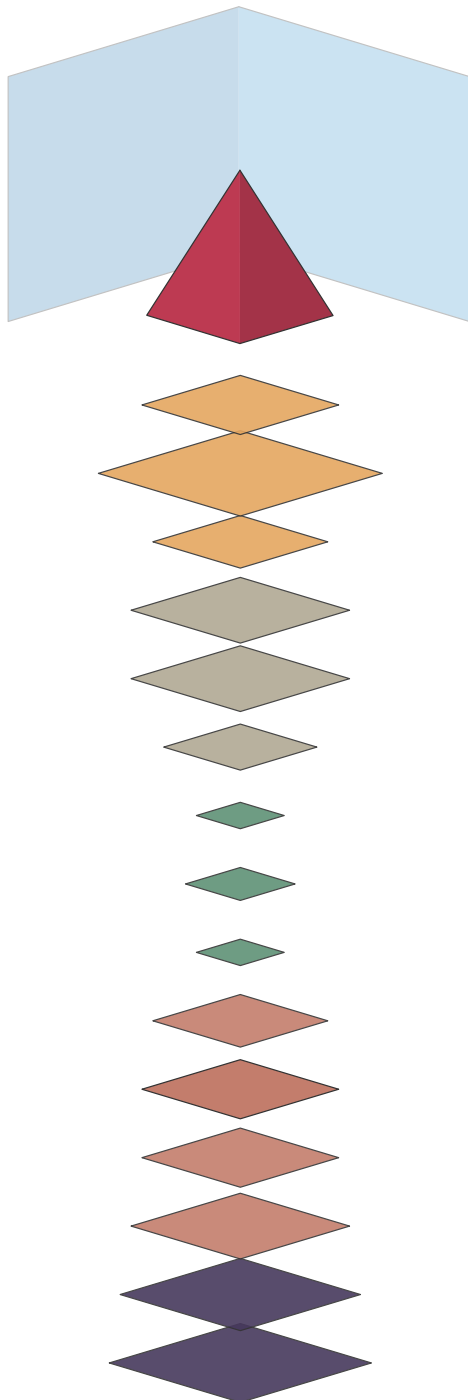
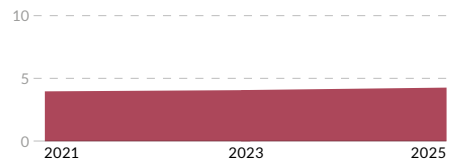


AUSTRIA



4.30 $\nearrow 0.17$ CRIMINALITY SCORE

139th of 193 countries $\nearrow 8$
31st of 44 European countries $\nearrow 2$
8th of 11 Western European countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.30 $\nearrow 0.13$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.00	$\searrow 0.50$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	3.50	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	2.00	0.00
FAUNA CRIMES	2.50	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	4.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.30 $\nearrow 0.20$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	2.00	$\nearrow 1.00$
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.50	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.00	0.00



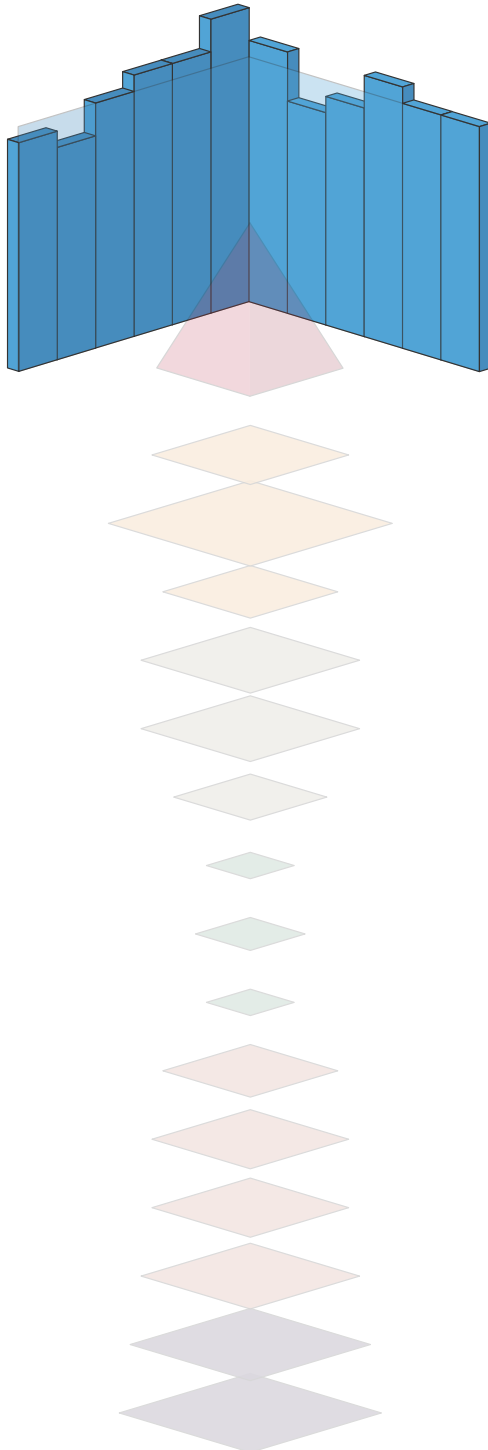
This project was funded in part
by a grant from the United
States Department of State.



