, legally defined selection criteria, and procedural rules, and further specified by new provisions. The existing five-year term of office for the Director General remains unchanged.

The Austrian Competition law contains specific provisions regarding the examination of media market

concentrations (Sec. 10 para 4 [Wettbewerbsgesetz](#) - WettbG, Sec. 8 and 13 [Kartellgesetz 2005](#) – KartG 2005). The Cartel Act (KartG) stipulates that media market concentrations have to be notified in advance to the Federal Competition Authority if certain turnover thresholds are exceeded. The Federal Competition Authority has to inform the national media regulator and the Federal Cartel Prosecutor of the notified media market concentration. The Federal Competition Authority and the Federal Cartel Prosecutor will assess the media market concentration and, where appropriate, file applications to the (judicial) Cartel Court for decisions on the substance. In addition, the provisions are currently amended to include Art. 22 EMFA.

Transparency of media ownership and public availability of media ownership information, including on direct, indirect and beneficial owners

Regarding the national accompanying measures for Art. 6 of the EMFA, an amendment to the Federal Act on the establishment of an Austrian Communications Authority (“KommAustria”) ([KommAustria-Gesetz](#) – KOG) is being prepared, which will entrust the regulatory authority with the establishment of a database on the ownership of media services and their revenues from public advertising. This database is to contain the information specified in Art. 6, para. 1 a to d of the EMFA and will build upon the existing collection and publication of public advertising expenditures under the MedKF-TG.

Framework for journalists' protection, transparency and access to documents

Access to information and public documents by public at large and journalists

According to the Freedom of Information Act ([Informationsfreiheitsgesetz](#) - IFG), which entered into force on 1 September 2025 and derives its constitutional basis from Art. 22a para. 1 of the Federal Constitutional Law ([Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz](#) - B-VG), bodies entrusted with the conduct of business of the federal and provincial administration, judicial and legislative organs have to provide information of general interest in their area of responsibility.

Information of general interest within the meaning of this Federal Act is information that concerns or is relevant to a general group of persons (e.g. activity reports, statistics, expert opinions, contracts). Such information must not only be provided on request by the bodies responsible for doing so (these are all administrative bodies in a functional sense) but also made available proactively on the internet (by additionally obligated bodies, in particular judicial and legislative organs; only small communities are exempted from the obligation to publish proactively). A central freedom of information register (www.data.gv.at) serves as a publication platform.

Concerning information on request, the new fundamental clause (Art. 22a par. 2 B-VG) in conjunction with implementing provisions in the IFG (in particular cf. Sec. 7 et seq.), the public administration is required to disclose information. Every (natural and legal) person has the right to access information from the federal, provincial or municipal administration bodies. The provisions concerning the right to access information also applies to foundations, funds, and institutions audited by the Austrian Court of Audit, as well as to companies in which the Federal Government, a province, or a municipality holds a share of at least 50% or which are effectively controlled by the Federal Government, a province, or a municipality through financial, economic or organizational measures. Self-governing bodies (beyond the municipal administrations) are only required to provide information to their members within its inherent sphere of competence.

The only restrictions on the obligation to proactively publish information of general interest and limitations to the right to access information are listed exhaustively in constitutional and implementing provisions (Art. 22a para. 2 B-VG in conjunction with Sec. 6 para. 1 IFG). In the event of a predominant interest in confidentiality, the information shall not be made available to the extent that this is necessary and proportionate.

If certain legally defined important public and private interests relating to national security, the right

to protection of personal data, trade secrets, etc. are affected by the disclosure of information, a proportionality test based on the case law of the ECtHR on Art. 10 of the ECHR must be applied. With regard to the right of access to information, the interests of public watchdogs must be given particular weight when balancing all interests.

The IFG has accelerated and streamlined the entire access to information procedure, making it as direct as possible. Anyone is entitled to submit requests for information without justification (cf. Sec. 7 and 9 IFG). According to Sec. 9 para. 1 IFG, information must be provided in the requested form. Only if this is not possible may the information be made available in a suitable form, but as directly accessible as possible. Requests for information, requests in the procedure for the provision of information, information and notices under this federal law are exempt from administrative charges and fees (Sec. 12 IFG).

The requested information must generally be granted within four weeks (previously eight weeks). For special reasons, this period may be extended once by four weeks, which must be communicated to the applicant, stating the reasons. If access to the information is not granted, the body obliged to provide information shall issue a decision on this within two months (previously six months) of receipt of the request upon written request by the person requesting the information. In the event of an appeal against the decision, the administrative court must also decide within two months (previously six months; cf. Sec. 8 und 10 IFG).

