

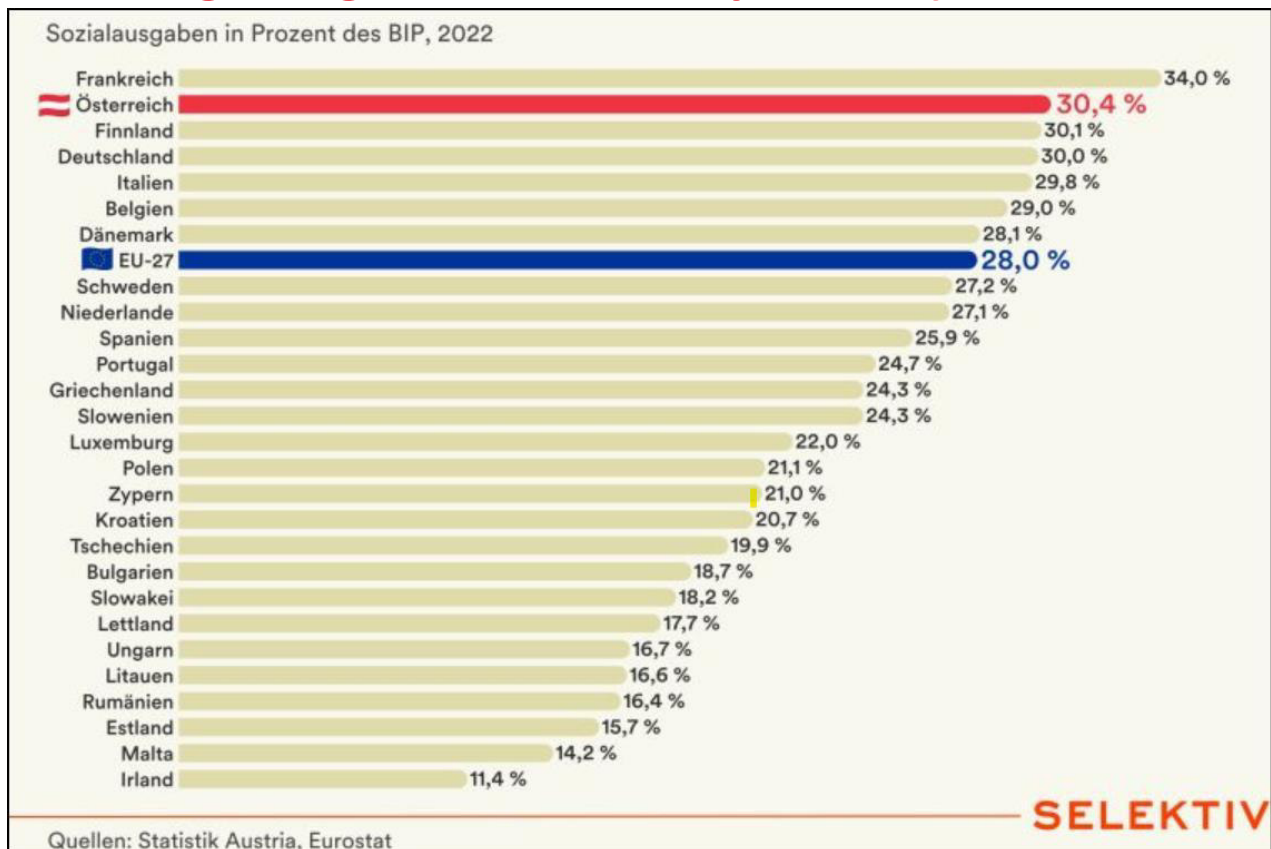
Austrian social system

with a focus on the federal state of
Upper Austria

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Cost of the social welfare system (percentage of gross domestic product)



Austrian social system

- The Austrian social security system is a solidarity-based model designed to promote social security and equal opportunities. It includes benefits such as social assistance, care, unemployment insurance and support for people with disabilities.
- Responsibility lies at both federal and state level, resulting in federal differences.

Tasks of the Ministry of Social Affairs

The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMSGPK) is responsible for the development and implementation of social policy.

Main tasks:

- Supervision of social insurance (health, pension, accident and unemployment insurance)
- Promoting the professional and social inclusion of people with disabilities
- Administration of benefits such as care allowance, family allowances and minimum benefits
- Consumer protection and policies for senior citizens and carers

Federal structure: Federal and state laws

The social system is regulated by an interplay of federal laws (framework laws) and state laws (implementation laws)

- Federal laws:
 - Basic Social Welfare Act: regulates the minimum standards for social welfare benefits.
 - General Social Insurance Act (ASVG): Basis for health, pension and accident insurance.
- State laws:
 - Each federal state has its own implementing legislation, e.g. the Upper Austrian Social Assistance Act (OÖ SHG) and the Upper Austrian Equal Opportunities Act (OÖ ChG).



Upper Austrian Social Assistance Act (OÖ SHG)

- Target group: People with age-related support needs or homeless people
- Objective: To secure a livelihood through retirement homes, day care centres or assistance for the homeless.
- Access: Subsidiary - benefits are only granted if no other means are available

Upper Austrian Equal Opportunities Act (OÖ ChG)

Target group: People with physical, mental or multiple impairments that are not age-related

Objective: To promote self-determination and social inclusion through support services such as

- Ability-orientated activity (§11)
- Forms of housing (fully supervised, partially supervised, short-term) (§12)
- Personal assistance (§13)
- Mobile care and assistance (§14)

Access: Application to the authority; administrative procedure determines the type and scope of the benefit.

Main benefits vs. supplementary benefits (OÖ ChG) I

Main services

- Application required; administrative procedure decides on service provision.
- Legal entitlement exists; notification regulates the type, scope and provider of the benefit.
- Examples (§11-14 OÖ ChG): Ability-orientated activity.
- Forms of housing (fully supervised/partially supervised).
- Personal assistance.
- Mobile care.

Main benefits vs. supplementary benefits (OÖ ChG) II

Supplementary benefits

- No application; direct access to offers without administrative procedures
- No legal entitlement; benefits are regulated in §17 para. 3
- Examples: Psychosocial counselling (PSB), psychosocial meeting points, crisis support, addiction counselling, ...

Financial regulations

Contribution and reference rate ordinance

- Regulates income limits and asset allowances for access to benefits.
- no access to assets but people with high incomes have to pay a share themselves;

Social Welfare Income Act

- Basis for calculating the social assistance allowance
- Subsidiarity principle: The state only intervenes if no other means are available.
- Duty to cooperate: those affected must disclose their financial situation; stricter handling in practice

Conclusion

- The Austrian social system is a complex interplay of federal regulations and state implementation laws.
- Example Upper Austria: Differentiation between the Social Assistance Act for older people or homeless people and the Equal Opportunities Act for people with non-age-related impairments
- The clear distinction between main benefits (with legal entitlement) and supplementary benefits (without legal entitlement) as well as the financial regulation through contribution ordinances ensure needs-based support - albeit often with bureaucratic hurdles

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