



Legal Regulations to build up HE strategies - Austria

PLAR-U-PAGs

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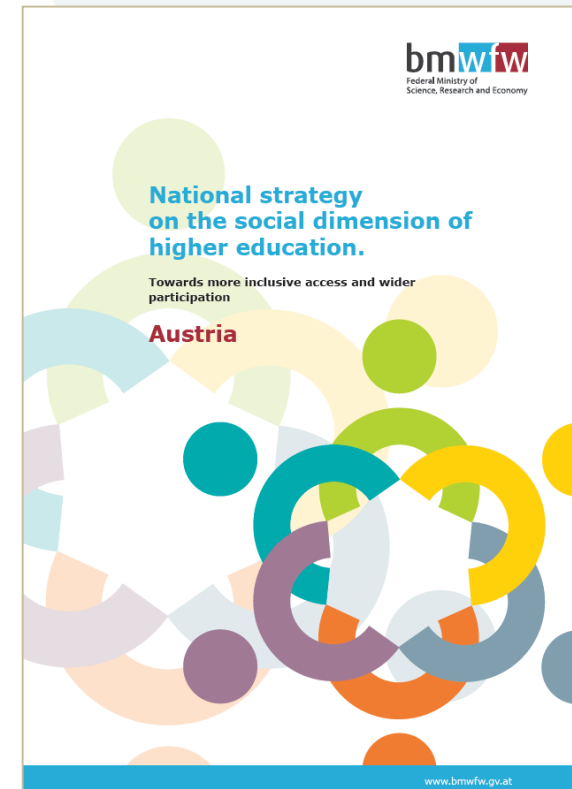
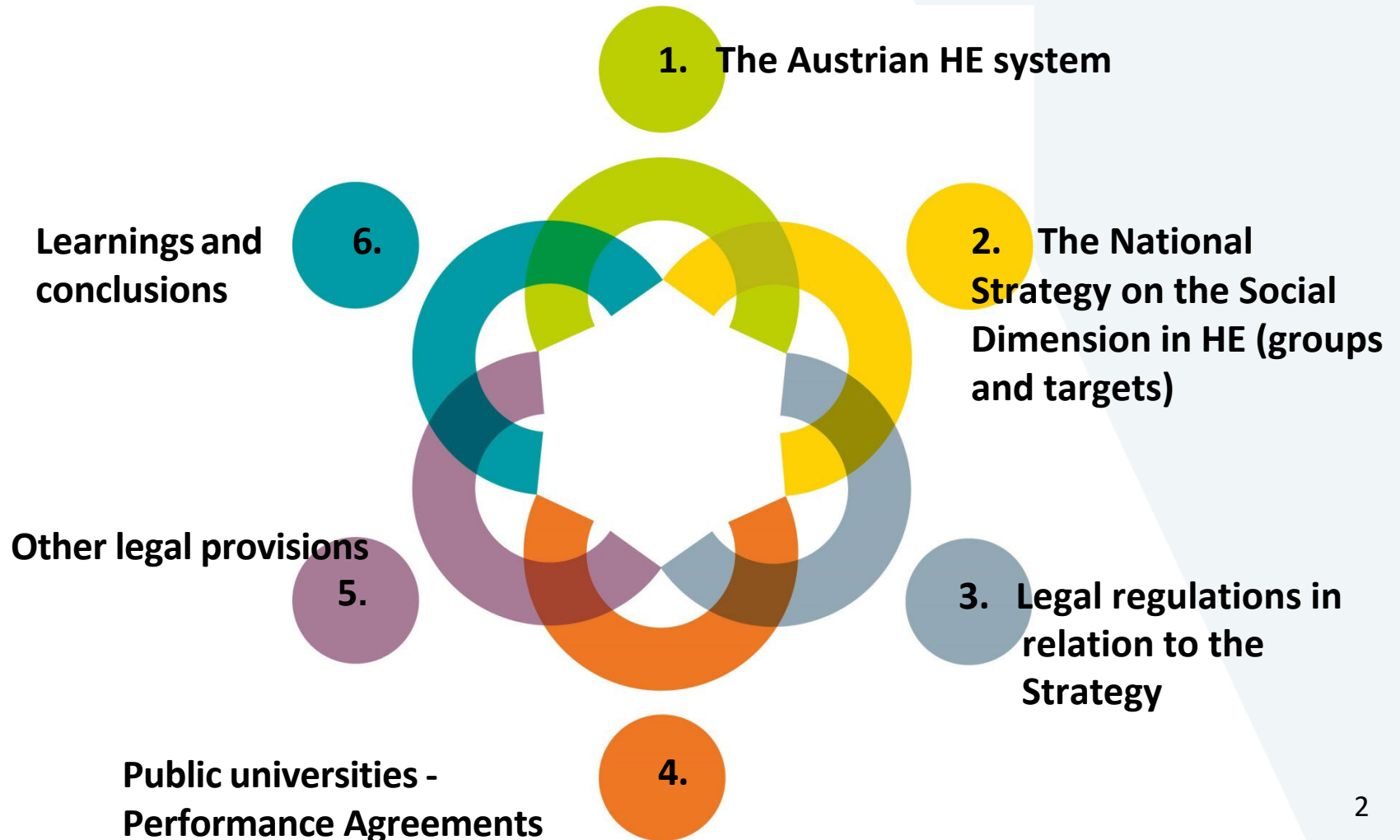