Funded by
the European Union

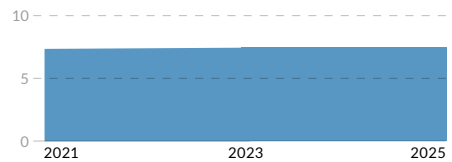
ENACT is funded by the European Union
and implemented by the Institute for
Security Studies and INTERPOL, in
affiliation with the Global Initiative Against
Transnational Organized Crime.

AUSTRIA



7.54 $\nearrow 0.04$ **RESILIENCE SCORE**

13th of 193 countries -
10th of 44 European countries -
4th of 11 Western European countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00	$\searrow 0.50$
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	6.50	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.50	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	8.00	0.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00	$\searrow 0.50$
LAW ENFORCEMENT	9.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.50	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	8.00	0.00
PREVENTION	7.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Austria functions as both a transit and destination country for human trafficking, with victims mainly exploited for sexual and labour purposes. The majority of victims originate from Eastern Europe, West Africa and East Asia, with notable numbers from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. Nigerian and Chinese victims are commonly exploited in massage parlors and brothels, while some Nigerian victims enter Austria as asylum seekers. Labour trafficking affects men and women from Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and China, particularly in the hospitality, construction, agricultural and domestic service sectors. Seasonal migrant workers are especially vulnerable during harvest seasons. Children, particularly Romani girls, and persons with physical and intellectual disabilities are exploited for forced begging and petty crime. While cases of trafficking for forced begging have declined in recent years, online recruitment for exploitation is rising, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Small mafia-style groups and biker gangs play a key role in human trafficking, often luring victims with fraudulent employment offers or false promises of romantic relationships.

Austria remains a significant hub for human smuggling, mainly along the Balkan Route. The country is a key transit point for irregular migrants seeking to enter Western Europe. Most individuals are smuggled from Türkiye and the broader Western Asia region, with Austria ranking among the top European destinations for irregular migration. Many smugglers originate from Syria, Romania, Iraq, Türkiye and Afghanistan. Smugglers often charge thousands of euros per person for passage into Europe. Austria has made extensive documentation and enforcement efforts, but its proximity to Hungary, which has a lax approach to border enforcement, worsens the smuggling problem.

Extortion and protection racketeering remain relatively rare in Austria, though isolated cases linked to mafia-style groups and biker gangs have been reported. Recent cases involving extreme violence, particularly among young perpetrators, suggest an alarming trend of organized extortion independent of traditional criminal organizations. Vienna is a hotspot, with restaurants, retail businesses and food service establishments being common targets.

TRADE

Austria has a notable firearms and ammunition manufacturing industry, but illicit arms trafficking is not a significant issue. However, criminal groups involved in drug and human trafficking often possess illicit firearms. Stockpiles of weapons from the former Yugoslavia and the Ukraine conflict have been noted as potential sources. Large-scale seizures have implicated outlaw motorcycle gangs and far-right extremist groups. The illicit arms trade mostly involves the smuggling of components.

Austria is a destination and transit point for counterfeit goods. The country is a major hub for counterfeit products in Europe, with significant shipments originating from China, Vietnam, Türkiye and Iran. The Austrian customs service has reported a dramatic increase in seizures of counterfeit goods in recent years. The most commonly trafficked counterfeit items include clothing, footwear and accessories. The flow of counterfeit medicinal products, particularly weight-loss drugs, has increased substantially, with a notable scandal involving fake Ozempic originating from Austria.