Requesters have the right to lodge a judicial appeal against the decision to the Administrative Court (Art. 130 (1) lit. 1 and 3 B-VG; Sec. 7 et seq. Proceedings of Administrative Courts Act ([Verwaltungsgerichtsverfahrensgesetz](#) – VwGVG)). If an appeal is lodged against such a decision, as in the case of a complaint alleging breach of the duty to reach a timely decision, the administrative court must decide within two months. In the event of unlawful non-granting of access to information, the administrative court has to pronounce that access must be granted and to what extent. The administrative body is bound to the judgement. If a violation of the fundamental right to access information is alleged, the matter may also be brought before the Constitutional Court.

Lawsuits (incl. SLAPPs) and convictions against journalists and measures taken to safeguard against manifestly unfounded and abusive lawsuits

See above on trainings in chapter 1.

4. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

The process for preparing and enacting laws

Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'/public consultations

As already reported in the Austrian Inputs for previous Rule of Law Reports, a parliamentary consultation procedure is in place pursuant to Sec. 23b para. 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council ([Geschäftsordnungsgesetz](#) 1975). Participation in public consultations on the parliamentary website is constantly high – both in the preparatory and the parliamentary phase: In 2025, 3.727 comments by experts and citizens were submitted on the Parliament's website; these comments were supported a total of 37.722 times.

In addition, the committees of the National Council continue to conduct so-called committee consultations (Ausschussbegutachtungen) on a regular basis. According to Sec. 40 para. 1 of the Rules

of Procedure of the National Council, the committees may, through the President, i.a. summon experts or other informants to provide information orally or in writing. In committee consultations, the federal ministries and other public and private institutions and/or persons (e.g. interest groups, NGOs, universities and university professors) are invited by a committee to provide written comments regarding items of business subject to preliminary deliberation by the committee; a majority vote has to be taken by the committee on the committee consultation and its required duration. If a majority of the committee decides so, the comments submitted by the invited institutions and/or persons are published on the Parliament's [website](#). By December 2025, 55 committee consultations have been conducted in the current legislative period (7 on government bills, 3 on Members' motions, 29 on citizens' initiatives and 16 on petitions).

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As already reported in the 2025 Austrian Input, a transparent and participatory multi-stakeholder process was of central importance in drawing up Austria's second VNR in 2024. Building on the experience of the first VNR, the systematic involvement of civil society, science, business and youth representatives was successfully continued. Three 'VNR Stakeholder Forums' were organised for the purpose of informing and involving all stakeholders in the ongoing process. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on drafts of the VNR and to make their contribution to SDG-implementation visible with success stories and examples of good practice (via online webform). More than 250 success stories were submitted, 120 of which were published in the report.

The new government programme 2025–2029 reaffirms Austria's commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. A transparent and participatory multi-stakeholder process remains a key component in achieving progress towards sustainable development. A first step to ensure stakeholder engagement was the continuation of the SDG Dialogue Forum, which was held three times at the federal level and once at the regional level (by the province of Carinthia). The aim of the forum is to facilitate and continue direct exchange between politics, administration, science, business and civil society and to extend this to the regional and local level. The SDG Dialogue Forum 2025 at federal level discussed the implementation of the SDGs in the remaining five years until 2030 and prospects for a possible framework for sustainable development after 2030 ('Post 2030 Agenda'). The interactive format of a 'World Café' enabled a more in-depth exchange on a range of relevant topics, such as policy coherence for sustainable development and SDG-localisation.

Accessibility and judicial review of administrative decisions

Implementation of final judgments by the public administration and State institutions and follow-up given to supranational judgments

For updated information on the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) please refer to the country factsheet of the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights for Austria (see [here](#)) and the Country Map — European Implementation Network (see [here](#)). As of 10 December 2025, Austria has implemented 441 out of 444 decisions (99.3%) by the ECtHR, including 120 out of 121 leading judgments (99.2%). With this implementation rate Austria is among the best performing EU Member States.

Oversight, including by courts, of the use of intrusive surveillance software by national authorities

An amendment to the State Security and Intelligence Service Act ([Staatsschutz- und Nachrichtendienst-Gesetz](#) – SNG) entered into force partly on 30 September 2025 and partly on 1 October 2025. The amended provisions of the SNG enable the competent authority (Directorate State Protection and Intelligence Service) to use intrusive surveillance software in order to monitor the communications of specifically named individuals after obtaining approval from the Federal Administrative Court (Sec. 11 para. 1 lit. 8 and 9 and Sec. 15a SNG). The Minister of the Interior as well as the Legal Protection Officer at the Ministry of the Interior (Rechtsschutzbeauftragter) may appeal against the approval of surveillance to the Supreme Administrative Court (Sec. 15a para. 4 and Sec. 15c para. 1 SNG).

