2011/1

journal nachhaltigkeit

Special edition

Newsletter of the Actors Network for a Sustainable Austria

ÖSTRAT

Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development
mission, benefit, initiatives

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Photo credits: cover and pages 3, 7–24: istockphoto.com, page 6: publisher, page 7: NESTOR^{GOLD} Quality Seal for age(ing)-appropriate organisations and enterprises. Award-winning age(ing) management. Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, 2011, page 8: Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, Department VII, page 9: Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, page 10: Office for Future-Related Issues of the Provincial Government of Vorarlberg, page 11 (left): BMASK/www.freiwilligenweb.at, page 11 (right): European Union, 1995–2010, page 14: ÖkoKauf Wien, page 16: Office of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria, Division of Economy, Tourism and Technology (WST2), pages 17 and 18: Office of the Provincial Government of Styria, Specialist Division 19D, page 19 (left): Plansinn, page 19 (right): HBF/Srodic, page 22: Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection

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BUNDESKANZLERAMT ÖSTERREICH

bmwfj

2011/1

editorial

Sustainability at the heart of policy

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Sustainable development has become one of the policy objectives increasingly gaining in importance in the past few years. It covers themes that are among the most pressing issues our society will be faced with in the future, namely the combat against climate change, management of scarce resources, migration as a social challenge, intergenerational solidarity in ageing societies, to mention but a few. This shows very clearly that sustainable development is a complex societal task, comprising many dimensions, involving various levels of action and requiring the firm commitment of the actors in their respective local and regional environments. Hence, a specific instrument is required to provide direction and orientation.

By developing the Austria-wide Strategy for Sustainable Development (ÖSTRAT) in collaboration and in consensus between the Federal Republic of Austria and the Federal Provinces (Länder) a milestone has been achieved. It signals that sustainability has outgrown its ecological origins and dimensions, developing into a cross-cutting issue in the centre of public debate and political action.

The demands for an ecological transformation of society and those for safeguarding jobs are, within their fundamental meaning, not contradictory but express a double social dividend: Ecological innovation provides answers to climate change and to the shortage of resources, opens up new opportunities in international markets for the economy and offers prospects for sustainable employment to individuals. However, ÖSTRAT is also guided by the conviction that new, sustainable patterns of consumption and production can be realised only on the basis of strong social cohesion, tightly woven social safety networks, equal opportunities and fair access to education and qualification.

In addition, the strategy requires new, enhanced governance models to ensure vertical coherence of objectives and of implementation between different levels of action, i.e. the global, European, national, regional and local level. This approach is illustrated in an exemplary way by coordination across policy areas, involving the Federal Government as well as the Federal Provinces. At operational level, it is reflected in the Work Programme for 2009–2010, which has already been implemented to a large extent. In this special edition, the "journal nachhaltigkeit" informs about ÖSTRAT and provides an overview of selected initiatives at federal and provincial level.

östrat

Ana Jakil, Martina Schmalnauer-Giljum

Strategic framework

Joining forces for the **challenges of the future**

Sustainable development is a social process. It is not so much about standards and technological change but requires a clever, creative, and in particular holistic approach to tackling the challenges of the future. Against this background, the Council of Ministers and the Conference of Governors decided to join the forces of the federal provinces and the Federal Republic of Austria in a common strategic and organisational framework.

The Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development (Österreichische Strategie Nachhaltige Entwicklung/ ÖSTRAT) was adopted by the Governors of the Federal Provinces in May 2009 and by the Council of Ministers in July 2010. It is based on the objectives and policy principles of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Sustainability Strategy of the Federal Republic (Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie des Bundes/NSTRAT, 2002) as well as the strategies and programmes of the Federal Provinces in the field of sustainable development. Last but not least, it is guided by the millennium goals of the United Nations.

ÖSTRAT is well positioned to complement the activities pursued by the entire Federal Government sector, by individual ministries based on their sectoral responsibilities or independently by individual Federal Provinces. It primarily addresses political and administrative players and opens up new vistas for topic-specific cooperation between the individual partners (Federal Republic, Federal Provinces, regions, municipalities, social partners and civil society organisations). To coordinate and implement the activities, existing mechanisms for sustainable development are used.

Cross-cutting issues with a potential for synergy

The Work Programme 2009-2010, i.e. the operational, results-oriented strand of ÖSTRAT, addresses fields of action from a long-term perspective and outlines concrete challenges and medium-term objectives. Their common characteristics as cross-cutting topics are that they may only be tackled across portfolios of ministries. Moreover, cooperation between Federal Government and Federal Provinces in this field offers a high potential for synergy. For these fields of action initiatives were developed that testify to the outstanding quality of cooperation. ÖSTRAT initiatives are based on an integrated approach comprising the economic, ecological and socio-cultural as well as temporal dimension and thus serve as best practices.

Basis or frame of reference

During this process, the Federal Provinces also examined whether it was useful to develop regional sustainability strategies as a link between ÖSTRAT and existing strategies and programmes and whether this would generate a clear added value. As the conditions in the individual Federal Provinces are very different, the question was answered in different ways. ÖSTRAT takes account of this fact by meeting both requirements, serving as a basis for strategic work at the provincial level on the one hand and as a frame of reference for specific strategies of the Federal Provinces on the other hand.

All documents concerning ÖSTRAT and more in-depth information are available at www.nachhaltigkeit.at.

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Ulrike Haslinger, Thomas Steiner

The added value of the strategy

A common compass for a **wide range of initiatives**

Sustainable development has become the guiding principle of political action and in shaping society. Recognition of this fact has led to the development of numerous initiatives and the realisation of various activities – by the Federal Republic of Austria in its entirety, the individual ministries as well as the Federal Provinces. Hence, the question arises: In which way does the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development (ÖSTRAT) generate added value?

