

OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Outlook: Country Fact Sheet 2024

Austria

Contextual factors

State structure	Executive power	Legislative system	Legal system
Federal	Parliamentary	Bicameral	Civil law

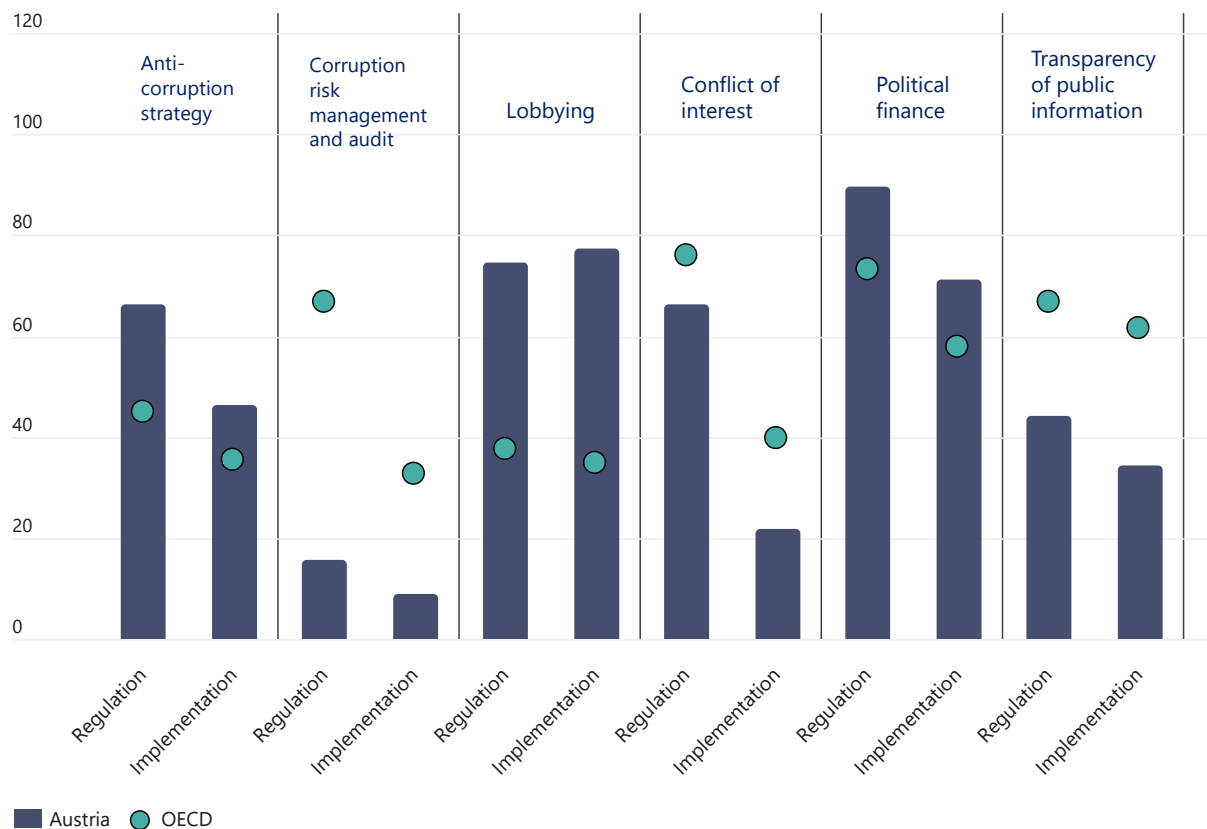
Strategy and institutions on anti-corruption and public integrity

The [Austrian Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2025 \(NACS\)](#), adopted by the Council of Ministers on 31 October 2023, provides a strategic framework for all measures taken to prevent and combat corruption. It incorporates insights from the evaluation report of the previous Strategy and includes a formal Action Plan 2023-2025. The Strategy was drawn up by the [Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption \(BAK\)](#) and Ministry of Justice, in co-operation with other relevant ministries and departments.

