

**Globalized Election
Weekly Report
April 06, 2010 to May 13, 2010**

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Week # 118

The Austrian presidential election took place on 25 April 2010. It was the twelfth election of an Austrian head of state since 1951. The candidates were Heinz Fischer, Barbara Rosenkranz (FPÖ) and Rudolf Gehring. Heinz Fischer won with just under 80% of the valid votes. The turnout was on the historic low of about 50%.

Austria

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Austria

Republic of Austria

Capital (and largest city)	Vienna 48°12′N 16°21′E
Official language(s) Recognised regional languages	German Slovene, Croatian, and Hungarian
Ethnic groups	82.5% Austrians
Demonym	Austrian
Government	Federal Parliamentary republic
- President	Heinz Fischer
- Chancellor	Werner Faymann
Independence	July 27, 1955 (Duchy: 1156, Austrian Empire: Austrian State Treaty in 1804, First force Austrian Republic: 1918–1938, Second Republic since 1945)
EU accession	January 1, 1995
Area	
- Total	83,872 km ² (115th) 32,383 sq mi
- Water (%)	1.7
Population	

-	2009 estimate	8,356,707
-	2001 census	8,032,926
-	Density	99/km ² 257/sq mi
GDP (PPP)	2009 estimate	
-	Total	\$322.506 billion
-	Per capita	\$38,839
GDP (nominal)	2009 estimate	
-	Total	\$381.880 billion
-	Per capita	\$45,989

1. INTRODUCTION

Austria officially the **Republic of Austria** is a landlocked country of roughly 8.3 million people in Central Europe. It borders Germany and the Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia and Hungary to the east, Slovenia and Italy to the south, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west. The territory of Austria covers 83,872 square kilometres (32,383 sq mi), and has a temperate and alpine climate. Austria's terrain is highly mountainous due to the presence of the Alps; only 32% of the country is below 500 metres (1,640 ft), and its highest point is 3,797 metres (12,457 ft). The majority of the population speaks German, which is also the country's official language. Other local official languages are Croatian, Hungarian and Slovene.

The origins of Austria date back to the time of the Roman Empire when a Celtic kingdom was conquered by the Romans in approximately 15 BC, and later became Noricum, a Roman province, in the mid 1st century AD—an area which mostly encloses today's Austria. In 788 AD, the Frankish king Charlemagne conquered the area, and introduced Christianity. Under the native Habsburg dynasty, Austria became one of the great powers of Europe. In 1867, the Austrian Empire was reformed into Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in 1918 with the end of World War I. After establishing the First

Austrian Republic in 1919 Austria was de facto annexed into Greater Germany by the Nazi regime in the so-called Anschluss in 1938. This lasted until the end of World War II in 1945, after which Austria was occupied by the Allies. In 1955, the Austrian State Treaty re-established Austria as a sovereign state, ending the occupation. In the same year, the Austrian Parliament created the Declaration of Neutrality which declared that the country would become permanently neutral.

Today, Austria is a parliamentary representative democracy comprising nine federal states. The capital—and with a population exceeding 1.6 million, Austria's largest city—is Vienna. Austria is one of the richest countries in the world, with a nominal per capita GDP of \$43,570. The country has developed a high standard of living, and in 2008 was ranked 14th in the world for its Human Development Index. Austria has been a member of the United Nations since 1955, joined the European Union in 1995, and is a founder of the OECD. Austria also signed the Schengen Agreement in 1995, and adopted the European currency, the euro, in 1999.

History

Settled in ancient times, the Central European land that is now Austria was occupied in pre-Roman times by various Celtic tribes. The Celtic kingdom of Noricum was later claimed by the Roman Empire and made a province. Present day Petronell-Carnuntum in Eastern Austria was an important army camp turned capital city in what became known as the Upper Pannonia province. Fifty thousand people called Carnuntum home for nearly 400 years.

After the fall of the Roman Empire the area was invaded by Bavarians, Slavs and Avars. The Slavic tribe of the Carantanians migrated into the Alps, and established the realm of Carantania, which covered much of eastern and central Austrian territory. Charlemagne conquered the area in 788 AD, encouraged colonisation and introduced Christianity. As part of Eastern Francia, the core areas that now encompass Austria were bequeathed to the house of Babenberg.

The area was known as the *marchia Orientalis* and was given to Leopold of Babenberg in 976.

The first record showing the name Austria is from 996 where it is written as *Ostarrîchi*, referring to the territory of the Babenberg March. In 1156 the Privilegium Minus elevated Austria to the status of a duchy. In 1192, the Babenbergs also acquired the Duchy of Styria. With the death of Frederick II in 1246, the line of the Babenbergs went extinct.

