The Austrian Bar: Structure – Activities – Facts

7,265 lawyers and 2,370 trainee lawyers

In Austria there have been 7,265 lawyers by 31st December 2025 (114 thereof are established European lawyers) and 2,370 trainee lawyers. About 25,6 per cent of lawyers and 52,6 per cent of trainee lawyers are women.

9 regional Bars

The nine regional Bars ("Rechtsanwaltskammern") are as public corporations autonomous self-governing bodies of the lawyers and trainee lawyers in their respective state. They manage their affairs partly directly in the plenary assemblies ("Plenarversammlungen") and partly indirectly through their Board ("Ausschuss"). In addition to the tasks such as entries in the list of lawyers and trainee lawyers, fee management, old-age and survivors' pensions of the professional members and service activities, the Bars have the right to examine draft laws related to their respective state. The disciplinary council members, who are directly elected by the plenary assembly of the respective regional Bar monitor the compliance with the professional obligations of lawyers and trainee lawyers.

President's Council

The President's Council ("Präsidentenrat") is in particular responsible for the definition of the principles of the legal professions policy and the legal framework policy to be pursued. Members are the presidents of the nine Bars.

Austrian Bar - „Österreichischer Rechtsanwaltskammertag"

Umbrella organisation of the regional Bars in Austria is the Austrian Bar ("Österreichischer Rechtsanwaltskammertag" - ÖRAK), a public body based in Vienna. It is responsible for the protection of the rights and affairs of the Austrian Bar at large as well as for their representation. The duties of the president of the Austrian Bar are to implement the professional policies of the President's Council and to represent the political positions towards political policymakers as well as towards the public.

„Wahrnehmungsbericht" and evaluation of laws

The Lawyers' Act entrusts the Austrian Bar with the regular monitoring of the handling and implementation of laws as well as the co-operation with justice, administration and all public organisations in practice. This includes the detection of deficiencies as well as the recommendation of improvement proposals. On top of that experts of the Bars annually examine a multitude of law- and

regulation-drafts for its lawfulness and feasibility. All advisory opinions to national and European legislation are available under www.oerak.at. The "Wahrnehmungsbericht" is available at www.wahrnehmungsbericht.at. With these actions the Austrian Bar shapes and promotes the legal compliance and further development of the rule of law.

Independence and Professional secrecy

The lawyer is an independent representative and advisor, who is only bound and responsible to his/her client. He/she protects and defends the rights of the individual vis-à-vis the state and asserts them. Vis-à-vis third parties he/she is committed to absolute discretion. Professional secrecy is legally protected, so that full independence from the state is ensured.

Education and Expertise

A condition for the practise of the profession is a completed study of Austrian law, five years professional experience, at least seven months thereof at court or a public prosecutor's office and three years practice with a lawyer, as well as the bar exam, which guarantees a comprehensive knowledge of the substantial fields of law. This exam must be taken before an examining board of the higher regional court. Only after passing the test and a positive assessment of the trustworthiness the lawyer can be entered on the list of lawyers (at the relevant Bar).

Austrian Bar and Europe

As a member of the CCBE (Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe) the Austrian Bar is actively involved in the law of the legal profession as well as the legislation in Europe. Since 2004 the Austrian Bar has its own Brussels office.

Legal Aid

2025 Austrian lawyers have carried out legal aid 20,230 times. The value of these services performed, which ensures socially disadvantaged an often survive-necessary legal advice, totalled over 49 million euros.

"Erste Anwaltliche Auskunft"

The "Erste Anwaltliche Auskunft" is an unbureaucratic assistance, which can be obtained by all citizens at the Bars in the several states free of charge. 10.000 citizens made use of this service in 2025.

24 hours stand-by legal counselling service

Thanks to the legal counselling service arrested suspects/defendants can consult a lawyer from 24/7 through a hotline free of charge (0800 376 386) anytime immediately. The first call and the first telephone consultation are free of charge. All information on the stand-by legal counselling service ("Rechtsanwaltlicher Bereitschaftsdienst") is available under www.verteidigernotruf.at.

Register for the last will and the living will

Last wills can be registered electronically in the register for the last will of the Austrian lawyers. In the process the circumstance of the establishment as well as the place of the deposition are documented so that actually the last will can be found by the notary public. The register of the Austrian lawyers for the living will works similar to this to minimize a possibly crucial loss of time - when searching for the living will - in this particular register not only the circumstance of the establishment but also the living will itself are recorded.

E-Government, Lawyers Documents Archive

Austrian lawyers are European leaders in electronic legal communication. The electronic lawyer ID card, which was implemented in the middle of 2004, has found international attention. Together with the electronic signature it allows to handle numerous activities for the client on-line. The land and commercial register or the central "Melderegister" can be inspected electronically, actions for payment before court can be done by mouse-click and the payment transactions with the finance can be done via FinanzOnline. The lawyers documents archive "Archivium" allows a swift and cost-saving electronic storage of documents.

Arbitration courts

Since 2002 there are arbitral courts and arbitration boards established at each Bar, thereby disputes can be settled out of court, swiftly and cost-saving.

Lawyer's Magazine

The Lawyer's Magazine ("*Anwaltsblatt*") is the official publication organ of the Austrian lawyers, which is published by the Austrian Bar. It includes both specialist legal information (in particular for the professional conduct of lawyers), as well as official releases and many other information. The Lawyer's Magazine is published 6 times a year. In addition, the news portal of the Austrian Bar Association is available at www.anwaltsblatt.at.

New Legal Fields, Mediation

A trend of specialization can be observed particularly in densely populated areas. New fields of expertise, as for example internet, domain or data law, have developed according to the economic and social development. Furthermore ever more lawyers have further training in the area of mediation, which aims at out of court settlement of disputes.

Law per mouse click

Under www.oerak.at you can learn about service facilities of the lawyers, current information and law tips ("Rechtstipps"), useful links as well as the

one and only official Austrian lawyers' directory, which is constantly updated and includes comprehensive search functions.

Fees

Each lawyer can charge his/her activities differently. Best, one inquires beforehand and fixes a fee, which can be agreed freely. Commissions or broker wages are without exception forbidden for lawyers. The information leaflet "Mein Recht ist kostbar" available at www.oerak.at gives an overview.

Brochure „Recht einfach"

Lacking information frightens off many individuals to take up legal advice at all. In order to be able to give the citizens a better overview and to point out how manifold the activity areas of the lawyers are, the ÖRAK has published an information brochure "Recht einfach". The brochure is available at all district courts or directly at the homepage www.oerak.at where it can be requested and/or downloaded free of charge.

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