

ÖREK

Austrian Spatial
Development Concept
Need For Transformation

2030

in brief



Austrian Spatial
Development Concept
ÖREK 2030 in brief

Need For Transformation

Resolution of the
Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning
20 October 2021

The **Austrian Spatial Development Concept (Österreichisches Raumentwicklungskonzept – ÖREK)** is a set of guidelines followed by all institutions represented in the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz – ÖROK). It is by nature a recommendation and serves as a voluntary agreement.

ÖREK 2030 in brief is a condensed edition of the ÖREK 2030 (long version) and contains a ten-point programme with priority themes to be implemented by 2030.

It addresses informed readers and decision-makers in the field of (spatial) planning as well as the relevant departments in Austria's provinces (Länder) and at ministries, regional and local planning bodies, stakeholders, companies and NGOs.

Long version and digital ÖREK 2030: www.oerek2030.at



Foreword	4
Mission Statement of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning	6
Shaping change – Climate-friendly and sustainable Principles and objectives of the ÖREK 2030	8
Change is happening Megatrends	13
Change is needed Global, European and national calls for action	16
The challenges we face Differences in Austria's spatial types	17
Thematic objectives of the ÖREK 2030	24
The ten-point programme Taking action	26

Need For Transformation

Working together for change

A key function of spatial planning is the coordination of the diverse interests and demands of society on our common living space. In Austria, these tasks are performed by the federal government, the provinces, the cities, and the municipalities in accordance with their respective constitutionally defined responsibilities.

The Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (Österreichische Raumordnungskonferenz – ÖROK) was founded in 1971 as a political body for the purpose of improving the coordination of these tasks. Its members include representatives of the federal government, governors of the nine provinces (Länder), the president of the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns, the President of the Austrian Association of Municipalities, and the economic and social partners (in an advisory capacity).

One of ÖROK's most important tasks is the preparation of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept (Österreichisches Raumentwicklungskonzept – ÖREK). The ÖREK is revised every ten years and is a joint steering instrument for all Austrian government levels for the spatial development of the country.

Spatial planning and spatial development are defined as the joint responsibility of the federal government, the nine federal states (Länder), the cities, and the municipalities. The Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) and the Austrian Spatial Development Concept (ÖREK) are an expression of this understanding of shared responsibility.

Climate change and its impacts – which are already affecting our lives – are the key topics of the ÖREK 2030. Achieving decarbonisation in all areas of our lives is the key challenge, especially changing our mobility habits.

In the coming ten years, we will have to make crucial decisions and take major actions to achieve the 2030 climate goals. The swift implementation of the concrete measures will be imperative in addition to overcoming the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The effects of the pandemic on spatial development have already begun to emerge, but what they will look like and if they will be long term effects is still unclear.

Coordinated spatial development and planning policy is an important contribution to the attainment of the climate goals, as it helps to balance the divergent interests and achieve viable solutions. The ÖREK 2030 has defined three fundamental principles that serve as guidance for decision-making: Austria's spatial development must be climate-friendly and sustainable, it must serve the common good, and it must be just.

The challenges to successful transformation diverge widely in the (urban) regions and in the subregions of Austria. Therefore, a spatially differentiated approach must be pursued when implementing the ÖREK 2030 and the specific situations in the provinces and regions must be given due consideration.

The ÖREK 2030 is primarily a voluntary agreement reached jointly by the federal government, the provinces (Länder), the cities, and the municipalities. It has been drafted and adopted by consensus by all members of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK). The agreement is a solid basis for implementation. Still, the success of the ÖREK 2030 will ultimately be measured by the extent to which it has been put into practice. It can only be achieved if there is cooperation among all partners on an equal footing – as has been standard practice at ÖROK for over 50 years. Our joint mission statement also clearly expresses this ambition and serves as a solid foundation for our programmes and plans of action to achieve the ÖREK 2030.

The federal government, the provinces (Länder), the cities and the municipalities will work together side by side to implement the necessary measures to secure the success of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2030.



Federal Minister Elisabeth Köstinger
Chairwoman of the Austrian
Conference on Spatial Planning



Governor Günther Platter
First Vice-Chairman of the Austrian
Conference on Spatial Planning



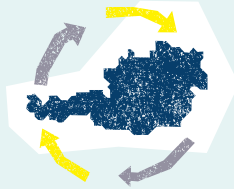
Mayor Michael Ludwig
President of the Austrian Association
of Cities and Towns



Mayor Alfred Riedl
President of the Austrian Association
of Municipalities

Mission Statement of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK)

ÖROK – Our joint organisation



ÖROK is the organisation established jointly by its members for the purpose of coordinating spatial development and spatial planning activities in Austria. The members are the federal government, the provinces (Länder), the cities, and the municipalities as well as the economic and social partners.

As members of ÖROK, we recognize ÖROK as the principal organisation for the coordination of spatial activities in Austria.

We have been working together at ÖROK across all levels of government and sectors successfully for 50 years and plan to do so for the next ten years as well. The Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2030 (ÖREK 2030) guides our activities in the field of spatial development.

ÖREK 2030 – Strategy for spatial development in transition



The ÖREK 2030 is guided by the motto “Need for transformation”

With the ÖREK 2030, we created an ambitious programme to help us master the climate crisis – especially in the critical period up to 2030 – and to preserve our natural resources and their diversity.

We believe the future central challenge for spatial development will be to jointly achieve the transition to a sustainable, non-fossil fuel society and economy that offers a high quality of life and equivalent living conditions across all regions. The contributions of spatial planning are essential for achieving this transition in energy use and mobility behaviour.

The ÖREK 2030 is our agreement on a forward-looking, positive, and supportive joint strategy. We define the actions and work needed to meet the challenges and are committed to cooperation in their implementation.

ÖREK 2030 – Common policy for spatial development



ÖREK 2030 sets out our common principles and objectives for spatial development in Austria.

We recognize the ÖREK 2030 as our common source of guidance for spatial development in Austria.

We agree to align our actions with an impact on spatial development to the principles of this mission statement and the three overarching principles: “climate-friendly and sustainable spatial development”, “spatial development for the common good” and “just spatial development” and to define any objectives in this context in line with these principles.

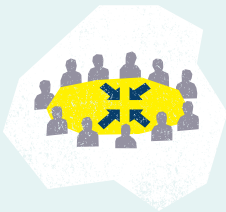


ÖREK 2030 – Plan of action for implementation

With the ÖREK 2030, we have adopted a joint plan of action.

We agree to the priorities and implementation pacts in the ÖREK 2030 based on the plan of action and will implement these in the coming ten years.

We work with the ÖROK Office and rely on it to provide professional support for our tasks in its function as a coordination and networking organisation.

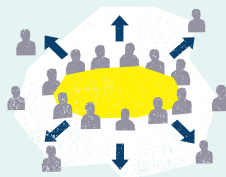


ÖREK 2030 – Guidance for ÖROK members

ÖREK 2030 serves as a source of guidance for spatial development for all members of ÖROK.

We are committed to following the guidelines of ÖREK 2030 for the spatial planning activities of our administrative units, institutions, and in our own areas of work.

We firmly support the joint implementation of the plans of action and programmes of the ÖREK 2030 through ÖREK Partnerships and in our work on the ÖROK Committees.



ÖREK 2030 – Guidance for all players in spatial development

The ÖREK 2030 also addresses all parties involved in spatial planning and development.

The ÖREK 2030 sets out the key principles, objectives and plans of action for spatial planning and spatial development for the next ten years.

We invite all parties that play a role in spatial planning and development to take guidance from the ÖREK 2030 and participate in the implementation of its objectives and plans of action. These include town planners, educators at universities and schools, researchers, businesses, and citizens.



ÖREK 2030 – An accessible and transparent document

The ÖREK 2030 supports transparency, accessibility, and inclusion.

We ensure that the documents of the ÖREK 2030 as well as all subsequent documents on its progress are publicly available and accessible, and welcome further public discourse on its contents and implementation.

We will conduct a transparent evaluation of the document and its implementation steps at midterm and also when preparing the spatial planning reports – to ensure that it is a living document. This supports the development and “transformation” of its contents.