As a result Otakar II of Bohemia effectively assumed control of the duchies of Austria, Styria and Carinthia. His reign came to an end with his defeat at Dürnkrut at the hands of Rudolf I of Germany in 1278. Thereafter, until World War I, Austria's history was largely that of its ruling dynasty, the Habsburgs.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Habsburgs began to accumulate other provinces in the vicinity of the Duchy of Austria. In 1438 Duke Albert V of Austria was chosen as the successor to his father-in-law, Emperor Sigismund. Although Albert himself only reigned for a year, henceforth every emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was a Habsburg, with only one exception.

The Habsburgs began also to accumulate lands far from the hereditary lands. In 1477 Archduke Maximilian, only son of Emperor Frederick III, married the heiress Maria of Burgundy, thus acquiring most of the Netherlands for the family.^{[22][23]} His son Philip the Fair married the heiress of Castile and Aragon, and thus acquired Spain and its Italian, African and New World appendages for the Habsburgs. In 1526 following the Battle of Mohács, Bohemia and the part of Hungary not occupied by the Ottomans came under Austrian rule. Ottoman expansion into Hungary led to frequent conflicts between the two empires, particularly evident in the so-called Long War of 1593 to 1606.

During the long reign of Leopold I (1657–1705) and following the successful defense of Vienna in 1683 (under the command of the King of Poland, John III Sobieski), a series of campaigns resulted in bringing all of Hungary to Austrian control by the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699.

Emperor Charles VI relinquished many of the fairly impressive gains the empire made in the previous years, largely due to his apprehensions at the imminent extinction of the House of Habsburg. Charles was willing to offer concrete advantages in territory and authority in exchange for other powers' worthless recognitions of the Pragmatic Sanction that made his daughter Maria Theresa his heir. With the rise of Prussia the Austrian–Prussian dualism began in Germany. Austria participated, together with Prussia and Russia, in the first and the third of the three Partitions of Poland (in 1772 and 1795).

Austria later became engaged in a war with Revolutionary France, at the beginning highly unsuccessful, with successive defeats at the hands of Napoleon meaning the end of the old Holy Roman Empire in 1806. Two years earlier,^[26] in 1804, the Empire of Austria was founded. In 1814 Austria was part of the Allied forces that invaded France and brought to an end the Napoleonic Wars.

It thus emerged from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 as one of four of the continent's dominant powers and a recognised great power. The same year, the German Confederation, (*Deutscher Bund*) was founded under the presidency of Austria. Because of unsolved social, political and national conflicts the German lands were shaken by the 1848 revolution aiming to create a unified Germany. A unified Germany would have been possible either as a Greater Germany, or a Greater Austria or just the German Confederation without Austria at all. As Austria was not willing to relinquish its German-speaking territories to what would become the German Empire of 1848, the crown of the newly-formed empire was offered to the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. In 1864 Austria and Prussia fought together against Denmark, and successfully freed the independent duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Nevertheless as they could not agree on a

solution to the administration of the two duchies, they fought in 1866 the Austro-Prussian War. Defeated by Prussia in the Battle of Königgrätz,^[27] Austria had to leave the German Confederation and subsequently no longer took part in German politics.

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the *Ausgleich*, provided for a dual sovereignty, the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary, under Franz Joseph I.^[30] The Austrian-Hungarian rule of this diverse empire included various Slavic groups including Croats, Czechs, Poles, Rusyns, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenes and Ukrainians, as well as large Italian and Romanian communities.

As a result, ruling Austria–Hungary became increasingly difficult in an age of emerging nationalist movements. Yet the government of Austria tried its best to be accommodating in some respects: The *Reichsgesetzblatt*, publishing the laws and ordinances of Cisleithania, was issued in eight languages, all national groups were entitled to schools in their own language and to the use of their mothertongue at state offices, for example. The government of Hungary to the contrary tried to magyarise other ethnic entities. Thus the wishes of ethnic groups dwelling in both parts of the dual monarchy hardly could be solved.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914 by Gavrilo Princip (a member of the Serbian nationalist group the Black Hand) was used by leading Austrian and Hungarian politicians and generals to persuade the emperor to declare war on Serbia, thereby risking and prompting the outbreak of World War I which led to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Over one million Austro-Hungarian soldiers died in World War I.

