

- These four social partner organisations are committed to pursuing common long-term economic and social policy goals and share the conviction that these goals are better achieved through joint action and ongoing dialogue in search of consensus rather than through open conflict, thereby avoiding the costs of direct confrontation.
- Negotiating collective agreements is one of the tasks conducted by the social partner organisations. As a rule, collective agreements are negotiated by the representative professional organisations of the Economic Chamber Organisation on behalf of the employers and by the Austrian Trade Union Federation on behalf of employees.
- The Parity Commission is an institutionalised forum for dialogue between the four social partners and the federal government, in which approaches and strategies for matters of particular economic importance are discussed and agreed.
- As part of the Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs, the social partners conduct detailed studies of economic and social policy relevance. By agreeing on data and facts they discuss economic policy and jointly produce objective recommendations.
- The social partners represent the interests of their respective members and provide founded input and expertise for policy formulation.

The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber: The legal representative of the business community. Its Role in the Economic Chamber Organisation and in the Austrian Social Partnership

The Economic Chamber Organisation (WKO)

- The Economic Chamber Organisation is established by law and consists of the following autonomous bodies:
 - The Federal Chamber (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber – WKÖ)
 - Nine regional chambers
 - Representative Professional Organisations
 - Specialised Professional Groups
- All the chambers and representative professional organisations are self-governing bodies by public law and represent their members' interests.
- Though the bodies are subject to statutory regulatory oversight and examination by the Austrian Court of Audit, they are nevertheless autonomous and independent from the state, in as far as they are financed by member contributions, set their own agendas and have their own decision-making processes carried out by representatives elected by democratic ballot.
- The law stipulates compulsory membership in the chambers and representative professional organisations for all entrepreneurial activities in crafts and trades, industry, commerce, banking and insurance, transport and logistics, tourism and leisure and information and consulting.
- The chambers represent collective interests across all members, while the representative professional organisations represent the mutual interests in their profession.

- Chambers and representative professional organisations are required by law to perform a balance of interests. This may involve resolving clashes of differing interests among their members, coordinating these interests and promoting a joint position with a single voice.
- For this reason the chambers and representative professional organisations never act on behalf of a single client or individual business in exchange for payment. They may not represent specific individual interests, instead they must exclusively represent the collective interests of the members.

The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

- At the national level, the WKÖ is the economic chamber responsible for Austria, thereby making it the largest and most comprehensive self-governing body within the Economic Chamber Organisation.
- The tasks of the WKÖ in the public interest are governed by law, as are its bodies and their appointments, structures, financing and membership.

- The WKÖ representatives are democratically elected every five years in open elections by secret ballot.
- Based on the Economic Chamber Law, the WKÖ is the official organisation representing the mutual interests of its more than 500,000 members at national and European levels. In addition, the WKÖ provides its members with comprehensive information and services with a global network of about 100 foreign trade centres.
- In line with its legal mandate, the WKÖ comments on draft laws and regulations on behalf of the interests of its members.
- The WKÖ provides vast expertise to the public administration by way of its representative delegates in federal agencies, governmental committees, advisory boards and commissions in line with statutory provisions.

Social Partnership in Austria

- The Social Partnership is a voluntary arrangement of a broadly informal nature and is not regulated by law. It refers to the cooperation of the four major socio-economic interest groups between themselves and with the government.
- The social partners are the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), the Federal Chamber of Labour (BAK) and the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (LKÖ).