In terms of institutions, Austria has a central government body responsible for anti-corruption, the [Ministry of Interior \(BMI\)](#). The Co-ordination Body on Combating Corruption (KzK) is responsible for the development and evaluation of the integrity action plan, and [the Ministry of Justice](#) is responsible for policy on corruption enforcement. Austria has a central government body responsible for lobbying (Ministry of Justice) and for central harmonisation of internal audit ([Federal Chancellery – BKA](#)) but not for central harmonisation of internal control. The Austrian Court of Auditors oversees political finance. To date, there are no central government bodies responsible for conflict of interest, open data policy and public information.

Overview

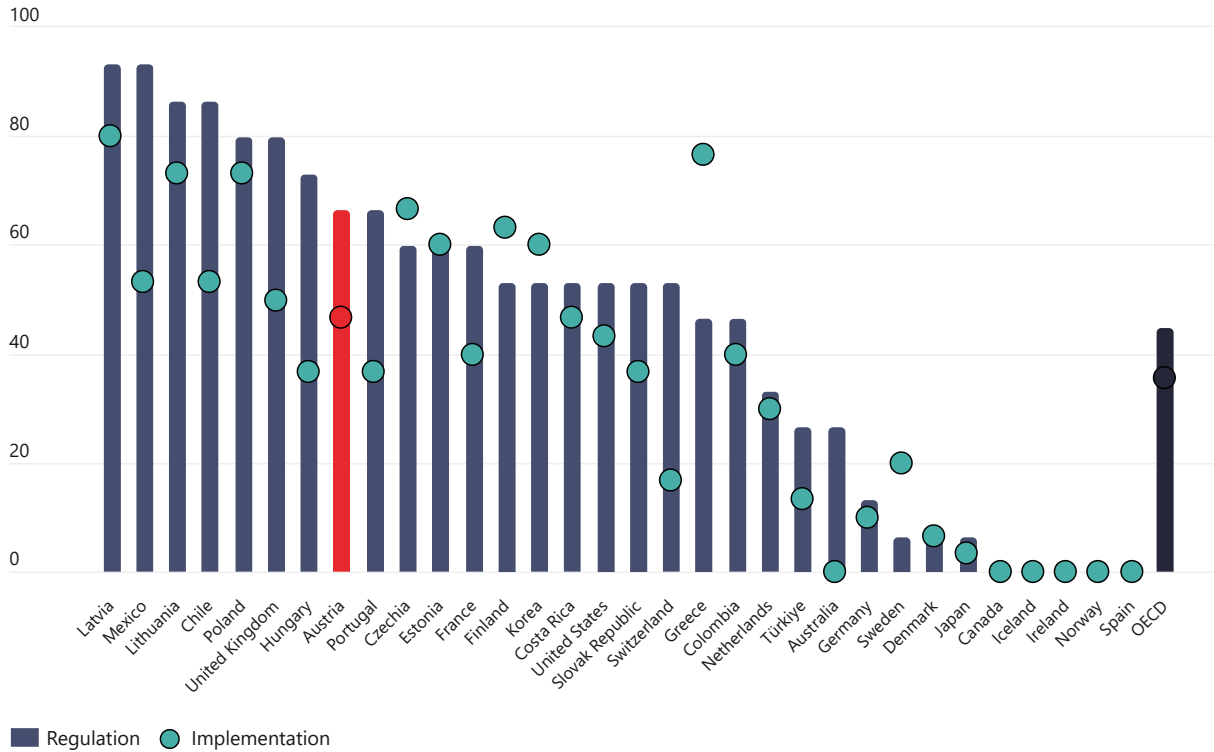
Figure 1. Overview



Greatest strengths	Areas to improve
Political finance	Conflict of interest – implementation
Lobbying safeguards	Risk management
Anti-corruption strategy	Transparency of public information