On October 21, 1918, the elected German members of the *Reichsrat* (parliament of Imperial Austria) met in Vienna as the Provisional National Assembly for German Austria (*Provisorische Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich*). On October 30 the assembly founded the State of German Austria by appointing a government, called *Staatsrat*. This new government was invited by the emperor

to take part in the decision on the planned armistice with Italy, but refrained from this business; this left the responsibility for the end of the war on November 3, 1918, solely to the emperor and his government. On November 11 the emperor, counseled by ministers of the old and the new government, declared he would not take part in state business any more; on November 12 German Austria, by law, declared itself to be a democratic republic and part of the new German republic. The constitution, renaming *Staatsrat* to *Bundesregierung* (federal government) and *Nationalversammlung* to *Nationalrat* (national council) was passed on November 10, 1920.

The Treaty of Saint-Germain of 1919 (for Hungary the Treaty of Trianon of 1920) confirmed and consolidated the new order of Central Europe which to a great part had been established in November 1918, creating new states and resizing others. Over 3-million German Austrians found themselves living outside of the newborn Austrian Republic in the respective states of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Italy. Between 1918 and 1919 Austria was officially known as the State of German Austria (*Staat Deutschösterreich*). Not only did the Entente powers forbid German Austria to unite with Germany, they also ignored the name German Austria in the peace treaty to be signed; it was therefore changed to Republic of Austria in late 1919.

After the war inflation began to devalue the *Krone*, still Austria's currency. In the autumn of 1922 Austria was granted an international loan supervised by the League of Nations. The purpose of the loan was to avert bankruptcy, stabilise the currency and improve its general economic condition. With the granting of the loan, Austria passed from an independent state to the control exercised by the League of Nations. In 1925 the *Schilling*, replacing the *Krone* by 10,000:1, was introduced. Later it was called the Alpine dollar due to its stability. From 1925 to 1929 the economy enjoyed a short high before nearly crashing after Black Friday.

The First Austrian Republic lasted until 1933 when Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, gladly using what he called "self-switch-off of Parliament" (*Selbstausschaltung des Parlaments*), established an autocratic regime tending toward Italian fascism. The two big parties at this time, the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, had paramilitary armies; the Social Democrats' *Schutzbund* was now declared illegal but still operative as civil war broke out.

In February 1934 several members of the *Schutzbund* were executed, the Social Democratic party was outlawed and many of its members were imprisoned or emigrated. On 1 May 1934, the Austrofascists imposed a new constitution ("Maiverfassung") which cemented Dollfuss's power but on 25 July he was assassinated in a Nazi coup attempt.

His successor, Kurt Schuschnigg, struggled to keep Austria independent as "the better German state", but on 12 March 1938, German troops occupied the country while Austrian Nazis took over government. On 13 March 1938, the *Anschluss* of Austria was officially declared. Two days later Hitler, a native of Austria, proclaimed the re-unification of his home country with the rest of Germany on Vienna's Heldenplatz. He established a plebiscite confirming union with Germany in April 1938.

Austria was incorporated into the Third Reich and ceased to exist as an independent state. The Aryanisation of the wealth of Jewish Austrians started immediately mid-March with a so called "wild" (i.e. extra-legal) phase but soon was structured legally and bureaucratically to strip Jewish citizens of any asset they may have possessed. The Nazis called Austria "Ostmark" until 1942 when it was again renamed and called "Alpen-Donau-Reichsgaue". Vienna fell on 13 April 1945, during the Soviet Vienna Offensive just before the total collapse of the Third Reich.

Karl Renner and Adolf Schärff (Socialist Party of Austria [Social Democrats and Revolutionary Socialists]), Leopold Kunschak (Austria's People's Party [former

Christian Social People's Party]) and Johann Koplenig (Communist Party of Austria) declared Austria's secession from the Third Reich by the Declaration of Independence on 27 April 1945, and set up a provisional government in Vienna under state Chancellor Renner the same day, with the approval of the victorious Red Army and backed by Stalin. (The date is officially named the birthday of the second republic.) At the end of April, most of Western and Southern Austria still was under Nazi rule. On May 1, 1945, the federal constitution of 1929 was put into validity again, which had been terminated by dictator Dollfuss on May 1, 1934.

Total military deaths from 1939–1945 are estimated at 260,000. Jewish Holocaust victims totaled 65,000. About 140,000 Jewish Austrians had fled the country in 1938–39. Thousands of Austrians had taken part in serious Nazi crimes, a fact officially recognised by Chancellor Franz Vranitzky in 1992.