Shaping change – Climate-friendly and sustainable

How do we want to make the best possible use of our scarce spatial resources for the public good? In what condition do we want to hand over Austria's landscapes to the next generations? How can we overcome the climate crisis? How can we participate in the spatial development of Europe?



In the coming ten years, we will have to make crucial decisions and take major actions to achieve the 2030 climate goals. There is no other path forward to attain climate neutrality. Contributing to these goals is an essential task of spatial development and spatial planning.

A dynamic pace of change has long since been typical of our modern society. What is new, however, is how quickly and how intensely changes are taking place. The coronavirus pandemic revealed how interconnected and vulnerable the globalised world has become. Droughts, heavy rains and storms are manifestations of the climate crisis, and digitisation is changing how we work and spend our leisure time in astounding ways.

Our common purpose is to create a sustainable, climate-neutral and climate-resilient world, and to enable future generations to live a good life in an inclusive society.

The task is to shape the future, providing

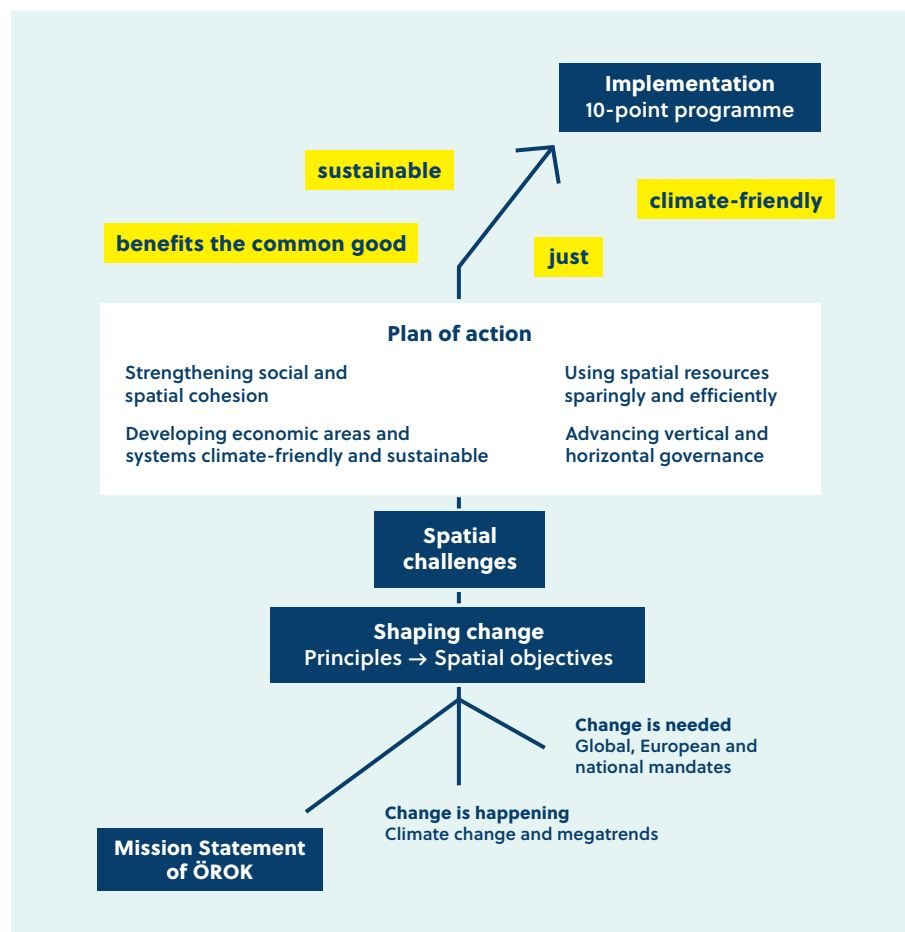
- a healthy, clean, intact environment and at the same time a flourishing and sustainably growing economy with attractive jobs
- justly distributed opportunities for a good life, enabling people living in difficult conditions to improve their standard of living

- space for living, working, producing, learning, shopping, relaxing, and for cultural and sports activities
- safety from natural hazards such as floods, mudslides, avalanches, storms and forest fires
- more space for nature so as to preserve species and habitat diversity, and permit ecosystems to renew themselves
- opportunities for all people to engage in their activities as unhindered as possible and to be able to travel wherever they choose to go quickly, comfortably and without barriers

However, many of these needs and desires are difficult to reconcile. They contradict each other at times and give rise to conflicts. How can these be balanced sustainably and justly?

Space and land are scarce resources that cannot be increased. In democratic societies, accommodating the needs and desires relating to space requires constant processes of deliberation and negotiation.

The core idea of the ÖREK 2030 is **“shaping change”**. To this end, principles, objectives and a plan of action for Austria's spatial development until 2030 have been accorded. They are the basis for a ten-point programme with priority themes to be implemented over the next ten years.



Principles of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept 2030



Spatial development for a climate-friendly and sustainable world

Spatial developments progress slowly and steadily, and in many cases, cannot be reversed. Therefore, climate-friendly and sustainable spatial development aims for long-term, intergenerational solutions. Sustainable spatial development gives equal attention to the environment, social issues, and the economy.

Environmentally-sustainable spatial planning refers primarily to the economical and sparing use of land and resources. Growth that does not take an environmentally-sustainable approach intensifies the climate crisis, leads to overuse and ultimately destroys spatial resources. Therefore, spatial planning must point out the limits to growth at an early stage and limit the use of resources. However, it must also ensure that land is available for the generation of renewable energy locally and regionally, and promote climate-neutral mobility.

Socially-sustainable spatial development aims to improve social and spatial cohesion. It strives to reduce regional inequalities and ensure an inclusive society. For example, by giving special consideration to the needs of women and girls or by guaranteeing barrier-free housing for all.

Economically-sustainable spatial development strengthens Austria as a location for research and development and aims to develop the country into a climate-neutral business location. Austria's regions must have the opportunity to develop in accordance with their strengths and potentials, and economic cycles should be organised as regionally as possible.



Spatial development for the common good

Land is a commodity that cannot be increased at will and is therefore scarce. Many different interests come together in this context. An important task of spatial planning is to represent and safeguard the interests of the public in the event of a conflict of interests. A balance must always be sought between the property rights, the political and civil rights of individuals, and the common good. This applies, for example, when the value of land increases when it is rezoned or access roads are built with public money.



Spatial development for a just world

Municipalities, cities and regions are endowed with very different resources – natural spaces differ, there are divergent social and historical developments. Societies with purely market-based economies tend to reinforce inequalities. A just spatial development means working to reduce regional inequalities and offering people from different areas equal starting opportunities. This type of spatial development ensures a minimum level of infrastructure and services across all regions of Austria. Regulations that prevent undesired tax competition between locations are needed to achieve this goal.

Spatial objectives

The following objectives guide spatial development, spatial planning actions and activities for Austria until 2030. They support the necessary transition to a spatial structure that is climate-neutral, sustainable, just, and supportive of the common good.

Embedding climate protection in spatial development and spatial planning – adapting structures to climate change

Spatial development must shape spatial structures to enable the attainment of climate neutrality. This requires embedding climate change adaptation and mitigation in legislation, in development schemes and plans, and also the implementation of measures in practice.

Shaping the energy transition – spatially managing the expansion of renewable energy production and grids

The climate goals will only be achieved if we accomplish the energy transition. Renewable energy needs space for production, storage and transport. Suitable areas must be selected and secured for this purpose.

Developing and promoting compact settlement structures with a quality-based mix of uses

Austria's cities and towns should be developed in a compact manner encouraging mixed uses. In order to protect valuable soil and the climate, distances must be shortened, surface areas revitalised and unsealed, town and city centres regenerated with high quality urban densification.

Improving living standards and equivalent living conditions for all people across all regions based on needs

Essential basic needs of people should be covered in all regions of Austria. Ensure infrastructure and services of high quality with good accessibility.

