

Country profile 2026: Austria

Introduction

Austria’s digital landscape in 2025 is defined by high individual capability with some structural infrastructure gaps. While Austria performs above the EU average in terms of digitalisation, the ICT sector's contribution to national value added (3.8%) remains notably lower than the EU average of 5.5% ([Digital Decade 2025: Country reports](#)). Significant progress has been made in mobile connectivity, with 99.5% 5G coverage and a strong lead in AI adoption at 20.3%. Austria maintains a strong profile in digital skills; 64.7% of its population possesses at least basic digital skills, surpassing the EU average. To address persistent disparities in digital inclusion across gender and age, the government has launched flagship initiatives such as Digital Everywhere+ and the Future Skills programme. According to the [State of the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025](#), public sentiment remains supportive, with 68% of citizens reporting that digitalisation simplifies daily life, though there is a strong demand for enhanced cybersecurity (78%) and better mitigation of online disinformation (87%). Administratively, Austria is a leader in implementing the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles. Its updated 2025 strategic roadmap commits EUR 4.07 billion to digital transformation, supporting advanced technology sectors.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching goals that shape policies for a better internet for kids.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Policy priority		X		
Integrated policy			X	

Influence of the BIK+ strategy	X
Recognition of children's rights	X

Table 1: Policy frameworks - Austria

- **This topic is an important and emerging policy priority** partially covered in national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- **The topic of children and the digital environment is covered by broader policies** rather than in separate dedicated policies.
- **The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development** on children and the digital environment.
- National/regional policies and policy documents **do not refer to children's rights in the digital environment.**

Key developments and policy frameworks

- The **Austrian Youth Strategy** aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital environment safely and consciously.
- The **Digital Austria Act** covers the key areas of cyber security, cyber defence, and digital skills.
- **Digital Competences Austria** implements eight strategic priorities, each with concrete measures to further develop digital skills.
- The **Acht-Punkte-Plan** (strategy for a digital school) is a national strategy to ensure that innovative teaching and learning formats are widely implemented in the education system.

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection		X		
Data on risks, harms, well-being		X		
Information systems	X			
National research fund			X	
Monitoring and evaluation		X		

Table 2: Policy design - Austria

- **Quantitative data on some aspects of children’s digital activity** is collected regularly as part of broader surveys.
- **Some but not all aspects of children’s experiences** of risks, harms and digital well-being are included in regular surveys.
- **Systems are in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment.
- **There are occasional special initiatives** to gather evidence about children and the digital environment.
- **Policies are regularly monitored and evaluated**, but not always systematically.

Key national research studies

- Austria has carried out several studies on the use and behaviour of children and young people on the Internet and on the use of digital devices and social media. Examples: Youth Internet Monitor, Ö3 youth study, youth report from the Federal Chancellery, insight into the digital advertising environment for children and young people from the Ministry of Health.
- The **Youth-Internet-Monitor** is an initiative of the Austrian Safer Internet Centre and presents current data on social media usage by young people in Austria

- The Education Group conducts regular studies on children and young people's use and media skills as part of the [Upper Austrian Children's Media Study](#).
- Other special studies include the [Evaluation study](#), measuring the implementation quality and effectiveness of the youth crime prevention programme "UNDER18"; the [Reducing Screentime](#) project carried out by ORF-Radio, and the [Mental Health Days](#) schools project.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery and coordination.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development			X	
National coordination body		X		
National action plan or strategy			X	

Table 3: Policy governance - Austria

- **The lead ministry, public agency, or regulatory authority** operates on an informal, ad hoc basis, depending on the requirements at any given time.
- **Coordination occurs across relevant departments** and stakeholders through more informal arrangements.
- **Government policy has yet to be developed** into an implementable action plan at this point, but this is under development.

