

# **CULTURE, SOCIETY & POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES- IRE214**

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**Fall 2019**

**Session 7: Introduction to Austria**

# Introduction to Austria

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- **General information**
- **Conceptualizing Austria**
- **Austrian Politics**



# The Republic of Austria



- **Landlocked** country in **Central Europe**
- **Bordered** by the Czech Republic and Germany (north), Slovakia and Hungary (east), Slovenia and Italy (south), and Switzerland and Liechtenstein (west)
- **83.87 sqkm** (4 times smaller than Germany)



# The Republic of Austria



- The name 'Austria' is Germanic in origin
  - **Austriaca** => 'Eastern Borderland' + Latinised form of the Old High German name for the country, 'Ostarreich' (eastern kingdom)
  - Modern German => Österreich
- One of the **wealthiest countries** in the world
  - Nominal per capita GDP of \$51,511 (Dec 2018), slightly higher than Germany (€ 37,370, Poland 15,424, Switzerland +82k)
  - High standard of living

# The Republic of Austria



- Austria is a **Parliamentary Representative Democracy**
- Heavily **dominated by its capital**, Vienna
  - Largest city (population exceeding 1.9 million)
- Large Urban centers (>100k): Graz (439k), Linz (203k), Salzburg (152k), Innsbruck (308k)
- **The Welfare State** => Austria provides a **comprehensive** system of social **security** and **welfare** schemes
  - **Insurance**, provides cover for all employed persons in cases of sickness, accident, unemployment, parental leave
  - **Public welfare benefits** to citizens in need, not covered by the insurance system

# The Republic of Austria



- Following the **rejection of nuclear power** by Austrian voters in a referendum (1978), Austria renounced the use of nuclear energy => a **nonnuclear country**
- Austria is advocating the creation of a **nonnuclear Central Europe**
- At the international level, Austria strongly supports **strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency** as a **control instrument**



# The Republic of Austria



## Population =>

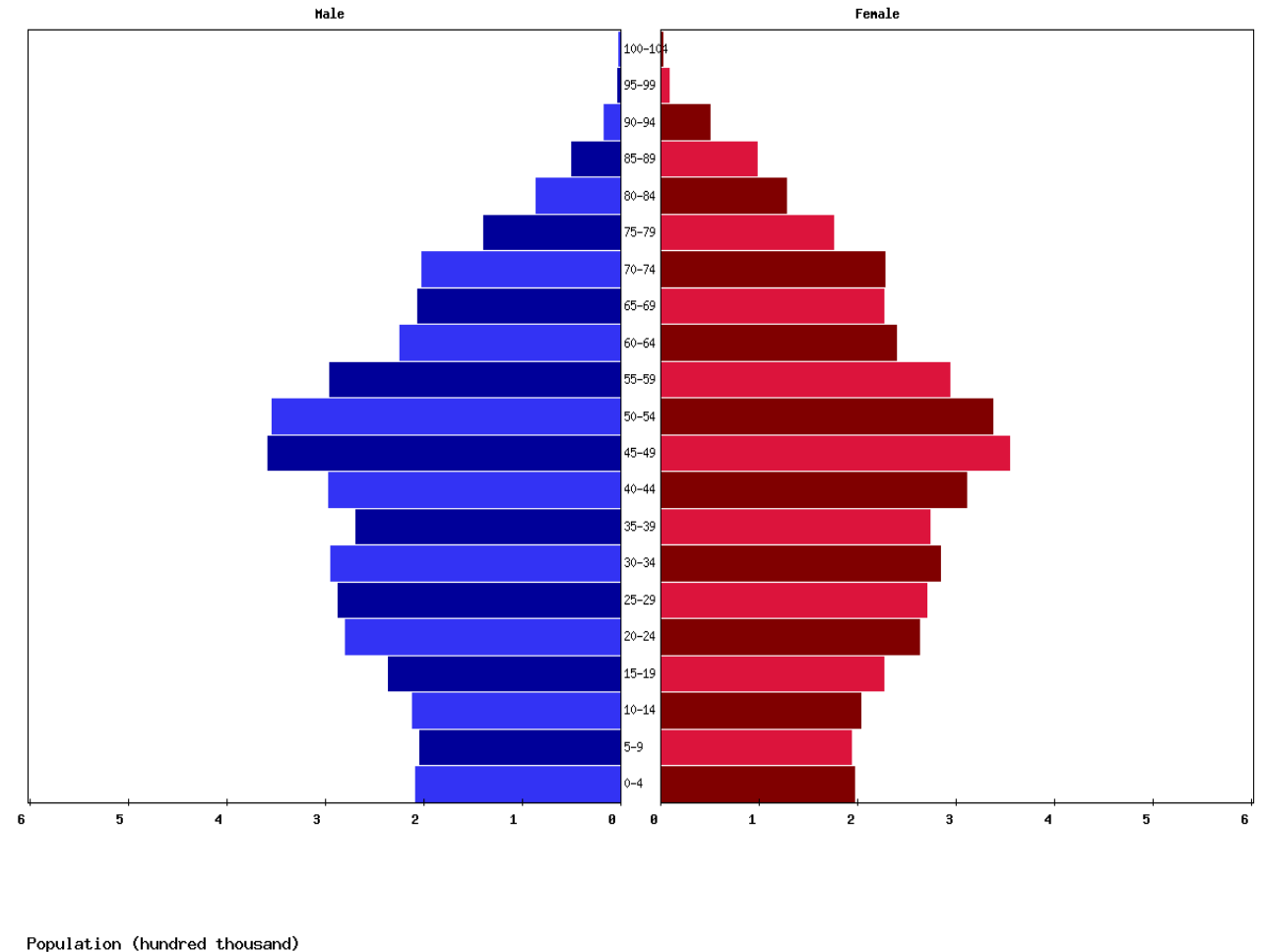
- Approximately 8.82 (2018) million inhabitants
- Most of the population speaks **German**, which is also the country's **official language**. Other local official languages are Croatian, Hungarian and Slovene
- **Population growth** mainly due to a positive net migration (balance of immigration and emigration), but regional difference exist:
  - In **Vienna**, large population increase nearly exclusively a result of **net-migration gains** (prime destination for international immigration)
  - **Low immigration** and **higher natural population** increase in **Vorarlberg**

# The Republic of Austria



## Population =>

- **Low fertility rate** (1.53 children per woman), well below the “replacement level” of approx. 2 children per woman
  - Ever rising age at childbirth (>30)
  - **Population growth** is mainly attributed to gains from international **migration**
- Life expectancy Men >79, women of >84





