

# Summary

## 15th Spatial Planning Report 2015 to 2017

The Austrian Spatial Planning Report ("Österreichischer Raumordnungsbericht") is published by the ÖROK in regular three-year intervals and includes comprehensive analyses of developments in the field of spatial planning in Austria. The Spatial Planning Report is part of the Austrian Regional Monitoring System and a supplementary element of the systematic monitoring of spatial development. The current 15th Spatial Planning Report for the period 2015 to 2017 contains an overview about the framework conditions and trends in spatial development in Austria. Additionally, it addresses the themes of European spatial development and cohesion policy and their implementation in Austria, as well as an overview of the implementation of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept ("ÖREK 2011"). The focus of the report centres on the presentation of spatial trends and developments within the overall Austrian context. Therefore it uses the current instruments of the Austrian Regional Monitoring System – the "ÖROK-Atlas" and the "ÖROK-Rechtsammlung". Examples – including photos, graphics and web links – aim to illustrate the diversity of planning instruments in the planning processes of Austria. (These illustrative examples replace the usual contributions of ÖROK members.)

### **Framework conditions and trends in spatial development**

On the basis of facts and maps, the chapter „Framework conditions and trends in spatial development“ highlights and analyses specific topics related to spatial development. The authors Erich Dallhammer, Wolfgang Neugebauer and Roland Gaugitsch used current data of the Austrian Regional Monitoring System. Indicators from the "ÖROK Atlas", the "ÖROK Forecasts" or from ÖROK accessibility analyses are presented in a comprehensive picture and in relation to each other. Based on the region-

specific Austrian developments, the authors derive challenges for the future spatial development policy in Austria.

The effects of the economic and financial crises on spatial development were analysed in the 14th Spatial Planning Report. The current Spatial Planning Report raises the question, how the recovering European economy affects the Austrian regions. It concludes that economic growth and the reduction of unemployment have not yet arrived in all regions.

A key topic is the population decline in rural-peripheral areas. It still represents one of the biggest challenges for spatial development in Austria. However, smart strategies allow individual municipalities to uncouple themselves from this Europe-wide trend. Observing specific strategies of these municipalities, learning from them and, if necessary, adapting strategies on other municipalities is a central task. Accessibility is an important criterion in the overall assessment of attractiveness of rural regions. There are still immense regional differences between metropolitan areas and rural-peripheral areas. In order to offer an attractive public transport system even in rural areas, it is important to pay attention to compact settlements and districts in rural areas in the future. Many rural regions are currently also disadvantaged in their competitiveness due to an insufficient high-speed internet access. The expansion of broadband is an important prerequisite to ensure that rural-peripheral regions do not lose more competitiveness compared to the metropolitan areas. This could help to secure existing or even create new jobs and to avoid brain drain from peripheral regions.

Housing demand will continue to rise in cities, also for multi-person households. Affordable housing for families will thus remain an important topic in the future. ÖROK forecasts assume

that in rural areas, where currently many detached houses exist, fewer large households are to be expected in the future. The issue of the efficient use of areas with loosely-built detached houses will become an even more important topic in spatial planning: in the future more and more houses, in many cases occupied by just one or two (older) persons, need to be maintained. Due to the high land consumption of detached houses, land consumption per person will increase in these regions. The authors underline that land consumption and soil sealing will continue to increase especially in rural areas, if no countermeasures are taken. However, the obvious intention of the peripheral municipalities to attract people through generous zoning of building land does not lead to the desired success – the emigration of people from peripheral regions continues nevertheless.

### **Key activities of ÖROK 2015–2017 with spatial reference**

In this chapter, the authors of the ÖROK Office illustrate the innovations in the Austrian Regional Monitoring System such as ÖROK Atlas and ÖROK forecasts, the ÖROK Recommendations, and the implementation status of "ÖREK 2011". Additionally, activities within the scope of EU regional policy – such as the implementation of the „Partnership Agreement STRAT.AT 2020“ or the transnational ETC programs and macro-regional EU strategies in Austria are presented.