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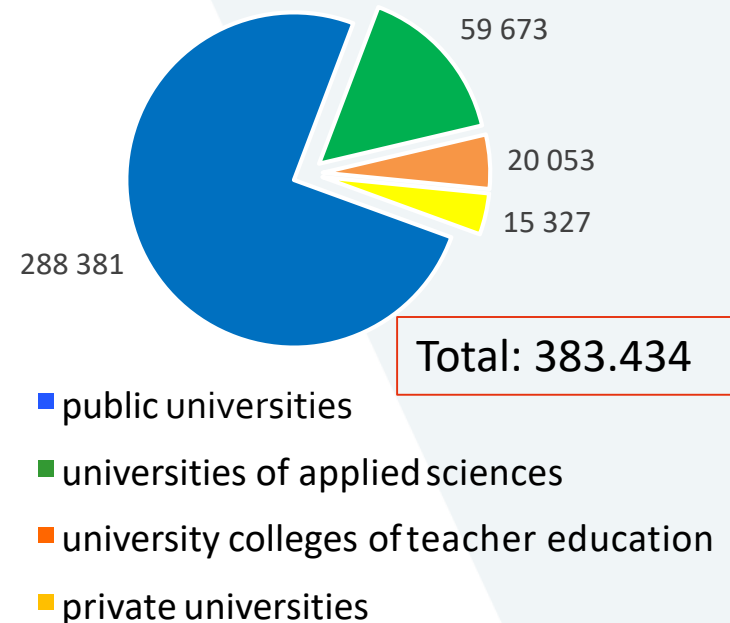


