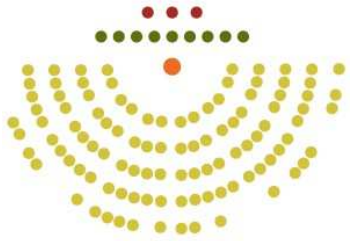


Transparency and Trust: case study Austria

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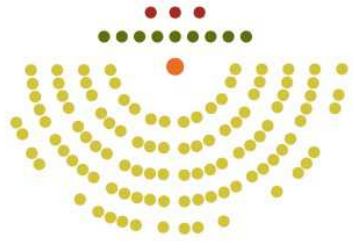
About "Meine Abgeordneten"

Online since November 2011.

Includes 407 Dossiers of Austrian politicians:

Nationalrat ✓
Bundesrat ✓
EU-Parlament ✓
Bundesregierung ✓
Bundespräsident ✓
EU-Kommissar ✓

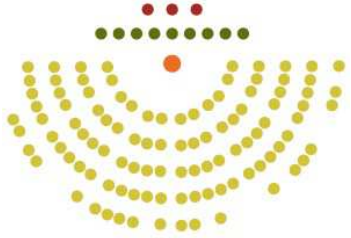
Volksanwaltschaft ✓
Rechnungshofpräsident ✓
Landesregierung ✓
Landtag ✓
Landeshauptmann/frau ✓



Offenlegungs/Nebeneinkünfte Gesetz: Changes since 2011

2012: MPs and federal state deputies had to report additional sources of income „Nebeneinkünfte“ above €1.142,50 per year. Breaking the law had no consequences, how much they really earned was not visible. It was published in a well hidden .pdf spreadsheet on the website of the parliament.

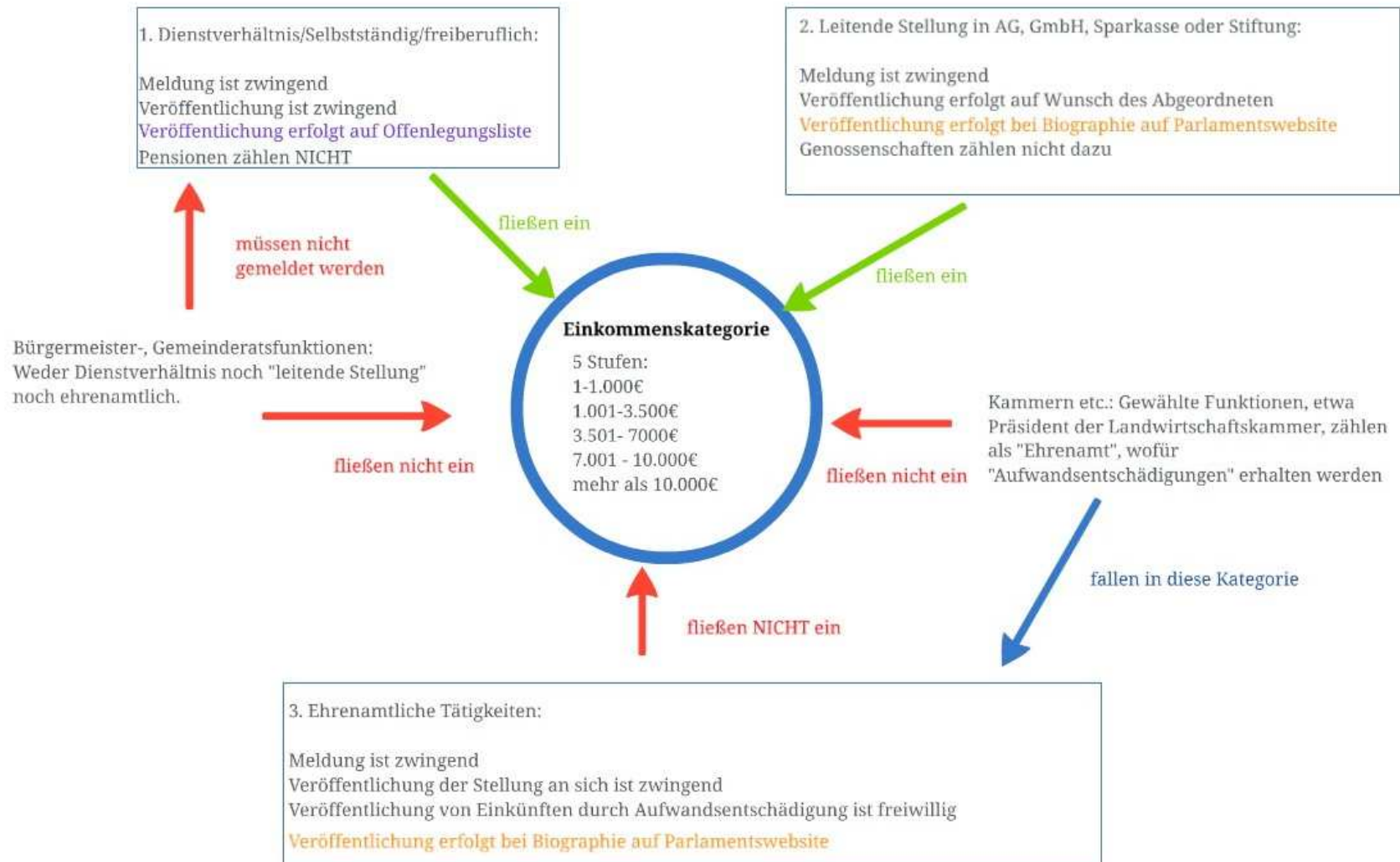
"Meine Abgeordneten" startet a media campaign and by beginning of 2012 the .pdf was linked from the first page. Many MPs reported „new jobs“. A public discussion began.