# The Republic of Austria



## Population Trends =>

- **Aging population:** The proportion of the elderly population will grow from 18.6% in 2017 to 28.1% by 2060
- Continuing **growth** of the Austrian population with a **foreign background** due to **migration**
  - Foreign born population: 19% in 2017, expected 25% in 2060)
- **Diverse regional development:** Vienna will see the highest growth during the next decade (+18%)
- **Population** will increase to **9.43 million** (+9%) until 2030

# The Republic of Austria



## Religion =>

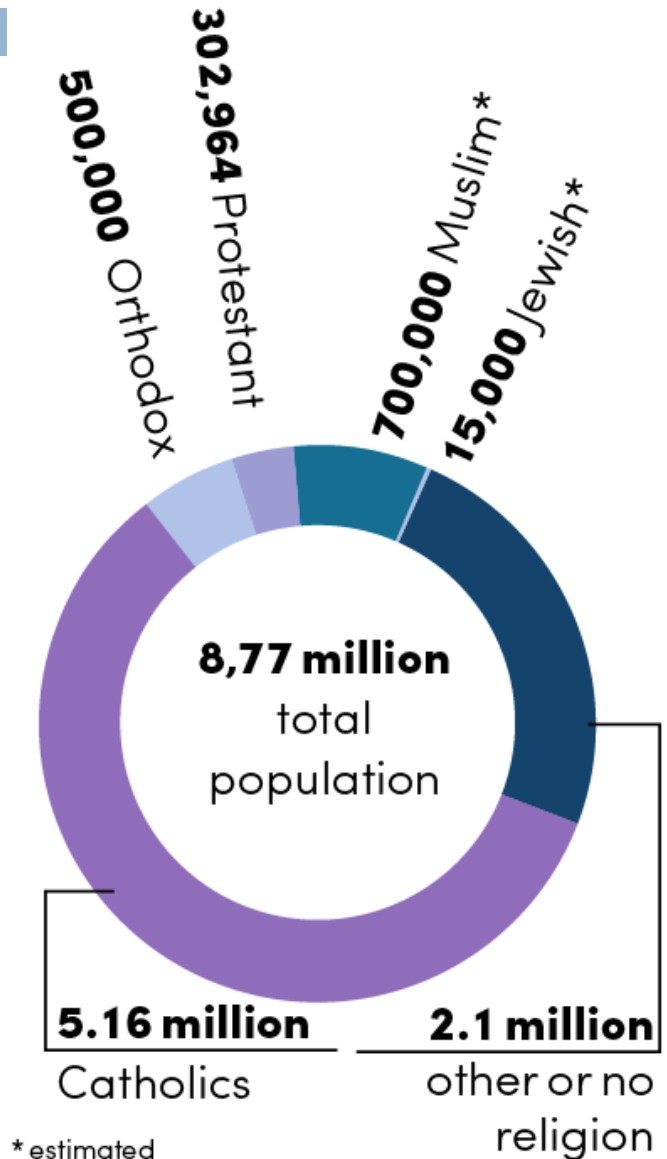
- **Freedom of religion** is a **statutorily guaranteed right** in Austria
- State and church are independent from one another
- Statutory enactments regulate the state's relationship with:
  - The **Catholic church** (the Concordat of 1933)
  - The **Protestant Church** (the Protestantengesetz of 1961)
  - The **Orthodox Church** (the Orthodoxengesetz of 1967)
  - The **Jewish Religious Association** (the Israelitengesetz of 1890)
  - The **Islamic Religious Community** (the Islamgesetz of 1912)
  - **Buddhism** was legally recognized as a religion in Austria (1983)

# The Republic of Austria



## Religion =>

- At the end of the 20th century, about **74%** of Austria's population were registered as **Catholic**,
  - **Catholicism** has **gradually declined** in Austria over the past decades
- In 1938, over 200k **Jews** lived in **Vienna**, reduced to 4,500 after WW2, app. 65k Jewish Austrians killed in the **Holocaust** and 130k **emigrating**
  - Majority **current Jewish** population are post-war immigrants (from eastern Europe & central Asia)



# The Republic of Austria



## Ethnic groups =>

- The **Austrian Federal Constitution** calls for the **respect** and **promotion** of **ethnic groups** resident in Austria. According to the 'Ethnic Group Act' (1976), special rights are given to:
  - Croatian (over 30k)
  - Slovenian (about 40k)
  - Hungarian, Czech and Slovak ethnic groups and for Roma
- The rights of Croatian and Slovenian are also set forth in the State Treaty of Vienna (1955)

# The Republic of Austria



## Nature =>

- One of Europe's most **water-wealthy** countries (average annual precipitation of 1,100mm)
- **Forestry** and the **timber industry** are **important economic factors**
- Almost **half** of Austria's federal territory is covered by **forests**
  - Most are **privately owned** and represents an important source of income for many agricultural holdings
- Austria's **terrain** is highly **mountainous** due to the presence of the **Alps**



# The Republic of Austria



## Environmental Protection =>

- Austria is one of the **leading** countries in **Europe** in the field of **environmental policy**
  - The **standards** in force in Austria are very **stringent** by **European comparison** (concerning **waste management, chemicals** or air pollution)
  - **Ecological criteria** have increasingly been taken into account in **agriculture** (strict regulations for the use of **pesticides** and **fertilizers**)
- **High quality Water** of Austria's lakes

# The Republic of Austria



## Languages =>

- **Main native language** outside Vorarlberg is **Austro-Bavarian**, which is spoken using many different dialects
  - **Northern parts** of Austria (including Vienna): Central **Austro-Bavarian dialects**, **southern parts: Southern Austro-Bavarian dialects**
  - **Austro-Bavarian differs heavily from high German**, making it hard for German speakers of different regions to understand the native population
- **Alemannic** is spoken in **Vorarlberg**, same dialect group as in Northern **Switzerland** and parts of southern Alsace, France

# The Republic of Austria



## Languages =>

- **Minority languages** with official status:
  - **Serbian:** The largest minority language, spoken by 2.4% of Austrians
  - **Turkish:** Second largest, spoken by some 2.3% of the population
  - **Burgenland Croatian:** An official language in Burgenland, spoken by 2.5% of Austrians
  - **Slovene:** an official language in Carinthia, spoken by 0.3% of Austrians
- Traditionally held an important position in Austria (Austria-Hungary), **Hungarian** is currently spoken by .05% of the Austrian population