Much like Germany, Austria was divided into a British, a French, a Soviet and a U.S. zone and governed by the Allied Commission for Austria. As forecast in the Moscow Declaration in 1943, there was a subtle difference in the treatment of Austria by the Allies. The Austrian Government, consisting of Social Democrats, Conservatives and Communists (until 1947) and residing in Vienna, which was surrounded by the Soviet zone, was recognised by the Western Allies in October 1945 after some doubts that Renner could be Stalin's puppet. Thereby the creation of a separate Western Austrian government and the division of the country could be avoided. Austria, in general, was treated as though it had been originally invaded by Germany and liberated by the Allies.

On 15 May 1955, after talks which lasted for years and were influenced by the Cold War, Austria regained full independence by concluding the Austrian State Treaty with the Four Occupying Powers. On 26 October 1955, after all occupation troops had left, Austria declared its "permanent neutrality" by an act of Parliament, which remains to this day but has been implicitly overlapped by

constitutional amendments concerning Austria as member of the European Union from 1995 onward.

The political system of the Second Republic is based on the constitution of 1920 and 1929, which was reintroduced in 1945. The system came to be characterised by *Proporz*, meaning that most posts of political importance were split evenly between members of the Social Democrats and the People's Party. Interest group "chambers" with mandatory membership (e.g. for workers, business people, farmers) grew to considerable importance and were usually consulted in the legislative process, so that hardly any legislation was passed that did not reflect widespread consensus. Since 1945 a single-party government took place only 1966–1970 (Conservatives) and 1970–1983 (Social Democrats). During all other legislative periods, either a grand coalition of Conservatives and Social Democrats or a "small coalition" (one of these two and a smaller party) ruled the country.

Following a referendum in 1994, at which consent reached a majority of two thirds, the country became a member of the European Union on 1 January 1995. According to its economic success, Austria is one of the "net contributors" of the union.

The major parties SPÖ and ÖVP have contrary opinions about the future status of Austria's military non-alignment: While the SPÖ in public supports a neutral role, the ÖVP argues for stronger integration into the EU's security policy; even a future NATO membership is not ruled out by some ÖVP politicians. In reality, Austria is taking part in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, participates in the so-called Petersburg Agenda (including peace keeping and peace creating tasks) and has become member of NATO's "Partnership for Peace"; the constitution has been amended accordingly. The term "neutrality" is only used to tranquillise voters afraid of change. Since 2008, due to the Schengen Agreement, the only neighbouring country performing border controls towards Austria is Liechtenstein.

Politics

Political system

The Parliament of Austria is located in Vienna, the country's largest city and capital. Austria became a federal, parliamentary, democratic republic through the Federal Constitution of 1920. It was reintroduced in 1945 to the nine states of the Federal Republic. The head of state is the Federal President (*Bundespräsident*), who is directly elected by popular vote. The chairman of the Federal Government is the Federal Chancellor, who is appointed by the president. The government can be removed from office by either a presidential decree or by vote of no confidence in the lower chamber of parliament, the Nationalrat. Voting for the federal president and for the Parliament used to be compulsory in Austria, but this was abolished in steps from 1982 to 2004.

The Parliament of Austria consists of two chambers. The composition of the Nationalrat (183 seats) is determined every five years (or whenever the Nationalrat has been dissolved by the federal president on a motion by the federal chancellor, or by Nationalrat itself) by a general election in which every citizen over 16 years (since 2007) has voting rights. While there is a general threshold of 4 percent for all parties at federal elections (Nationalratswahlen), there remains the possibility to gain a direct seat, or *Direktmandat*, in one of the 43 regional election districts.

The Nationalrat is the dominant chamber in the formation of legislation in Austria. However, the upper house of parliament, the Bundesrat, has a limited right of veto (the Nationalrat can—in almost all cases—ultimately pass the respective bill by voting a second time. This is referred to as '*Beharrungsbeschluss*, lit. "vote of persistence"). A convention, called the *Österreich -Konvent* was convened in June 30, 2003 to decide upon suggestions to reform the constitution, but failed to produce a proposal that would receive the two-thirds of votes in the Nationalrat necessary for constitutional amendments and/or reform.

With legislative and executive, the courts are the third column of Austrian state powers. Notably the Constitutional Court (*Verfassungsgerichtshof*) may exert considerable influence on the political system by ruling out laws and ordinances not in compliance with the constitution. Since 1995, the European Court of Justice may overrule Austrian decisions in all matters defined in laws of the European Union. Austria also implements the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, since the European Convention on Human Rights is part of the Austrian constitution.