The implementation of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2011 (ÖREK 2011) was one of the main priorities in the years 2015 to 2017. The interim evaluation of ÖREK 2011 highlighted the content of the concept and the previous implementation process in the framework of the ÖREK partnerships. As exchange and discussion platforms, in which results can also be implemented in their own organisations, ÖREK partnerships are highly appreciated by all actors involved. ÖREK activities led to relevant changes in many fields of action, e.g. in spatial planning law. The interim evaluation drew up recommendations for the future orientation of the ÖREK Partnerships and ÖROK products.

A milestone in the field of EU regional policy was the STRAT.AT 2020 Partnership „Smart Specialisation“, where the strategy heads of the federal and Land level exchanged contents intensively and deepened the knowledge and understanding of smart specialisation in Austria. The result is a broadly coordinated paper on the policy framework for smart specialisation in Austria, which was published in the ÖRÖK Publication Series. As part of the STRAT.AT 2020 monitoring process, the ÖROK Subcommittee on Regional Economy developed the STRAT.AT progress report and presented it in autumn 2017. The report was published in the ÖROK Publication Series.

Since 2002, the National Contact Point (NCP) is at the ÖROK office for the implementation of transnational and EU wide European Territorial Cooperation programmes (ETC). The implementation of projects in the period 2014–2020 is already well advanced in all programmes. The support of beneficiaries represents a central task of the National Contact Point. During project calls the NCP supports Austrian applicants with consultations and information events. In the period 2015–2017, more than ten national information days were offered. During the Europe-wide campaign „Europe in my Region“, Austria presented a large number of EU-funded projects under the title „Europe in Vienna – Open Days for EU co-funded projects“ in cooperation with European Structural Investment (ESI) Funds and the City of Vienna, to show citizens where EU funds are used reasonably in their immediate area.

Chapter 2 also highlights the relevant Austrian activities within the framework of the macro-regional EU strategies. Austria participates in the Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) as well as in the EU Strategy for the Alpine Space (EUSALP).

### **Regional policy and regional economic development: working in the „multilevel system“**

In Chapter 3, Markus Gruber and Simon Pohn-Weidinger outline the framework conditions for regional policy and regional economic development in the multilevel system – the European

Union, the federal and state governments – and discuss the important developments in the period 2015–2017. They look at long-term developments and illustrate the change of this policy field in a contextual way and by focusing on milestones.

Regarding goals, instruments and measures, the multilevel system of regional policy and development in Austria is described in detail and concrete developments are outlined for the reference period 2015–2017: This includes the current strategic work of the Austrian Länder, particularly in the context of smart specialisation and other regional policy initiatives at Land level, such as Land development programs, RTI strategies, or cooperation at municipal and federal level. Chapter 3 also outlines key elements of the first implementation period of the “Partnership Agreement STRAT.AT 2020” and ESI Funds in Austria. At the end of the chapter, the main developments during the reporting period are summarised and the challenges for future regional policy are discussed.

### **Current developments in the Austrian spatial planning law**

In Chapter 4, Arthur Kanonier and Arthur Schindelegger present current trends and developments in Austrian spatial planning law on the basis of the law chronology of ÖROK, whereby individual legal issues are considered across sectors and levels. Starting with the ÖROK law chronicle, which is published semi-annually, the main developments and changes in the Austrian spatial planning law between 2015 and 2017 are presented as an overview at federal and Land level. Not only the regulatory framework is taken into consideration, but also changes in the functional spatial planning law, in particular at the federal level, are taken into account.

The relevant reported points were: amendments and renotifications of spatial planning laws at the Land level – such as the amendment of Salzburg’s spatial planning law, and changes to the building regulations in 2015 with regard to the accommodation of refugees and basic services. Furthermore, reported points include activities in the field of active develop-

ment Land policy, significant transregional planning programs, changes to the nature conservation acts, changes in planning-relevant federal matters, as well as adjustments to the guidelines for housing subsidies. In addition to changes in spatial planning law during the reporting period, planning law concepts and strategies at federal and Land level were described.