# The Republic of Austria

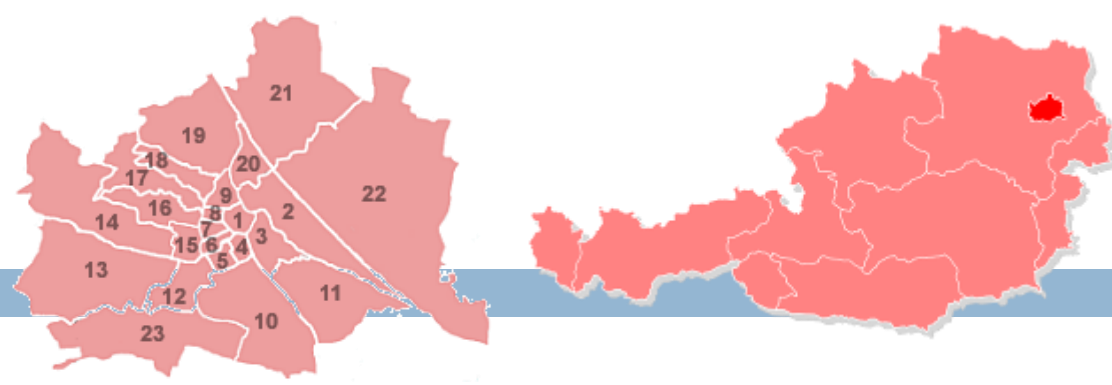


- As a **federal republic**, Austria is comprised of **9 independent federal states/provinces**:

- Vienna (Wien)
- Burgenland
- Lower Austria (Niederösterreich)
- Upper Austria (Oberösterreich)
- Styria (Steiermark)
- Salzburg
- Carinthia (Kärnten)
- Tyrol (Tirol)
- Vorarlberg



# Vienna

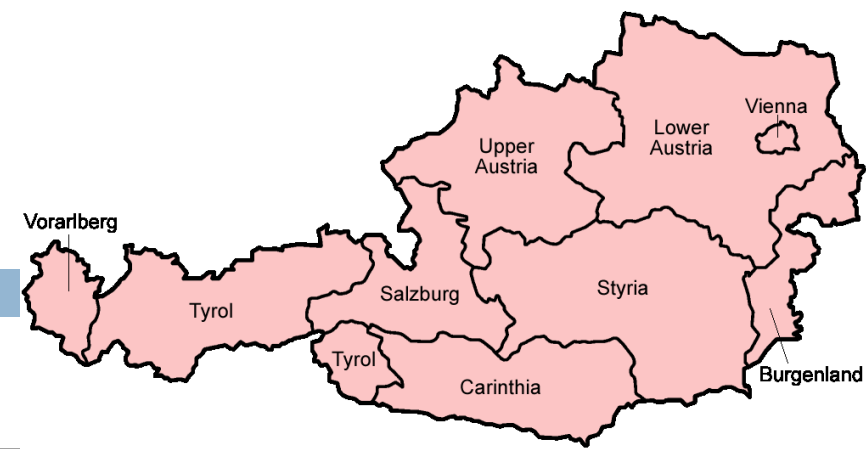


- **Capital** of Austria and a **federal state**
- Located in the north-east of Austria
  - Surrounding province: Lower Austria
  - Borders the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary
  - Divided into 23 districts
- Famous for its **architecture** (e.g., palaces) and **music, International institutions**, etc.

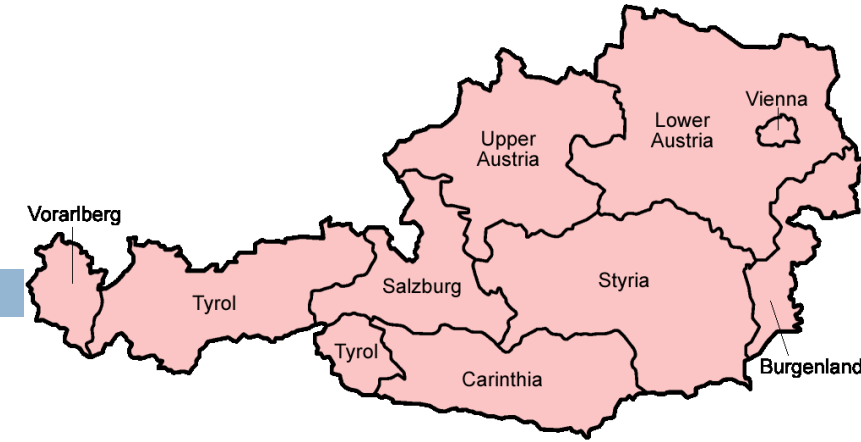


# Burgenland

- **Eastern federal state**
  - Neighbouring federal states: Lower Austria, Styria
  - Neighbouring states: Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia
- Capital: **Eisenstadt**
- 7 districts, 3,966 km<sup>2</sup> , 292k residents
- Important wine growing area



# Lower Austria



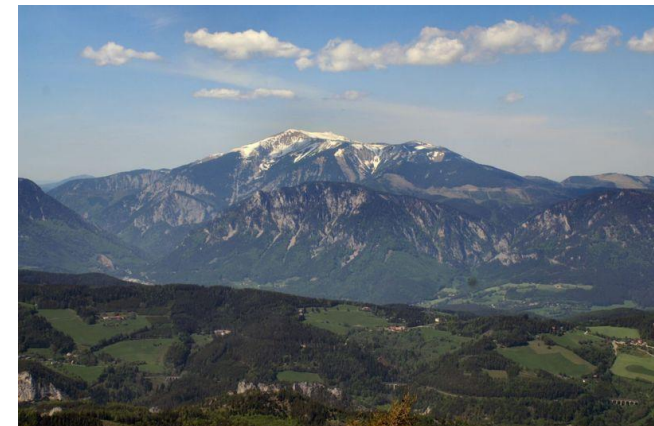
- Located in the north-east of Austria, 19,186 km<sup>2</sup>
  - Neighbouring provinces: Upper Austria, Styria, Burgenland
  - Neighbouring states: Slovakia, Czech Republic

