



Austria

The **Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development (SD)** identifies solutions through education and research as one of the key objectives for sustainable development. The underlying objective is to halve the number of people without completed education by the year 2015. Other objectives of the SD strategy include Sustainable Lifestyles, empowerment of all generations, gender equality, protecting environmental media and climate, fighting poverty and creating a social and economic balance.

Austrian Education Strategy for Sustainable Development

Martin Heinrich, co-author of the **Austrian Education Strategy for Sustainable Development**, highlighted two initiatives by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management: the commissioning of a group of experts to develop a framework concept for Sustainable Development and initiating a dialogue process for the development of the Austrian Education for Sustainable Development strategy. He sees the need for “a fundamental reorientation in politics, society and the economy encompassing all spheres of life” and a common basis for communication between all actors and participating groups.

Projects/Initiatives

Ecologisation of Schools- Education for Sustainability (ECOLOG)

A key action programme and network on the ecologisation of schools and education for sustainability was developed by an Austrian team of teachers working on the international project ‘Environment and School Initiatives’ (ENSI) (Posch 1999) in the 1990s, as a national support system aimed at promoting and integrating the development of individual schools. The programme was initiated in the School Networks in 2001 by the Ministry of Education. Ecolog is the first and main Austrian programme for schools at the interface of Environmental Education and School development. It is based on the ENSI approach to EE and ESD taking into account the challenges and opportunities of school autonomy and school programme development. Schools define ecological, technical and social conditions of their environment and on the basis of these results, define objectives, targets and/or concrete activities and quality criteria, to be implemented and evaluated.

National environmental performance award for schools and educational institutions

This is a government-based award, the criteria for which were put in force in January 2002. About half of the 120 criteria relate to EE, the school curriculum and school development. The other half refer to technical aspects such as energy saving. The award is valid for three years, after which the obligatory external evaluation has to be renewed (see <http://www.umweltzeichen.at/schulen>).