

Plenary 3

From energy efficiency to net zero – lessons learnt and challenges ahead in Austria's housing association sector

Speaker: Gerald Koessler, Austrian Federation of Limited-Profit Housing Associations

Chaired by: Stephanie Lloyd-Foxe

Room: Main Hall



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Video about social housing in Vienna by the Dutch journalist Maarten Hajer: <https://vimeo.com/713581081>

00:07 Vienna is a city with a proud history of social housing. [Progress bar] [Signal strength] [CC] [Settings] [Full screen]

Outline

- What are Limited-Profit Housing Associations (LPHA) and what is their position in Austria's housing market?
- Energy efficiency of LPHA homes
- Towards net zero: the challenge of decarbonizing heating systems

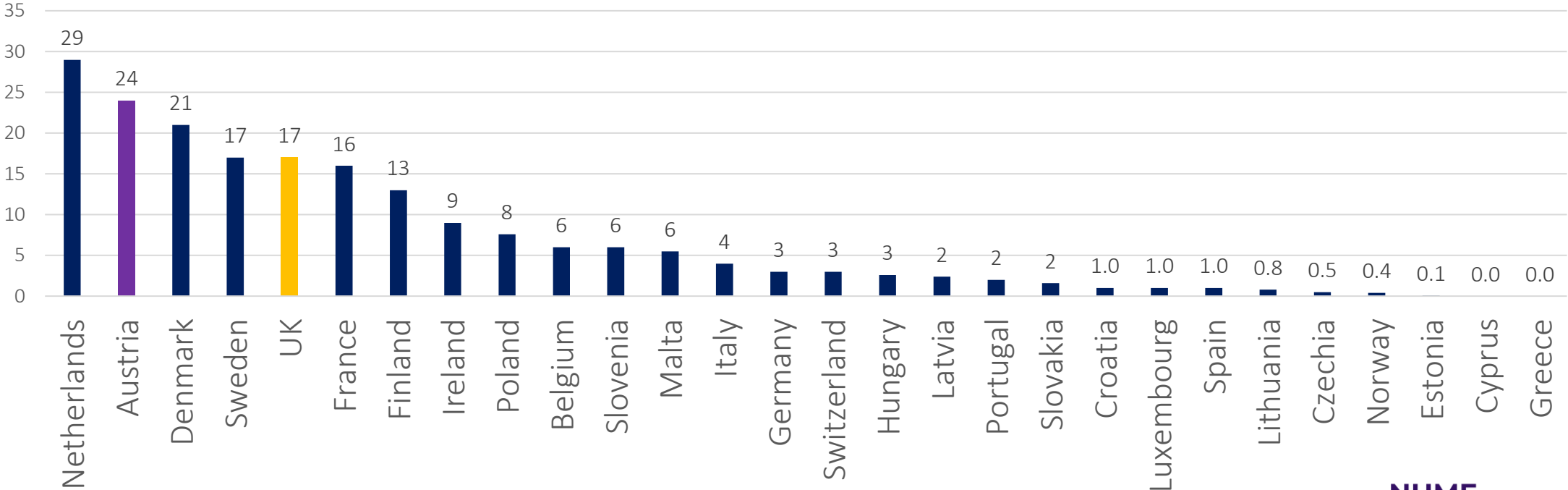


Photo: Wohnprojekt Wien

A little comparison to start...

Share of social rented housing (local authority + housing association) in total housing stock, Europe