■ Austria's **largest federal state**

■ Capital: **St. Pölten**

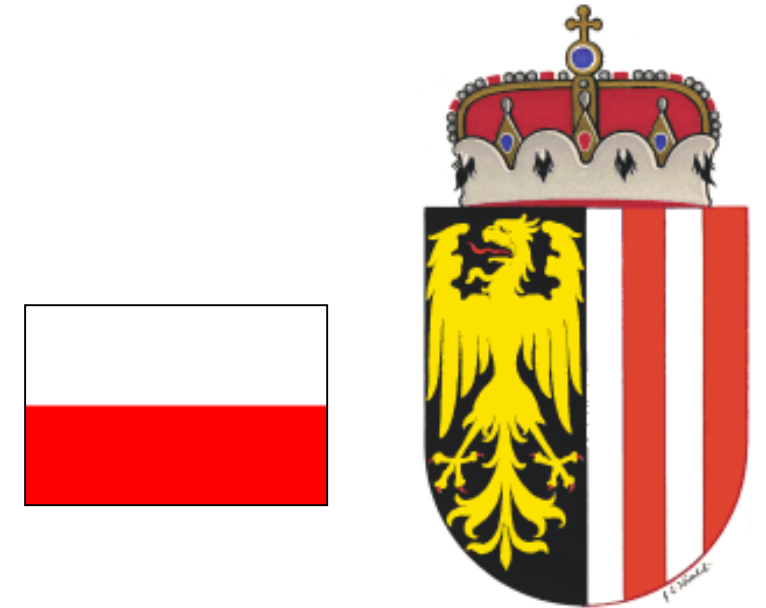
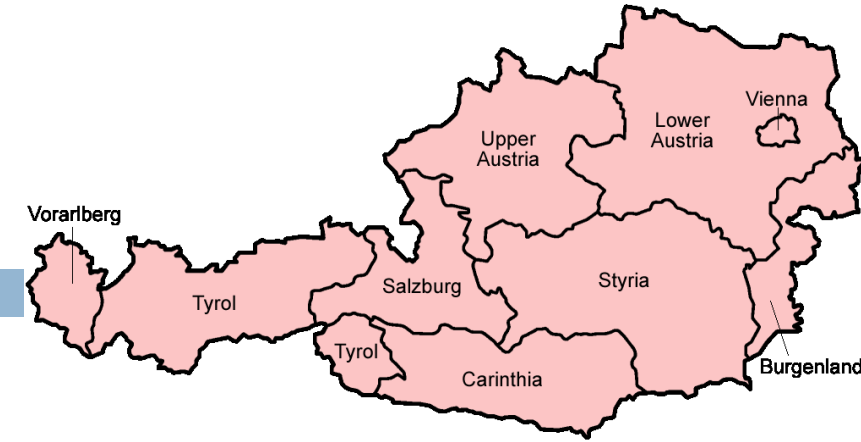
- 1.67 million residents (2<sup>nd</sup> most densely populated state), divided to 4 districts ("Viertel")
  - Weinviertel, Waldviertel, Mostviertel, Industrieviertel

■ Highest mountain: **Schneeberg, 2076m**

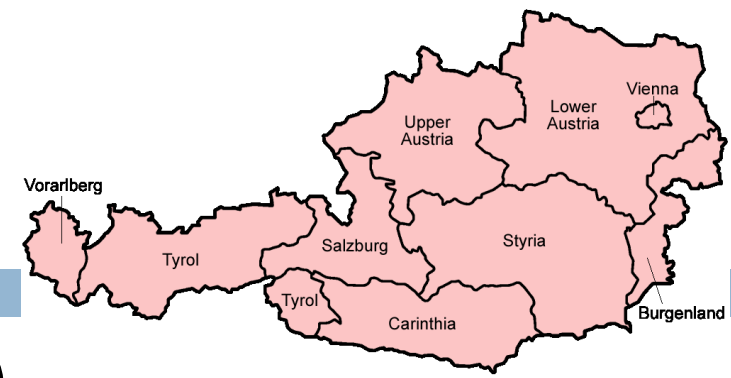


# Upper Austria

- **Fourth-largest** federal state (area), third (population)
  - Neighbouring provinces: Lower Austria, Styria, Salzburg
  - Neighbouring states: Czech Republic, Germany
- 11.981 km<sup>2</sup>, 1.47 million people
- Capital: **Linz**
- **Linzer Torte**: said to be the oldest cake in the world (1653), traditionally eaten during Christmas (there is also a cookie version)



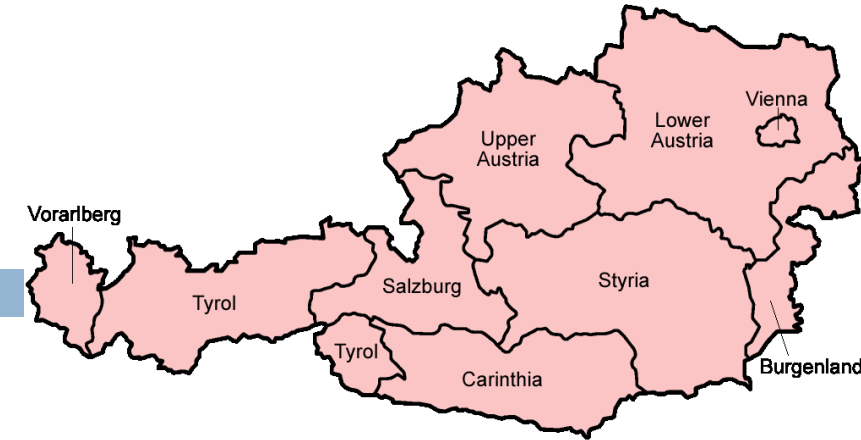
# Styria



- **Second largest** Austrian federal state (area covered)
  - Neighbouring federal states: Burgenland, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Carinthia
  - Neighbouring states: Slovenia
- 16.391 km<sup>2</sup>, 1.21 million residents
- Capital: **Graz** (second largest city in Austria), Arnold Schwarzenegger
- “*The green heart of Austria*” (61% of it are covered by forests, fruit gardens, vineyards and grasslands)



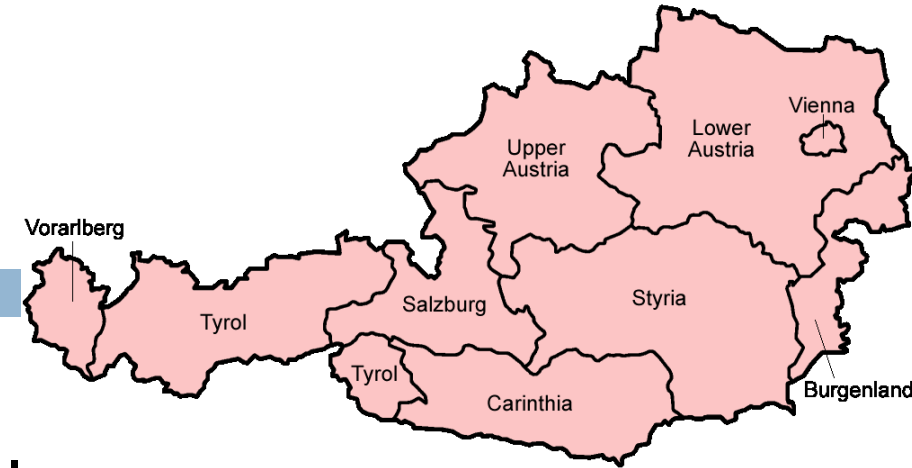
# Salzburg



- 7.154 km<sup>2</sup>, 552k residents
  - Neighbouring federal states: Upper Austria, Styria, Carinthia and Tyrol
  - Neighbouring states: Germany
- Divided into five regions, called “Gau”
- Capital: **Salzburg** (152k)
- Best known for its various music festivals + Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