The added value of ÖSTRAT lies in its very nature:

- ÖSTRAT is an enabling strategy. It ensures that the sustainability activities of the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces are geared towards a common goal, while allowing room for manoeuvre, different pathways and innovative solutions for decision-making adjusted to sectoral but also regional and local needs.
- ÖSTRAT is committed to subsidiarity. By taking concerted measures where individual activities of the Federal Government or the Federal Provinces are insufficient, fast and target-oriented action becomes possible.
- ÖSTRAT defines a programmatic and organisational framework for the joint sustainability activities of the Federal Government and Federal Provinces. Its work programme addresses concrete challenges, targets, measures and implementation processes regarding topical issues. Consequently, strategic alignment is guaranteed.
- ÖSTRAT is a learning strategy. It is evaluated in terms of efficiency and goal orientedness and updated at regular intervals. External evaluation makes it possible to incorporate outside views. In this way, ÖSTRAT creates an optimal basis for decision-making and innovation.
- ÖSTRAT is a voluntary, common, cross-level strategic and results-oriented process. Its programmes are developed and adopted by consensus and implemented cooperatively. Thus, ÖSTRAT opens up new vistas of collaboration between the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces and ensures a prudent and impact-oriented use of resources.

These characteristics of ÖSTRAT are also confirmed by the owners of the initiatives represented in the ÖSTRAT Work Programme, i.e. persons of different bodies at federal and provincial level assuming special responsibility for an initiative. According to a poll, the owners share the opinion that ÖSTRAT strengthens their competence. Added value is identified in the following areas:

- ÖSTRAT decisions taken at the level of the Council of Ministers and the Governors of the Federal Provinces legitimise the actors to tackle pressing and complex issues within a clear, process-oriented framework for cross-sectoral work.
- The ÖSTRAT process provides opportunities to develop, present, discuss, elaborate, question and examine ideas in the framework of developing the Work Programme.
- The owners are provided with better access to information/data, networks and structures.
- Innovative processes generate innovative structures and products. The owners may acquire standardised, innovative and practical methods and tools/instruments at low cost to facilitate their work.
- Existing bodies and networks raise public awareness and spread ideas. They also ensure that quality assurance standards are met.

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östrat

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The Work Programme 2009-2010

Making **sustainability** an **everyday experience**

The ÖSTRAT Work Programme 2009-2010 agreed on between the Federal Republic of Austria and the Federal Provinces comprises 42 concrete initiatives covering nine fields of action. Thus "sustainability" is no longer just an abstract concept but can be experienced in practice.

The ÖSTRAT Work Programme 2009-10 based on the resolution of the Conference of Governors (May 2009) encompasses 32 initiatives in the following seven fields of action:

- Global responsibility
- Social cohesion, social capital
- Sustainability at local and regional level
- Eco-efficiency and resource management based on sustainable mobility, consumption and production patterns
- Responsible enterprises (CSR) as a success factor of Austria as a business and employment location
- Education, communication and research to promote sustainable development
- Good governance – high quality cooperation between the government and the civil society

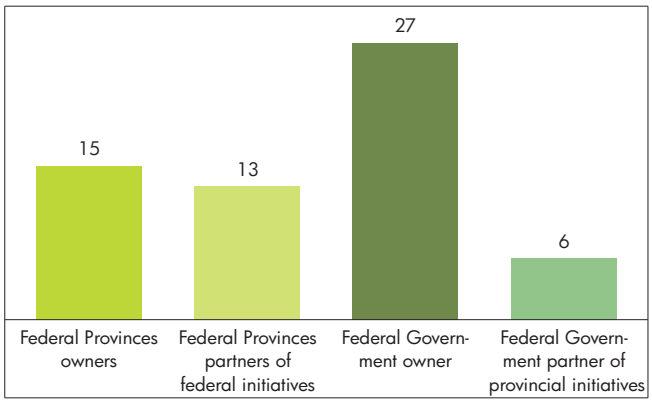
In accordance with the resolution of the Council of Ministers of July 2010, two additional fields of action were added:

- Public health, preventive healthcare and ageing
- Work under fair conditions for all

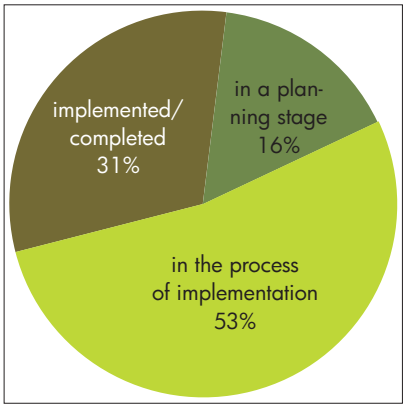
This implied further initiatives of the Federal Government. The Work Programme now comprises a total of 42 initiatives spanning nine fields of action.

For each initiative an owner has been defined as the responsible institution, which in turn appointed a competent contact person ensuring that the initiative is supported and implemented adequately.

In March 2011 53% of the initiatives were being implemented, 31% were completed and 16% were in a planning stage.



Distribution of initiatives



Status of implementation

21 selected initiatives covering the nine fields of actions of the Work Programme are presented in the following. It is a common feature of all ÖSTRAT initiatives that they are implemented in collaboration between several Federal Ministries, across Federal Provinces and/or in cooperation between Federal Government and Federal Provinces.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Work under fair conditions for all

Gainful employment continues to secure the livelihood of the overwhelming majority of the population. However, it is becoming increasingly fragile: due to the upward trend of unemployment as well as the increase in precarious employment relationships that do not even guarantee adequate incomes to those holding a job. With a view to the rising average age of the working population, age(ing)-appropriate working conditions are of growing importance.

NESTOR GOLD

Quality seal for age(ing)-appropriate work environment

To secure the welfare state on a sustainable basis and to safeguard the competitiveness of the business location Austria even against the background of demographic change, it needs an optimal framework to support longer working lives. To raise awareness and to provide incentives, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) developed – jointly with the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ), various social partner organisations and the Public Employment Service – the NESTOR GOLD quality seal for age(ing-)-appropriate enterprises and organisations.

The aim of the initiative is to prepare the Austrian enterprises sustainably for a radically changing age structure of the population by strengthening awareness of the special value, potentials and needs of older workers and by supporting the realisation of concrete measures.

The certificate has been created with a view to further developing and enhancing the Nestor Competition initiated by the BMASK between 2004 and 2007. It is awarded by the Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection every second year. In 2010 for the first time, the three best pilot projects were awarded the NESTOR GOLD quality seal. The application period for the next selection in 2012 has already started.

