Questions and answers: European Commission endorses Austria's recovery and resilience plan

Brussels, 21 June 2021

How did the Commission assess Austria's recovery and resilience plan?

The Commission is assessing the recovery and resilience plans based on eleven criteria set out in the Regulation itself. The 11 criteria require an assessment of whether:

- the measures have a lasting impact;
- the measures address the challenges identified in the country specific recommendations or a significant subset of it;
- the milestones and targets which allow for monitoring the progress with the reforms and investments are clear and realistic;
- the plans meet the 37% climate expenditure target and the 20% digital expenditure target;
- the plans respect the do no significant harm principle;
- the plans provide an adequate control and audit mechanism and set out the plausibility of the costing information.

The Commission has summarised its assessment in the proposal for the Council Implementing Decision. The accompanying staff-working document provides detailed documentation on the assessment.

Does Austria's recovery and resilience plan effectively support the green transition?

The Austrian plan's contribution to the green transition amounts to 59% of its total allocation of €3.5 billion. This exceeds the minimum of 37% required by the RRF Regulation.

The plan focuses on sustainable mobility, buildings and industry, which are among the biggest greenhouse gas emitters in Austria. In relation to mobility, the plan includes measures to electrify vehicles used in public transport and make the public transport network more attractive. Emissions by industry, including from heavy industry and emissions resulting from transport by businesses, are targeted through an investment support scheme. A dedicated scheme for low-income households supporting the replacement of gas and oil heating systems with more sustainable heating appliances is expected to reduce emissions from buildings.

Does Austria's recovery and resilience plan effectively contribute to the digital transition?

The Austrian plan's contribution to the digital transition amounts to 53% of its total allocation of €3.5 billion. This exceeds the minimum of 20% required by the RRF Regulation.

The plan includes support for a widespread deployment of Gigabit-capable access networks, helping to ensure that currently underserved and remote areas are better connected. The plan provides for equipping pupils with digital devices to improve their digital skills and to facilitate increased use of digital means and methods in teaching and learning settings. This is expected to contribute to addressing challenges that have been highlighted due to the COVID-19 pandemic such as the difficulty to provide digital education to all students during periods of confinement.

Does the recovery and resilience plan represent a balanced response to the economic and social situation of Austria?

The Austrian plan represents a comprehensive and adequately balanced response to Austria’s economic and social situation of Austria, thereby contributing appropriately to all six pillars referred
to in the RRF Regulation.

The Austrian plan includes measures supporting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Social and territorial cohesion is supported by measures reforming the pension system that are expected to help reduce the gender pension gap and old age poverty and investments in upskilling and reskilling activities, the education bonus, and the early care for pregnant disadvantaged women will contribute to reducing social imbalances.

The plan supports the health, economic, social and institutional resilience with measures such as enlarging the network of primary healthcare centres and a national rollout of dedicated support to disadvantaged young mothers and their families aimed at reducing their risk of social exclusion. Specific measures on education are expected to improve the digital skills of pupils and help recover lost learning opportunities due to the lockdowns, thus contributing to strengthening the next generation.

**Do the reforms presented by Austria effectively address a significant part of the country-specific recommendations issued to it in the context of the European Semester?**

The Austrian plan includes an extensive set of mutually reinforcing reforms and investments that contribute to effectively addressing a significant subset of the economic and social challenges outlined in the country-specific recommendations addressed to Austria.

Planned changes to the tax system should incentivise the reduction of Austria’s greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute to shifting taxes away from labour. The full-time labour market participation of women will be facilitated by the increased availability of quality early childcare facilities. The plan includes measures to tackle challenges related to the gender pension gap. Investments in energy efficiency, renewables, decarbonisation of industry, biodiversity and circular economy, accompanied by related reforms, including the overhaul of the support framework for renewables and the phase-out of oil heating systems, are expected to promote the green transition.

**For More Information**

- [Press release: European Commission endorses Austria's recovery and resilience plan](#)
- [Recovery and Resilience Facility: Questions and Answers](#)
- [Factsheet on Austria's recovery and resilience plan](#)
- [Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Austria](#)
- [Annex to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Austria](#)
- [Staff-working document accompanying the proposal for a Council Implementing Decision](#)
- [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)
- [Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation](#)