# Carinthia



- Most **southern** Austrian federal state
  - Neighbouring provinces: Styria, Salzburg, Tyrol
  - Neighbouring states: Slovenia, Italy
- Capital => **Klagenfurt** (100k)
- 9,535 km<sup>2</sup>, >560k residents, 8 districts
- Known for its chemical, mechanical engineering & electrical industries
- Shares **Großglockner**, (the highest mountain) with Tyrol





# Tyrol

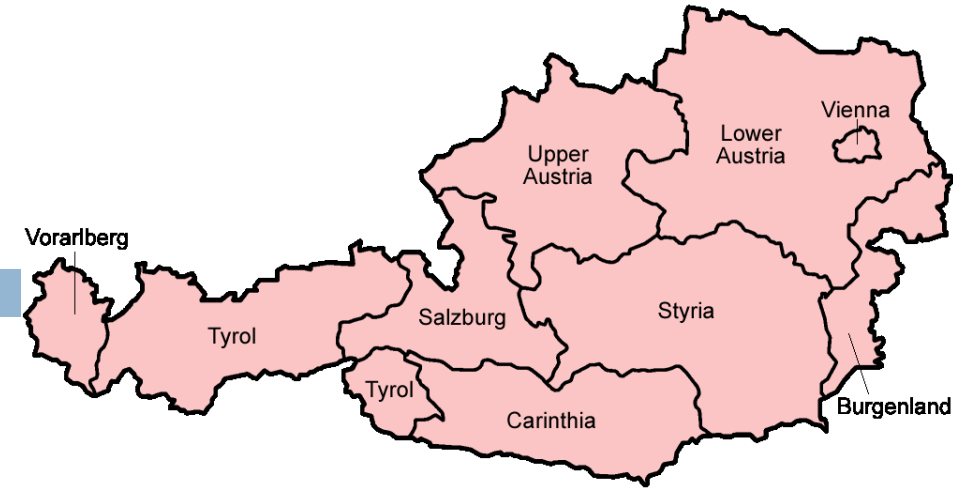
- 12,647 km<sup>2</sup>, 750k residents

- Neighbouring federal states: Salzburg, Vorarlberg
- Neighbouring states: Germany, Italy, Switzerland

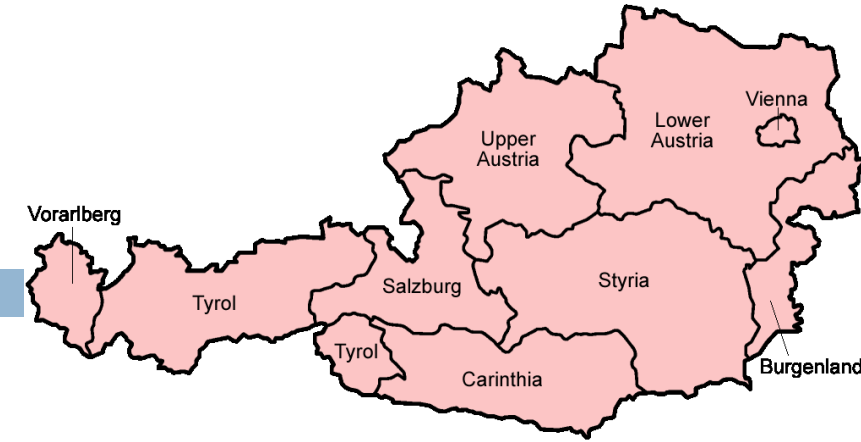
- Capital: **Innsbruck**

- Dominated by the Alps' peaks

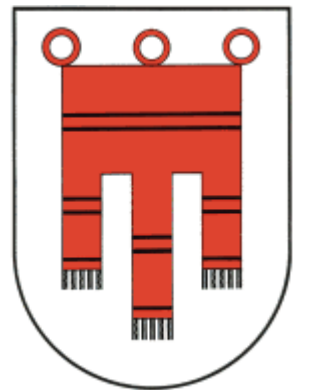
- Known for its ski resorts



# Vorarlberg



- Most Western, **second smallest** federal state
- 2.601 km<sup>2</sup>, 370.000 residents, 6 regions
  - Neighbouring federal state: Tyrol
  - Neighbouring states: Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein
- Capital: **Bregenz**
- Lake Constance (Bodensee) is one of the biggest **lakes** in Europe, connects Germany, Switzerland, Austria

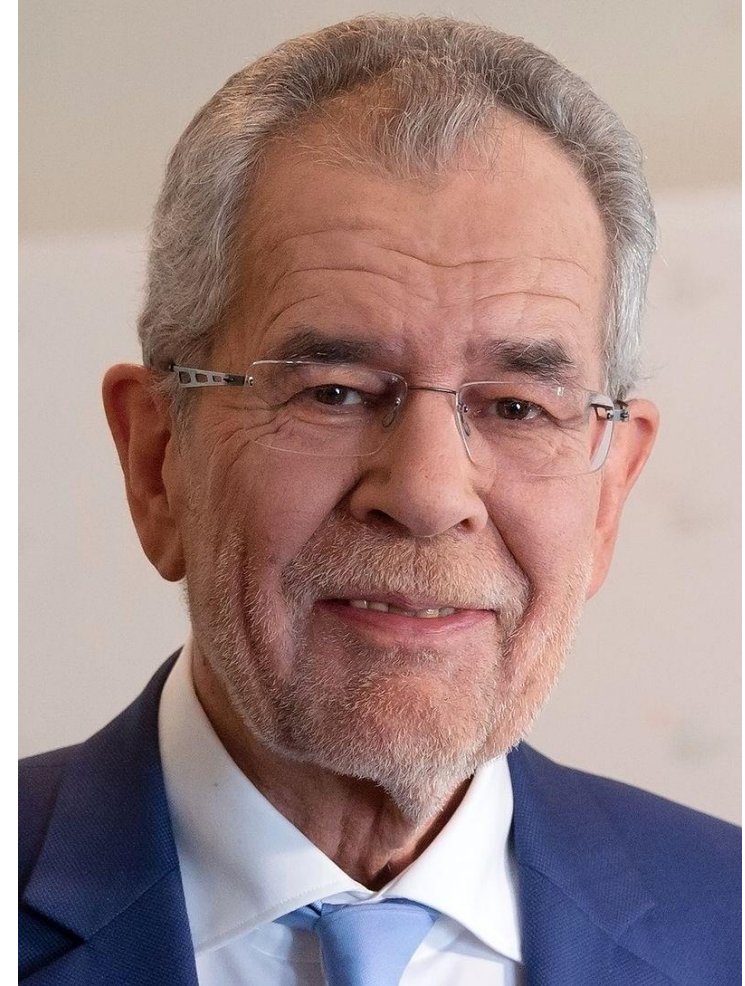


# Political Leaders



## President: Alexander van der Bellen

- **Green Party**
- largely a **ceremonial** post
- Elected in the December 2016, defeating Norbert Hofer of the far-right Freedom Party
  - Initial run => A narrow victory, highly polarized election annulled due to vote-counting irregularities

