

Confidentiality

Austria

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Also available at:

http://www.statistik.at/web_en/about_us/responsibilities_and_principles/confidentiality

Confidentiality of statistics

The strict confidentiality provisions of the Austrian Federal Statistics Act 2000 regulate the handling of sensitive data relating to individuals and organisations.

- The Statistics Act contains measures for the protection of the right to confidentiality of individuals and organisations as well as measures for ensuring the confidentiality of micro data. These include the deletion of names and addresses at the earliest possible moment and the obligation of secrecy imposed on persons entrusted with tasks of official statistics.
- Compliance with confidentiality provisions is monitored by a data protection agent who acts as an internal controlling body.
- Any breach of confidentiality is grounds for prosecution and may be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.

Security of data

Official statistics rely on the trust of citizens, in particular those who contribute to the compilation of a statistical product as respondents. For Statistics Austria, confidentiality of statistical data is therefore more than a legal duty: Ensuring statistical confidentiality through technical and organisational measures is in Statistics Austria's own best interests.

- An internal directive on data security regulates staff's handling of personal data.

- Employees are obliged to issue a written commitment stating their full compliance with all provisions on data security.

Trust of respondents

Persons providing information to Statistics Austria can be assured that their personal data are used exclusively for statistical purposes. Data are treated confidentially and must not be passed on to third parties, be they official, private or of another nature. There has been no infringement of confidentiality since official statistics began in Austria. Some respondents may fear that their personal data will be misused, but this fear is completely unfounded.