The illicit trade of excise consumer goods, particularly tobacco and nicotine products, remains limited in Austria. Legal tobacco prices are relatively low, reducing domestic demand for smuggled products. However, Austria is a known transit point for untaxed tobacco shipments, particularly from Slovakia and Hungary en route to the UK and Germany. In recent years, a significant number of untaxed cigarettes were seized in Austria, with international criminal networks coordinating logistics.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes are not a widespread issue in Austria. However, some cases of illegal logging and timber smuggling have been reported, often linked to trans-shipments. Austria serves mainly as a transit country for wildlife trafficking, with incidents of illegal imports and exports involving endangered species and animal parts used in traditional medicine products, including but not limited to ivory, alligator heads and caviar. Reports indicate an increasing volume of illicitly traded caviar, usually smuggled by travelers from Russia and former Soviet states.

Non-renewable resource crimes are not prevalent in Austria, but sporadic cases of gold smuggling have been documented. There are concerns about Austria's reliance on Russian oil imports and the potential involvement of illicit actors in this trade.

DRUGS

Austria remains a key transit point for heroin smuggling along the Balkan Route. Criminal groups from the Western Balkans dominate the trade, with street-level distribution often managed by Afghan and African actors alongside ethnic Serbs. While domestic heroin consumption is limited, prices remain high, restricting widespread use. Austria appears to serve mainly as a transit hub in the region rather than a primary consumer market.

Cocaine consumption and trafficking have increased with increasing availability and falling prices, particularly among young professionals. Western Balkan criminal groups dominate the trade, with supply routes originating in Spain and the Netherlands. Waste-water analyses have identified Vorarlberg and Tyrol as major consumption hubs. Law enforcement dismantled several organized crime networks involved in large-scale cocaine smuggling.

Cannabis remains the most commonly used illicit drug in Austria. While domestic production supplies part of the market, hashish is largely imported from Morocco via Spain and France. Transnational criminal groups from the Maghreb and the Western Balkans dominate the trade. Authorities are struggling to combat online drug sales via social media and encrypted messaging platforms. The possession and consumption of small quantities of cannabis are generally tolerated by Austrian law enforcement. This decriminalization for personal use has led to an increase in the number of cannabis shops across the country.

Synthetic drug trafficking remains stable, with Austria serving as a transit country for MDMA and amphetamine-based drugs originating from the Netherlands and Belgium. Local production is minimal, with few laboratories being discovered. Methamphetamine use is concentrated in Upper Austria.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Austria has seen a significant number of reported cybercrime incidents in recent years. Hacking and ransomware attacks are widespread. Cryptocurrencies are frequently used to commit cybercrimes. Austria has suffered a series of worrying cyber-attacks, notably ransomware attacks and data thefts, and cybercriminals have gained access to the government's citizen registry and sold stolen data online. High-profile cyberattacks in 2024 targeted Austrian government institutions, financial entities and corporations, some of them executed by pro-Russian hacker groups.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crime has become a growing concern in Austria, with investment fraud, social welfare fraud, tax fraud and embezzlement of public funds among the significant threats. More specifically, cyber-enabled fraud appears to

be the most prevalent financial crime in the country and has grown consistently over several years. While Austrian authorities have ramped up countermeasures, including using AI tools to combat fraud, they have not sufficiently curtailed the rise in financial crimes and continue to face ongoing scrutiny over their reportedly slow response to financial crime.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Austria have seen a resurgence. Since 2023, outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) such as the Hells Angels and Bandidos have expanded their presence, engaging in the drug trade, firearms trafficking and aspects of the sex industry. The Hells Angels, historically the dominant OMG in Austria, remain powerful, though their ageing membership contrasts with the expansionist ambitions of the Bandidos. The growing presence of the Bandidos has led to increased scrutiny from Austrian authorities, with security agencies monitoring potential turf wars. While Austria's mafia-style groups are less visible than counterparts in other European countries, their influence within criminal markets is growing, particularly in illicit economies such as drug trafficking and protection racketeering.

Loosely organized criminal networks in Austria are under-researched, making it difficult to assess comprehensively their structure, scope and activities. But available evidence suggests that various networks operate within Austria. Small local criminal networks have been identified in the drug market, particularly the cannabis trade, in which domestic production exists alongside foreign supply routes. These groups are also involved in human trafficking, human smuggling and firearms trafficking. Most of these networks operate with loose structures and often collaborate with international groups, particularly when engaging in cross-border offences. Due to the lack of detailed research, the extent of these networks' influence remains poorly understood. However, their presence is evident in Austria's organized crime landscape, particularly within markets where illicit activities overlap with transnational supply chains.