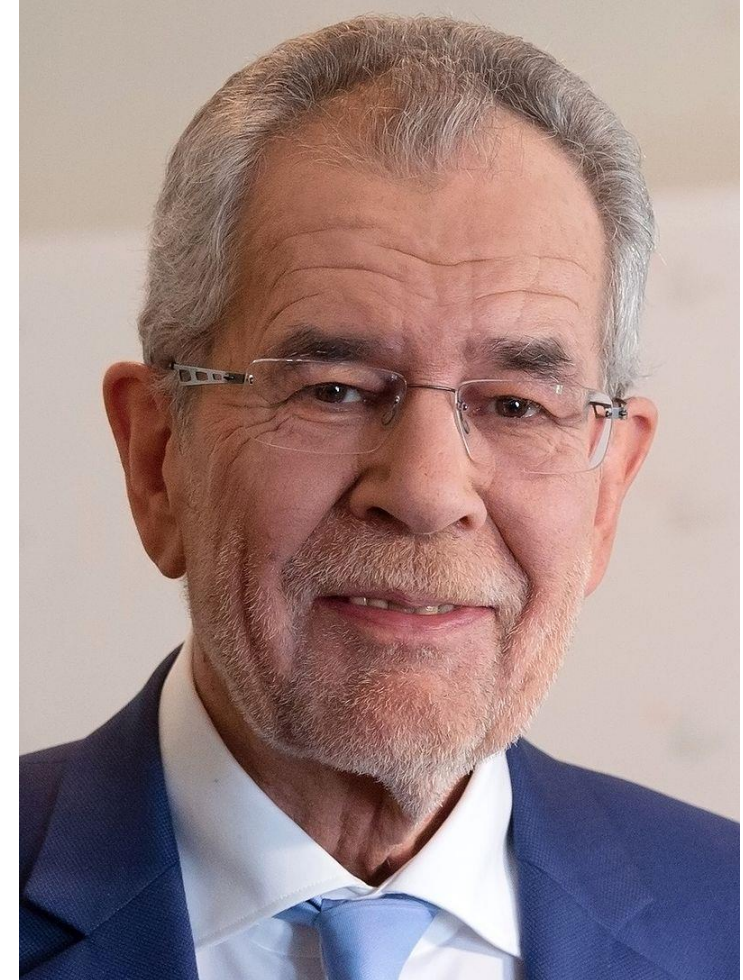


# Political Leaders



## President: Alexander van der Bellen

- Hofer's potential to become the first far-right European head of state in recent history attracted major international media



# Political Leaders



## Sebastian Kurz

- Was the chancellor from Dec 2017-May 2019
- Heading the Austrian People's Party (OeVP)  
Youngest Minister of Foreign Affairs in Austrian history –was 27 when entered office
- World's youngest head of government (sworn chancellor in December 2017 at the age of 31)
- Became OeVP chairman in May 2017



# Political Leaders



- Immediately **ended** the decade-long **coalition** government with the **Social Democrats (SPOe)** and called for an **early election**
- Formed a **coalition** government with **the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖe)**, making Austria the **only** country in western Europe with a far-right **presence** in the **government**
- 6k people **protested**, denouncing the Freedom Party as Nazis



# Political Leaders

- Current **Chancellor**: Brigitte Bierlein (since 3 June 2019)
- Former ruling **Coalition** ÖVP–FPÖ **collapsed** as former **Vice Chancellor** Heinz-Christian Strache resigned on 18 May 2019, following the Ibiza affair (political scandal)
- **Snap elections** were held on 29 September 2019 after a no-confidence vote (May 27)
- Coalition building **negotiation**



## Results by national party: 2019-2024

Austria - Official results

National parties	Percentage of votes
ÖVP - Österreichische Volkspartei	34.55%
SPÖ - Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreich	23.89%
FPÖ - Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	17.20%
GRÜNE - Die Grünen - Die Grüne Alternative	14.08%
NEOS - NEOS - Das neue Österreich	8.44%
JETZT - JETZT - Liste Pilz	1.04%
Other parties - Other parties	0.80%
	100.00%

# Neutrality and Army



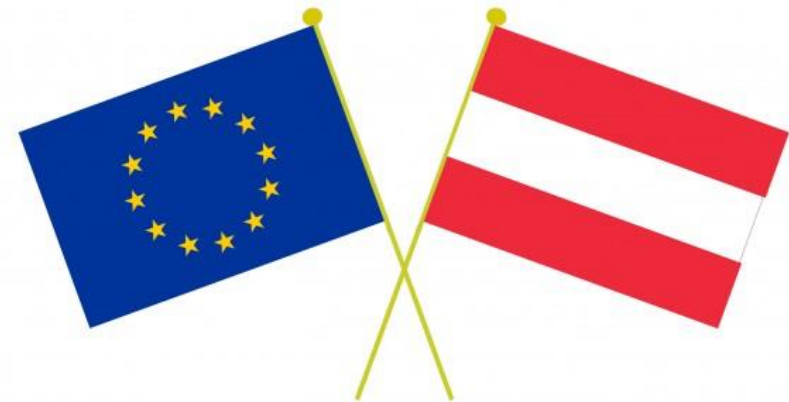
- In 1955, Austria declared its **permanent neutrality**
- Although **NOT** a member of NATO, Austria does participate in various **international military activities**
- Has an **army + conscription** for men
- Member in international organizations (UN) and security alliances (Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe)



# Foreign Relations



- **UN member** since 1955
  - Actively participating (dispatching personnel) in UN missions, e.g, in the Middle East (UNDOF, UNTSO), Cyprus (UNFICYP) and in Africa (UNOWA)
- The **end of the Cold War** enabled Austria to move from its **peripheral position** at the borderline between "East" and "West" closer to the **center of a larger Europe** => new forms of partnership and cooperation across Europe
- Joined the **EU** and signed the **Schengen Agreement** in 1995
  - Adopted the **Euro** in 1999



# Foreign Relations



- **Founding member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**
  - Austria participated in missions in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina & Afghanistan
- **Austria joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (1995)**
  - Supports NATO in peace missions, crisis management activities and rescue operations in disaster areas



# Foreign Relations



- **Vienna** is a home to =>
  - One of the **headquarters** of the UN and hosts the IAEA, UNIDO, CTBTO and further UN organizations (UNODC, UNCOPUOS)
  - The **Secretariat** of the **Permanent Council** of the OSCE, OPEC and the OPEC Fund
  - The European Union Agency for **Fundamental Rights** (for the protection of human and fundamental rights)
- Has frequently been the venue of **superpower summits**

# Changing Manifestation of Austria



- Roman Provinces (1-5th c. AC)
- Frontier Province (Mark) (803-1156), 996 “Ostarrichi”
- Duchy (1156) – state sovereignty
- Regnum (1192-1699)
- World Empire (1516-1556)
- Continental Empire (1699-1918)
- Republic (1918-38, 1945)
- United with Germany in World War II
- Republic of Austria (modern times)



# Conceptualizing Austria



- Throughout history, similarly to other states, **Austria** had different **territories with changing boundaries**
- There is **no 'Austrian people'** in an **ethnic** sense
  - Austrians are the people that belong to the respective state
  - Subjects of the Duke, Archduke, King, Emperor etc.
  - Citizens of the Empire, Republic
- The Austrian population consists of **various ethnic groups** which form one nation; Political nation: Austrian Ethnic nation: German, Czech, Magyar, Croat, ...