The amendment is already applicable to the surveillance of non-encrypted data. However, the provisions regarding the surveillance of encrypted data shall only become applicable once the technical requirements for the use of programmes to monitor encrypted messages and information have been established. The Minister of the Interior must officially announce, by way of ordinance, both the fact that the necessary technical prerequisites have been established and the specific date from which they are operational. To date, no such ordinance has been issued.

The enabling framework for civil society

Reference is made to the Austrian presentation on the EU Strategy for Civil Society in the context of the Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens Rights and Free Movement of Persons.

Rules and practices having an impact on the effective operation and safety of civil society organisations and human rights defenders

See above on trainings in chapter 1.

Initiatives to foster a rule of law culture

In Austria, numerous measures are taken to foster a rule of law culture and structured coordination, education and open dialogue support effective application of fundamental rights. Reference is made to the presentations and the transmitted documents in the context of the exchange with Director J. Mousnier on 12 December 2025, in particular with regard to the Human Rights Coordinators network, the Charter focal point, the Constitutional Court outreach ("Verfassung macht Schule", "Verfassung im Dialog") and Forum Verfassung.

As already reported in the 2025 Austrian Input, further examples of fundamental rights and rule of law culture initiatives can be found in the collection of "Examples of best practices in Austria on the use and awareness of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights" available in the e-Justice Portal: [Member States' best practices on the Charter | European e-Justice Portal](#).

In 2025, approximately 470.000 visitors were welcomed in the Parliament building. By December 2025, the democracy workshop of the Austrian Parliament, a standing educational initiative for pupils of different ages and school types as well as for apprentices, welcomed a total number of approximately 170 000 workshop participants since its foundation in 2007.

In 2025, three important events in Austrian democratic history were spotlighted as the Parliament's focus in a number of exhibitions, events, publications and press releases: the end of World War II 80 years ago, the signing of the State Treaty 70 years ago, and Austria's accession to the European Union 30 years ago ("80 70 30 – Jahresschwerpunkt des Parlaments zum Jubiläumsjahr 2025"; see [here](#) and [here](#)).

As the Parliament's focus for the year 2026, the socio-political participation of young people will take center stage under the title "teilhaben teilsein". The annual focus will be reflected in a variety of ways, including events and activities promoting democratic education. The topic will also be covered on the website, in parliamentary correspondence, and on social media using dedicated communication formats. All information can be found on the website www.parlament.gv.at/jahresschwerpunkt.

Raising awareness on corruption issues within the younger generation is especially important, as they will shape our society in the future. The Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) brings together all its measures and services for this group under the umbrella-term of 'YOUTH4Integrity' (see [here](#)).

Informative and interactive events at schools (of which fifteen were carried out in 2025, reaching 1,068 pupils), further training for teachers and teaching materials are designed to provide these target

groups with special training and raise their awareness. To this end, the BAK works together with schools and Vienna University for Teachers (Teach the Teacher model).

Furthermore, 'YOUTH4Integrity' encompasses a teaching material 'For Integrity – Against Corruption'. It is aimed at teachers who want to raise awareness regarding corruption and integrity among their pupils, even if they have no prior knowledge of these topics. The content serves to promote civic education and positively influence the moral development of pupils in terms of personal integrity. The teaching material can be used without further preparation within approximately two teaching units and consists of a teacher's version with suggested solutions and a version for pupils. In terms of content, the material includes a brief theoretical input, a description of a fictional case of corruption and a total of seven ready-made work assignments.

Additionally, as part of 'YOUTH4Integrity' the BAK hosted a photography competition titled 'Values and Role Models in Front of the Lens'. Pupils from upper secondary schools specialising in photography or art in Lower Austria took part in the competition and presented their interpretation of values, integrity and role models in the form of photographs.

Finally, the BAK also promotes this approach in its international engagements. A resolution tabled by Austria was adopted by the 11th Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in Doha, Qatar in December 2025. The resolution on preventing corruption by promoting integrity in childhood and adolescence, drafted in cooperation with the co-sponsors Slovenia and Chile, was adopted by consensus. The text, entitled "Strengthening education activities and programmes on ethical values, integrity and anti-corruption for children and young people as a significant pillar to prevent corruption and enhance trust in public institutions", won the support of several dozen countries as further co-sponsors. This allowed Austria to play an active role in the global agenda in the field of anti-corruption and in setting the international priorities of the UNCAC States Parties.

