

4.2 Administration and governance

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Governance

Social inclusion is a **cross-sectoral matter** and therefore approached by a broad variety of measures initiated by several Ministries as well as the Federal Provinces. The [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) heads the action on social issues, social security, and the welfare system. As education plays an important role for social inclusion, the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#) is also involved in governing measures. For the social inclusion of young people, the [Department for Families and Youth at the Federal Chancellery](#) ([Bundeskanzleramt, Sektion für Familie und Jugend](#)) is another key player.

Competences for the Austrian **social security system** are **divided between the federal government, the Länder and the municipalities**. Social security and general benefits fall within the remit of the federal government, while the provinces, municipalities and cities are responsible for a large part of health care, housing, social services as well as childcare facilities and 'means-tested minimum benefits'.

Numerous non-governmental parties are involved in social legislation in Austria. They play a central role in the political opinion-shaping process. The discussions of the **social partners** - the [Chamber of Labour](#), the Trade Union ([Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund](#), ÖGB), the [Austrian Economic Chambers](#) (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ), and the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture ([Landwirtschaftskammer](#), LKO) – also play an important role in shaping Austrian social policy. Before national social legislative measures are taken, the social partners are consulted. They **seek consensual solutions**, which often provide a good basis for the legal regulations. Not least, the institutions of the **European Union** also provide important impulses for the further development of the social security system. The [Federal Youth Council](#) ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#)) alerts to the needs of young people. In representation of youth, it has to be consulted for any law concerning young people. **Private associations** play an important role in providing support in the field.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Austrian Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (Österreichische

Plattform gegen Armut und soziale Ausgrenzung)

Within the framework of the 'Europe 2020 Strategy', the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion was initiated to help the Member States achieve the core goal of freeing 20 million people from poverty and social exclusion. In Austria, the [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) has set up a separate platform for this purpose. **Representatives of the federal and provincial governments and the association of towns and municipalities, the social partners, [Statistik Austria](#), the [Federal Youth Council](#) and the senior citizens' association as well as actors of civil society** ([poverty conference](#), [BAWO](#), [Caritas](#), etc.) **participate** in the platform. Since 2010, the members of the platform meet twice a year in order to discuss current issues and therefore guarantee a **lasting dialogue** in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The aim of the platform is to provide information on current subjects and developments, to discuss socio-political challenges, to implement the national Europe 2020 strategy, to identify risk of poverty indicators, and to allow an institutionalised exchange with stakeholders. The Poverty Platform thus institutionalizes cross-sectoral cooperation between Ministries and non-governmental stakeholders.

Strategies and Action Plans

Different Strategies and Action Plans have been set up in cross-sectorial cooperation for different matters of social inclusion, e.g. the **National Action Plan for Integration (NAP)**, which pooled policies on integration of the Federal and Provincial Governments, municipalities and cities, and the social partners. It aimed to provide a structured platform for nation-wide cooperation of all involved stakeholders for successful integration measures and their optimized implementation.