# Always a 'Team player'



- Austria was often a **part of larger political units**
  - Holy Roman Empire
  - German Confederation
  - Austrian Empire
  - Austro-Hungarian Empire
  - European Union
- **Independent since 1955**
- **Industries** include: Steel, machinery, chemicals, forestry, hydropower, handicrafts (wood, glass, textile, ceramic), tourism, foreign trade

# Economy



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- Austria is one of the most **prosperous** and **stable** EU Member States
- **Free market economy** with a strong **social** focus
  - Well-functioning system of **economic** and **social partnership**, traditionally played a **reconciliatory role** in wage and price policies
- Highly developed **industrialized country** with an important service sector
- **Top industries** => Food and luxury commodities, mechanical engineering and steel construction, chemicals, and vehicle manufacturing
- Has **natural resources** (iron, non-ferrous metals, minerals, petroleum, natural gas) but is importing further due to its growing industrial sector

# Economy



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- **Agriculture** => a strong trend towards **organic farming**
- leader in the field of **hydroelectric power** in the European Union
- Austria's industrial and commercial sectors are characterized by a high proportion of **medium-sized companies**
- **Tourism** is an essential pillar of the Austrian economy.
- Relatively **low unemployment**



# Austrian Culture



- **Traditional dishes (Vienna):**
  - Wiener Schnitzel
  - Tafelspitz
  - Apfelstrudel
  - Palatschinkeen (sweet pancakes)
  - Sachertorte



- **Opera Ball (Vienna) =>** The most famous ball event in Austria



# Austrian Culture



- In the Alpine regions, the **Krampus** acts as an **anti-Saint Nicholas**, who, instead of giving good children presents (for Christmas), gives **punishments** to the **bad kids**
  - Traditionally, young men dress up as the **Krampus** in the first two weeks of December, particularly in the evening of December 5, and roam the streets **scaring children**
- **Prangstangen** are decorated with flowers and are carried around in June to secure a good harvest for the farmers  
salzburg



# Austrian Culture



- **Midsummer fires** are lit by the end of June to welcome summer, mainly in lower Austria and in Vorarlberg
- **Lederhosen**, knee-long trousers or short-pants made from leather, are worn with rustic shoes and woollen socks
- **Budelfrau** is a helper of Santa Claus who brings sweets for the children on January 6 (Burgenland)
- The **Dirndl**, consists of a close fitting bodice combined with an apron in a different colour



# Confidence in institutions

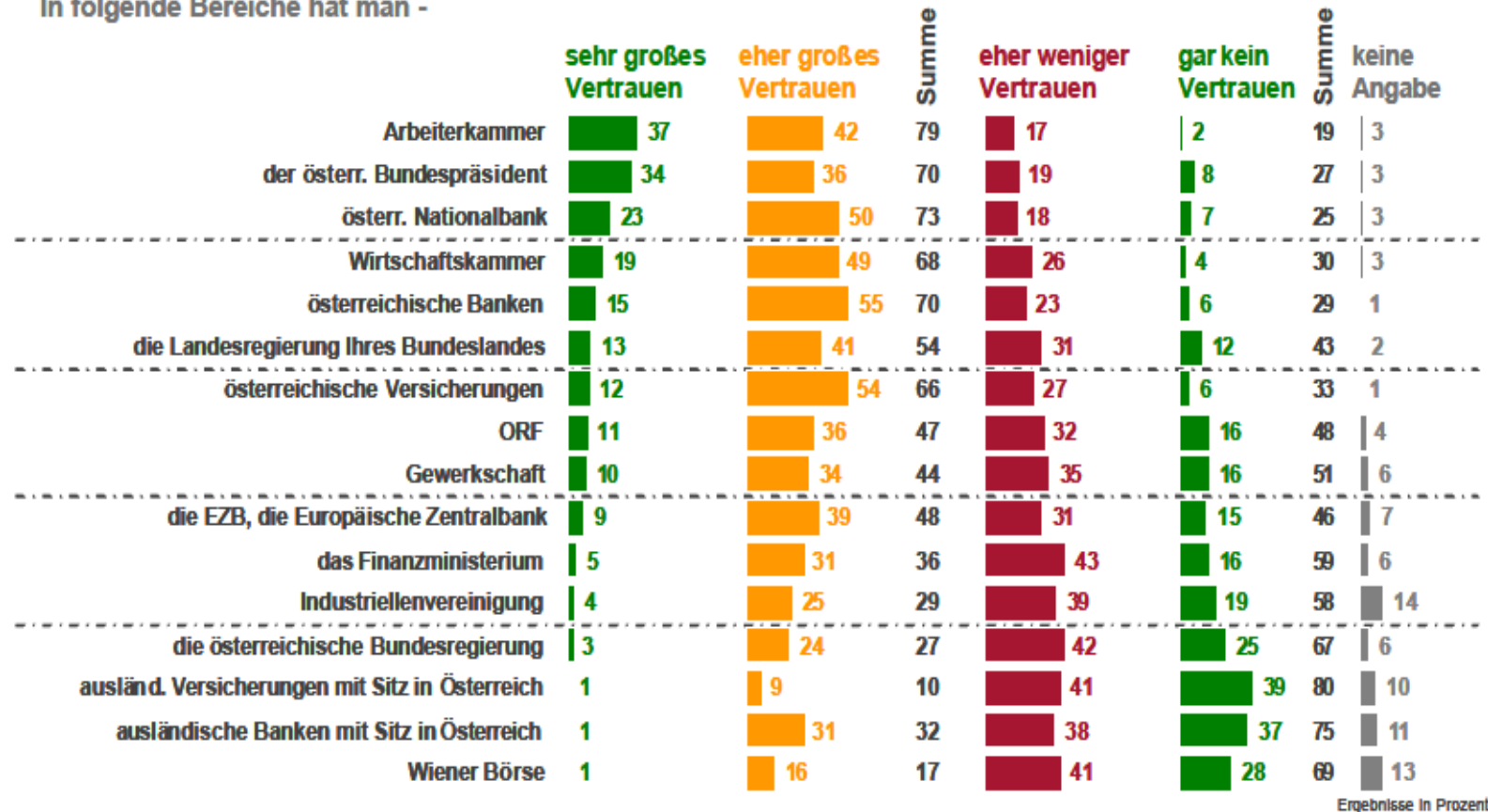


- Austrians have varying degrees of confidence in institutions:

- Chamber of Labour
- President
- Bank

Frage 4: Hier stehen nun einige Namen von Institutionen. Sagen Sie mir bitte zu jeder, ob Sie zu diesen im Großen und Ganzen großes Vertrauen haben (1), eher schon Vertrauen haben (2), eher weniger Vertrauen haben (3) oder gar kein Vertrauen haben (4).