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum		X		
Public consultation on BIK topics			X	
Youth involvement in policy		X		

Table 4: Stakeholder involvement – Austria

- **Stakeholders are involved through various existing groups or platforms across different government branches.** While opportunities for engagement exist, they are not centrally coordinated, and stakeholder participation may vary in consistency or influence.
- **Public consultation occurs, but it is irregular, infrequent, or limited in scope.**
- **Children are listened to directly in the policy development process but are not formally involved in decision-making.**

Stakeholder mechanisms

- The Safer Internet Advisory Board advises the Austria Safer Internet Centre initiative and also serves to network with other projects and facilitate information exchange between advisory board members.
- The Digital Skills Office is a national agency for education and internationalisation within Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD) as part of the "Digital Competence Offensive for Austria". It provides information and tips on dealing competently with risks and using the positive aspects of the internet, mobile phones and computers.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Actions to promote a safe, age-appropriate digital environment that respects children’s best interests.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Content rating systems for online/video games			X	
DSC measures protection of minors	X			
DSC-SIC working relationship	X			
Definition of harmful online content			X	
Complaints handling mechanism	X			
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification requirements			X	
Digital wallet for minors		X		
EU harmonised age verification		X		
Laws on online marketing			X	
Protecting mental health and well-being			X	

Table 5: Safe digital experiences - Austria

Implementing EU laws

- There is no binding age rating or approval system for video games in Austria. However, media can be labelled with age recommendations (PEGI and USK). Recommendations for digital games can be found on

the website of the BuPP - Federal Office for the Positive Assessment of Digital Games.

- Youth protection regulations also govern age ratings for media consumption.
- The Austrian DSC hosts regular exchanges with relevant government departments, CSOs, and other stakeholders in the area of the protection of minors, informing them about the available tools under the DSA, the work of the DSC/TF/EC in this regard, and providing regular updates on its enforcement activities.

Addressing online harms

- There are Children and Youth Ombuds-Offices in Austria in each of the nine federal states and at the federal level. Children and young people can contact the Children and Youth Ombuds- Offices regarding every matter of concern, including harmful online content.
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is covered under various laws, such as protecting privacy under the General Civil Code (ABGB), the Austrian Criminal Code, and Hate Speech Laws.
- Laws to protect children and young people from cyberbullying include the Hate Speech on the Internet Act (HiNBG), which was amended by renaming the offence to "persistent harassment using a telecommunication or computer system" (instead of "continued").

Age assurance

- The Austrian Audiovisual Media Services Act (AMD-G) requires video-sharing platforms to restrict harmful content from minors. Providers must use parental control systems and age verification for content involving gratuitous violence or explicit sexual acts (§ 39, paragraph 3). Platforms must also provide easy-to-use functions for users to evaluate and flag content.
- Persons aged 14 or older can apply for the notified eID (ID Austria). Remote age verification in accordance with EU standards is planned for the wallet. Currently, digital proof of age is available for all persons aged 14 or older who are registered in Austria via the eAusweise app.

Supporting digital well-being

- Influencer-based marketing is subject to legal framework conditions in Austria when advertising products and brands. These include the Media Act (MedienG), the [Austrian implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Act \(AMD-G\)](#), and the [Federal Act against Unfair Competition \(UWG\)](#). The Austrian advertising industry also has a voluntary [Code of Ethics](#), which sets out fair advertising principles.
- Some of the youth goals within the [Austrian Youth Strategy](#) support children and young people in using digital media and the internet safely by strengthening their own skills. Mental Health days and other workshops are offered on the regional level
- The ban on mobile phones was legally established as part of a [regulation](#) issued by the Federal Minister of Education concerning conduct in schools and measures to ensure orderly and safe school operations.