In the certification process enterprises and organisations have to undergo to obtain the quality seal, individual measures for age(ing)/gender-appropriate as well as life-phase-oriented working environments are developed with the support of age management experts. In parallel, specifically trained assessors examine the entity's compliance with age(ing)-specific requirements based on 27 indicators covering the four fields of action "individual", "organisation", "vitality" and "culture". Following the recommendations of the assessors, the certification panel – composed of representatives of the ministries, social partners and other representations of interest – will decide for or against awarding the quality seal. The certification is valid for a three-year period and may be reacquired in a shorter renewal process.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Global responsibility

The global use of resources is not sustainable and the social gap between poor and rich is widening steadily. This has an adverse impact on the opportunities of present and future generations. Austria advocates global social fairness and a transition to a sustainable economy at international level. In this context, it is vital to examine also the relationship between economic growth and sustainable development.

Strategic Guide Environment and Development

Guiding principles for **development cooperation**

Drafted by an interministerial working group together with civil society representatives, the "Strategic Guide Environment and Development" was approved by the Council of Ministers in September 2009. It was conceived to provide guidance to all public players in Austria.

Basic principles

Austrian Development Cooperation is committed to the UN environmental conventions, the principles of the respective EU policies as well as the OECD's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Special attention is paid to engaging in partnership-based action, taking into account cultural and social frameworks, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Additional goals are as follows:

- to take advantage of synergies between environmental protection and the reduction of poverty,
- to prevent an adverse impact on the environment and to maximise favourable effects,
- to pursue preferably integrated, multi-sectoral approaches,
- to promote the local ownership and local management of natural resources,
- to campaign for the incorporation of environmental protection into national development plans,
- to support awareness raising and capacity building in environmental protection,
- to promote an integrated approach to environmental resources and a fair sharing of the benefits of environmental protection,
- to cooperate internationally and to contribute to the implementation of environmental conventions,
- to use the experience and know-how of the Austrian society.

Thematic fields of action and objectives are the sustainable management of natural resources, the fight against desertification, the preservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of chemicals and waste, climate protection as well as water and sanitation.

Implementation strategy

To implement these principles, it is vital to promote decentralisation and to integrate environmental objectives and measures into local development plans, development funds and projects. It is also of great importance to strengthen local civil society organisations and to encourage broad participation of the population. Multilateral cooperation as well as partnerships with organisations of the civil society and the private sector offer valuable approaches to implementation. An "informal platform" was set up so as to facilitate the exchange of information and to improve coherence within Austria. It is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the "Strategic Guide Environment and Development".

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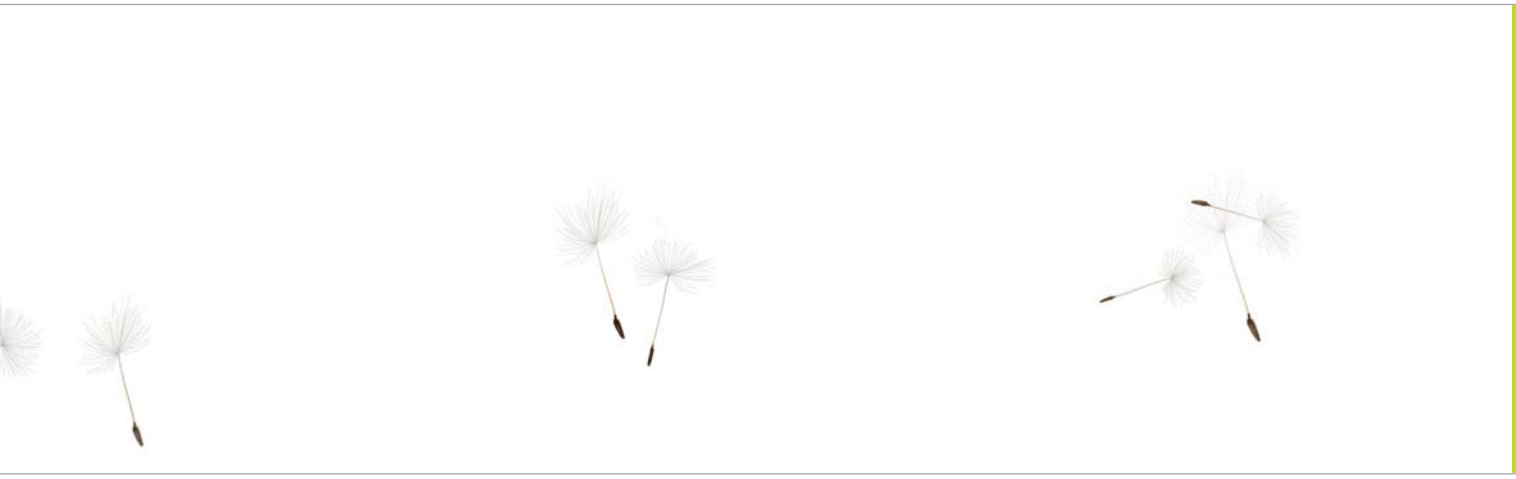
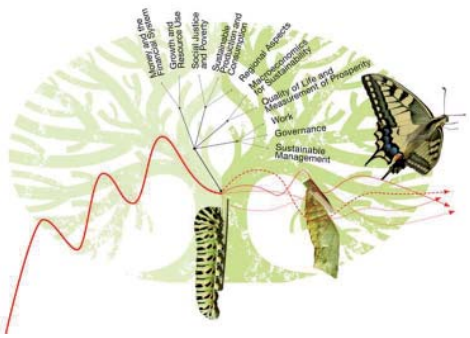


Growth in transition

Approaching the limits of a dogma

The initiative "Growth in Transition" was called into life as a necessary response to the manifest problems the dominating capitalist economic system is increasingly faced with. With our paradigmatic claims of perpetual economic growth we are gradually approaching ecological limits, social abysses and economic identity crises. Making us aware of global reciprocal dependencies and consequently our responsibility, the current financial and economic crisis demonstrates once more that the initiative launched by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management already in 2007 is of an extremely topical nature.



