

PRESS FACTSHEET

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Austria's notarial profession

There are 483 notarial offices all over Austria staffed with 850 law experts. Notarial offices also exist in economically disadvantaged regions. This ensures a comprehensive provision of legal services on a national scale.

Presidents

Dr. Klaus Woschnak has been president of the Austrian Chamber of Civil-Law Notaries since October 2003, assisted by Dr. Engelbert Petrasch and Dr. Bernhard Frizberg as vice-presidents.

Core competencies

Notarial core competencies range from the provision of legal advice to contracts, real-estate and escrow accounts, corporate law and family law, authentications and certifications in succession and probate matters.

Escrow accounts

For decades, notaries have been enjoying high public confidence when administering escrow accounts or real estate transactions. Rightly so, as Austria's notaries have set up facilities such as an Escrow Register and Notartreuhandbank, a specialised bank for the administration of escrows. In 2007, Austria's notaries transacted about 30,000 purchases of buildings, land or apartments as trustees.

Corporate partners

Companies are increasingly realising that, beyond the formation or transfer of

companies, civil-law notaries are reliable and competent partners when it comes to the provision of legal advice in all business matters.

cyberDOC

Legal services such as the calculation of real-estate acquisition tax or the registration of escrow accounts and of wills and testaments have been conducted on-line for years. In a joint venture with Siemens, Austria's notaries have set up the first fully electronic document archive to pave the way for e-government.

Preventing lawsuits

As experts in settling business without litigation, civil-law notaries avert costly lawsuits. They help ensure a maximum of legal certainty by providing legal advice and by drafting contracts and deeds.

Mediation

More than 50 civil-law notaries have additional qualifications as mediators. They assist individuals and companies in settling disputes amicably and avoid litigation in court, which is often costly and tedious.

Court commissioners

A major part of a notary's statutory duties relates to probate and custodial cases. In 2007, Austrian civil-law notaries acted as court commissioners in some 80,000 cases. 11% of all business conducted on behalf of the courts was carried out free of charge.

Training

Notarial training is among the most comprehensive in the law professions. The minimum time of practical training required after obtaining a law degree is 7 years. 20% of the current 380 candidate notaries are women; their share is increasing.

Notarial Academy

The Notarial Academy is a dedicated training and further education institute. In addition to providing subject-specific training, it runs courses on quality management, corporate management, marketing and mediation. Since 2000, all notaries must spend at least 12 hours per year on further education. In 2005, the Notarial Academy hosted some 200 seminars, which drew an audience of 4,500 participants.

478 notarial offices in Austria

Currently, there are 478 notarial offices all over Austria.

The first-time legal advice is free of charge.

All of Austria's 483 notaries provide first-time legal advice free of charge. More than 70,000 individuals and companies used this service in 2005. For legal hints and client information, visit our homepage at www.notar.at.

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