Recent developments

After general elections held in October 2006, the Social Democrats emerged as the largest party, whereas the People's Party lost about 8% in votes.^{[56][57]} Political realities prohibited any of the two major parties from forming a coalition with smaller parties. In January 2007 the People's Party and Social Democrats formed a grand coalition with the social democrat Alfred Gusenbauer as Chancellor. This coalition broke up in June 2008. Elections in September 2008 further weakened both major parties (Social Democrats and People's Party) but together they still held more than 50% of the votes with the Social Democrats holding the majority. They formed a coalition with Werner Faymann from the Social Democrats as Chancellor. The positions of the Freedom Party and the deceased Jörg Haider's new party Alliance for the Future of Austria, both right-wing parties, were strengthened during the election.

Elections in Austria

On a federal level, there are two main elections: for head of state (Federal President) every six years, and for the 183 seats of the National Council (*Nationalrat*) every four years by proportional representation (to be changed to five years at the beginning of the next election period.)

Austria has a multi-party system. From 1945 to 1986 Austria had two main parties, with a third party also winning seats in the National Council. Since 1986 there have been generally four parties, for a few years even five. At least 4% of the popular vote, or a "direct mandate" in one of the districts, is needed for representation in the National Council.

The voting age has recently been lowered from 18 to 16 in all federal elections, following some states which had lowered it for state and local elections before that.

2008 Parliamentary election

Votes	+/-	%	+/-	Seats	+/-	
Social Democratic Party of Austria (<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs</i>)	1,430,206	-233,780	29.26	-6.08	57	-11
Austrian People's Party (<i>Österreichische Volkspartei</i>)	1,269,656	-346,837	25.98	-8.35	51	-15
Freedom Party of Austria (<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>)	857,029	+337,431	17.54	+6.50	34	+13
BZÖ – Jörg Haider's List (<i>BZÖ – Liste Jörg Haider</i>)	522,933	+329,394	10.70	+6.59	21	+14

The Greens – The Green Alternative (<i>Die Grünen – Die Grüne Alternative</i>)	509,936	-10,194	10.43	-0.62	20	-1
Liberal Forum (<i>Liberales Forum</i>)	102,249	*	2.09	*	—	¶
Citizens' Forum Austria Fritz Dinkhauser's List (<i>Bürgerforum Österreich Liste Fritz Dinkhauser</i>)	86,194	*	1.76	*	—	*
Communist Party of Austria (<i>Kommunistische Partei Österreichs</i>)	37,362	-10,216	0.76	-0.25	—	—
Independent Citizens' Initiative Save Austria (<i>Unabhängige Bürgerinitiative Rettet Österreich</i>)	35,718	*	0.73	*	—	*
The Christians (<i>Die Christen</i>)	31,080	*	0.64	*	—	*
Animal Rights Party earth-human-animals-nature (<i>Tierrechtspartei earth-human-animals-nature</i>)	2,224	*	0.05	*	—	*

Left (<i>Linke</i>)	2,138	† -119	0.04	† ±0.00	—	†
Dipl.-Ing. Karlheinz Klement (<i>Dipl.-Ing. Karlheinz Klement</i>)	347	*	0.01	*	—	*
List Strong (<i>Liste Stark</i>)	237	-75	0.00	-0.01	—	—
Total (turnout 78.82%; +0.34%)	4,887,309	—	100.0	—	183	—

2004 Presidential election

Summary of the 25 April 2004 Austrian Presidential election results

Candidates and nominating parties	Votes	%
Heinz Fischer (Social Democratic Party of Austria)	2,166,690	52.4
Benita Ferrero-Waldner (Austrian People's Party)	1,969,326	47.6
Total (turnout 70.8 %)	4,136,016	100.0
Invalid votes	182,423	

Total votes	4,318,439	
Eligible voters	6,030,982	
Source: Austrian ministry of Interior		

Austrian presidential election, 2010

Austrian presidential election, 2010

April 25, 2010



Candidate	Heinz Fischer	Barbara Rosenkranz	Rudolf Gehring
Party	Independent	Freedom Party of Austria	Christian Party
Popular vote	2,287,640	452,615	157,712
Percentage	78.9%	15.6%	5.4%
Previous President	Heinz Fischer		

Independent

President-elect

Heinz

Fischer

Independent

The Austrian presidential election took place on 25 April 2010. It was the twelfth election of an Austrian head of state since 1951. The candidates were Heinz Fischer, Barbara Rosenkranz (FPÖ) and Rudolf Gehring. Heinz Fischer won with just under 80% of the valid votes. The turnout was on the historic low of about 50%.

Candidates

Social Democratic Party of Austria

Incumbent President Heinz Fischer (independent, former member of the Social Democratic Party) announced on 23 November 2009 that he will seek a second term.^[2] According to a June 27, 2009, Gallup poll for the newspaper Österreich, Fischer had a job approval rating of 80%.