Anti-corruption strategy

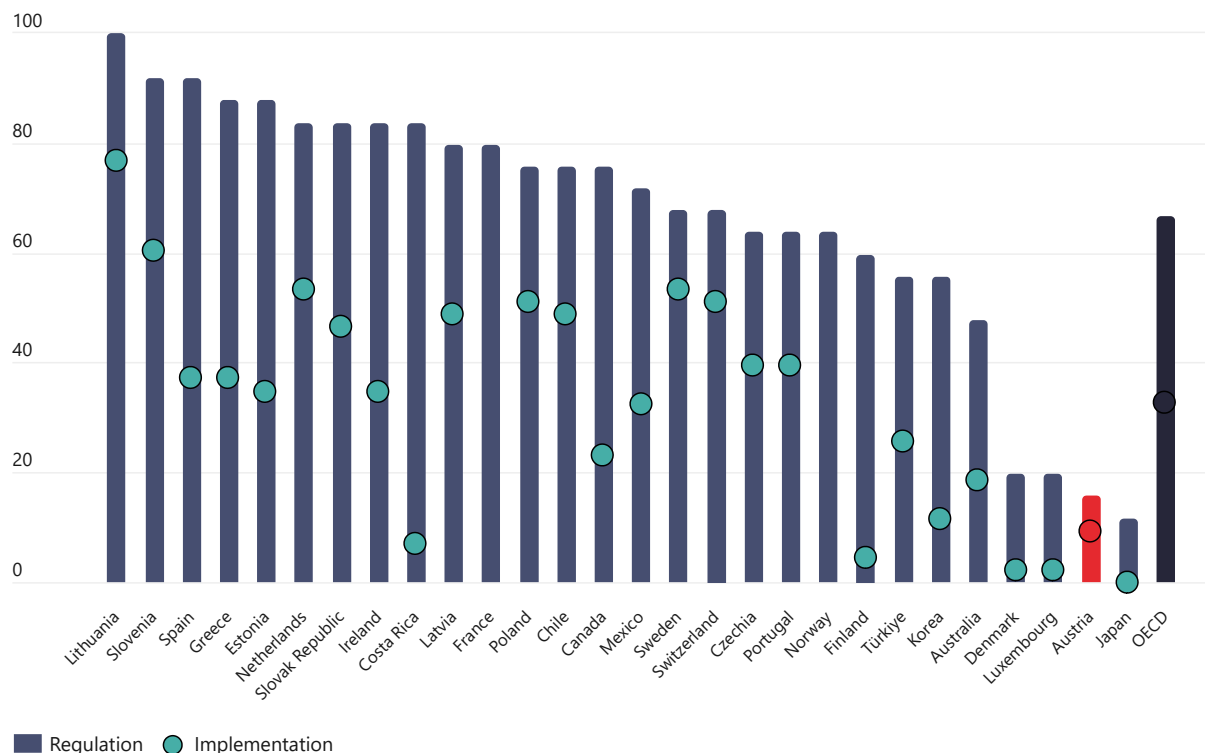
Figure 2. Anti-corruption strategy



Austria fulfils 67% of OECD criteria on the quality of its strategic framework and 47% for implementation in practice, compared to the OECD average of 45% and 36%, respectively. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2025 is the successor to Austria's previous National Anti-Corruption strategy. It includes objectives to mitigate public integrity risks related to human resource management, internal control and risk management, public procurement fraud and other types of corruption, private sector corruption, and education. While it contains a situation analysis, including identification of existing public integrity risks and outcome-level indicators for public integrity objectives, the strategy was not based on a formal comprehensive risk assessment. The Action Plan 2023-2025 contains 120 secondary objectives to support the primary objectives outlined in the strategy and these are supported by 228 specific actions, each of which has lead organisations and outcome level indicators. Since the strategy was just adopted in 2023, no monitoring reports exist yet. While the Coordinating Council conducted an evaluation of the previous strategy (2019-2020) and this strategy was used to inform the new strategy, this evaluation report has not been published online.