In that year the Sustainable Europe Research Institute (SERI) and Karuna Consult were commissioned to draft a compendium of arguments addressing these problems and exploring the relationship between growth and sustainable development. The answers and results of this stakeholder process were published in the volume titled "Welches Wachstum ist nachhaltig? Ein Argumentarium" ("What Kind of Growth is Sustainable? A Compendium of Arguments") in 2009. After this first message to the public, the first international conference "Growth in Transition" was staged in Vienna in January 2010. More than 600 participants discussed manifold aspects of the subject "growth" during the two-day meeting.

Besides the urgent appeal to make ecological, economic and social processes more sustainable, ÖSTRAT focuses attention also on the participation processes in the framework of the "Growth in Transition" initiative. Apart from the economy, the social partners and non-governmental organisations, the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces also participated in its implementation.

Drawing conclusions from the results of the conference, a series of policy papers is being developed in policy/science/stakeholder dialogues, in which growth-relevant issues are considered in more depth and further developed. On this basis, a second international conference "Growth in Transition" will be held at the end of 2012, to which all interested stakeholders are again warmly invited.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Social capital and social cohesion

Demographic trends such as increasing life expectancy, decreasing birth rates and the fading of traditional family models challenge social cohesion. Against this background social capital developed in manifold social relationships becomes a decisive factor of social stability. It is therefore a primary objective to strengthen collective, civic commitment.

Learning world social capital

From theory **to practice**

Research defines "social capital" as social cohesion within a community ("social glue"). Today this issue has become a top priority in international research (see OECD, WTO) for social capital has been found to be the key to a sustainable development of communities. Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that there are direct links between social capital and economic success, health, education, quality of life and security.

International trends

A decline in social capital may be observed globally. Due to modern lifestyles – busy schedules and time pressure, stress and competition – as well as the huge array of entertainment, there is a general trend towards less willingness to volunteer and to more casual relationships. The consequences of this development are still unforeseeable today. Many people are increasingly affected by involuntary social isolation, while social cohesion is also dwindling. In addition, the demographic development increases the pressure on social capital.

How can social capital be strengthened?

For social capital the quality, rather than the quantity of relationships is essential. A key indicator of quality relationships is mutual confidence. The more trustful the relationships between people (and social networks), the greater the social capital. However, trust cannot be imposed, forced or "made". Trust is, to some extent, a "desired side effect" of successful relationships.

So which concrete measures may be taken to strengthen social capital? Searching for answers to this question, the Office for Future-Related Issues of the Provincial Government of Vorarlberg initiated, supported and evaluated several pilot projects, e.g. the community project "zämma leaba" (meaning "living together" in the dialect of Vorarlberg) or the school project "friends and more".

The LA21 Summit "We – A Luxury in Today's World. What does hold together our society? Sustainability and social capital" held in Vorarlberg in autumn 2010 provided a platform for an intensive exchange of experience. More than 200 participants from all over Austria and the bordering Lake Constance area participated and exchanged views on the "process of learning: social capital". This subject was explored in depth also in cooperation with the Lake Constance Youth Summit in June 2010. In addition, numerous excursions are organised allowing the participants to deepen their knowledge and to gain practical insights.

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Volunteering

Promoting **active citizenship**

Voluntary activities are of great significance in Austria. 43.8 percent of the Austrian population aged 15 years and over, i.e. about three million people, are active on a voluntary basis or in an honorary capacity. The high quality of life in our country may to a large extent be attributed to voluntary activities in a wide range of sectors such as disaster relief and rescue services, social affairs, culture, entertainment, sport, environment, religious communities or neighbourly help. Volunteering has an added value, generates social capital and strengthens social cohesion. Alongside with a successful employment policy and an effective social state with legally guaranteed rights, volunteering is an essential component of our social model.

New types and structures
Studies confirm that people's willingness to volunteer has in general not decreased significantly but that the types, structures and motivation of volunteering are changing. These challenges as well as those arising from demographic change have to be tackled actively. It is therefore indispensable to continue discussing and taking joint and coordinated policy measures to improve the framework for volunteering and to secure a sustainable future for volunteering.

European Year of Volunteering
2011 has been declared the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship by the EU. Its objectives are inter alia to improve the conditions for volunteering and to raise awareness of the great importance of voluntary activities. Thus valuable impetus is provided to achieve more long-term objectives such as securing volunteering and assure quality in volunteering, recognising competence, drawing attention to the significance and value of voluntary activities and cooperation as well as networking.

Europäisches Jahr der Freiwilligentätigkeit 2011

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Sustainability at local and regional level

Processes of self-organisation and participation as well as the establishment of local and regional economic loops are crucial for achieving sustainable development. Agenda21 processes and other participation models have been designed therefore and are ideally suited to create a culture of sustainability. Land-use planning is responsible for sustainable spatial development. Innovative infrastructure and mobility solutions also make vital contributions.

FutureSpace Tyrol

A guideline for **spatial development**

Thanks to the adoption of the land-use plan "ZukunftsRaum Tirol" ("FutureSpace Tyrol") by the Provincial Government of Tyrol in 2007, this Federal Province since then has been able to use a strategic guideline for Tyrol's spatial development, that is fully geared towards achieving sustainability since 2007. At present, the first interim evaluation is being conducted. It will serve as a basis for the revision of the land-use plan to be adopted by the Provincial Government by mid-2011. As sustainability coordination tasks in Tyrol are performed by the body responsible for land-use planning and regional development, the further development of the "FutureSpace Tyrol" may be synchronised optimally with the drafting process of the sustainability strategy for Tyrol.
The land-use plan covers a wide spectrum of issues; e.g. all aspects of the careful use of land as a natural resource, the connection between land-use planning and mobility, the strengthening of (particularly rural) habitats and economic areas as well as intensified cooperation. The results of evaluation have in general been very favourable as about two thirds of the measures planned have been or are being implemented. However, there is still a strong need for action regarding key tasks of land-use planning. Pressing issues are to continue promoting inner urban development, to give greater consideration to the traffic/transport effects of spatial structures as well as to protect and develop unbuilt areas and their functions. These issues will therefore continue to take centre stage in further developing land-use plans.
"FutureSpace Tyrol" was developed in a broad participatory process, involving about 1,200 committed citizens, experts, members of interest groups, representatives of municipalities and public bodies as well as politicians.