Austrian People's Party

There were rumours that the candidate of the Austrian People's Party would be either Governor of Lower Austria Erwin Pröll or president of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl. On 13 October 2009 Pröll announced that he would not run for the Presidency and that he would remain Governor of Lower Austria. Leitl and former governor of Styria Waltraud Klasnic also declined a presidential run. On 25 February 2010, the People's Party announced that it would not nominate a candidate, and would not officially support any candidate.

Freedom Party of Austria

The Freedom Party announced in June 2009 that it would definitely field a candidate "to prevent Fischer[*s* reelection]". Possible candidates mentioned included Martin Graf, Norbert Steger, Siegfried Dillersberger, Norbert Gugerbauer, Dieter Böhmdorfer and Wilhelm Brauneder. After the Carinthian branch of the Alliance for the Future of Austria broke away to re-unite with the Freedom Party, it was rumoured that Barbara Rosenkranz would be their candidate. In early January 2010, Heinz-Christian Strache, leader of the Freedom Party, guaranteed that the party would nominate a candidate to assure that Fischer would not run unopposed. On 28 February 2010, Strache announced in the *Kronen Zeitung* that the Freedom Party would nominate Barbara Rosenkranz as its presidential candidate.

Alliance for the Future of Austria

Alliance for the Future of Austria leader Josef Bucher and General Secretary Stefan Petzner voiced their support for a presidential candidacy of Claudia Haider, widow of former Alliance leader Jörg Haider, by inviting the Greens and the Freedom Party to form a non-partisan committee. Carinthia Governor Gerhard Dörfler spoke out against such a candidacy, because he "wouldn't like to join forces with Heinz-Christian Strache's [Freedom Party]", but nonetheless said that Claudia Haider would be a "good candidate, who could finance her campaign on her own". On August 17, Haider announced that she would not run for President. On 26 February 2010, Bucher said that he might run as a candidate for his party, because "he could appeal to [People's Party] voters". On 1 March 2010, the Alliance announced that Bucher would not stand as a candidate, as the odds were clearly against him and they did not want to waste taxpayers' money.

The Greens – The Green Alternative

It was expected that former Green Party leader Alexander Van der Bellen might stand in the election, but he stated in January 2009 that if Fischer ran for

reelection he would have his support. In June 2009, however, Green party leader Eva Glawischnig stated that the Greens were considering fielding a candidate, and that Van der Bellen would be a very good candidate. By November 2009, there was still no clear decision from the Greens, even though Van der Bellen had ruled out a run for the Presidency on 23 November 2009. On 25 February 2010, the Greens announced they wanted to concentrate on state elections and would not nominate a candidate. After Fischer appeared at an event where the Greens questioned him on a number of issues, with questions submitted by voters via the internet, the Greens on 12 April 2010 officially endorsed his candidacy and called for their voters to vote for him, a first in the party's history.

Christian Party of Austria

The Christian Party nominated its chairman Rudolf Gehring as a presidential candidate. On 25 March 2010, they announced they had gathered the necessary number signatures to run for president.

Other candidates

A former judge from eastern Styria, Martin Wabl, who had twice previously tried to run for president, announced on 6 February 2009 that he would run again. Green municipal councillor Ulrich Habsburg-Lothringen, as a descendant of the former ruling house of Austria–Hungary incapacitated by constitutional law to run for Austria's presidency, stated that he wanted to test the law at Austria's constitutional court if his candidacy is not permitted. Bernhard Gregor Honemann (nominated by the platform agenda2020.at) also planned to run. None of these candidates obtained the 6000 signatures necessary to run for president. The signatures submitted were:

- Fischer: 45,000 signatures
- Rosenkranz: 10,500 signatures
- Gehring: 8,000 signatures

Voter statistics

According to the federal election commission, 6,355,620 Austrian citizens aged 16+ will be eligible to vote in the presidential election. Compared with the 2004 presidential election, the number of eligible voters increased by 324,638, or 5.4% – primarily due to lowering the legal voting age to 16 between the two elections. 3,307,275 women and 3,048,345 men were eligible to vote.

Total number of eligible voters by state:

- Burgenland: 231,255
- Carinthia: 447,679
- Lower Austria: 1,267,388
- Upper Austria: 1,092,757
- Salzburg: 391,200
- Styria: 973,009
- Tyrol: 530,239
- Vorarlberg: 264,810
- Vienna: 1,157,283

Results

Heinz Fischer beat Barbara Rosenkranz by scoring 78.94% of the vote. Rosenkranz received 15.62%. Rudolf Gehring came third by scoring 5.44%.