Introduction: Higher Education in Austria

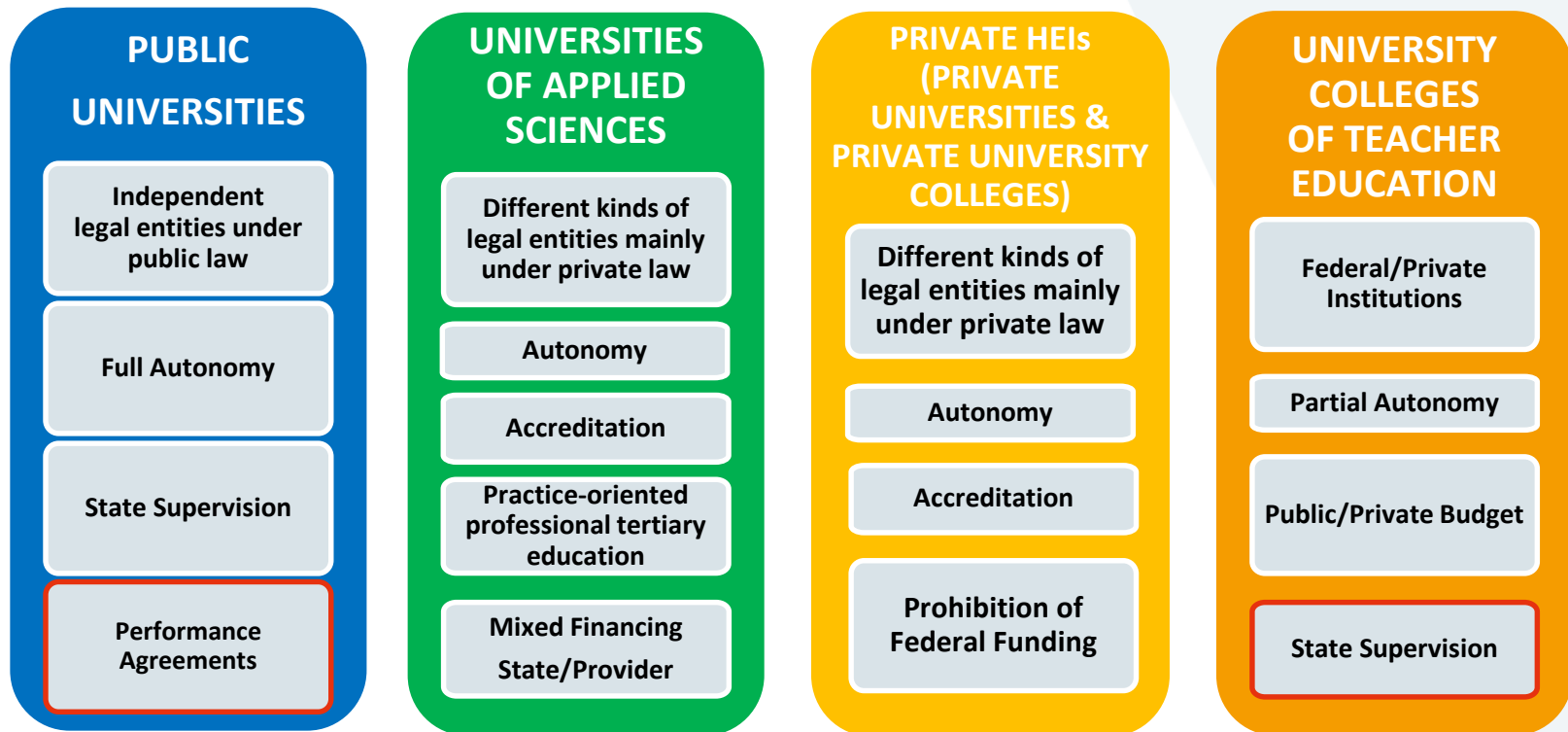
Types of HE institutions

- **22 public universities** (indicator based funding, performance agreements)
- **21 universities of applied sciences** (mix of funding based on the standard costing systems, 90% funded federally, fixed amount per study place)
- **14 university colleges of teacher education** (9 public → direct funding, fixed educational budget; 5 private)
- **16 private universities + 1 private university college** (no federal public funding)

Students enrolled (winter term 2021)



Characteristics of the 4 sectors of Austrian Higher Education



Introduction: national HE policy from 2015 to 2023

2015	2023
<p>Government's programme 2013-18: “support the compatibility of work and study and to provide non-traditional access to the entire higher education sector”</p> <p>Output-oriented budgeting: raise quota of students with parents without HE entrance qualification as target</p> <p>GUEP (2016-21): National Development Plan for Public Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance of all social classes in education and training• Equal appreciation of vocational training and HE <p>Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences through to 2017/18: Offers for special target groups, e.g. people in full-time or part-time employment</p> <p>Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences 2018/19-2022/23: Implementation of National Strategy on the SD; develop institutional action plans; RPL</p>	<p>Government's programme 2020: „further develop legal provisions ...to strengthen RPL, compatibility, development of admission system“</p> <p>Output-oriented budgeting: ✓✓</p> <p>GUEP (2022-27): National Development Plan for Public Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• System goal on SD - implementation of National Strategy; Social dimension mainstreaming <p>Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences 2023/24-2025/26: Implementation of National Strategy on the SD; institutional strategies; RPL</p> <p>HMIS (2020) “HE Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus on underrepresented groups <p>Recommendations of the Austrian “HE Conference” (2021) regarding distance learning</p> <p>HOP “Higher Education Plan 2030”</p>

National strategy on the SD of HE - timeline

2015

- Political commitment to have a National strategy
- Start of development process with stakeholders

2017

- Publication of strategy
- First successes of implementation

2018

- UG 2002, §12: new funding system for public universities

2021

- Mid-term evaluation

2022

- 5 years experience of implementation

2025

- Final evaluation

Underrepresented groups and groups with specific needs in Austrian HE

Underrepresented groups

- Students whose parents don't have a HE entrance qualification
- Men/women in certain study fields
- Students with migrant backgrounds (with an Austrian entrance qualification)
- Students with a disability and/or chronic illness
- **Groups with specific needs**
- Students with children/care responsibilities
- Students with disability/chronic illness
- Students with delayed/non-traditional entry to higher education (i.e. at least two years since leaving school or “second chance” education)
- Students in employment

National Strategy on the SD in HE: 3 Target Dimensions

Target Dimension I: More inclusive access

- AL 1: Improve quality and accessibility of information materials
- AL 2: Outreach activities and diversity-sensitive course guidance
- AL 3: Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal skills

Target Dimension II: Avoid drop-out and improve academic success

- AL 4: Ease entry into higher education
- AL 5: Structure of study programmes and quality of teaching
- AL 6: Increase compatibility of studies with other areas of life

Target Dimension III: Create basic parameters and optimize regulation of higher education policy

- AL 7: System-related issues in higher education
- AL 8: Integrate SD into strategic planning for HE and create appropriate governance structures
- AL 9: Further develop the Student Support Scheme