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Teaching online safety	X			
Digital skills training	X			
Policies on digital use in schools	X			
Adequate teacher training	X			
Non-formal online safety education	X			
Critical media literacy	X			
Creative digital skills	X			
Supports for parents			X	

Table 6: Digital empowerment - Austria

Digital empowerment in formal education

- Online safety is fully incorporated into the national school curriculum. It is an integral part of the [curriculum in the primary school system](#). [Digital Basic Education](#) is also a compulsory subject in the middle and secondary school system. [Media literacy](#) is also recognised as an interdisciplinary competence.
- Within pilot schools, the [use of artificial intelligence in the classroom](#) is intended to support the quality of learning and teaching.
- "Basic Digital Literacy" training for academic teachers aligned with the Austrian [8-Point Plan](#) uses MOOCs for flexible professional development. Topics include violence prevention, (cyber)bullying, implementing school-wide protection concepts, and practical classroom applications of AI. Two courses focusing on social media's impact on democracy, digital self-awareness, and the identification of online manipulation and conspiracies. Resources are hosted on [Virtuelle PH](#) and [iMooX](#).

Digital empowerment and lifelong learning

- There are also various activities to reinforce informal education about online safety including at [Onlinesicherheit.at](#). The "[Digital Skills for All](#)" initiative was launched in 2023 to promote safe internet use to all target groups who do not attend formal learning venues. The [Austrian SIC \(saferinternet.at\)](#) offers a range of workshops for various target groups outside formal education. Initiatives like Coding Day, Coding Week, Safer Internet Day, and Hackathons promote digital safety and skill-building.
- The violence prevention programme [Click & Check](#) is concerned with promoting responsible use of digital media. Particular attention is paid to developing action strategies and promoting legal certainty in the daily use of the internet, particularly in the area of social media.
- [Cyber Kids](#) is a computer course for children, parents, and educators focused on digital literacy for 8-10 and 10-12-year-olds.
- [ZARA: Digitale Zivilcourage](#) offers various activities that encourage bystanders to challenge online hate speech and to develop digital 'civil

courage' (e.g., speaking up against a victim's bullies, perpetrators, or harassers).

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Promoting civic engagement	X			
Promoting children's rights	X			
Child-friendly policy documents			X	
Addressing digital inequalities	X			
Positive digital content	X			

Table 7: Active participation, respecting rights - Austria

Active participation

- The [Federal Youth Council](#) serves as the legally recognised representative of the interests of all children and young people. The [Federal Youth Representation Act](#) regulates its tasks, the implementation of which is the responsibility of the Federal Chancellery. Young people can actively participate in European youth policy through the [EU Youth Dialogue](#).
- The “[Digital Pioneers](#)” programme aims to promote (new) jobs for young women in the digital environment, while the [Student Competition \(BWKI\)](#) nurtures young people's interest in fields such as artificial intelligence and science, including mathematics, physics, and computer science, and the programme “[Science Flash](#)”.
- The Austrian Federal Chancellery provides funding for projects that promote greater awareness of children’s rights online and offline, e.g., a project on the risks of sharenting. It also publishes a [brochure about children's rights](#) that provides information in child-friendly language.

- The Austrian Ombuds Offices for Children and Youth ([Kija.at](https://www.kija.at)) are currently developing a digital youth rights charter. The first [Austria-wide Conference on Children's Rights](#) was held in 2025.

Addressing digital inequalities

- Various government initiatives exist to ensure inclusiveness regarding children's active participation, e.g., the [City of Vienna's child and youth work](#) will focus on inclusion in 2024 and 2025. A [dedicated child and youth portal](#) is in place.
- The [Federal Youth Representation](#) has initiated an [Inclusion Advisory Board](#).
- [OeAD](#), Austria's agency for education and internationalisation, also adopted inclusion and diversity as among the key priorities that Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps will address in the new programming period 2021-2027.

Best practices

Example 1

SaferInternet.at Workshops

As the specialist centre for digital child protection, [SaferInternet.at](#) supports professionals, including educators, social workers, and staff in child protection agencies, at the intersection of digitalisation and child protection. Its focus is on the prevention of online sexual violence and providing guidance on digital aspects within child protection strategies.

In its continuing education series, SaferInternet.at offers webinars on topics such as on topics of sexting, cyber grooming, media literacy, or the digital lives of children and young people. As part of the e-learning course "[Child Protection Concepts for Organisations](#)," the Safer Internet Centre has developed the chapter "Digital World." It deals with risks and protective measures in the digital space. The content is based on the standard framework of the "[Austrian Standards for Child Protection Concepts](#)", developed within the framework of the Alliance for Child Protection.