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Cross-linked initiatives

Soft mobility in tourism

The Austrian lodging sector reports about 125 million guest nights annually; the average length of stay is about four days. This may be translated into roughly 30 million arrivals and departures, i.e. more than 60 million trips per year. To this figure trips to private accommodation and day trips have to be added. A major part of the holiday trips are made using private cars. Tourist transport therefore has a significant negative impact on the environment. Besides noise, pollutants and CO_2 emissions as well as the accident risks of moving traffic, the space required for parking motor vehicles poses a problem in many tourist destinations.
As a consequence, numerous initiatives advocating "soft mobility" in tourism have been formed in Austria. Some of them have already realised measures successfully that offer tourists attractive ways of travelling without using private cars or airplanes. It is important to provide visitors with comprehensive information before and during their trip, moderately-priced travel

opportunities and luggage transport. Moreover, adequate mobility at their holiday destination (bus and train transport, shared-ride taxi services booked by phone, electric vehicles and bicycles for rent, etc.) has to be ensured.
The aim of the initiative proposed in the framework of ÖSTRAT is to bundle all these programmes, e.g. for joint marketing or projects. After all, improvements in tourist traffic should have maximum beneficial effects on the every-day mobility of the local population. Important implementation partners are the Federal Provinces and municipalities, the Austrian Tourist Board, tourist associations, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, the Alpine Convention, tourist destinations, transport enterprises in Austria and abroad as well as the Austrian Road Safety Board.

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National Parks

Initiatives generating **more synergies**

The uniqueness of the six Austrian national parks is a solid foundation for nature-based and sustainable tourism in Austria. But tourism in national parks is also an important economic factor. Closer cooperation among national parks and with external partners is necessary to succeed in international competition. However, in many cases it is still difficult as the products and target groups are too different.
These are the results of a two-year discussion process initiated in the framework of the task force "Tourism and National Parks" by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth in 2007 with the national park managers, tourist experts, the Austrian Tourist Board and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management. In late 2009 the task force presented its final report, which will have a sustained impact:

- Building on the results of the task force, individual initiatives were launched at the level of the competent mayors. The 33 municipalities of the Hohe Tauern National Park region – comprising several Federal Provinces – founded for example a working community to develop a common tourism marketing concept for the Hohe Tauern National Park in late 2009.
- Together with the Federal Provinces and the different nature conservation NGOs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management developed a new Austrian National Park Strategy, which was presented on 21 June 2010. It focuses on the efficient organisation and coordination of national park management under a common umbrella brand.

The Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth will continue to lend the maximum support possible to close strategic cooperation among all national park partners.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Eco-efficiency and resource management

Decoupling economic growth from use of natural resources is a prerequisite for sustainable development. This approach conflicts, however, with traditional consumption patterns and mobility structures. Qualitative growth therefore requires systemic innovation. Production processes and consumer behaviour have to change. Eco-efficiency may become an important location factor for enterprises. Public procurement plays a crucial role in this process.

Resource Efficiency Action Plan

A guide to **conserving resources**

The Resource Efficiency Action Plan (REAP) is to be developed in a broad dialogue process by mid-2011. Its aim is to define targets concerning the promotion of resource efficiency in Austria and to lay down appropriate lead measures and lead instruments. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management coordinates this process, in which business, research, administration, the Federal Provinces and the civil society are involved.
Hence, the Resource Efficiency Action Plan makes a fundamental contribution to implementing the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development (ÖSTRAT) and, in particular, to the field of action "eco-efficiency and resource management based on sustainable mobility, consumption and production patterns".

An efficient use of natural resources aims at several "win-win targets": a decrease in natural resources used and an increase in resource efficiency reduces environmental burdens, e.g. waste, emissions and ecologically adverse effects. But resource efficiency also benefits the economy. In view of increasing commodity prices, strategies may be developed to ease the financial strain on enterprises and to make room for innovation. In the wake of innovating processes and products as well as opening up new markets, new "green jobs" are created. Last but not least, the careful and efficient use of natural resources enhances the security of supply for present and future generations.

Round table

The development of REAP has been conceived as a dialogue process, in which the involvement of important stakeholders plays a vital role. Several expert workshops have been conducted, where the issues and the content of the Resource Efficiency Action Plan were discussed. The first "Round Table on Resource Efficiency" was organised in autumn 2010 and became a huge success, attracting about 200 participants. The round table will be held annually and serve as a platform for the "Resource Efficiency Network".
The Resource Efficiency Action Plan is a long-term process which will not be concluded with a report but provide important stimuli to improve resource efficiency in Austria during the implementation phase starting in 2011.

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EcoBuy Vienna

Model for **sustainable procurement**

The EU, the Federal Republic of Austria and the Federal Provinces have recognised the importance of public procurement as an instrument to promote resource-efficient economic practices in several strategy papers and plan to take advantage of this potential to a greater extent. The City of Vienna has tackled this subject at an early stage, launching the EcoBuy Vienna (ÖkoKauf Wien) programme already in 1998. It may therefore look back on more than ten years of experience in implementing the programme and has a wealth of material at its disposal. By passing on knowledge and cooperating with other relevant stakeholders, the effectiveness of this approach will be enhanced.

Apart from direct effects reducing the burden on the environment, the significant market power of important consumers like public sector organisations offers great opportunities. The introduction and diffusion of more environment-friendly products and services in the market will be promoted, while groundbreaking innovation will be encouraged.

To achieve that ecological measures are taken into account in procurement and tendering procedures, environment-related catalogues of criteria are prepared and further developed for goods, products and services requested by the Vienna City Administration and affiliated organisations. Due to an ordinance of the Chief Executive Office, they are mandatory for tender procedures and have to be accounted for in the same way as other requirements such as economic efficiency, quality, the protection of workers and fitness for use. Furthermore, relevant text modules for tendering procedures and position papers are drafted, pilot projects are realized, baseline data and evaluation procedures are developed and awareness-raising measures are carried out. International knowledge transfer on sustainable procurement is another priority issue.