Corruption risk management and audit

Figure 3. Corruption risk management and audit

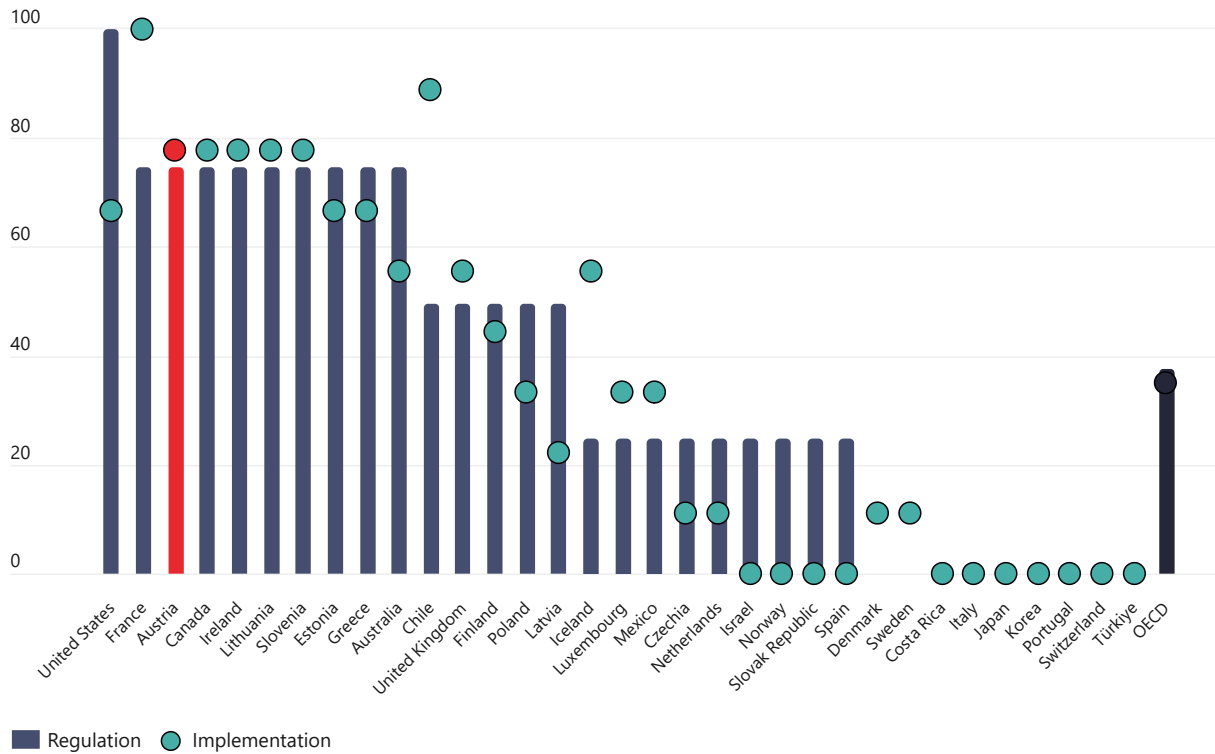


As measured against OECD standards on risk management, which include internal control and internal audit, Austria fulfils 16% of criteria for regulations and 9% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 33%, respectively. Currently, regulations do not define managerial responsibility or specify objectives of internal control and there is no risk management framework in place. Additionally, the coverage of functions to implement internal control is low, as there is no central function harmonising the internal control system. Moreover, Austria has no central reporting requirements on internal control.

In terms of internal audit, there are no formal minimum requirements that public sector bodies must follow as well as no national standards of conduct for internal audit professionals. This lack of binding provisions can lead to differences in expertise and audit methodologies between institutions since, for example, the head of internal auditing is free to determine how auditing activities are to be carried out in line with their ministry's internal regulations. Moreover, there is no available data on the public organisations internally audited in the past five years and the adoption rate of internal audit recommendations due to the absence of central regulations.