Opinion polls had placed Fischer in a good position on the day of the election.

Fischer thanked the nation on television: "I am extremely happy and thank the Austrian population for having so much confidence in me".

Poor voter turnout - only 49.2% voted - led again to calls by leaders of the extreme-right for the post to be abolished. It also provided an argument for the monarchists.

Votes		
	%	
Heinz Fischer (Social Democratic Party of Austria – nominally independent)	2,287,640	78.94
Barbara Rosenkranz (Freedom Party of Austria)	452,615	15.62
Rudolf Gehring (Christian Party of Austria)	157,712	5.44
Total (turnout 49.17%)	2,897,967	100.00
Invalid votes	226,986	7.26
Total votes	3,124,953	
Eligible voters	6,355,568	

Opinion polls

Social Democrats v. Freedom Party v. Christian Party

Source	Date	Social	Freedom	Christian	Undecided
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		Democrats	Party	Party	
Karmasin/Profil	17 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 82%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 13%	Rudolf Gehring – 5%	—
Market/Standard	16 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 60%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 15%	Rudolf Gehring – 4%	21%
Gallup/Österreich	16 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 80%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 16%	Rudolf Gehring – 4%	—
Gallup/Österreich	9 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 82%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 14%	Rudolf Gehring – 4%	—
Karmasin/Profil	9 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 82%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 12%	Rudolf Gehring – 6%	—
Market/Standard	1 April 2010	Heinz Fischer 71%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 13%	Rudolf Gehring – 2%	14%

Social Democrats v. Freedom Party

Source	Date	Social Democrats	Freedom Party	Undecided
Peter Hajek/ATV	31 March 2010	Heinz Fischer – 80%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 13%	7%
Gallup/Österreich	27 March 2010	Heinz Fischer – 86%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 14%	—
OGM/News	17 March	Heinz Fischer	Barbara	—

	2010	- 81%	Rosenkranz – 19%	
Gallup/Österreich	12 March 2010	Heinz Fischer - 84%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 16%	—
Market/Standard	5 March 2010	Heinz Fischer - 65%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 17%	18%
OGM/News	3 March 2010	Heinz Fischer - 74%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 26%	—
Gallup/Österreich	27 February 2010	Heinz Fischer - 79%	Barbara Rosenkranz – 21%	—
Gallup/Österreich	27 February 2010	Heinz Fischer - 84%	Heinz-Christian Strache – 16%	—

Social Democrats v. People's Party

Source	Date	Social Democrats	People's Party	Undecided
IMAS/Kronen Zeitung	28 June 2009	Heinz Fischer – 62%	Erwin Pröll – 20%	18%
Gallup/Österreich	27 June 2009	Heinz Fischer – 62%	Erwin Pröll – 25%	13%
OGM/News	25 June 2009	Heinz Fischer – 53%	Erwin Pröll – 30%	17%
Market/Standard	25 June 2009	Heinz Fischer – 54%	Erwin Pröll – 30%	16%
Gallup/Österreich	4 April 2009	Heinz Fischer – 67%	Erwin Pröll – 18%	15%

All parties

Source	Date	Social Democrats	People's Party	Freedom Party	Greens	Alliance	Undecided
Gallup/Österreich	9 August 2009	Heinz Fischer – 50%	Erwin Pröll – 24%	Martin Graf – 3%	Alexander Van der Bellen – 8%	Claudia Haider – 4%	11%
Gallup/Österreich	27 June 2009	Heinz Fischer – 51%	Erwin Pröll – 17%	Heinz-Christian Strache – 8%	Alexander Van der Bellen – 9%	Claudia Haider – 5%	10%

Austria held a presidential election today, April 25. Austria's President holds a largely ceremonial office, notably in charge of officially appointing a Chancellor. However, unlike in Germany, Austria's President is directly elected by voters for a six-year term in a classic two-round system. Most hot presidential contests in Austria happen when the incumbent retires, when it is usually contested by the main parties. The last such incidence was in 2004, when incumbent President Thomas Klestil was term-limited after two terms in office. At that point, both of Austria's major parties, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP) contested the election, which was narrowly won by Heinz Fischer of the SPÖ. Presidents running for re-election usually face no major opposition, save for opposition from smaller parties on the far-right or the Greens. In 1998, for example, Klestil, a member of the ÖVP, was re-elected with the support of the SPÖ and the far-right FPÖ against three other opponents, including a Green and a Liberal.