Strengthening polycentric structures for a high-quality supply of goods and services

A network of centres of varying sizes ensures that all people can find all the services they need as close as possible to where they live. Small and medium-sized towns are the anchor points for the local and regional supply of basic services.

Using efficient public transport axes and nodes as a backbone for settlement development

Cities, towns and commercial areas develop along the axes of attractive public transport. This type of development follows the transport nodes, stations and stops, thus making a key contribution to the fight against the climate crisis.

Planning, thinking and acting in regional and functional living spaces

In future, we should strive to find solutions to new challenges increasingly across municipal, district and national borders. People's everyday radius of action and travel has widened considerably. Therefore, providing basic services, affordable housing and the protection of natural spaces must be considered beyond the administrative borders.

Strengthening regional resilience

It became quite evident during the coronavirus pandemic that regional cycles and the security of regional supply are important support factors for coping with crisis events.

Building on local and regional strengths, and promoting the existing potential

There are no patent remedies for resolving problems such as shrinking populations or economic upheavals. The solutions to regional challenges are to be found in the regions themselves.

Protecting open spaces in their diverse functions and developing them in a resource-efficient manner

Undeveloped open spaces are coming under increasing pressure. Spatial planning ensures the diversity and quality of cultural landscapes and manages the competition for open spaces. In urban areas, spatial planning must ensure access to green spaces and their microclimatic functions.

Preserving and developing valuable cultural landscapes and cultural assets

In Austria, cultural landscapes are a treasure that must be preserved, but also developed. Spatial planning instruments can contribute significantly.

Megatrends

Change is happening

Megatrends are global developments with a long-term impact. They can only be influenced when large numbers of actors work together worldwide. The following megatrends are of immense importance for spatial development and spatial planning.

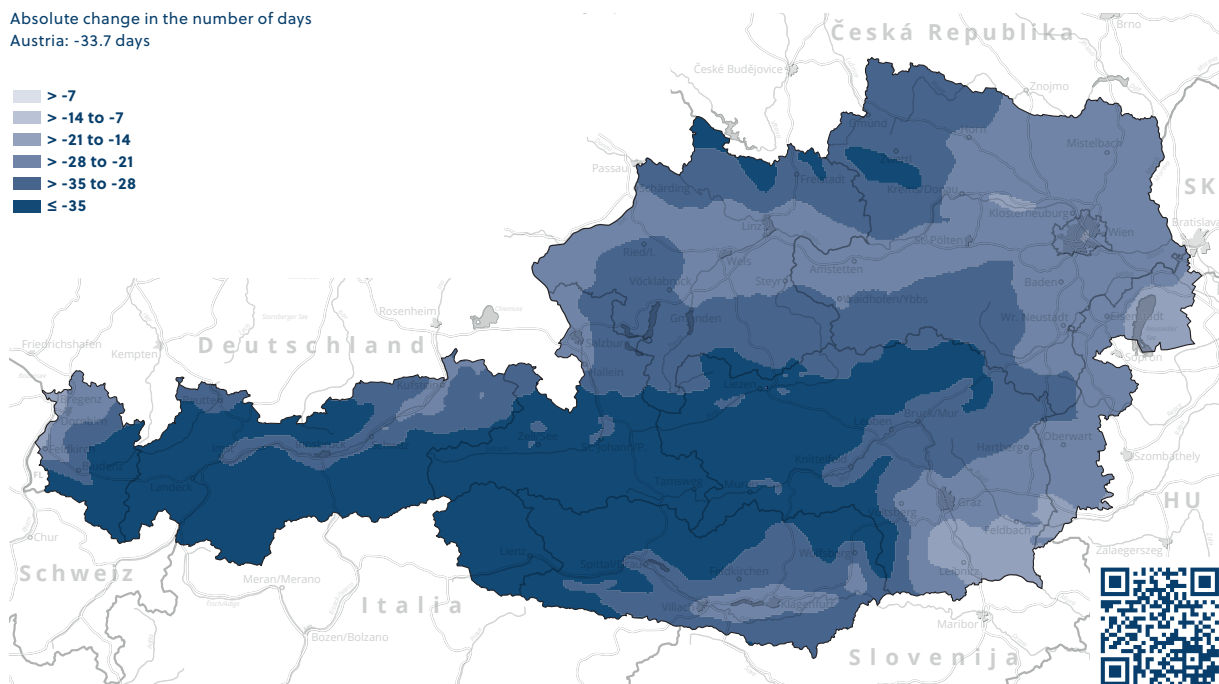
Climate change and climate crisis – the Alpine region is particularly affected

Climate change has a global, long-term impact and is already partly irreversible. As an industrialised nation, Austria contributes disproportionately on a per capita basis to the climate crisis¹, but is also highly affected itself. On the one hand, as a landlocked country it is warming more strongly than the global average. On the other, as an Alpine country it is clearly more susceptible to damage and more vulnerable.

Climate projection: Ice days <0°C

Comparison 1971–2000 with 2071–2100, business-as-usual scenario

Absolute change in the number of days
Austria: -33.7 days



© ÖROK-Atlas; Source: ÖKS15 Climate scenarios for Austria

Digitisation – digital in all areas of life

Digitisation is affecting all areas of life in the entire world. Already 28% of economic growth in Austria is attributed to the information and communication technology sectors (ICT) (WIFO 2019). Digitisation has far-reaching spatial effects. The availability of broadband infrastructure, for example, can create new

¹ UN Statistics Division: Millennium Development Goals Database

regional disparities. Workplaces are being moved to employees' homes and offices are being used for different purposes as a result of the growing trend of remote working.

At the same time, countertrends such as a revived appreciation of handicraft, personal services and "live" experiences are creating new opportunities for regional development. Services are partly returning to city and town centres.

Globalisation – global flows, effects and interdependence

Globalisation refers to increasing flows of people, goods, finance and information, and the emergence of global corporations and growing interdependence. Austria's globalisation index has increased steeply in recent years, as it benefits extraordinarily from rising growth and incomes.² However, the globalisation winners are also facing losses. In some sectors and regions, companies are losing competitiveness. One countertrend is regionalisation, which is shifting the focus to home markets and even resulting in complete border closures and new trade barriers.

Demographic change – more children, more elderly people

Within Austria, the country is separating into growth regions and declining regions. Austria's population is growing due to immigration. At the same time, the age structure is changing. The number of elderly and very old people is increasing throughout Austria. The number of children and young people is increasing, especially in the capital cities and their catchment areas. By contrast, the number of persons of gainful employment age is generally decreasing.³

Social change – diverse and multilocal

Society is becoming more heterogeneous: the diversity of households, families and lifestyles is increasing. More and more people have several places of residence and work. In some places, tourism infrastructure is being converted into (second) homes.

Knowledge-based society – from high tech to high touch to high skills

Global competition means that Austria has to focus on the high-tech sectors of the economy. The number of people employed in knowledge-based sectors has increased greatly. At the same time, demand for personal services is also growing. Childcare, health services, counselling, hospitality services and animation jobs at leisure and holiday facilities are grouped under high-touch.