Further transparency measures in the Austrian Parliament

The already mentioned amendment to the Federal Constitutional Law and the enactment of a Freedom of Information Act entered into force on 1 September 2025 (Federal Law Gazette I no. 5/2024; see also above). According to Art. 30 para. 7 of the Federal Constitutional Law, the National Council and the Federal Council are also obliged to actively publish information of general interest in a way that is accessible to everyone. Implementing provisions in this regard in Sec. 8 para. 5 and Sec. 14 para. 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council as well as in Sec. 65 para. 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Federal Council ([Geschäftsordnung des Bundesrates](#) – GO-BR) also entered into force on 1 September 2025 (Federal Law Gazette I nos. 32 and 51/2025). As regards the parliamentary interpellation right, the new provision covering the reasons according to which i.a. the Federal Government's as well as the Federal Ministers' obligation to provide information to the National Council and the Federal Council shall not apply, also entered into force on the same day (cf. Art. 52 para. 3a of the Federal Constitutional Law, Federal Law Gazette I. no. 5/2024).

According to the new obligation of the National Council and the Federal Council to actively publish information of general interest, the Parliament has started publishing new contents on its [website](#) as well as in the national information register (Informationsregister) on [data.gv.at](#) – notwithstanding the fact that the Parliament had already published a wide range of contents of general interest before the entry into force of the amendments in question. For example, a comprehensive list of remunerations and expense reimbursements for procedural judges, procedural lawyers and their deputies, as well as for special investigators and experts, will be published upon completion of each investigative committee; also, extended statistical reports i.a. on parliamentarians' contributions in plenary sessions, written questions to the Federal Government and consultation procedures as well as overviews of the legislative decisions made in the National Council and of the voting behaviour of the parliamentary groups are now being made publicly available on a regular basis (see [here](#)). In addition,

the Incompatibility Committees (*Unvereinbarkeitsausschüsse*) of the National Council and the Federal Council, respectively, have started to publish their committee reports in full on the Parliament's website (see [here](#) and [here](#); cf. also GRECO's recommendations regarding the transparency of incompatibility decisions in the 4th and 5th evaluation round).

As already reported in the 2025 Austrian Input, the Parliamentary Data Protection Authority has commenced its duties on 1 January 2025; proceedings that were pending before the Data Protection Authority on that day in matters which now fall under the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Data Protection Authority had to be continued by the Parliamentary Data Protection Authority (cf. Sec. 69 para. 10 of the Data Protection Act [[Datenschutzgesetz](#) - DSG]). A first landmark decision of the Parliamentary Data Protection Authority was delivered in June 2025, ultimately concluding the case which was subject to the judgment of the ECJ of 16 January 2024, C-33/22, *Österreichische Datenschutzbehörde*, by ordering the National Council to erase the name of the person concerned in the verbatim record of the public hearing of this person as a witness by an investigating committee from the Parliament's website.

It can also be mentioned that through the new data protection regime (cf. 2024 Austrian Input, p. 37 f.) joint Data Protection Officers (DPOs) of the National Council and the Federal Council were established (Sec. 7a of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council, Sec. 14a of the Rules of Procedure of the Federal Council). They are responsible pursuant to Art. 37 et seqq. GDPR only within the legislature, while the DPO of the Parliamentary Administration remains responsible within the administrative matters connected to that state function. Currently, five joint DPOs have been nominated by the parliamentary groups. They are neither Members of Parliament nor staff but external experts (e.g. from law or consulting firms). They are not obliged to adopt a common position. Every DPO can present their position, the decision is finally up to the President of the National Council or the President of the Federal Council who act on behalf of the National Council or the Federal Council respectively regarding requests from data subjects asserting data subject rights and in administrative or court proceedings concerning data protection matters (cf. Sec. 14 para. 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Council, Sec. 7 para. 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Federal Council).

Appointment of a substitute member of the Constitutional Court

Due to the appointment of a former substitute member of the Constitutional Court as member of the Constitutional Court, the position of one substitute member of the Constitutional Court is currently vacant. The appointment by the Federal President must be made on the recommendation of the National Council. In connection with this pending appointment, a hearing of candidates for the vacant position was held on 23 October 2025. Until now, such hearings have only been held for candidates for the position as member – and not as substitute member – of the Constitutional Court (see [here](#); cf. also p. 134 of the [Federal Government's programme 2025-2029](#)).

Cross-pillar elements

Cross-border rule of law issues related to the Single Market

One of the major challenges for companies in the single market is excessive bureaucracy. Simplifying procedures for companies, especially SMEs, reducing bureaucracy and preventing gold-plating must be the top priority in European and national legislation.

The ongoing omnibus-process can – if targeted – be a vehicle to achieve simplification and the reduction of reporting obligations in existing EU legislation. However, we should streamline the reduction of administrative burden within the designing phase of EU-legislation, in order to create a clear, comprehensive and practicable framework for legal and investment security.

The current AT government has prioritised reducing bureaucracy and administrative burden on a national and EU level.

Austria is committed to reduce unilateral and unjustified barriers as well as unfair practices in the Single Market.

Regarding proportionality tests reference is made to the 2024 and 2025 Austrian Input.