Lobbying

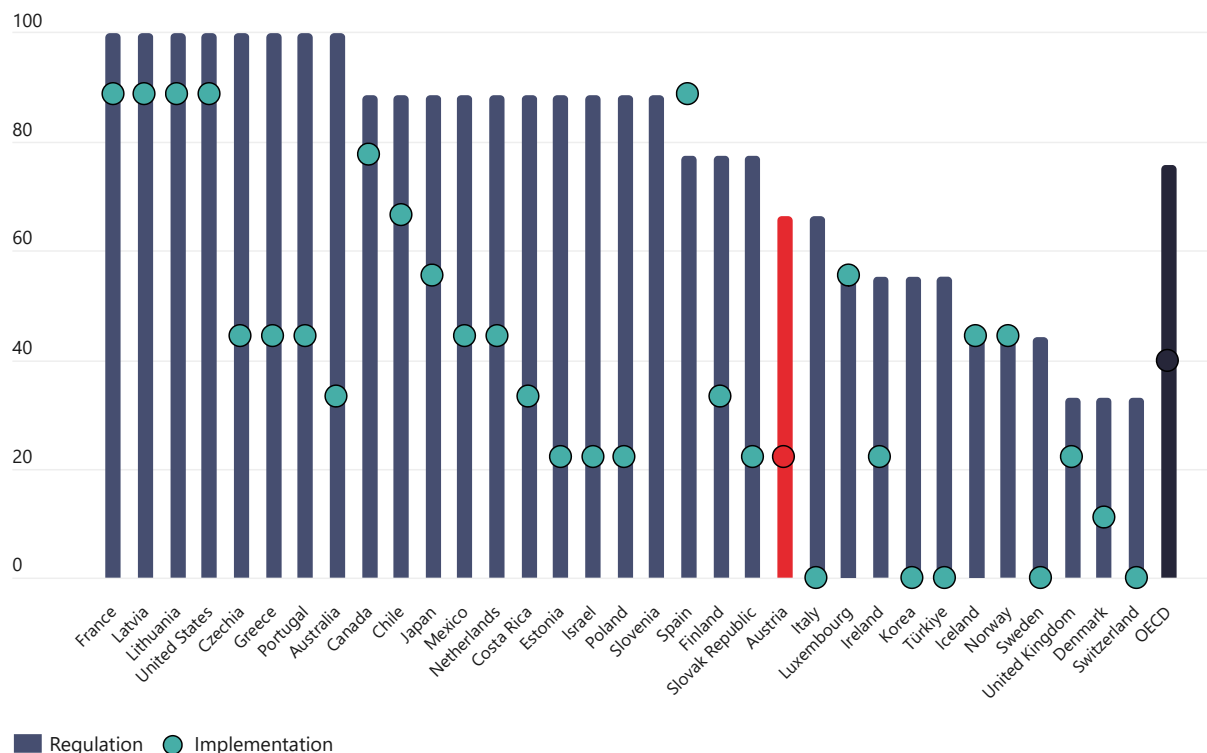
Figure 4. Lobbying



As measured against OECD standards on lobbying, Austria fulfils 75% of criteria for regulations and 78% for practice, exceeding the OECD average of 38% and 35%, respectively. Regulations define lobbying activities and which actors are considered lobbyists and establish sanctions for breaches of standards for transparency and integrity in lobbying. Moreover, Austria has taken several steps to encourage transparency of lobbying activities and prevent undue influence in practice. These include, for example, a supervisory function in central government – the Ministry of Justice – for these activities, a code of conduct supported by practical examples of undesirable behaviour, online registration tools for lobbyists, and a publicly available lobbying register. However, regulations do not require the disclosure of the legislation and/or regulations targeted by lobbyists, and this information is not publicly available online, which limits the amount of transparency that the lobbying register provides.