While there is no direct evidence of state-embedded actors being involved in running or facilitating organized crime markets in Austria, corruption remains a significant issue. The country has reported relatively high levels of corruption compared to other Western European nations. High-profile investigations and cases that came to light in recent years underscored concerns about collusion between political elites and illicit financial actors. Public sector corruption is perceived as a systemic issue, with media reports estimating that Austria has lost billions of euros to corruption.

Foreign criminal groups play a significant role in Austria's organized crime landscape, though many individuals involved are Austrian-born or naturalized citizens. The issue of foreign criminality is often politicized, with conservative and

far-right parties amplifying concerns over asylum seekers and migrant-linked crime. Young, single men awaiting asylum decisions are over-represented in crime statistics, though the reasons for this remain subject to debate. Criminal groups of Western Balkan origin are among the most prominent foreign actors in Austria, engaging in drug trafficking and turf wars, particularly in Carinthia. Serbian criminal groups are notably active, followed by Afghan networks, which have been involved in violent territorial disputes with Chechen groups. Turkish criminal actors have been implicated in human trafficking, smuggling, the counterfeit goods trade and illegal wildlife trafficking, while Romanian groups mainly engage in human smuggling and trafficking alongside German nationals. Other influential foreign criminal organizations include Nigerian and Chinese groups, which are involved in drug trafficking, counterfeit goods trade and sexual exploitation. Chechen criminal groups are engaged in arms trafficking, drug distribution and illegal gambling, while Italian mafias such as the Camorra, Cosa Nostra and 'Ndrangheta are involved in drug trafficking, money laundering and financial crimes. Reports indicate that the 'Ndrangheta has been expanding its presence in Austria in recent years, using the country as a base for laundering proceeds from illicit activities. Despite foreign groups' extensive involvement in Austria's organized crime

landscape, there is limited evidence to suggest that they control entire districts. However, political narratives around 'no-go areas', particularly in Vienna's Favoriten district, remain highly charged.

Private-sector actors' involvement in organized crime in Austria is poorly documented, and there has been limited government focus on investigating these connections. Nonetheless, corruption and illicit financial activities within the private sector remain a problem. Industries such as gambling have been linked to allegations of abuse of office and other offences, while money laundering through private businesses requires greater scrutiny. Financial crime and fraud are among the most prominent criminal activities involving private-sector actors. The Austrian Ministry of Finance has identified significant fraud schemes within cleaning businesses and professional gambling establishments. The sex industry, despite being decriminalized, remains largely controlled by organized crime groups, which indicates persistent regulatory shortcomings. Money laundering is another critical issue, with Austria's Federal Criminal Office reporting that nearly half of all identified money laundering cases had no clear link to a predicate crime. This large 'grey zone' suggests that some sectors of the formal economy may be unknowingly aiding illicit financial flows.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Austria maintains a coherent and effective system of governance, characterized by strong political institutions and adherence to democratic principles. The country's political stability remains intact, despite a 2021 political scandal that led to the resignation of the then prime minister and several senior ministers. However, public trust in political leadership remains affected by past crises, which have inflamed anger over cronyism and the appointment of unqualified officials. Investigations into corruption and economic crime are ongoing, although some senior figures remain in positions of power, obstructing inquiries.

Government transparency in Austria is relatively high compared to global standards but lags behind other EU countries. Austria has historically ranked low in international assessments of access to government information. In 2024, the government passed a bill aimed at abolishing official secrecy and establishing a Freedom of Information Act. However, this legislation has been criticized for lacking an independent oversight body and effective enforcement mechanisms. Political figures from major parties have faced corruption allegations. Investigations into bribery, false testimony and misuse of office have been ongoing, but gaps in anti-corruption measures persist. Austria's lack

of regulations on lobbying and conflicts of interest has also been identified as a significant concern.

Austria has a strong record of international cooperation in criminal matters. It is a party to major transnational organized crime conventions and actively engages in extradition, mutual legal assistance and joint investigation teams. The country participates in the EU's EMPACT platform, with a focus on combating human trafficking. Austria hosts key international organizations, including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), playing a significant role in regional security initiatives. Austria has also enhanced security cooperation with non-EU states, including Morocco and Türkiye, and has supported Ukraine's law enforcement reform through joint EU projects.