National Strategy on the SD in HE: 9 Quantitative Goals

1. Increase the number of „educationally disadvantaged“ students in HE
2. Widen inclusive access
3. Promote gender balance
4. Widen participation for students with migrant background
5. Strive for regional balance in HE access
6. Promote social dimension in mobility
7. Improve compatibility
8. Raise number of received student grants
9. Promote equal opportunity in medicine studies

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Legal regulations in relation to the SD strategy - Public universities

- Integration of the SD into the new public university funding system – 0,5% of the overall global university budgets can be retained by the federal minister (Amendment 2018 to Universities Act 2002, §12a, par.4)
- Integration of SD into the **performance agreements 2019-2021**
 - More than 1/3 of public universities have developed institutional SD strategies
 - Other universities are systematically implementing SD measures
 - Along with the performance agreements 2019-2021: **tender on digital and social transformation of HE, 50 mio €**

Present and future of SD in performance agreements

- **2022-2024**
 - 3 more universities adopt their own institutional SD strategies
 - systematical implementation and evaluation of measures
 - Other universities are systematically implementing SD measures
 - **Inflation** put financial pressure on universities: additions to PAs agreed
 - so far very **few adaptations** concerning SD measures, budget-cuts elsewhere
 - financial value of SD budget retention: 400.000 up to 8 mio. €
- **2025-2027: PA process has just started**

Process of SD budgeting, PA 2022-24



Decision of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to implement the budget retention in the same way for all universities

Q4/2020

Communication of the procedure to the universities (basis letter)

2021

Negotiation and definition of the projects in the PA for the promotion of the social dimension in higher education, the implementation of which will be linked to the budget retention; framework of report

Q3/2023

(written) Report of the university on the implementation within the process of the 4th PA monitoring meeting



After positive review: transfer of budget funds

National Strategy: results of interim evaluations

Target Dimension I: More inclusive access

- a lot of new (digital) outreach and peer-programmes
- Often focused on underrepresented groups
- Anecdotal evidence for high impact, but hard to measure empirically

Target Dimension II: Avoid drop-out and improve academic success

- on-boarding of students still a challenge: previous knowledge very heterogeneous
- highly increased demand for mental health counselling
- Find right balance between in-person networking und digital education

Target Dimension III: Create basic parameters and optimize regulation of higher education policy

- HE institutions need different sorts of guidance vs. central, national strategy
- restructuring of TD after 2025?

Other HE Policy Measures

- **2018/19:** Integration of SD into the “**Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) through to 2023/24**”, expansion to UAS sector
- **2020: HMIS 2020-2030 “Higher Education Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy”**, focus on underrepresented groups
- **2020-2022: Covid-19 measures**
 - Expansion of Psychological Student Counseling
 - One-time top-up for recipients of student support
- **Amendments to student support act**
 - 2017: higher financial support, higher share of recipients
 - 2020: prolongations of deadlines and other adaptations to the pandemic situation
 - 2022: automatic inflation adjustment of most social security funds

Other HE Policy Measures: Validation

New legal provisions regarding „**recognition**“ – validation procedures

- Four HE sectors – four legal regulations
- §78 UG, §56 HG, §12 FHG, §8 Priv.HG
 - RPL max. 60 ECTS
 - non-formal max. 60 → together max. 90 ECTS
 - application for validation until end of 2nd semester the latest
- AQ Austria to counsel HEIs on implementation
 - Austrian RPL network
 - European RPL network

UAS and Private HEIs (Private Universities)

- Universities of Applied Sciences
 - no legal provisions
 - SD as very important topic in UAS-Development Plan up to 2025/26
- Private universities
 - no legal provisions
 - SD Mainstreaming through networking

University Colleges of Teacher Education

Each University College of Teacher Education has to establish an **expert unit for gender- and diversity competences** (taking into account several steering documents, e.g. National Strategy on SD; decree on equity and gender pedagogy; Higher Education Conference-Recommendations with regard to widening gender competence in higher education processes, UN SDG 4 and 5)

- To be established by 2024
- Grundsatzterlass „Reflexive Geschlechterpädagogik und Gleichstellung“, decree on gender pedagogy and gender equality
- Performance and target agreements for each institution (2022-2024)
- No additional funding, but 2 persons per expert unit (counselling function at the rectorate)

New degrees

- Degrees for continuing education: Ba (Ce), Ma (Ce)
- Degrees for professional education: Ba (Prof.) Ma (Prof)
- in order to improve pathways into and through higher education

Learnings and Conclusions

Legal provisions support implementation

Without legal provisions:

- Mainstream (steering documents; networking conferences, ..)
- Monitor (improve data to provide evidence)
- Evaluate (anecdotal evidence is insufficient for policy development)
- Adjust (if data and evaluation show that measures need adjustment)
- Relaunch (e.g. Austrian SD strategy after 2025)

And – keep networking!

Thank you for your attention!

I am looking forward to questions &
comments 😊

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