

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Austria

CAPITAL: Vienna

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Federal Multiparty Republic

AREA: 83,853 Sq Km (32,376 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 7,995,500



LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY: Austria is a small mountainous landlocked country in South Central Europe. It is bound by Germany and the Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia to the northeast, Hungary to the east, Slovenia and Italy to the south as well as Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west. Although almost 75% of the country is mountainous and Austria can be topographically divided into (1.) the Eastern Alps, (2.) the northern Alpine forelands, (3.) the Bohemian Plateau, (4.) the Vienna Basin and (5.) the eastern and southern lowlands. The principal river is the Danube and its tributaries which flow eastward through central Austria. Austria has the highest percentage of forest in Central Europe with forests covering around 37% of the land area, of which conifers account for 85% while 10% are beech, 2% are oak and deciduous trees account for the remainder. Major Cities (pop. est.); Vienna 1,540,000, Graz 238,000, Linz 203,000, Salzburg 144,000, Innsbruck 118,000 (1991). Land Use; forested 39%, pastures 24%, agricultural-cultivated 18%, other 19% (1993).

CLIMATE: Austria's climate is influenced by three climatic systems, (1.) the North Atlantic maritime, (2.) the Mediterranean and (3.) the continental. The country can also be divided into three climatic regions, (1.) the Alps where it is often sunny in winter but cloudy in summer. (2.) The Danube Valley and Vienna Basin, the driest regions where winter snow is rarely deep. (3.) The southeast region which experiences heavy thunderstorms and where winters can be severe, although summers are warmer and sunnier than the Alps region. Winters are generally cold throughout the country and the summer months are often the wettest with heavy rainfall that is also short in duration. Average temperature ranges in Vienna are from -4 to 1 degrees Celsius (25 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit)

in January to 15 to 25 degrees Celsius (59 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Austrians who account for around 98% of the population and are of German origin. The principal ethnic minority groups are the Croats who account for .7% of the population, the Slovenes for .3% and others which include Magyars, Czechs and Slovaks.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 93 persons per sq km (241 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 57.7% urban, 42.3% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 47.7% male, 52.3% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 72.1 years male, 78.8 years female (1989). Age Breakdown; 17% under 15, 24% 15 to 29, 21% 30 to 44, 18% 45 to 59, 13% 60 to 74, 7% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 11.6 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 10.7 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 0.9 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 7.9 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 85 to 90% of the population Roman Catholic while around 6% are Evangelical Lutherans and 1% are Muslims. There is also a small number of Jews.

LANGUAGES: The official language is German with 99% of the population speaking it, although different dialects are associated with class distinctions.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: through lower secondary 40.0%, general secondary or vocational 54.3%, higher 5.7% (1989). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over virtually 100% (1989).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: During 1943, a conference in Moscow announced the intentions to recreate Austria as an independent sovereign state with democratic foundations. It was recognized internationally as an independent state in Dec. 1945. In 1955 the Austrian State Treaty banned any future economic and political union with Germany, reaffirmed the 1919 Habsburg Law and ensured Austria's future and permanent neutrality. In 1972 Austria signed a free trade industrial agreement with the EC and applied for membership in July 1989. An international panel of historians issued a report in 1988 which concluded that Pres. Kurt Waldheim knew of war crimes in Greece and Yugoslavia while serving in the German army during World War II, did nothing to stop them and later covered up his war record, however, the panel also found no evidence that Waldheim himself committed war crimes. In Oct. 1990 National Council elections resulted in the continuation of a SPO/OVP coalition government. On June 21, 1991 the controversial leader, Jorg Haider, of the right-wing Freedom Party (FPO) lost his post as Karnten provincial governor over continued remarks in "Nazi jargon", although regional election in November resulted in substantial gains for the FPO after campaigning with an anti-immigration agenda. In 1991 the Austrian government for the first time formally acknowledged that many Austrians had supported Adolf Hitler during his invasion and in mid-1991 received notice from the EU that negotiations for entry to the union should begin in 1993. During 1991 the worldwide recession hit Austria while the escalation of the Yugoslav war and continued violations of the Yugoslav-Austria border resulted in a military operation in the region. Also in the largest murder trial in the country's history four nurses were convicted of killing numerous elderly patients at a Vienna hospital. Spring Presidential elections in 1992 resulted in the election of Thomas Klestil of the OVP. In June 1992 the 32-year old controversy over South Tyrol (Sudtirol) came to an end when Italy and Austria announced the completion of a 1969 plan that contained 137 measures which would guarantee Sudtirol's autonomy. During 1992 the flow of European refugees swelled so that by September the country was harboring some 57,000 Yugoslav refugees. As a result the government and authorities were plagued with right-wing anti-immigration and anti-foreigner activities. On Feb. 1, 1993 negotiations began on Austria's full membership to the EU which resulted in Austria's plan for a referendum

on the issue. In June 1993 after decades of tension Israel and Austria established new diplomatic relations that greatly broaden cooperation between the two countries. In Dec. 1993 there were a series of right-wing letter box bombings, one in which injured the mayor of Vienna. During 1993 unemployment reached its highest level in 40 years while the government further privatized state-owned property, curtailed social services and increased taxes as austerity measures. In the political front nationalism and the radical right grew stronger with the FPO winners at further regional elections while a number of former officials faced trial for their alleged involvement in the illegal exports of arms to Iran with Interior Minister Karl Blecha convicted.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Euro divided into 100 cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$183,530,000,000 (1993). National Debt; USD \$88,149,000,000 (1992). Imports; S 593,900,000,000 (1993). Exports; S 487,600,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$13,400,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; S - 89,300,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 3,679,000 or 46.7% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 6.5% (1994).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, the former USSR and the UK.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Anhydrous Gypsum, Barley, Cattle, Clay, Copper, Graphite, Hay and Fodder, Iron Ore, Kaolin, Lignite, Maize, Manganese, Natural Gas, Oil, Potatoes, Salt, Sheep, Sugar Beets, Talc, Temperate Fruits, Timber, Vines, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Aluminum and Lead Processing, Beer, Ceramics, Chemicals, Clothing, Electrical Goods, Food Processing, Forestry, Glassware, Iron and Steel, Oil and Gas Production, Oil and Gas Refining, Textiles, Tourism, Wine, Wood Products.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemical, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Meat and Dairy Products, Textiles, Timber, Wood Products.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 6,662 km (4,140 mi) (1989), passenger-km 8,464,000,000 (5,259,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 12,691,000,000 (8,692,000,000 short ton-mi) (1990). Roads; length 107,099 km (66,548 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 2,902,949 (1989), trucks and buses 256,228 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 32 (1990), deadweight tonnage 233,618 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 2,819,000,000 (1,752,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 45,400,000 (31,094,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 27 with a total circulation of 3,108,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 4,710,000 (1994). Television; receivers 2,706,000 (1994). Telephones; units 3,579,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 51,250 (1994) total active duty personnel with 85.9% army, 0.0% navy and 14.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.0% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).