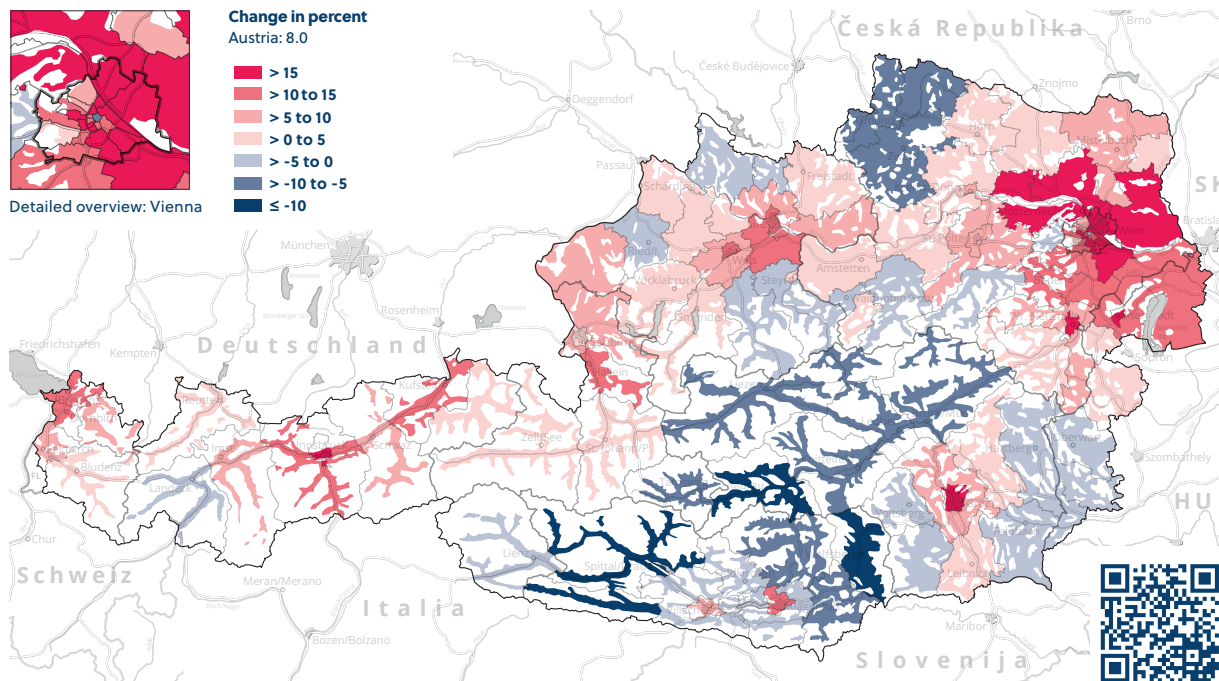
Additionally, the technical requirements for the installation and maintenance of our technical environment such as energy-efficient homes also requires high-quality training for tradespeople and a high willingness to learn, i.e. high-skills.

² Bertelsmann Foundation 2018
³ ÖROK population forecast 2018

Urbanisation and suburbanisation – urban regions continue to grow

The population in cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants in Austria is expected to increase by 20%⁴ by 2050. This is creating pressure to take action in cities and urban regions, for example, with respect to housing construction, efficient and climate-friendly mobility, high-quality open spaces and the sustainable use of resources.

ÖROK Population Forecast: Population change 2018–2040 in percent, total



Rising demand for energy – electricity consumption on the rise

The current forecast of the International Energy Agency estimates a further increase in global energy demand (+30% by 2040).⁵ On the other hand, scenarios in which climate targets are met show that demand for energy will have to drop by half by the middle of the century and that this is possible.⁶ However, all estimates concur that the share of electricity in energy consumption will increase. For spatial development, the changeover to renewable energy presents an extraordinary challenge, because additional surface area is needed for energy production. Still, it is also opening up huge economic opportunities, especially for rural regions.

⁴ ÖROK Population Forecast 2018

⁵ IEA 2019

⁶ Schleicher S.P., Steining K.W. (2017): Strengthening the economy and achieving climate goals: Pathways to a near greenhouse gas emissions-free Austria. Scientific report (73-2017)

Global, European and national calls for action

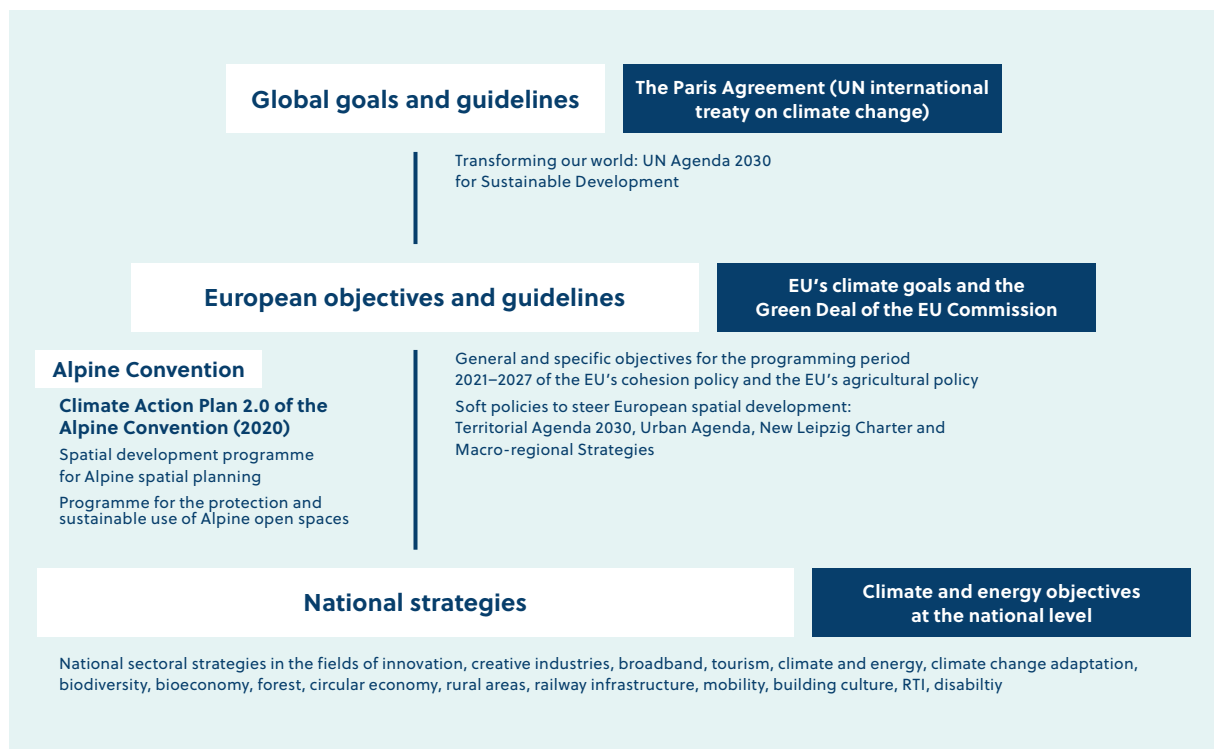
Change is needed

Spatial development and spatial planning is embedded in a dense network of international treaties and strategies. Additionally, there are national objectives and mandates. Spatial development and spatial planning work must support the overarching objectives and at the same time respond to the effects of these policies on spatial development.



