

Summary

SCENARIOS FOR THE SPATIAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRIA

Task

The objective of the project “Scenarios for the spatial and regional development of Austria in the European context” is to develop spatial development scenarios for Austria for the period until 2030 to serve as a basis for further work by ÖROK on a new Austrian Spatial Development Concept as well as for the sectoral and spatial development schemes of the Länder, cities and municipalities, and for the expert concepts of the federal government (e.g. sustainability strategy).

An external team of experts under the leadership of Helmut Hiess (content, Rosinak & Partner ZT GmbH) and Harald Payer (communication, ÖAR Regionalberatung GmbH) was charged with the implementation of the project; the task of project control is the responsibility of an ÖROK Working Group. Work launched at the beginning of 2007 and scenarios were developed on selected themes of spatial relevance in a first phase. From these scenarios, further integrated, spatial scenarios were derived and aggregated.

A breakdown of the work accomplished to date within the scope of the project is given below by phase:

(1) The themes of spatial relevance were defined and selected – jointly with the ÖROK Working Group – to be prepared for the specific thematic scenarios.

(2) Contracts were awarded for the preparation of “Future Briefings” on the specific themes. In addition to a review of the past 25 years, the task was to develop two to four thematically specific and consistent potential scenarios based on a defined scenario rationale and a verifiable process for specifying the factors of influence and the possible directions in which the scenarios could develop. Additionally, the assignment was also to make proposals on possible megatrends and develop wild cards.

The Future Briefings were developed by experts from the specific fields and discussed at three workshops on the specific themes with an expert public.

(3) Based on the discussions at the workshops, the specific thematic scenarios were adapted and completed.

(4) In a last step, the specific thematic scenarios were aggregated into scenarios that cover several thematic strands.

The following interim results were arrived at in addition to the extensive collection of materials compiled into the Future Briefings of Chapter II:

- (1) Megatrends (Chapter III/2)
- (2) Thematically Interrelated Scenarios (Chapter III/3.2)
- (3) Wild Cards (Chapter III/4)

These findings were presented for discussion at a workshop covering several themes held in May 2007 and were further refined based on the contributions to the discussion. They constitute the foundation for the preparation of thematically integrated scenarios of spatial relevance. This publication presents overviews of the megatrends, the multi-thematic scenarios, and the wild cards.

The second project phase includes the following further work steps within the scope of the project:

- (1) Derived spatial consequences and development of spatial scenarios
- (2) Assessment of the need for action and development of recommendations for action
- (3) Preparation of a proposal for the indicators to be used for monitoring relevant long-term development trends

Looking forward – The selection of the methods

There are different methods for looking at potential future developments. The principal criteria applied to the selection of the methods are the degree of complexity of the themes and issues, the availability of information on developments to date, the current situation, and the degree of certainty of future trends.

Development scenarios were used in this project. The starting point was:

“What changes is an area, a region, or a location likely to undergo until 2030; what is the assessment of the changes from the perspective of spatial policy goals and how could – and should – spatial policy respond?”

Future Briefings – The basic themes for the spatial scenarios

The Future Briefings in Chapter II were prepared by experts from the field based on selected themes of spatial relevance as follows:

- (1) Development of the past 25 years based on the available data and sources,
- (2) Presentation of existing quantitative forecasts and trends where available,
- (3) Draft of thematic megatrends, scenarios, and wild cards.

In a first phase, the following nine thematic fields were defined that can be viewed as particularly relevant for spatial development in Austria: Institutional change, population, society/consumption habits, economy, energy, transport/mobility, agriculture and forestry, tourism and environment.

In addition, the analysis of the themes included the respective policies and technological developments as relevant issues for all thematic strands. Moreover, all themes were analyzed as an integral part of global and European developments.

A common structure for the contents of the Future Briefings was proposed to the authors.

Status Quo of the Project

After more than one year of work, the “Future Briefings” contain extensive materials on the topics of institutional change, population, society/consumption habits, economy, energy, transport/mobility, agriculture and forestry, tourism and environment. Apart from the brief presentation of the methods in the first part and a compilation of the multi-thematic scenarios in the third part, the “Future Briefings” constitute the main section of the collection of materials with the reference number 176/I of the ÖROK publication series.

In spring and summer of 2008, work will focus on the finalization of the integrated spatial scenarios and the measures required for action derived from the scenarios. These will be published after completion in the ÖROK publication series under reference number 176/II.