The knowledge developed and documented in the context of EcoBuy Vienna does not only serve as a basis for the tender procedures of the City of Vienna but also as guidelines for the public. In addition, the information is made available to consumers in different thematic formats.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Responsible entrepreneurship

The European economic and social model strives to combine efficiency, environmental protection and social balance based on a sustainable market-economy approach. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) stands for the conviction that economic performance and material wealth may be reconciled with high social and ecological standards.

FAIResponsibility

SMEs **report on sustainability**

In the framework of the project "Erfolg mit FAIRantwortung" ("Success with FAIResponsibility"), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of the most diverse sectors prepare CSR (corporate social responsibility) strategies as well as sustainability reports. The aim of the pilot project conducted in Lower Austria between January and October 2010 was to anchor sustainability in enterprises on a long-term basis and consequently promote regional development and competitiveness. In the process of CSR consulting, the 25 enterprises participating in the project made intensive efforts to incorporate social and ecological criteria into their business routines. Benefits range from improved staff motivation and customer loyalty to cost savings resulting from the more careful use of resources.

Entrepreneurs with FAIResponsibility

The initiative "Success with FAIResponsibility" has been realised in four Federal Provinces since 2008. The first sustainability reports have been prepared in Lower Austria. As only about ten reports are published by SMEs every year, Lower Austria plays a pioneering role.

The success of the pilot project convinced Lower Austria of the need to continue providing smaller enterprises with an opportunity to explore "CSR" on a strategic level. Therefore 15 companies will be supported by professional consultants in preparing sustainability reports in the current year.

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WIN

Support on the **path to sustainability**

Today enterprises operate under difficult conditions. Increasing energy prices, globalisation, demographic change and many other factors lead to radically changed markets and increased competitive pressure. To succeed on a long-term basis, enterprises should not only take into account factors determining economic success but also think innovatively and assume their ecological and social responsibility.

Styrian enterprises receive ongoing support under the "WIN- Business Initiative Sustainability" on their path to a "sustainable future". The Business Initiative Sustainability is one out of currently eight "regional programmes for corporate environmental protection" in Austria. Despite different organisational structures and funding schemes, these regional programmes pursue a common objective. By offering them subsidised consulting services, Austrian enterprises are to be encouraged to adopt responsible and fair attitudes towards all their

target groups and the natural environment.
The consulting projects focus on a wide range of measures that can be implemented quickly, e.g. to save energy, to boost energy efficiency, to introduce environmental management systems or to support sustainable corporate strategies developed on a participatory basis. Enterprises that deal in this proactive way with future trends

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and are aware of their responsibility vis-à-vis the environment and society create added value – for themselves and future generations.

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Masterplan green jobs

Employment through **environmental protection**

In October 2010 Federal Minister Niki Berlakovich presented the "Masterplan green jobs". It sets forth the Austrian strategy for maximising environment-relevant employment effects, which were defined in cooperation with numerous experts from ministries, interest groups and public bodies.
In accordance with the EU-wide definition, "green jobs" are jobs in sectors producing goods and technologies as well as providing services whose primary purpose is to protect the environment and to conserve natural resources.
"Green jobs" are crisis-proof jobs that do not only pursue the goal of boosting added value and wealth but also make a sustainable contribution to preserving and conserving eco-systems. At present there are about 200,000 "green jobs" countrywide. In Austria every tenth euro is already earned through environment-related activities.
A survey of the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria) demonstrates that investments in the environmental industry have far-reaching effects. While the number of gainfully employed persons in the Austrian economy as a whole dropped by 0.6 percent during the economic crisis, an upward trend was observed in the environmental sector. Green employment rose by 3.7% from 2008 to 2009.
Initiatives in the area of "energy resources management" have had a particularly strong impact on the development of the environmental sector and its number of employees. Between 2008 and 2009 the sector of "renewable energies" reported an increase by nine percent. Measures promoting Austria's energy independence could therefore trigger positive and promising employment effects.

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Field of action

Education, communication and research

Education based on humanistic ideals as well as on critical reflection on the social framework is a prerequisite for sustainable development. However, it also requires communication work to raise awareness of the impact of lifestyles and consumption patterns. In addition, publicly funded research is a key driving force for innovations towards sustainable economic development.

Eco-footprint

Measuring lifestyles

We are constantly confronted with the concept "sustainability" – but what does sustainability actually mean to the individual? The ecological footprint is a scientific method used to illustrate interdependence in a simple way and to allow individuals to examine the future viability of their lifestyles. Everyone may calculate his/her ecological footprint based on the individual lifestyle and consider measures to reduce it – without losing joy or fun in life. The aim of the eco-footprint initiative is to sensitise people to future issues and to encourage them to take responsible action vis-à-vis the environment and the people.
The Ecological Footprint Calculator was made available on the Internet based on an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the Footprint Platform. The Robert Jungk Library for Issues of the Future was commissioned by the Salzburg Sustainability Coordinating Body to develop relevant material. Styria adapted it at low cost and further developed it to

suit its regional needs. Tight networks of the stakeholders in the Federal Provinces ensured that the information on eco-footprints was disseminated fast and comprehensively. Within a very short time, "eco-footprint experts" were trained in the Federal Provinces. They are available for lectures and events in schools, municipalities and companies. In this way it became possible to address and inform more than 50,000 people.

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proVISION

Research basis for sustainable development

proVISION is a research programme of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. Its aim is to implement the Austrian strategy "Research for Sustainable Development" ("Forschung für nachhaltige Entwicklung/FORNE"). proVISION focuses on the relationships between climate change, spatial development and quality of life. Complementing other sustainability research programmes, it turns the spotlight on the ecological and social sphere, i.e. the interdependence of society and nature. proVISION requires interdisciplinarity on the one hand and intensive collaboration with the people in the region on the other hand. For research in this area sensitive use of the appropriate language is crucial to reach the people.
By involving all relevant universities and research institutions, proVISION created a critical mass of interdisciplinary sustainability research oriented towards fundamental principles. This also has made it possible to institutionalise sustainability research at university level. The "Doctoral College for Sustaina-

ble Development" ("Doktoratskolleg nachhaltige Entwicklung"/DoknE) at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences sets an excellent example in this respect. To date, this Ph.D. programme has resulted in more than 400 publications and activities for the research community as well as in about 170 publications and activities (events, workshops, contributions to radio and TV reports, etc.) for the practice.
A travelling exhibition titled "proVISION on the road" toured Austria from March 2008 to May 2009.