Guiding documents

Status: June 2021

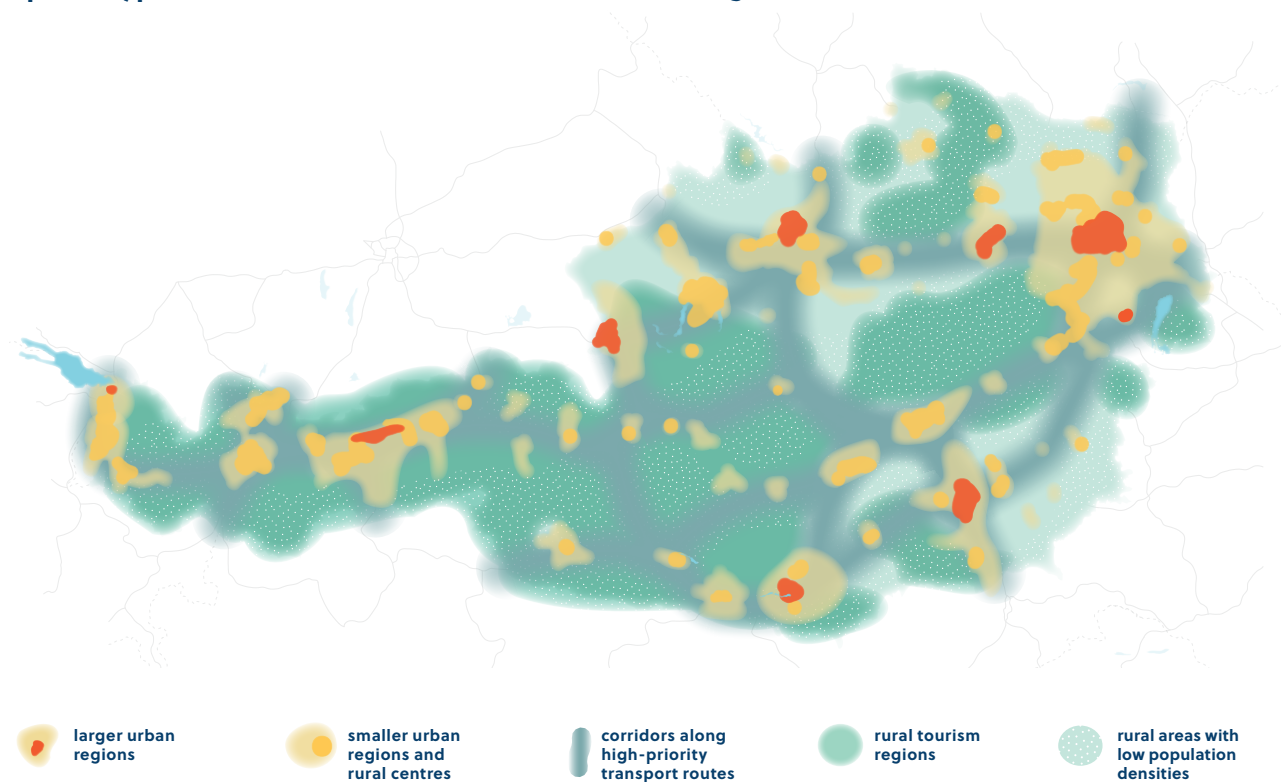


Differences in Austria's spatial types

The challenges we face

Austria's regions are affected differently by the megatrends, and therefore, the spatial planning challenges differ in each case. The principal challenges for the various spatial types in Austria (these are spaces with common characteristic features) are presented below.

Spatial types of Austria: Schematic illustration according to ÖREK 2030*



* Illustration of the spatial types of the Austrian Spatial Development Concept. These action areas are characterised by common challenges and potentials and may overlap. The map does not contain any objectives.

Challenges for all spatial types in Austria

All spaces are affected by the climate crisis. Therefore, specific measures for **climate change adaptation and mitigation** must be developed and implemented.



- **Protection and security** are growing in importance for spatial development. Adaptations are necessary to avoid damage and hazards. In this context, supply security for critical products such as food and energy is of utmost importance. This is creating new opportunities for regional production sites.
- People, households and businesses are becoming more flexible and mobile. **Multilocality**, i.e. living in several places, is increasing. As a result, demand for space for housing, working and leisure activities continues to rise. Providing high-quality for business locations will become an enormous challenge. At the same time, the risk of further urban sprawl is increasing
- **Mobilisation of building land** is a major challenge everywhere with respect to reducing urban sprawl and soil sealing.
- The expansion of online retail could result in even more **vacancies in town and city centres**. This poses a risk to the preservation of buildings.
- **A balanced urban and regional development** requires the targeted development of regional economies. This approach makes it possible to achieve a balance of high-tech, high-skill and high-touch businesses and employees.
- **Production** is becoming more individualised and automated. This may result in factories returning from low-wage countries and relocating in Austria. Such a trend requires locations with a good infrastructure.
- **Digitisation** may cause sudden factory closures, but can also open up opportunities for new businesses. The challenge consists in the management and conservative use of land for business sites.

- **Digital forms of communication** can partially replace spatial proximity. This reduces commuting and business travel during peak times.
- Bundling **mobility options** on joint digital platforms increases the choice for transport users. This helps reduce the need for expensive investments in infrastructure for just few peak hours.
- In future, workplaces are to become easier to access by **public transport and bicycle**. This is an important contribution to achieving climate neutrality in transport.
- **Automated driving** may have serious spatial and traffic consequences. The appropriate framework conditions must be created to prevent negative effects.
- It remains difficult to select and keep **infrastructure routes** free for overhead power lines or railway lines. Conflicting interests must be carefully analysed and weighed. Subsequently, careful planning is required to minimise the impact on people and nature.
- **Attractive public spaces** are becoming an essential factor for the quality of a location. Therefore, greater attention must be paid to building design and the built-up environment.
- The participation of citizens and complex requirements for building projects require **high-quality planning processes**.

Challenges for larger urban regions

Larger urban regions are regions where business, work, cultural and educational activities are concentrated and that compete with other urban regions all over the world. They remain growth regions also due to the general migration into the labour market and the influx of students (school and university) and knowledge workers.



The following challenges are emerging:

- Compact, climate-friendly and environmentally-friendly design with a mixed-use structure
- Attractive high-quality design of public spaces adapted to climate change and with access to recreational areas in the surrounding areas
- Ensuring an attractive living and work environment – also to keep people from moving to the catchment areas
- Managing growth without steeply rising housing costs, overcrowding and social displacement processes
- Making locations suitable for international companies from the service and production sectors
- Managing demand for logistics sites with space requirements and higher traffic volumes
- Preventing higher vacancies in ground floor zones further away from main shopping streets
- Sustainable management of higher traffic volumes within cities and between cities, their surroundings and wider catchment areas
- Necessary investments to ensure basic services for a growing population
- Revitalisation and climate-neutral design of urban tourism after the coronavirus pandemic

Challenges for smaller urban regions and rural centres

Smaller urban regions and rural centres fulfil important functions for their surrounding rural areas. They can serve as anchor points for knowledge-based services and offer attractive cultural and leisure activities as well as a wide range of educational opportunities. The population and jobs in these regions are expected to grow only moderately.



The following challenges are emerging:

- Developing balanced regional location management to reconcile living, working and recreation uses and fully exploit the potential

- Creating attractive business and educational locations at suitable sites with balancing mechanisms between the municipalities
- Increasing the appeal of locations for knowledge-based services and innovative production
- Safeguarding regional production sites by intensifying training, continuing education, research, development and businesses networks
- Improving accessibility by public transport to regional centres and within the centres
- Dealing with increased vacancies of business premises in the city and town centres
- Aligning housing supply with the capacities of schools, kindergartens and other social facilities in growing communities
- Bundling qualitatively efficient facilities to ensure basic services
- Revitalisation and reorientation of urban tourism after the coronavirus pandemic

Challenges for corridors along high-priority transport routes

Corridors along high-priority transport routes are already attracting production and logistics companies with higher space and transport requirements. Shopping centres are also looking for locations connected to the high-priority roadway network. In these areas, the population is mostly stable or growing.



The following challenges are emerging:

- Avoiding further development at locations with a high dependence on individual private transport
- Concentrating settlements along public transport lines with stations and stops by ensuring attractive transport options
- Developing large industrial, production and logistics locations with good accessibility to public transport and bicycle paths as well as the option of rail connections
- Ensuring accessibility to natural habitats and avoiding the barrier effects of infrastructure routes and settlement bands

Challenges for rural tourism regions

Tourism regions are rural growth areas facing international and national competition for guests. The number of overnight stays has developed dynamically in recent years, but this trend was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. However, there is still potential for further growth albeit with opportunities, risks and challenges.



The following challenges are emerging:

- Developing sustainable and climate-neutral tourism is an important economic factor and is well integrated in regional value chains
- Managing growing demand for locations for leisure, health, wellness and recreation facilities
- Dealing with demand for new developments and further growth
- Avoidance of urban sprawl caused by holiday residences near tourist attractions
- Lack of availability of suitable building land and the associated land speculation
- “Overtourism” in especially attractive “hot spots” with numerous negative side effects such as increased traffic, noise and displacement
- Conflicts between tourism uses and nature and landscape conservation, agriculture and forestry, and wildlife management
- Decreasing identification of the local population with tourism due to displacement processes
- Declining local population due to lack of attractive jobs and high land and housing prices
- Seasonal and daily fluctuations of the population causing underuse and overuse of infrastructure
- Higher traffic volumes due to multi-local lifestyles

Challenges for rural areas with low population densities

While other regions are growing, the population in sparsely populated rural areas tends to decrease.