Conflict of interest

Figure 5. Conflict of interest

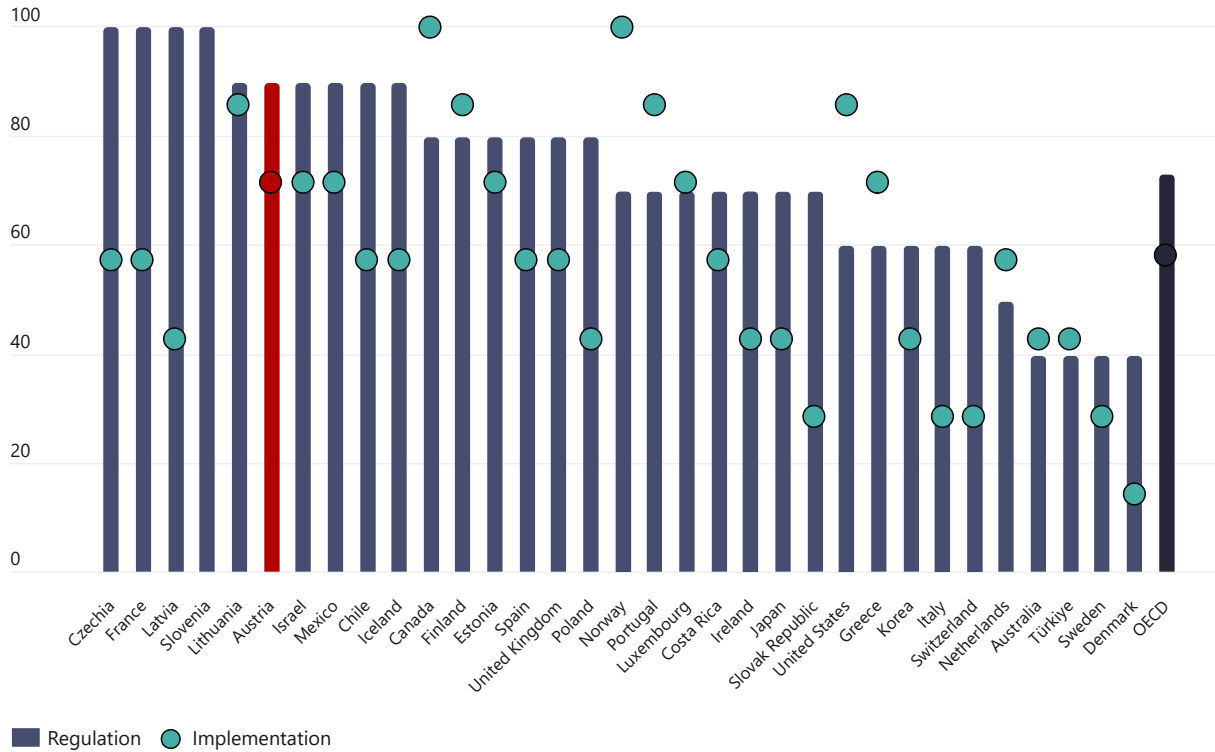


As measured against OECD standards on conflict of interest, Austria fulfils 67% of criteria for regulations but only 22% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 76% and 40%, respectively. The regulations define incompatibilities between public functions and other private or public activities and circumstances that can lead to conflict-of-interest situations. They outline submission procedures for interest declarations for members of Government and parliament and define sanctions for breaches of conflict-of-interest provisions.

The submission rate of interest declarations from members of parliament and Government is 100% for both categories of officials. However, there is no data for members of the highest bodies of the judiciary and newly appointed or reappointed top-tier civil servants of the executive branch as both are not required to submit interest declarations. Moreover, there is no systematic verification of declarations and no systematic issuing of recommendations for resolution conflict-of-interest cases.