Example 2

Austria's 8-point plan

Austria's [8-point plan](#) for digital learning (8-Punkte-Plan) is an initiative to expand innovative teaching and learning in the Austrian education system. The national plan includes (1) a digital school portal, (2) standardisation of platforms, (3) continuing education for educators, (4) expanding the platform Eduthek, (5) certifying learning apps, (6) expanding IT infrastructure at schools, (7) providing digital terminals for students (8) and teachers. An additional investment volume of €250 million was made available in 2024 to support its implementation, ensuring that the innovation drive continues consistently and sustainably and that innovative teaching and learning formats are widely implemented in the education system.

Example 3

Cyber Security Quiz und Cyber Security Challenge

The **Cyber Security Quiz** is a low-threshold, free and digitally available learning resource designed to strengthen cyber security skills. It teaches key topics such as password security, data protection, phishing, fake news and deepfakes, online fraud, and cyberbullying in a fun way. Short, interactive quiz formats encourage participants to engage with the material. The Cyber Security Quiz thus makes an effective contribution to digital security awareness. The programme is aimed at secondary school pupils, teachers and adults. Challenges are held in schools.

BIK+ index 2026: Austria

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Austria compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

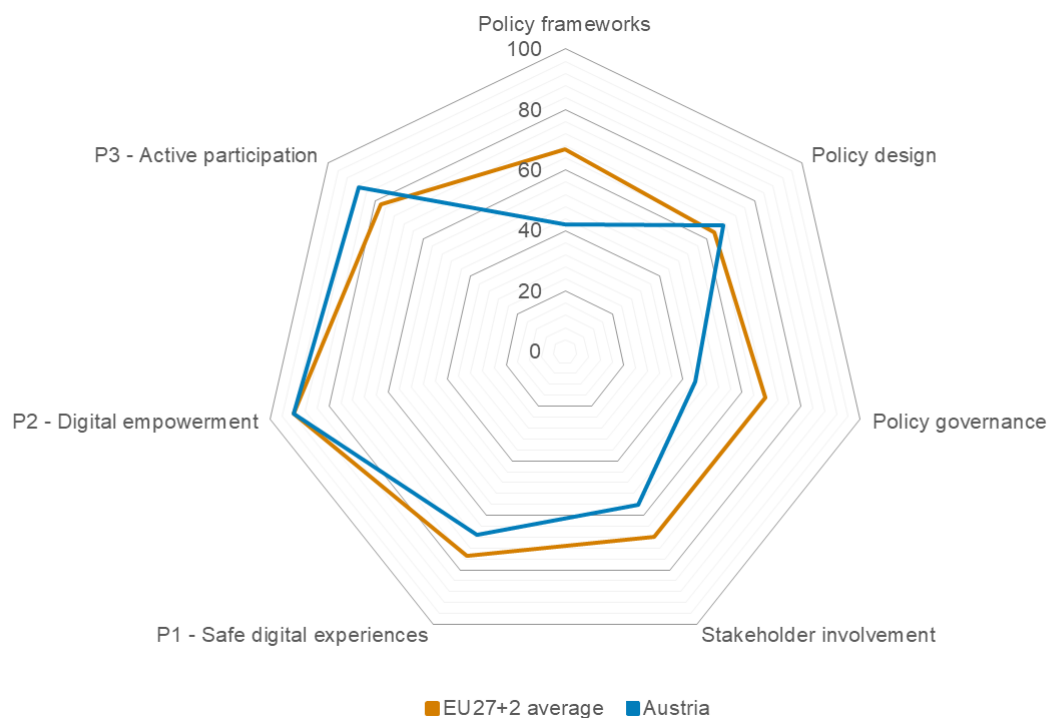


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2026: Austria - EU27+2 average comparison