

# AUSTRIA



**POPULATION:** 8.2 million (246 people per square mile)

**CAPITAL:** Vienna

**STATUS:** Federal Republic

## CULTURAL NOTES:

High environmental awareness. Close trading relationship with Germany, as well as political, cultural and linguistic affinity. Follows same general policy trends. Austria joined the EC relatively recently, in 1995.

## RETAIL SYSTEMS:

Big refillables market for beverages. Retailers must provide receptacles for secondary packaging.



## MSW DISPOSAL:

89% landfill; 11% incineration with energy recovery. Estimated overall plastics recovery rate over 33% in 1995.

## DEPOSITS AND FEES:

Mandatory deposit of ÖS 4 on refillable plastic beverage containers; otherwise voluntary deposits on refillables.

## PACKAGE RECYCLING MANDATES:

Austria has come the closest to copying Germany in its “manufacturers responsibility” system for packaging. Industry is solely responsible for ensuring collection of used packaging. New rates for beverages in the most recent amendment to the packaging ordinance are back-dated to 1996. Product-specific container reuse and recycling targets, ranging for 96% for water to 80% for milk, were replaced with a single 80% target for all beverages, which are now defined broadly to include the most possible products. The targets are calculated by adding the total proportion of beverages in refillable containers plus the proportion of packaging recycled and recovered by weight. The government expects all rates to be met or exceeded in 2001. The ‘Objectives’ ordinance, amended in 1996, also set limits on disposal of used packaging other than through recycling or energy recovery. The limits are as follows:

<i>Material</i>	<i>1998 in metric tonnes</i>	<i>2001</i>
<i>Glass</i>	<i>54,000</i>	<i>38,000</i>
<i>Paper &amp; Board</i>	<i>140,000</i>	<i>99,000</i>
<i>Plastics</i>	<i>90,000</i>	<i>60,000</i>
<i>Metals</i>	<i>36,000</i>	<i>17,000</i>
<i>Composites</i>	<i>50,000</i>	<i>30,000</i>

The revised ordinance requires that a certain percentage of each type of packaging material must be delivered for recycling (excluding refillables). *The targets include: glass 70%; plastics 20%; paper 60%; metals 50%; composites for beverages 20%; and other composites 10%.*

Small manufacturers/distributors are exempt -- for example, if they handle 300 kg/yr or less of board. Companies not joining a third party organization must comply with reporting requirements. The ordinance also requires **degradable wastes** to be separately collected from households. Durable packaging (e.g. CD cases, game boxes, etc.) is exempt.

The revised law creates a new category of 'large waste holders.' If you send your packaged part or product to a large waste holder (registered as such--only 19 have done so) you do not have any take-back obligation, and that generator must ensure recovery of its own wastes. Auto and electronics sectors tend to dominate this category, according to Perchards.

Companies opting to do their own take-back must prove they are recovering to target levels; if they recover less, they must pay a PRO the difference between what they recover and their total PKG (complementary licensing).

After the third revision that came into force January 2001, the ordinance still limits the landfilling of packaging, but only the limit on glass will be progressively tightened. The amendments also stipulate disposal limits be counted by materials placed on the market by sampling and industry figures and then sampling the packaging in landfills. The count, to be done every three years, is the method required by the 1996 version of the regulation.

A survey conducted by the Austrian Environment Ministry (Spring 1999) found that half of all Austrian companies ignore the packaging waste law. 300 businesses out of the 600 surveyed, had neither collected packaging nor paid into ARA, the main national collection system. Most compliance problems come from plastic packaging, which is more difficult to collect and recycle. Austria is estimated to produce 170,000 - 190,000 tons of plastics per year, of which only 90,000 tons can be accounted for under the ARA system. According to Perchards, Austria now appears to be getting a grip on its free rider problem. Top up fees paid to ARA by companies complying individually rose to 18.8 million ÖS in 1998, a 41% increase on 1997 figure. The authorities have stepped up their monitoring activities.

The Austrian government commissioned a study (July '99) to help decide whether any changes to the packaging reuse and recovery targets were necessary. The study examined market trends, such as the increasing switch to PET and environmental factors, and may recommend altering reuse/recovery targets. Recovery/reuse targets for drinks containers and landfill limits for other packaging waste are being debated, targets may be adjusted in line with market changes or separate rules for drinks containers could be introduced.

A **voluntary agreement** was reached in September 2000 requiring industry to achieve 50% PET material recycling by 2004. Consumers can choose between refillables and non-refillable beverage containers, but beer will be delivered predominantly in refillables. In the first annual report published in June 2001, 59% of all beverages were supplied in refillable containers in 2000. The refill rates by sector are as follows: mineral water (64.6%), soft drinks (42.7%), beer (85.3%) and fruit juices (17.5%).

#### **TRANSPORT PACKAGING MANDATES:**

The packaging ordinance applies equally to commercial and industrial packaging. Altstoff Recycling Austria (ARA) has been handling both types of packaging. However, the government is encouraging other schemes to avoid a monopoly. Other schemes for transport packaging have appeared recently (see PROs below).