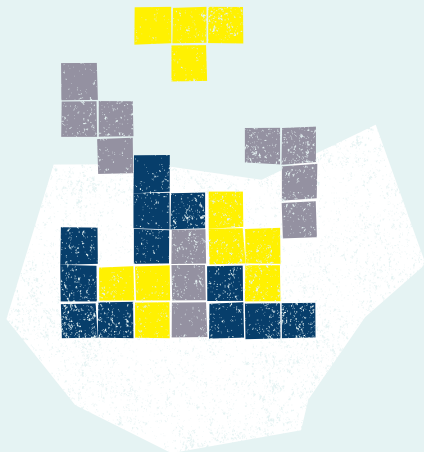
The following challenges are emerging:

- Impacts of renewable energy carriers on landscape and ecosystems as well as conflicts of interest with the local population
- Motivating young adults who have left for education purposes and other target groups such as senior citizens and young families to move to rural areas by highlighting the high quality of the landscape, the low environmental pollution and an intact social fabric
- Loss of basic services, lack of capacities for elderly care and healthcare
- Increasing vacancies and structural decay of valuable buildings
- Loss of revenues and difficulties in maintaining the transport, technical, social and cultural infrastructure
- Expansion of high-voltage power lines for energy transmission
- Provision of basic services through the use of digital services
- Compensating locational disadvantages by providing broadband infrastructure
- Use of multi-local lifestyles for the preservation of building structures, the revitalisation of towns and the maintenance of infrastructure
- Excess land zoned for construction creating risk of further urban sprawl despite declining populations and households



Thematic objectives of the ÖREK 2030

The principles and spatial goals are specified in more detail by the thematic objectives. They are the basis of the ten-point programme and the implementation pacts.



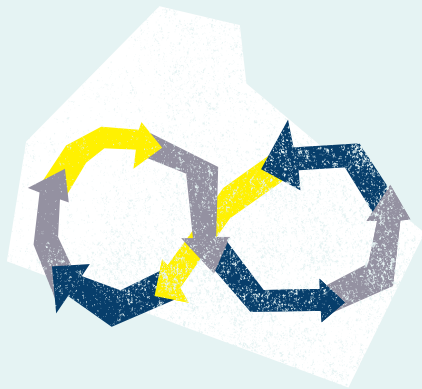
Using spatial resources sparingly and efficiently

- Reducing energy consumption, securing and using the potential of renewable energy regionally – promoting spatial planning for energy
- Significantly reducing soil sealing and land use in the near future, and developing spatial and settlement structures in a resource-efficient, climate-friendly and resilient manner
- Securing land and water as the basis of life and their sustainable management
- Enabling climate-neutral mobility and accessibility
- Increasing and securing open and green spaces and their functions, and strengthening suitability for multifunctional uses
- Containing the growing risks from natural hazards and other threats resulting from climate change through preventive spatial planning



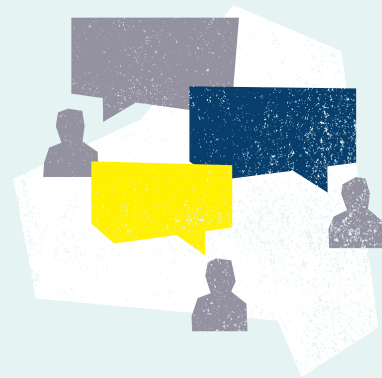
Strengthening social and spatial cohesion

- Strengthening the spatial conditions for social cohesion
- Developing regional basic services and polycentric structures with a view to future uses
- Pro-actively shaping demographic and social change
- Focusing on the socio-spatial qualities of public spaces and the advantages of high-quality planning and design of the built-up environment



Developing economic areas and systems climate-friendly and sustainable

- Developing Austria into a climate-neutral and climate-resilient location for businesses
- Responding to the spatial opportunities and risks of digitalisation and combining these with efforts to strengthen regional innovation capacity
- Improving international and regional accessibility of business locations and making them climate-neutral and environmentally-compatible
- Maintaining and strengthening competitiveness and resilience of Austria as a business location, and its regions, and supporting regional economic cycles
- Developing sustainable regional tourism and leisure destinations in a climate-neutral and climate-resilient manner
- Developing rural regions into specialised bio-economy locations while preserving biodiversity and climate
- Reducing regional disparities in competitiveness, economic performance and income levels



Developing vertical and horizontal governance

- Strengthening the (urban) regional and inter-communal levels of action
- Improving interaction between government and governance
- Improving communication and participation in planning
- Pro-actively shaping spatially relevant European and bilateral policies
- Expanding and strengthening supra-regional spatial development and spatial planning on a sectoral and cross-sectoral basis

The detailed description of the thematic objectives listed here can be found in the long version of ÖREK 2030 and the digital ÖREK: www.oerek2030.at

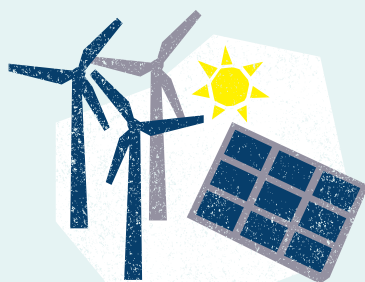


The ten-point programme

The ten-point programme is the basis for the implementation of the ÖREK 2030. It defines priorities and serves as a basis for ÖROK decisions. Therefore, it is at the core of implementation work, which is supported by the activities of the ÖROK members in their own spheres.

The 10-point programme will be reviewed every three years to ensure it is up to date and will be adapted as necessary. In the monitoring process, the aspects specific to spatial types are taken into account.

The following ten points were defined as priorities at the time the ÖREK 2030 was prepared:



1 Focussing spatial development on climate-neutrality and energy transition

2 Reducing land consumption and soil sealing



5 Ensuring accessibility and the transition to climate-neutral mobility



7 Ensure a supply of basic services that supports equivalent living conditions and secures affordable housing



8 Strengthening regional value chains and circular economy

Taking action

The success of the ÖREK 2030 will ultimately be measured by the extent to which it has been put into practice. ÖREK partnerships were established already for the ÖREK 2011 for this purpose and to guarantee cooperation and implementation across institutions. The partnerships will be continued and developed as implementation instruments.

With ÖREK 2030, implementation pacts are newly introduced with a political mandate and work assignment.

3



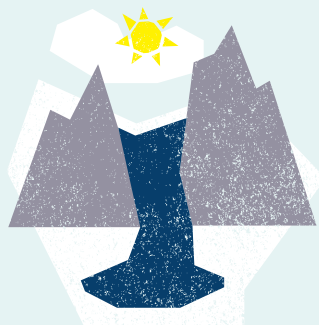
Strengthening town and city centres and improving the design of the built-up environment

4



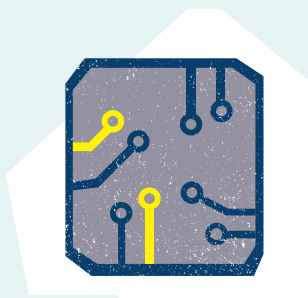
Designing open spaces to conserve resources and mitigate climate change

6



Supporting climate change adaptation through spatial development and spatial planning

9

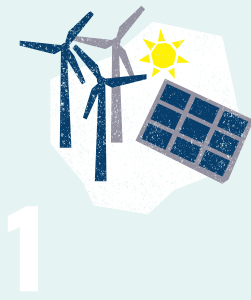


Exploiting the opportunities of digitalisation and strengthening regional innovation systems

10



Integrating government and governance as cross-cutting themes



Focussing spatial development on climate neutrality and energy transition

The climate crisis requires crucial decisions within the next ten years. Without far-reaching measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions, the average global temperature could increase by up to 4.5°C (IPPC 2013). As an industrialised nation, Austria contributes disproportionately on a per capita basis to the climate crisis, but as a landlocked and Alpine country, it is also particularly affected by rising temperatures and is susceptible to natural hazards.

Austria has committed itself in international agreements to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has also defined ambitious national targets:

- Greenhouse gases will be reduced by 36% vs. 2005 by 2030
- Electricity consumption be fully covered by renewable energy starting 2030
- Austria will be climate-neutral by 2040
- Austria will discontinue all use of fossil fuels by 2050

Very ambitious measures must be taken to attain these targets within a very short time. To achieve them, Austria's transition to climate-neutrality must be supported by spatial development and spatial planning.