The aim of this exhibition was to communicate the content of the research projects in a "knowledge box" to the public by using interactive media (video and audio clips, slide shows, logs).

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Sustainability Award

Exemplary transmitters of values

As educational facilities training future decision-makers, universities and other institutions of higher learning assume great responsibility to achieve the goal of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), namely to integrate and embed sustainable development into all national education programmes. The aim of the Sustainability Award is to establish networks among stakeholders (who are often isolated) paving the way for sustainable development through their initiatives and to present them to other institutions as inspiring role models.

The different institutions of the university sector do not only stand for research and teaching of environment-relevant knowledge but often also act as transmitters of social standards and values. Tasks in the area of environmental management and environmental protection have become in integral part of everyday routines, while challenges concerning the social dimension of sustainable development require additional innovative approaches and broader attention. The reconciliation of work and private life, gender aspects but also healthy nutrition and preventive health care are issues which may be explored and tested in different models by the universities.
Education for sustainable development helps people to recognise interdependence, to anticipate developments, to think beyond the boundaries of disciplines and sectors as well as to engage in independent, responsible action and intercultural interaction. Thus it creates the ideal conditions for success in the flourishing green economy.

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Field of action

Good governance

Social discussion and negotiation processes are important to reconcile economic, social and ecological concerns. Good governance means that these processes are organised on the basis of high-quality cooperation between the state and the civil society. To this end it is necessary to establish new forms of participatory democracy and resilient social institutions as well as to further develop quality assurance instruments.

Agenda 21

A network of **landing sites for sustainability**

According to the sustainability programmes of the UN, the EU, the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces, the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) is the key instrument to implement sustainable development at municipal and regional level. Across Austria there are already 430 Agenda 21 municipalities and 35 Agenda 21 regions. More than 30,000 citizens have participated actively, and approximately 3,000 projects to implement Agenda 21 have been called into life. LA21 represents a network of "landing sites for sustainability" where the objectives and principles of overarching programmes become concrete and viable.
Constant improvements of the quality of LA21 processes play a key role. The working group "DNS LA21" of the sustainability coordinators developed basic qualities for local and regional Agenda 21 processes in Austria in the following three areas:
1. Basic qualities of process flow (adoption, broad participation, mission, realisation, evaluation of results, networking)
2. Basic qualities of participation (active involvement in planning and developing)
3. Programmatic basic qualities (social, economic and ecological sustainability goals)
These qualities have been mandatory in all processes launched as from 2009. They are evaluated and documented by the competent bodies of the Federal Provinces together with the municipalities, districts and regions. The following goals are to be achieved:

- Long-term stabilisation of LA 21 processes,
- Closer alignment of content with the principles and goals of sustainable development,
- Transparency of success factors for local decision-makers and process facilitators,
- Clearer differentiation between LA21 and other instruments of municipal and regional development.

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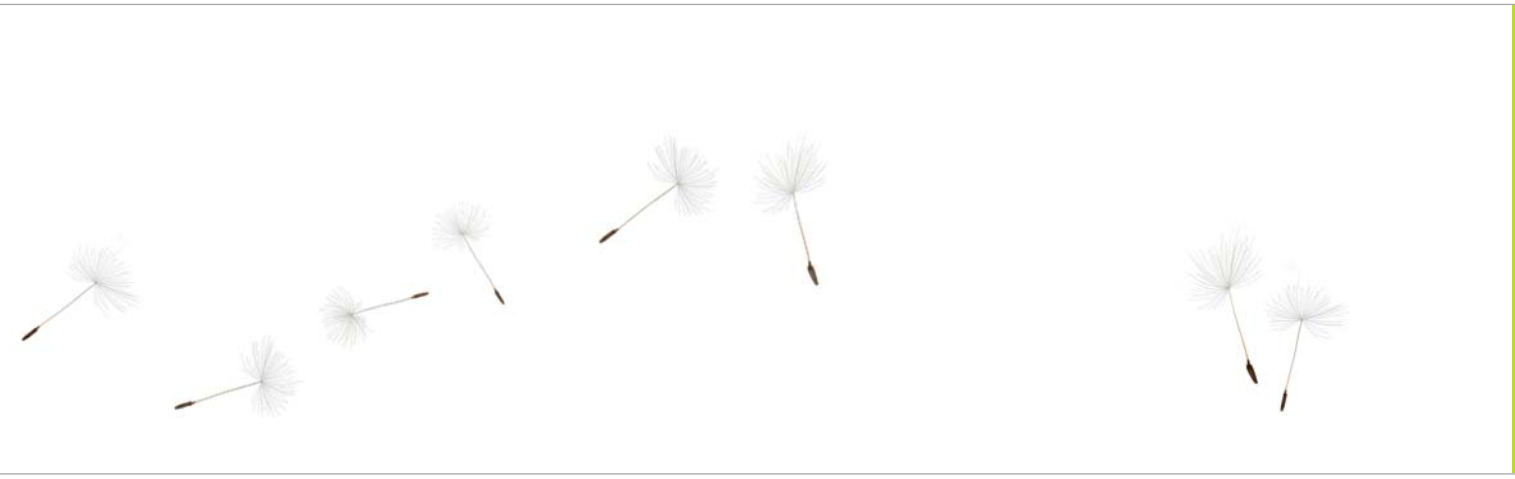
Revamping policies

Stronger involvement of the public

In the past three years, the so-called "Standards of Public Participation" have encouraged and motivated administrative staff to involve the public to the extent possible in preparing plans, programmes and legal acts. This has been the outcome of a project promoting public involvement. It was launched in the Austrian Federal Administration in 2005 by taking concrete measures. Led by the Federal Chancellery and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, a process was started to ensure the formal introduction of these standards.
In a multi-stage process, in which the ministries were involved, a first joint draft of the standards was prepared. It was submitted for review, comments and observations to important representatives of local authorities, the social partners and different NGOs. The great number of remarks and comments received showed a lively interest in



this subject. In summer 2007 the "Standards of Public Participation" were adopted by way of a motion to the Council of Ministers.
Besides the Standards of Public Participation, a Guide for the Practice of Public Participation has also been completed under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Its aim is to provide the necessary information, tips and tools for implementing participatory processes. The printed Guide will become available by mid-2011.
These ways of disseminating information are to be complemented by a specific tool on the Internet platform www.help.gv.at, which will allow citizens to join participatory processes with a mouse click. An interministerial working group on public participation in Federal Government activities will be set up still during the current year.