Political finance

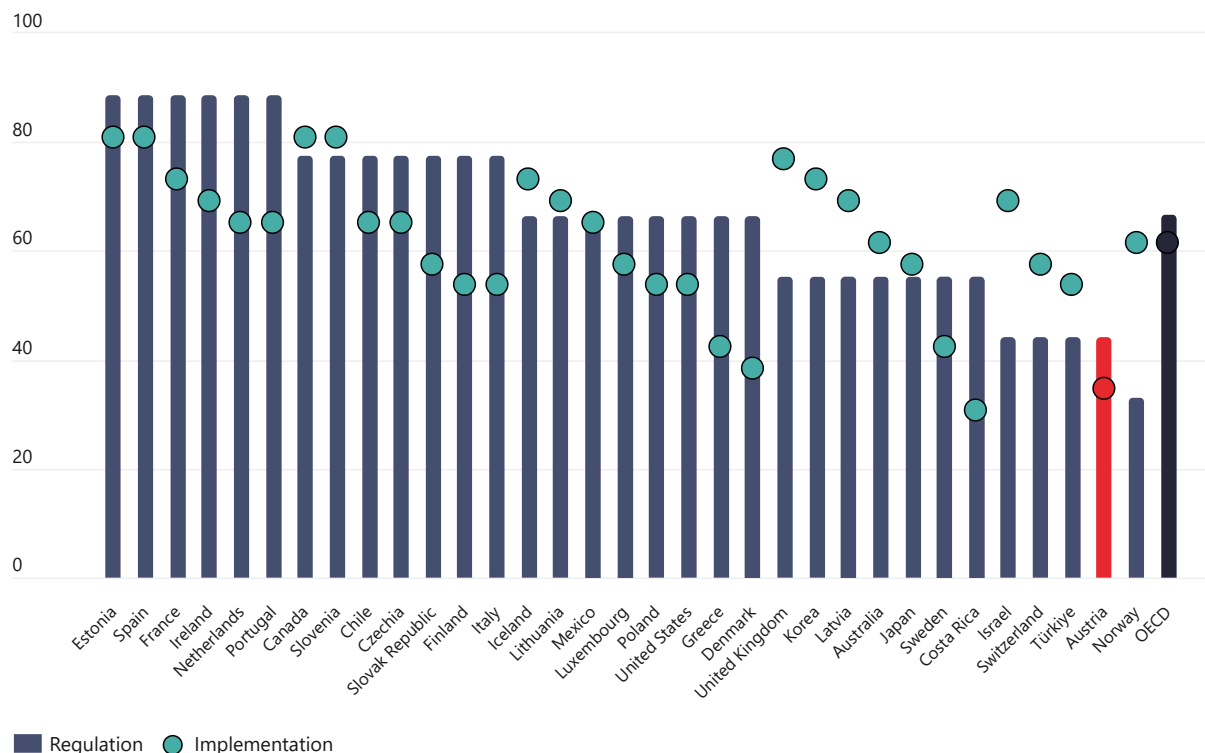
Figure 6. Political finance



As measured against OECD standards on political finance, Austria fulfils 90% of criteria for regulations and 71% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 73% and 58%, respectively. The country's framework includes personal liability for electoral candidates that violate the rules, proportionate sanctions, and bans on contributions from foreign states or enterprises, as well as publicly owned enterprises. Stringent limits on campaign expenses, comprehensive reporting requirements, and mandatory public disclosure of party finances are in place. However, there is neither a ban on anonymous donations nor a register for contributions made to political parties and/or candidates. Additionally, unlike approximately two thirds of OECD countries, financial reports from all parties in Austria are not publicly available on a single online platform.

Transparency of public information

Figure 7. Transparency of public information



As measured against OECD standards on public information, which include access to information and open data, Austria fulfils 44% of criteria for regulations and 35% for practice, compared to the OECD average of 67% and 62%, respectively. Austria's regulations entitle every person to submit requests for information but do not mention whether information is accessible in all available forms, and there is no requirement to provide information in the requested format. The restrictions on access to public information are not in line with the restrictions outlined in the Tromso Convention, which Austria has neither signed nor ratified. For example, information is only to be given to an extent that does not significantly impair the provision of other administrative tasks. Moreover, filing a request for information is not free of charge. There is neither a monitoring function nor a central government unit or independent body responsible for open data policy. Additionally, Austria does not have a supervisory body responsible for public information issues. Records of all decisions from government sessions are kept and a range of datasets proactively disclosed, such as consolidated versions of all primary laws, state budgets and election results. However, agendas of formal government sessions and Ministers' agendas are not published and no aggregated data on lobbying exists.