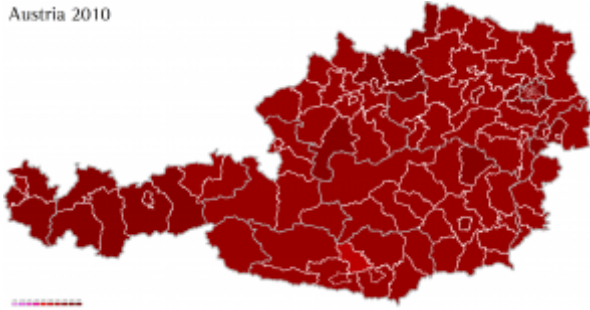
Heinz Fischer, like most of his predecessors, built up tremendous popularity while in office, likely due to the non-confrontational nature of the office. Despite the SPÖ's series of electoral trouncings in 2009, Fischer's popularity broke party

lines and the ÖVP could not hope to field a strong challenge. Indeed, the ÖVP's most likely candidate, Lower Austrian Governor Erwin Pröll announced in late 2009 that he would not run and the party officially endorsed Fischer in February 2010. The Greens, who were considering fielding their former popular leader Alexander Van der Bellen as a candidate, finally decided to endorse Fischer as well. On the far-right, the FPÖ announced early that it would field an opponent to Fischer. However, since the FPÖ's young leader, Heinz-Christian Strache is focusing on the Vienna state elections later this year, he did not run but he announced in the *Kronen Zeitung* (the FPÖ's mouthpiece, for all intents and purposes) that Barbara Rosenkranz, a state deputy in Lower Austria and a known far-rightist, would be the party's candidate. Rosenkranz, it was thought, would have more appeal to traditionally conservative voters, while Strache is more popular with young and working-class voters. Rosenkranz is a polarizing figure, given her marriage to a neo-Nazi and her controversial position on immigration, the EU and Austria's anti-Nazi legislation. The BZÖ of the late Jorg Haider, which has seen its fortune dwindle due to scandals in Carinthia, division and civil war in the party's Carinthian stronghold, considered fielding Haider's widow but decided against it. A final candidate emerged from the fringes, Rudolf Gehring of the Christian Party (CPÖ), which is a Christian fundamentalist outfit and shares some of the far-right's anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Fischer's re-election was never in doubt, with polls predicting around 75-80% support against 15-20% for Rosenkranz and 3-6% for Gehring. Rosenkranz' goal was around 17%. Many had thought that she could have broken 20%. Turnout, which was slightly above 70% in 2004, was widely expected to reach a record low this time. Here are the results. excluding postal votes (which are significant in Austria):

Heinz Fischer	(SPÖ-ÖVP-Greens)	78.94%
Barbara Rosenkranz	(FPÖ)	15.62%
Rudolf Gehring (CPÖ)		5.44%

Austria 2010



Turnout was 49.2%, including a record 7.3% spoilt ballots. This reflects well the apathy of voters vis-a-vis an unimportant election for a ceremonial position, but also the abstention of many ÖVP voters, not fond of the Social Democrat Fischer, the quasi-Nazi Rosenkranz and the fundie Gehring. The high amount of spoilt ballots likely comes from ÖVP voters as well.

Fischer's results are remarkably similar throughout Austria (a low of 67% in one district, with highs of around 89%), and the FPÖ did relatively poorly in areas where the bulk of its vote comes from old working-class voters, showing Rosenkranz's weak appeal to that demographic. Even in Vorarlberg, where the FPÖ polled around 25% in last year's state election, Rosenkranz won only 8.1% of the vote, while Gehring took 10.8%. Gehring did best in western Austria, which is traditionally rural, Catholic and a stronghold of the ÖVP. It shows well that the vast majority of Gehring's vote came from ÖVP voters. Rosenkranz won her best result, 20.8%, in Carinthia, which isn't very surprising. Overall, Fischer did surprisingly well in western Austria as well, either due to the flukes of low turnout or Rosenkranz's poor appeal to FPÖ voters here (or the result of extrapolating too much stuff about results in such an election).

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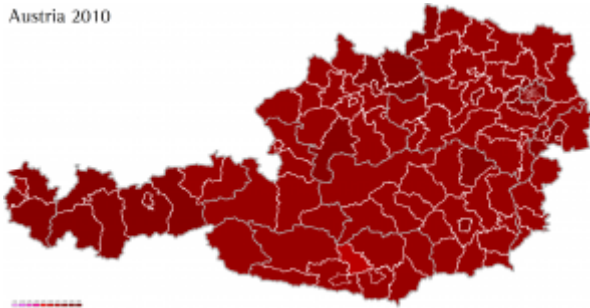
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