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Measuring sustainability

New tools for planning and evaluation

Most Federal Provinces have explored the subject "examining and evaluating sustainability" for many years. In the framework of ÖSTRAT, the partners intensified their exchange of concrete experience gained in developing and applying various tools. Key challenges and approaches to solutions were identified in a workshop attended by representatives of the Federal Provinces.
It is important to assess long-term effects of projects already during the development and planning stages. This makes it possible to prepare recommendations for improvements in the area of sustainable development and to provide well-aimed and efficient support during the implementation of measures. A learning-oriented and activity-based approach has been applied in Vorarlberg since 2001. Experience has been pooled in the Office for Future-Related Issues of the Provincial Government of Vorarlberg and, since 2005, in the non-profit organisation Kairos GmbH. On this basis, tools were developed and also applied which may serve as examples for ÖSTRAT. Tools are in place at a superior level (the instrument "Projekt Check"), at provincial level ("Verwaltung hoch4") as well as the level of different regional planning communities and municipalities (e.g. "ProjektDialog").
Key challenges are posed by questions such as: how to integrate sustainability instruments into the work and development of administration, how to gain acceptance by those responsible for implementation, how to achieve political mandates, credibility and self-responsibility. In this context, it is decisive to consider sustainability an executive task as well as a great opportunity. Sustainability coordinators act as guardians and developers of a process of finding answers and establishing contacts between the stakeholders and those in power.

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östrat-initiatives

Field of action

Health, prevention and ageing

Life expectancy is increasing, the share of older people in need of support and care is growing. In parallel, physical and mental pressure at work is rising. A sustainable healthcare sector guaranteeing a high quality of life has to respond to these phenomena. Therefore efforts have to concentrate on health-promoting, gender/age-appropriate work environments and on strengthening preventive measures.

Quality of life in old age

Certificate for exemplary nursing homes

The National Quality Certificate (Nationales Qualitätszertifikat/NQZ) stands for a countrywide uniform and sector-specific procedure in which the quality of residences for the elderly and nursing homes is assessed objectively by external experts. The NQZ may be awarded to homes which do not only meet legal requirements but also implement comprehensive measures to ensure the best quality of life for the individual resident. Objectives are for example to make quality visible, to prevent a proliferation of "quality seals" and in particular to provide an incentive for a sustainable sector-wide further development of quality.

Changing demands

In Austria about 70,000 people live in residences for the elderly and nursing homes. As society is changing, quality awareness and the expectations of the residents and their families also change. At the same time, conceptual developments in nursing care for the elderly have led to a new interpretation of "quality" by these homes. Besides structural quality, the quality of processes and results is gaining in importance.

The NQZ is developed by a working group set up by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Federation of Austrian Residences for the Elderly and Nursing Homes (Bundesverband der Alten- und Pflegeheime Österreichs), in which all the Federal Provinces and leading experts in quality management and work with the elderly are represented. Certification is conducted by independent, specially trained certification officers experienced in this sector using uniform certification instruments. The certification process is subject to generally accepted international standards.

Widening the scope of the model

In a pilot phase, which took place from 2008 to 2009, 14 pilot residences all over Austria (which had been proposed by the federal Provinces) were subject to certification audits. In 2010 the scope of the National Quality Certificate model was widened to embrace geriatric residences and homes offering hospice and palliative care as standard services. AG NQZ is developing an implementation strategy for standard operations. In the transition phase (2010–2012) the current certification procedure will be continued in coordination with the Federal Provinces. The costs are shared between the Federal Government and the Federal Provinces.

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A right to rehabilitation

Longer and healthier working lives

Like all modern societies, Austria is confronted with demographic ageing. Decreasing birth rates and the continuously increasing life expectancy lead to a long-term ageing of society. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the actual retirement age remains considerably below the standard retirement age even though early retirement schemes are being phased out. The pension system is approaching the limits of its financial viability. Therefore the aim is to keep healthy people longer in their jobs. Measures have to be taken to preserve their capacity for work and to prevent them from ending their careers for health reasons.

Restructuring the invalidity pension system

A prerequisite therefore is an amendment of the invalidity pension law. The government programme for the 23rd legislative term had already enshrined the establishment of a working group consisting of representatives of the social partners and the government as well as other experts. The importance of taking measures to prevent invalidity was emphasised in expert talks.

Taking account of the results and recommendations of these meetings, the government programme for the 24th legislative period (starting on 28 October 2008) laid down that the respective organisational law, the law on preventive health care and the invalidity law had to be amended. The reforms focused on intensifying and modernising occupational rehabilitation to enable people to (re-)gain their capacity for work. By adopting the Budget Accompanying Act 2011, which entered into force on 1 January 2011, the Federal Government realised its goal of amending the invalidity pension law.

Rehabilitation before retirement

To translate the idea "rehabilitation before retirement" into practice, a legal entitlement to rehabilitation was introduced (provided that compliance with the invalidity pension requirements is at least probable in the respective case). The aim of this concept is to ensure longer and healthier working lives. Thanks to a complementary measure to prevent undue hardship, people with severe health impairments aged 50 plus will benefit from qualified protection.

Even though the Federal Government set itself the target of reducing invalidity pensions on a long-term basis by taking more effective preventive measures and adhering to the principle "rehabilitation before retirement", it does not want to prevent persons with health impairments from retiring but strives to protect people against developing severe health problems. Ultimately, the opportunity to enjoy longer and healthier working lives also means a substantial increase in quality of life.

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