#### **CODING:**

All plastic packaging of any type must be coded; no SPI chasing arrows required; use ISO resin abbreviations. The Austrian code is somewhat similar to the SPI Code but without chasing arrows. PET would be PET (Not PETE as in the U.S.); HDPE would be PE-HD; Polypropylene, PP; Low-Density, PE-LD; Polystyrene, PS; and Polyvinyl chloride, PVC (Not V as in the U.S.). Exemptions: dangerous goods, drugs, sterile medical, skin packs, gift packs, un-printed films, sacks, films with area less than .125 m<sup>2</sup> or rigid pkg with capacity less than 100 ml.

**BANS:** Phthalate softeners in PVC toys, some batteries.

#### **OTHER WASTE STREAMS:**

Takeback obligation for **batteries** (c. 60% collected in 1999), takeback obligation and deposit schemes for **refrigerators** (takeback rate 53%) & **fluorescent tubes** (collection rate declining), mandatory separate collection of **hazardous household wastes, kitchen & yard wastes**.

The batteries take-back law covers all batteries, and is more stringent than the EC Directive. The law requires a **crossed-out dustbin** and a **crossed-out lavatory** on all batteries.

A 1994 draft on **electronics takeback legislation** calls for a mandatory takeback scheme involving manufacturers and distributors. The scheme was proposed to be financed by a surcharge on new products. For now collection is voluntary. Legislation is stalled and Austria is waiting for the EC to act,

although industry is being encouraged to plan for collection and treatment. A voluntary agreement on automobiles was renewed in 1996 (takeback charge for final owner of \$70-130), but may not be effective enough to meet the requirements of the ELV Directive. (*See Electronics report, due spring 2002*)

**Proposed Revisions:** Austria has drawn up a comprehensive new act that encompasses detailed rules for several specific sectors in its national waste legislation. The draft waste management act covers end-of-life-vehicles (ELVs), some electrical waste, refrigerators and packaging, and proposes streamlining Austria's bureaucratic licensing procedures and complex legislative competencies in a new framework. The ambitious and reformed waste law now meets EU directives while providing 'clear definitions of waste'. However, the law does not classify material recovered during production process as waste. Several new ordinances dealing with different waste streams are to be complemented by simplified waste notification and licensing procedures. Licensing will be dealt with by a comprehensive ordinance combining the needs of conservation, highways, planning, heritage protection. The ELV ordinance would provide for disposal and dismantling costs to be split between importers and holders of vehicles as allowed for in the EU directive, which must be transposed in all member states by April.

**DOMESTIC ECOLABELING PROGRAM:**

National scheme launched 1991: 36 product groups have been agreed to (including refrigerators, paper, varnishes, filing systems, washing machines, wooden furniture, detergents, paints, publications, playthings for outdoor use, compostable paper bags, tickets for public transport, newsprint and refillable bottles). The Green Dot labeling exists but is not mandatory.

**Recovery Organizations for Industry:**

Altstoff Recycling Austria (ARA) was set up to provide an integrated service for household and commercial / industrial packaging waste. Its **Green Dot** license fees have been falling steadily as collection and treatment becomes more efficient. They fell by 13% in 2000. ARA's unexpected surplus may allow it to reduce its fees in 2002. Income in 2000 increased to ÖS 2,543 (185 million euros) or ÖS 246 million (11%) above budget, in part due to new membership. In 1999 income was 17% above budget. The surplus would be refunded pro rata to the material recycling organizations if they account for it next year's fee calculations. In 2000, the organization collected 14,000 new 'bring' containers and added 150,000 households to curbside.

**ARA LICENSE FEES 2002**

<b>ARA PACKAGING MATERIAL FEE in €/ kg</b>	<b>2002 Fees</b>
<b>Sales packaging</b> in paper, board, corrugated board	0.150
Paper transport pkg	0.063
Non-refillable glass	0.085
Wood	0.023
Ceramic	0.290
Ferrous metals (containers with capacity of up to 10 l & other ferrous metal pkg)	0.360
Ferrous metals (capacity above 10 l)	0.180
Aluminum	0.430
Textiles	0.460
Small plastics (incl. small plastic packs with "special" contents)	0.810
Large plastics: (Containers over 5 l, Films over 1.5 m <sup>2</sup> or 0.15 kg, EPS foams over 0.1 kg, incl. large plastic packs with special contents)	0.400
Composites (excl. beverage cartons)	0.750
<b>Commercial/Industrial plastics</b>	

ARA PACKAGING MATERIAL FEE in €/ kg	2002 Fees
LDPE & LLDPE pallet wrap 1.5 m <sup>2</sup> Minimum Annual quan. = 3 tonnes	0.250
C&I containers HDPE; PP & sacks of LDPE, PE/PP & plastic cartridges as of 2002	0.250

Note: ARA defines a **heavy-duty bag** as one with min. 15 kg capacity. Companies that license heavy-duty bags are partly refunded based on the paper fee schedule for the average share produced by trade and industry. Special agreements required. Companies using disposable **PET containers** are also eligible for a partial refund. Separate agreement required.