Distribution of the costs of the damage caused by climate change vary widely from region to region. At the same time, the regions are affected differently by the steering mechanisms such as taxes on emissions. Spatial planning must therefore ensure spatial compatibility.

The climate goals will only be achieved by an energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy carriers. The production, storage, and transport of renewable energy carriers (biomass, solar and wind energy) will use significantly more land in the future. Therefore, spatial development and spatial planning must accomplish a number of new tasks: selecting areas and locations with the best suitability, securing areas for the production and storage of energy, mediating in the event of conflicts of use and reconciling divergent land claims.

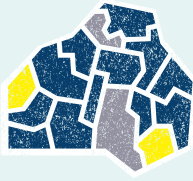
Therefore, spatial development supportive of climate neutrality and the energy transition will be the dominant issues in the next ten years. This means establishing climate change in spatial development and spatial planning, supporting the energy transition by steering spatial development in the expansion of renewable energy and grids, and developing the country into a climate-neutral location for business.



Selected key measures

- Developing models on opportunities and land requirements for renewable energy at the regional level, coordinating these at the national level, and making the results available
- Developing planning guidelines for renewable energy installations on buildings, technical facilities and built-up land, and strategies for mobilising potential
- Supplementing and adapting ÖROK recommendations on spatial planning for energy by criteria for regional and local spatial planning instruments

Reducing land consumption and soil sealing



2

Objectives for the efficient use of land have always been included in regional planning legislation. However, ten to twelve hectares have been newly built up per day for settlement and transport purposes in Austria in recent years. The Austrian Sustainability Strategy as well as the government programme for 2020 to 2024 set the target at 2.5 hectares per day. This target is defined in the EU Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe in which the target for 2050 for net land use for new settlement and transport purposes is defined as zero. This will significantly change how land is used in Austria.

Austria's population is set to grow in the coming years, especially in cities and urban regions. Therefore, demand for building land and housing will remain high. In recent years, this trend has caused a marked rise in land prices and rents, above all, in urban areas. The trend of acquiring second homes is also driving up demand for land and prices.

The resources of soil and water are affected directly by both the climate crisis and the pressure created by demand for more settlement areas. Therefore, valuable agricultural soils must be better secured in future to ensure self-sufficiency in food production and to protect water as a resource.

The national goals listed above apply to Austria and were defined by the federal government. For successful implementation, these still need to be established in policies and legislation throughout Austria. This is a prerequisite for success, because the main implementation instruments are the responsibility of the provinces (Länder), cities and municipalities.



Selected key measures

- Establishing a new ÖREK Partnership “2.5 ha” for the purpose of producing an ÖROK recommendation with specific targets for each province (Länder) and differentiated specifications for the various spatial types
- Improving and publishing databases for a standardised evaluation of discontinued land uses in Austria
- Developing models for the regionalised calculation of building land demand: based on experience in other regions (e.g. Bavaria, Germany), the models will be technically tested, adapted and developed. A trading system for land use certificates between municipalities will also be evaluated

3



Strengthening town and city centres and improving the design of the built-up environment

Town and city centres have always been the vital centres of public life where central functions and basic services are bundled and accessible within short distances. Therefore, they are important pillars of sustainable spatial development. Motorisation and digitalisation triggered far-reaching changes that pose a risk to urban centres as the focal points of our towns and villages.

In 2020, two thirds of Austrians already used the internet for shopping. Town and city centres are losing ground in one of their most important functions. Vacant shops, a lack of customers at restaurants and cafés, and the resulting lack of funds for the renovation of buildings threaten the vitality and the building structures in town and city centres. Yet lively town and city centres are important for reducing land use and ensuring the efficient use of resources in existing buildings, and the short distances contribute to the reduction of automobile traffic thereby contributing to the attainment of the climate goals.

The aim of spatial development and spatial planning is therefore to create economically vital town and city centres with high-quality architecture and a built-up environment in which people feel comfortable, where they enjoy spending time, and where inclusion is possible for all types of users.

Austria's cultural landscapes with their towns and cities are a treasure that must be preserved, but also developed. This includes lively multifunctional city and town centres with a functioning economy as well as inclusive public spaces of high quality. The instruments of spatial planning and urban development can make significant contributions to this goal.



Selected key measures

- Applying current and potential new subsidy schemes to strengthen local and urban centres
- Developing awareness-raising measures throughout Austria and guidelines for participatory processes and making these available
- Supporting and promoting discourse and knowledge transfer among experts and for the general public



Designing open spaces to conserve resources and mitigate climate change

Undeveloped and unsealed open spaces have essential functions for both urban and rural areas. They are key resources for farming and forestry, for the extraction of raw materials, and also a valuable resource for tourism. These spaces are considered in risk management against natural hazards and ensure the biodiversity of fauna and flora.

Green spaces must also be expanded and kept accessible in urban areas. Microclimatic functions must be maintained and improved.

If the current trend in settlement and transport land use is continued, we will see further significant losses of agricultural land over the long term. The increased use of renewable energy will add to demand for already limited surface areas.

However, not only are open spaces under increasing pressure, but also biodiversity. The number of flying insects is steadily decreasing, a third of breeding bird species is endangered, and valuable habitats are being disrupted by settlements and infrastructure. Five per cent of valuable biotopes are located in areas zoned as building land but not yet developed (UBA 2019).

It is the responsibility of spatial development and spatial planning bodies to safeguard open and green spaces, protect natural resources and biodiversity, and coordinate their use for economic purposes. This also includes the management of competition for land use.



Selected key measures

- Establishment of an ÖREK Partnership for “Development of open spaces, resource protection and climate change”
- Analyse models for financial and fiscal consideration of ecosystem-based services and present their spatial impacts
- Develop guidelines for resolving conflicts between densification and urban greening, and prepare good practice example

5



Ensuring accessibility and the transition to climate-neutral mobility

Megatrends such as demographic change and digitalisation pose new challenges for mobility systems. More senior citizens, fewer school students – especially in regions with declining populations – remote work and multi-local lifestyles as well as flexible working hours are making it increasingly difficult to offer attractive and efficient public transport. Online retail is changing the delivery of goods and demand for land for logistics purposes is growing.

The locations of workplaces and services in Austria are all easily accessible by automobile. Reaching them by public transport is usually much more difficult, especially in rural regions. For Austria to become a climate-neutral place to live and work, climate-friendly transport systems for people and goods must be expanded and this will be a central task for the coming years. Switching to electric vehicles is not a sufficiently sustainable solution. Increasing the use of public transport, cycling and walking is also necessary.

At the same time, basic services must be easily accessible for all people. This requires compact and well-mixed settlement structures with short distances, a network of centres of different sizes, and public transport axes and nodes as the backbone of settlement development. The coordination of spatial development with transport systems is a condition for climate-neutral accessibility.



Selected key measures

- Intensifying the work of the ÖREK Partnership “Platform for spatial planning and transport”
- Establishment of an ÖREK Partnership “Climate-friendly and spatially compatible tourism”



Supporting climate change adaptation through spatial development and spatial planning

Droughts, heavy rainfall, storms, hot spells and winters with little snow are manifestations of the climate crisis. Climate change is strongly affecting Austria as a landlocked country with an alpine topography. Natural hazards pose a very high risk and the potential economic impact is severe especially on winter tourism. Damage caused by weather events and climate change currently generate costs of at least two billion euro per year. According to forecasts, the costs will continue to rise.

The increasing demand for more land for settlement purposes is creating new threats and risks, and is also reducing areas previously reserved for nature. Climate resilience of the transport and energy infrastructure is also an increasing challenge. Disaster events are becoming more frequent due to the climate crisis, and dealing with residual risks is therefore becoming increasingly urgent. The practice of withdrawing hazard zone plans and restrictions to zoning uses when zones are protected by structural measures leads to higher risks when these structural measures are overwhelmed or fail. Integral risk management is urgently needed to deal systematically with natural hazards and their risks.

