

0.22% GENUINE AID/GNI

0.41% TOTAL AID/GNI

# AUSTRIA



“If we finally applied pressure on the African states, and cut their development cooperation funds or other European grants when they were not willing to take back refugees, then they would change their policies.”

Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, June 2017

## MAIN CHANGES IN 2016

For the second consecutive year Austria's ODA rose significantly – from 0.35% in 2015 to 0.41% in 2016 – mainly owing to increased costs for in-donor refugees. There was also an increase in multilateral contributions. In-donor refugee costs account for 38% of Austria's ODA – the highest share of all DAC members. In comparison, the programmable budget of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) accounted for merely 5.6% of total ODA in 2016.

While the government announced an increase in the Disaster Relief Fund (Auslandskatastrophen-fonds) from €5 m to €20 m for 2016, preliminary OECD data shows an increase in humanitarian aid of only €3 m. Transparency and a strategy for humanitarian aid and for the Disaster Relief Fund are both lacking. Decisions on where and how to spend the increased funding are made on an ad hoc basis by the Austrian council of ministers. Austrian Development Cooperation is increasingly shifting its attention to the countries of origin of refugees/migrants, and to transit countries, in order to prevent people from coming to Europe. As a result, NGOs are concerned about the potential instrumentalisation of aid and about aid being diverted away from fighting poverty, from tackling the root causes of poverty, and from helping those most in need.

## TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS FOR 2017

The government announced that it would increase the ADA's budget by €15.5 m annually from 2017, to give a total budget of €154 m per annum by 2021. A transparent spending plan for this budget has yet to materialise, however. It is not yet clear how the budget for 2017 has been allocated, or which countries have benefited from the increased funding. So far, it looks as though the increased budget has been allocated predominantly to migration-related purposes. There have been no new announcements, for example, on any increase in the budgets for the ADA's usual priority countries – for which funds have been decreasing in recent years.

In 2017 a new three-year programme for development policy will be produced, which will highlight migration issues. Civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders have been invited to provide input on selected topics. The government is contemplating further aligning the development programme

with Austrian national interests, placing a stronger focus on migration and security. This is likely to result in more aid being allocated to “countries of origin”, with existing partner countries that are not associated with migration towards Europe being left behind.

The government, politicians and political parties show limited interest in implementing the SDGs in Austria. Despite progress on identifying them as an important global challenge, there is no common, overall government strategy, nor is there any high-level political support for the goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT

- Implement the government's commitment to raise ODA to 0.7% of GNI, to reach the LDC target of 0.15–0.20%, and draw up a binding timetable for reaching these goals.
- Ensure that all development programmes, in particular the new three-year one, focus exclusively on the goal of fighting multidimensional poverty and inequality.
- Develop a general, overall, whole-of-government strategy for implementing the SDGs, addressing policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) and including broad participation by civil society.
- Develop a strategy for the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund to provide predictable financing for long- and short-term relief.

## AUSTRIA - GENUINE AND INFLATED AID (€ million, constant 2015)