*Separate Öko-box scheme for recovery of beverage cartons.*

ARA has developed simplified reporting procedures for the electronics, grocery, clothing, shoes, tiles, mail order, medical/diagnostic equipment and household furniture sectors. Under an agreement with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, small companies can pay a one-time fee based on gross sales of ÖS \$1,500.

As you can see above, from January 2002, reduced packaging rates will begin to apply for sales and transport board packaging, plastic transport and steel sales packaging. This will save the industry at least about €13.8 million compared with fees in 2001.

The ARA has about 12,000 licensees; it is a ÖS 2.7 billion operation. About half of the packaging collected is commercial; of that more than 90% was recycled, 10% incinerated.

#### Other Recycling Organizations:

Examples of other schemes for transport packaging include EVA, which is a subsidiary of Interseroh, the big recycling cooperative based in Germany. 1999 fees in ÖS per metric ton were as follows against which the updated fees for the year 2002 are being provided.

ARA PACKAGING MATERIAL	€ per kg	
	2001	2002
Paper/board transport packaging (less 0.102 euro refund for commercial or industrial end-users of paper sacks >15 kg capacity)	0.0778	0.063
Paper/board sales packaging	0.1824	0.150
Non-refillable glass	0.0872	0.085
Refillable glass	-	-
Wood	0.0225	0.023
Ceramic	0.2907	0.290
Ferrous metals <10l (<3 litres from 1.1.02)	0.3990	0.360
Ferrous metals \$10 l (\$3 litres from 1.1.02)	0.1955	0.180
Aluminium	0.4615	0.430
Textiles	0.6497	0.460
Small Plastics (<1.5 m <sup>2</sup> or < 0.15 kg) (refunds for PET non-refillables in certain circumstances)	0.8604	0.810
Large Plastics	0.4666	0.400
Composites (excluding beverage cartons)	0.7543	0.750
<i>C&amp;I plastic packaging (if more than 3 tonnes licensed):</i>		
Pallet films, (L(L)DPE), tray films (LDPE), plastic strapping	0.2892	0.250
Containers (HDPE, PP) >5 l Sacks (LDPE, PE/PP) > 25 l	0.2892	0.250

**FRS BONUS** was set up to compete with ARA on plastics collection, since ARA's fees are high. It is owned by Hamburger Unterland, a plastics converter. Its 1999 fees fell to 5.15/kg for most plastics. In

fact, here is a table to show Bonus's latest fees which has been on a decline since 1999. It has complained to the EC about ARA's dominance of the market. The company's strength is its offer of free containers and free transport to end-users.

### FRS Fees

Material	euros per kg	
	2001	2002
Paper/board (sales & transport)	0.08	0.062
Paper and laminated sacks	0.09	0.078
P E films, sacks	0.29	0.248
PE & PP containers	0.29	0.248
Other plastics (PE & PUR foams, strapping, etc)	0.29	0.248
EPS	0.47	0.380
Wood	0.02	0.022
Metal pails, tubes, cans and steel	0.19	0.178
Jute sacks	0.65	0.455

#### AUTO PARTS:

**PORR & Eco Management** recovers packaging used in the motor vehicle parts industry.

#### COMPOSTING:

**INK** was established in 1994 to develop and promote composting in response to a new requirement for composting of household and garden wastes, activated in July 1994. The non-profit group will negotiate contracts with local authorities, a marking system, fees, and license marks.

#### CONTACTS:

**ARA** (Altstoff Recycling Austria - in charge of collecting packaging waste), Mariahilferstrasse 123, A-1062 Vienna, Austria. Tel +43 1 599 970; Fax: 43 1 595 3535. [www.ara.at](http://www.ara.at) Distributors handle paperwork.

**Altpapier Recycling Organizations GmbH** Gumpendorfer Strabe 6, 1061 Vienna, Austria tel+43 1 581 3500 - 0 (fax) +43 1 581 39 91 [www.aro.at](http://www.aro.at)

**EVA GmbH** Ungargasse 35 1030 Wien, Austria Tel. + 43 1 714 2005; Fax +43 1 714 2005 40

**Bonus Holystem fur Verpackungen** Professor Sinwel Weg 1 6330 Kulstein, Austria Tel. +43 5372 61082; Fax +43 5372 61083

**Oko-Box** Tel. +43 1 505 1280 Frau Schmidt or Herr List at the **Environment Ministry** tel+43 1 711 580 . Fax: 43 1 522 3103. [www.bmu.gr.at](http://www.bmu.gr.at)

**Competent Body for Domestic Eco-labelling:** Ministry of the Environment, Youth and Family, Radetzkystrasse 2, 1031 Vienna, Austria. Tel. +43 1 711 58 4211; Fax: 43 1 711 58 4276.

**Austrian Packaging Centre**, Tel. +43 1 501 05 3045; Fax: 43 1 502 06 253