Spatial development and spatial planning that considers adaptation to climate change must safeguard soil and water as the basis of life and must secure the function of open and green spaces, also at higher temperatures. The higher risks from natural hazards and other hazards resulting from climate change (e.g. heat stress, especially in urban areas) must be contained by preventive spatial planning.



Selected key measures

- Standardised, inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary collection of data of spatial relevance and of basic data for spatial planning for all of Austria and defining safety levels in accordance with the specific circumstances of the provinces and regions.
- Defining the specific actions in the spatial planning legislation of the provinces (Länder) for attaining the objectives and targets by combining the results of the ÖREK partnerships “Risk Management for Gravitational Natural Hazards in Spatial Planning” and “Flood Risk Management”.



7

Ensure a supply of basic services that supports equivalent living conditions and secures affordable housing

The shift towards a more urban society is creating a situation in which central functions and basic services are under-utilised and at the same over-utilised. An ageing society and changing gender roles are also transforming what is needed in basic services (kindergartens, schools that operate all day, nursing and care facilities and services).

Population growth in cities and their catchment areas as well as demand for tourism uses in tourism regions is making it a challenge to secure affordable housing.

Digitalisation can create new impulse for basic services. In future, digitalisation can contribute significantly to making high-quality services available throughout the country such as e-government, telemedicine and online shopping. However, a condition for implementation is the availability of a high-capacity digital infrastructure in the entire the country and providing support for its use.

The goal of just and sustainable spatial development includes securing equivalent living conditions in all regions. Spatial diversity in Austria is a valuable asset. However, it also means different types of quality of life depending on the specific location. The population must have the opportunity to make location choices based on their respective subjective interests.

Therefore, regions should be developed in a way so as to ensure that central functions and basic services are available in acceptable quality and are reasonably accessible. This means proactively steering spatial development with respect to demographic and social change. Thinking, planning and acting in the context of regional living spaces, securing affordable housing and a supply with digital infrastructure.



Selected key measures

- Establishment of an ÖREK Partnership “Basic services for the future”
- Drafting an ÖROK recommendation on (minimum) standards for basic services
- Identifying adjustments needed for affordable housing for the entire territory of Austria and point out market distortions



Strengthening regional value chains and circular economy

The aim of a circular economy is to reduce waste production to a minimum and continuously recycle raw materials within a closed cycle. In addition to the environmental benefits and economic aspects, a circular economy may also have a social function by providing employment opportunities for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market.

Regional value chains aim to integrate producers into regional economic systems and to establish relationships with local consumers. This requires co-operation among the producers and consumers with the support of neutral intermediaries.

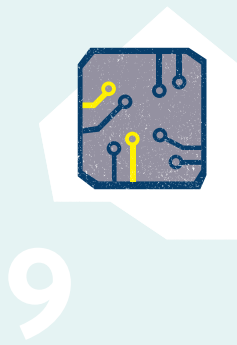
The path to a circular economy is also an important element of the “Austrian Recovery and Resilience Plan”. The regional organisation of waste management plays an essential role in this plan.

Regional value chains and regional circular economies promote resilience and support the efficient use of land. Additionally, they strengthen the competitiveness of the country and its regions as a location for businesses and work.



Selected key measures

- Establishment of an ÖREK Partnership “Strengthening regional economic cycles and regional value chains”. Its task is to identify topics, sectors and systems with actors that are suitable for circular economies and regional value chains.



Exploiting digitalisation opportunities and strengthening regional innovation systems

A share of 99% of homes in Austria are connected to broadband infrastructure with up to 10 Mbit. However, broadband with a higher capacity (30 Mbit or 100 Mbit) varies greatly from region to region. Generally, the availability of broadband is increasing rapidly, with more than half of households already being connected to 5G infrastructure.⁷

The ICT manufacturing industries and ICT user industries are concentrated more in urban regions, although rural regions have caught up considerably in recent years.

The use of ICT was accelerated by the coronavirus crisis both for work and for private uses. Working and learning is increasingly taking place remotely, business trips are being replaced by virtual meetings and conferences, doctor's visits by telemedicine. Demand for space for residential purposes and home furnishings, office space and shopping space is changing along with the need for physical accessibility to basic services.

The digital transformation will have a wide range of different effects on spatial development. The impact on spatial trends due to the interaction with other factors cannot yet be assessed. Therefore, spatial digitalisation strategies must be developed.

Digital transformation is also a key driver of innovation and innovation capabilities. Both are of vital importance for a high-wage location in the global competition to attract businesses. It is in the overall interest of Austria, but also in the self-interest of the regions, to increase innovation potential as much and as widely as possible. Innovation potential develops best in a supportive environment at attractive locations that are appealing to companies and a qualified workforce. The goal is to "transform" successful innovation into regional and global well-functioning businesses and organisational models. The concept of innovation includes technological as well as systemic and organisational innovation.



Selected key measures

- Establishment of ÖREK partnerships "Exploiting the opportunities of digitalisation" and "Strengthening regional innovation systems"
- Analysing the spatial impacts of digitalisation and identifying steering mechanisms and necessities

⁷BMLRT 2021



Integrating government and governance as cross-cutting themes

The implementation of the ÖREK 2030 depends on well-functioning government and governance. The reference to government refers to the legal framework, taxes and statutory areas of competence as the basis for achieving the objectives of the ÖREK 2030. Governance refers to the supportive effect of a positive attitude of all involved actors regarding cooperation and the availability of sufficient resources and “governance know-how”.

However, if the legal framework makes it difficult to achieve the objectives of the ÖREK 2030 or counteracts the objectives, the situation cannot be compensated by good governance.

Well-functioning governance is of enormous importance for the implementation of the ÖREK 2030. The principles of climate neutrality and sustainability, the orientation on the common good and the aspiration of a just development in spatial planning require a process of deliberation and negotiation. The varying regional and spatial impacts of climate change and the various levels of regional potential call for overarching strategies with regional adaptations in their concrete implementation.

Participation in European spatial development processes also plays a significant role for the development of vertical and horizontal governance. On the one hand, it is a matter of articulating spatially-relevant Austrian interests and including these in European processes. On the other, European strategies and processes create important impulses that need to be integrated in planning processes at the federal, provincial, regional, and local levels.

Additionally, close coordination between spatial and sectoral planning plays a key role. Coordination is especially important in planning for the sectors, for spatial development, for climate change and biodiversity as well as for adaptation to climate change.

Apart from the aspects of horizontal governance, vertical coordination between the various levels starting at the federal government and extending to the municipalities is also very important. Special attention is given to the (urban) regional level of action: work at this level has become much more important and professionalised over the past decade. The current challenges for spatial development also call for cooperation across municipal boundaries. Therefore, cooperation between municipalities and the (urban) regional level will continue to gain importance in the future.

The complexity of the challenges is increasing and the pace of change is very fast. Therefore, in addition to vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms, what is also needed is information, higher awareness and participation opportunities for civil society and the interested public. A broad repertoire of methods and processes are available for this purpose. It is important for the public sector to support civic participation processes in terms of content, organisation and funding. Although participation processes increase coordination work, the results are usually more sustainable and facilitate later implementation.

Open and transparent communication of spatial planning topics is important for the success of the ÖREK 2030. Communication should reference topics of the everyday life and enable people to participate in planning processes on a well-informed basis.

When working on the ten-point programme, aspects of governance and government are to be integrated as cross-cutting themes.

ÖREK – Implementation pacts

ÖREK implementation pacts have the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the ÖREK 2030. The pacts include policy mandates assigned by the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) specifying the content and timeframe. A limited number of implementation pacts are planned for the three-year work programmes of ÖROK that are adapted to the working capacities of the participating institutions. This requires defining priorities in the 10-point programme.

The entity responsible for the implementation pacts is the ÖROK Standing Sub-Committee. The lead for the processing of the implementation pacts lies with the ÖROK partners appointed by the members of the Standing Sub-Committee. They are assigned a mandate for this task. The ÖROK Office provides the organisational and administrative support for processing the implementation pacts.

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