Austria's national policies and laws addressing transnational organized crime are robust and regularly reviewed. The country's criminal code criminalizes a broad range of offences, including human trafficking, smuggling and money laundering. However, some regulatory weaknesses remain, particularly in anti-corruption enforcement and arms trafficking laws. Moreover, while international instruments are mostly

implemented effectively, the drafting of government bills can be slow and is often hindered by political disagreements and a reluctance to confront corruption, collusion and government transparency. While Austria has adopted several reforms to enhance whistleblower protection and anti-corruption measures, these reforms have not been fully implemented.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Austria's judiciary is generally independent and enjoys public confidence, ranking among the highest in Europe for trust in the legal system. However, the appointment of judges by the executive rather than an independent body has raised concerns over political influence and the separation of powers. Efforts to establish an independent prosecutor's office have been delayed by political disagreements. Prison conditions in Austria have improved, with the addition of new facilities addressing previous concerns over inadequate infrastructure. But staffing shortages persist, and there are persistent reports of violence in prisons. Most inmates reported experiencing some form of violence during incarceration, indicating a need for further reforms in prison management.

Law enforcement in Austria is well-resourced and professional, with specialized units addressing organized crime, human trafficking and cybercrime. The country has increased funding for law enforcement, with new recruits and expanded investigative units. In 2024, Austria launched a national security centre focused on countering cybercrime, extremism and human smuggling. The state has also created new positions within the financial police and tax fraud investigation units to strengthen responses to financial crime. Instances of abuse of power or police brutality are very rare, with isolated incidents of police violence reported.

Austria's territorial integrity remains largely intact, with strong border security measures in place. While the country is a transit point for contraband due to its geographic position, authorities have taken measures to prevent human and drug trafficking through border operations and intelligence-sharing initiatives. For instance, Austria has also enhanced border security measures, increasing checks at the Czech border and extending Schengen border controls to combat irregular migration and organized crime. In 2024, Austria implemented new cybersecurity measures, including the establishment of a national action plan against deepfakes and enhanced cybercrime detection frameworks for law enforcement.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Austria has robust anti-money laundering laws and institutions for detecting and preventing financial crimes. The country's Financial Intelligence Unit plays a central role in combating money laundering and terrorism financing, participating in international initiatives such as the Egmont Group

and the Financial Action Task Force. However, concerns remain about Austria's banking secrecy laws, which have historically facilitated financial crimes. Reports indicate an increase in the use of shell companies for fraudulent activities, underscoring the need for stronger oversight of financial transactions.

Austria's economic regulatory environment is strong, but bureaucratic hurdles have slowed growth. The country has made efforts to regulate financial markets and strengthen consumer protections. However, concerns over online trade fraud, particularly involving Far East vendors using Austrian-registered shell companies, have increased. Cash transactions remain prevalent, with over two-thirds of purchases made in cash, raising challenges for financial transparency and oversight. Efforts to establish joint customs zones with neighbouring countries, such as the Austria-Slovenia-Italy corridor, are aimed at enhancing trade efficiency while ensuring regulatory compliance.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Austria provides extensive support services for victims and witnesses of crime, including specialized legal assistance, shelters and trauma-informed testimony procedures. The government has increased funding for NGOs that help victims of human trafficking. Despite these efforts, victim identification remains inadequate, particularly of trafficking victims, and this limits victims' access to protection services. Reports indicate that victim compensation also remains inadequate, with EU institutions calling for stronger financial restitution mechanisms.

Prevention efforts in Austria are multifaceted, with national strategies targeting organized crime through educational campaigns, community initiatives and re-integration programmes for offenders. The government's anti-asylum campaign, launched to deter irregular migration, has sparked controversy, with critics questioning its effectiveness and its ethical ramifications. However, the initiative has coincided with a reduction in migrant smuggling reports. Austria continues to strengthen crime prevention efforts through international cooperation, hosting major conferences on human trafficking and transnational crime. Awareness campaigns addressing issues such as sexual violence and drug-facilitated assault have also gained traction, supported by law enforcement and victim advocacy groups.

Austria's civil society sector is strong, with a vast network of NGOs operating in the country. While NGOs have freedom to operate, concerns have been raised about their dependence on state funding, which may deter advocacy on politically sensitive issues. Media independence remains at risk, with allegations of government interference in public broadcasting and financial support favouring tabloid media. Libel laws continue to be used by political figures to silence critical reporting and the government has been given a deadline to reform public broadcasting appointment

processes. Despite these challenges, Austria maintains a diverse media landscape which reports independently on organized crime.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.