Offenlegungs/Nebeneinkünfte Gesetz: Changes since 2011

June 2012: A new law was passed and implemented in 2013. It turned out, that some mistakes were made. The discussion started again.

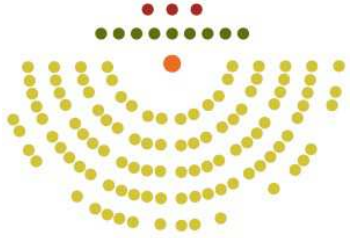
Abgeordnete: Meldung der Einkommenshöhe von Nebentätigkeiten



www.meineabgeordneten.at

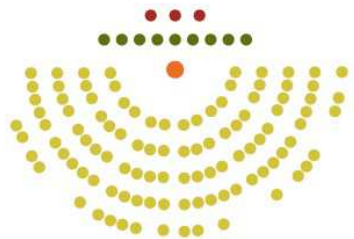
 twitter.com/meineabg

 facebook.com/MeineAbgeordneten



Offenlegungs/Nebeneinkünfte Gesetz: Changes since 2011

Summer 2013: The law was repaired. Now also the Leading Positions e.g. companies or foundations and the income as Mayor or Representation Allowance for Honorary Posts in Chambers or economic interest groups must be reported.

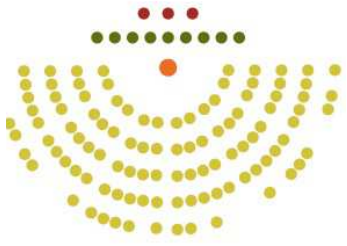


Offenlegungs/Nebeneinkünfte Gesetz: speaking of trust?

The Austrian law is far behind the German, the UK or on the EU parliament level:

It has no sanctions, if it is broken. It is not clear how much is earned in what position.

The last income step is above € 10.000,-
Selfemployed (lawyers, advisors) need not report their client structure.
eg owning a company does not need to be reported.



Offenlegungs/Nebeneinkünfte Gesetz: speaking of trust?

We need to make visible, what Austrian politicians stand for and do.

„Do“ includes their work within the parliament (eg committees) but also outside.

We need to do that in a way, people UNDERSTAND it.

Background to Transparency Package

- Internal pressure loss of trust (financial scandals, corruption charges)
 - External pressure (GRECO reports)
 - Party Laws from 1975 outdated and not meeting international standards with little transparency on income and professional and remunerative activities of public office holders, lack of internal audits
- (Laws and transparency package can be found on www.ris.bka.gv.at and www.parliament.gv.at as well as the osce page of legislation online).

Transparency package was negotiated at speed, little consultations, and (election year 2013) and later oversights resulting from hasty drafting and unclear provisions had to be repaired.

Definitions of Political Parties and importance in Austria

Political parties Act 2012 political parties legally defined "permanently organised association which through common activities aims at comprehensively influencing the national decision making process in particular by participating in elections for general representative bodies and the European Parliament" this addressed a point in Greco report that no legal definition of political parties (9.12. 2011 p.3)

Parties are obliged to publish by laws (statutes) on the Internet (still no laws on promoting women for election, minimum membership or intra party democracy, a political party can but does not have to stand for elections) but include details of executive bodies, rights and obligations of members, structure of party and provisions on voluntary dissolution.

Political Parties Acts and Reform

The law refers to political parties as above and campaigning parties (wahlwerbende partei) as group of voters participating in the election campaign for a representative body or EP under distinctive party name drawing up a party list.

Statement of accounts has to be published and checked by National Court of Audit but it has no powers of investigation and cannot check records of the political parties

Reforms

The reforms were greeted by experts as a step in the right direction and brought Austria into line with modern standards
The parties now have internal audits
First statements will come in Autumn of 2014

Laws did not cover parliamentary groups (Klubs)

Outlooks

- Transparency package and restoration of trust was short lived
- Scandals of the past resurged to haunt the government
- Political and parliamentary culture lacking adequate crisis management
- Increased transparency does not always bring increase trust levels
- Codes of Conduct at ministerial and parliamentary level could help plug the gaps in legislation (grey areas)

**Thank you for your
attention!**

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