In folgende Bereiche hat man -



Ergebnisse in Prozent

# Austria and the EU



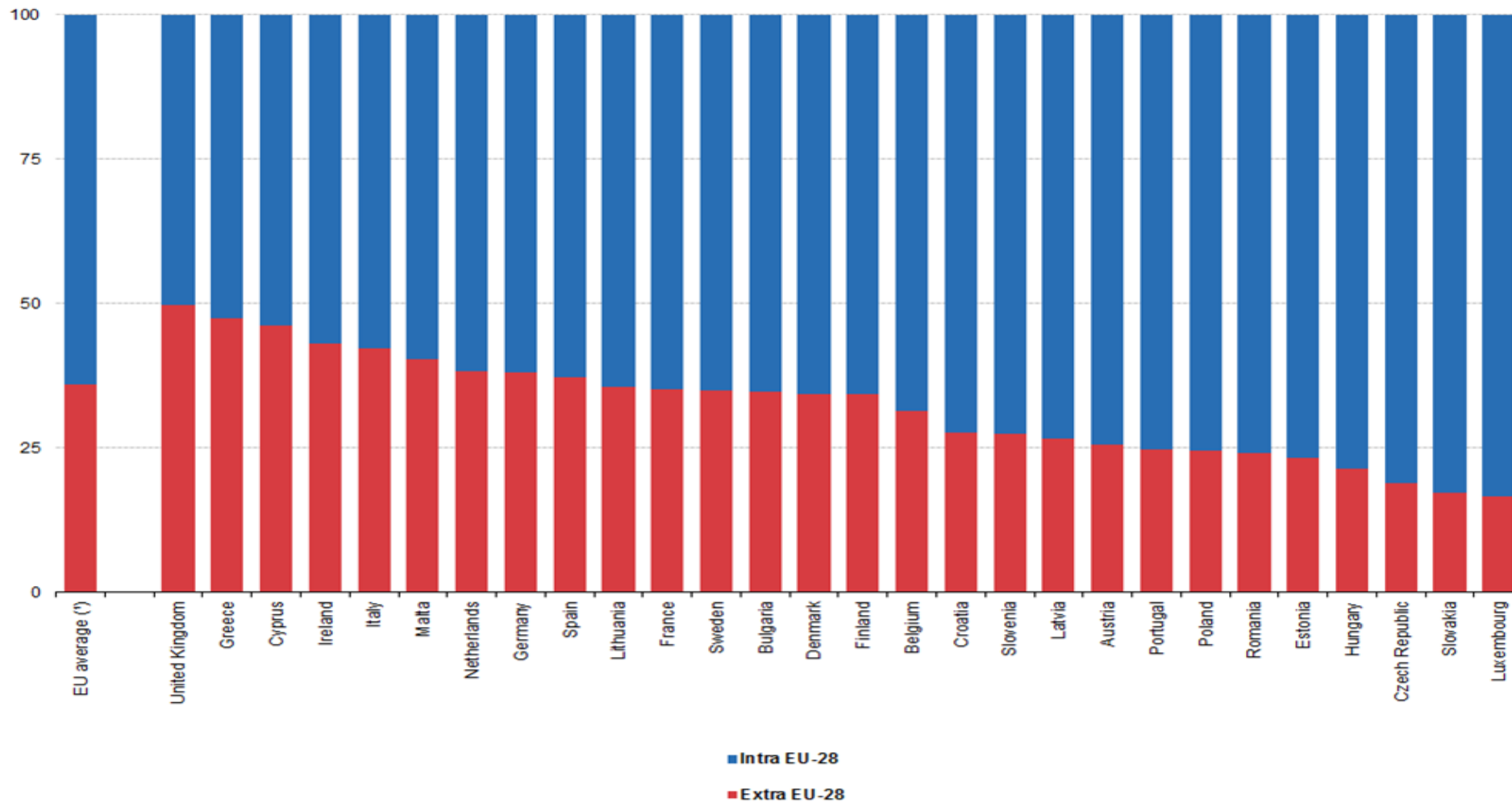
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- EU member since 1995, Schengen 1997
- **Intra-EU trade** accounts for 71% of Austria's exports
  - Germany 30%, Italy 6%, and Slovakia 4%
- **Exports outside the EU** => 6% go to the US, 5% to Switzerland
- **Imports:**
  - 78% come from EU Member States (Germany 43%, Italy 6% and Czech Republic 4%)
  - **Outside the EU** => 6% come from Switzerland and 3% from China

# Austria and the EU



**Intra and extra EU-28 trade in goods, 2017**  
(imports plus exports, % share of total trade)



(\*) Weighted average.  
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ext\_it\_intratrd)

# Austria and the EU



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- **Council of the EU** => National ministers meet regularly to adopt EU laws and coordinate policies
  - Council meetings regularly attended by Austrian representatives depending on the policy area being addressed
- **Presidency of the Council of the EU** => The Council doesn't have a permanent, single-person president. Its work is led by the country holding the Council presidency, which rotates every 6 months



Council of the  
European Union

# Austria and the EU



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- During these 6 months, ministers from that country's government chair and determine the agenda of Council meetings in each policy area + facilitate dialogue with the other EU institutions
- Austria last held the presidency at the end of 2018



Council of the  
European Union







# How did Austria get There?

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- **Despite:** being a small country + ww2
- Success Factors:
  - Political System – learning from the past
  - Labour Relations – negotiations to prevent conflicts
  - Mixed Economy: Private – Public – Welfare State
  - Technology Follower
- Institutional setup and cooperation

# Contemporary Challenges



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- Increasing pressure on living and working conditions, on social protections systems, Public Services (privatizations)
- Rising inequalities in society
- Sustainable Growth Model
- Pensions
- The rise of the Right wing
- Immigration

# Next Session...

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- **The Austrian Empire**
- **The Austro-Hungarian Empire**
  - **Nationalism and social multiculturalism**
  - **Politics and society**
  - **Foreign policy**



**Thank You For Your Attention!**

**Questions???**