source: Housing Europe Member Survey 2020 + Eurostat

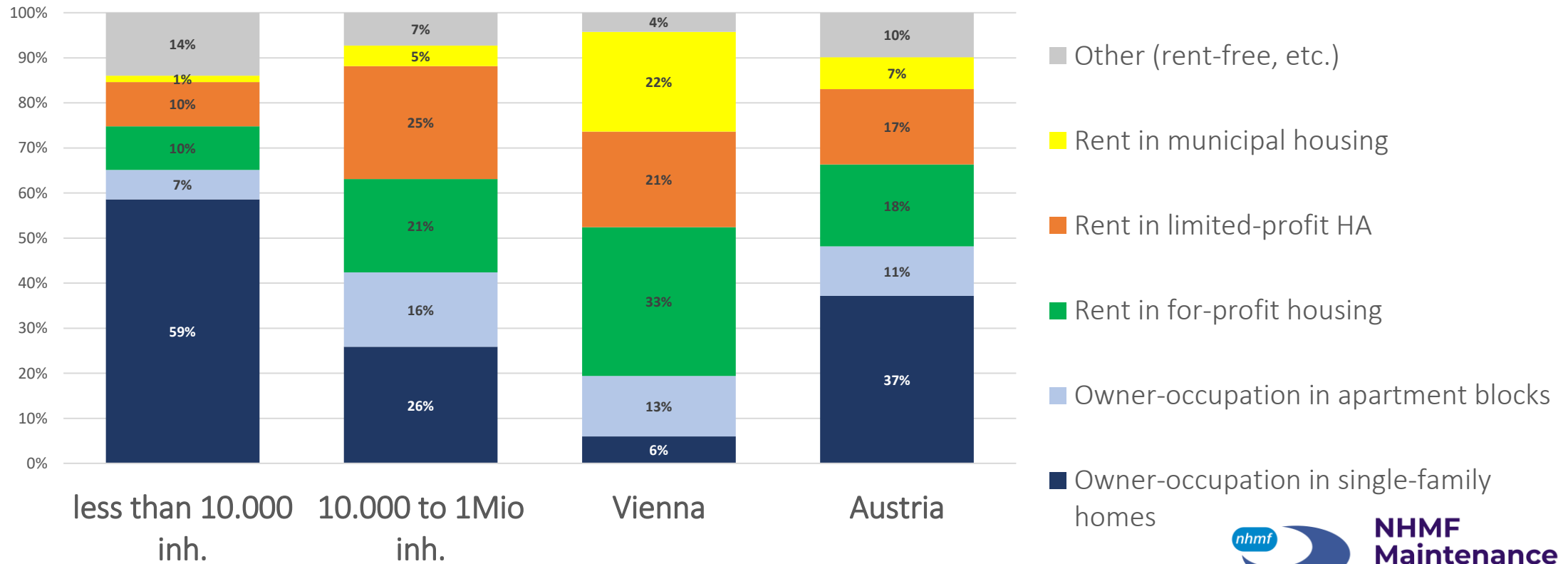


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Housing associations in the Austrian housing market

Housing tenure by degree of urbanisation

Source: Statistik Austria, Mikrozensus 2020



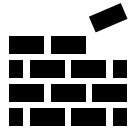
Origins and legal framework

- Origins: self-help movement, industrialists providing homes for workers, outsourced public housing
- Gemeinnützigkeit: „to be of benefit to all“ – targeted to low **and** middle-income households
- Secure and affordable housing for all - only permanent contracts and eligibility check only at start of tenancy
- LPHA are private entities: cooperatives or limited-liability companies
- Sector-specific law: Limited-Profit Housing Act (*Wohnungsgemeinnützigkeitsgesetz / WGG*)

Principles of limited-profit housing

- Cost-based rents: rents are set at cost-recovery level („not more but also not less“)
- Clearly defined exceptions to cost-based calculation allow LPHA to generate surpluses and build up equity for revolving fund
- Revolving funds: surpluses must be reinvested to build new affordable homes
- Non-speculative: legislation to prevent speculation with homes sold (under RtB)

New construction and asset management



Housing development

- 15,000 - 20,000 new homes per year
 - 1/4 of total construction in AT
 - 1/2 of new flats in AT
- Tenure mix (currently):
 - 60% rent
 - 30% rent with right-to-acquire
 - 10% outright sale



Housing management

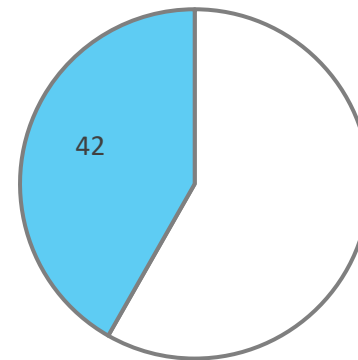
- 182 LPHA in Austria
- 980,000 managed homes
- (=1/4 of Austria's housing stock)
 - 2/3 rented homes
 - 1/3 owner-occupied homes
- On average: 5,300 managed homes per LPHA

Energy efficiency of homes

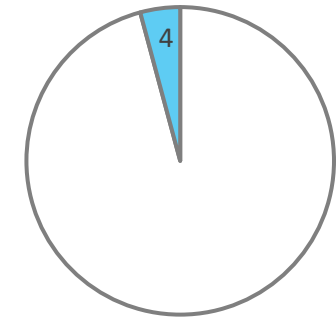
- Most pre-1980 LPHA homes have been renovated and thermally insulated
- Post-1980 homes are already of higher thermal standard
- Priority shift over last years: from thermal insulation to decarbonising heating systems

Share of pre-1980 homes that have **not** been retrofitted (and thermally insulated)

Total housing stock



LPHA homes



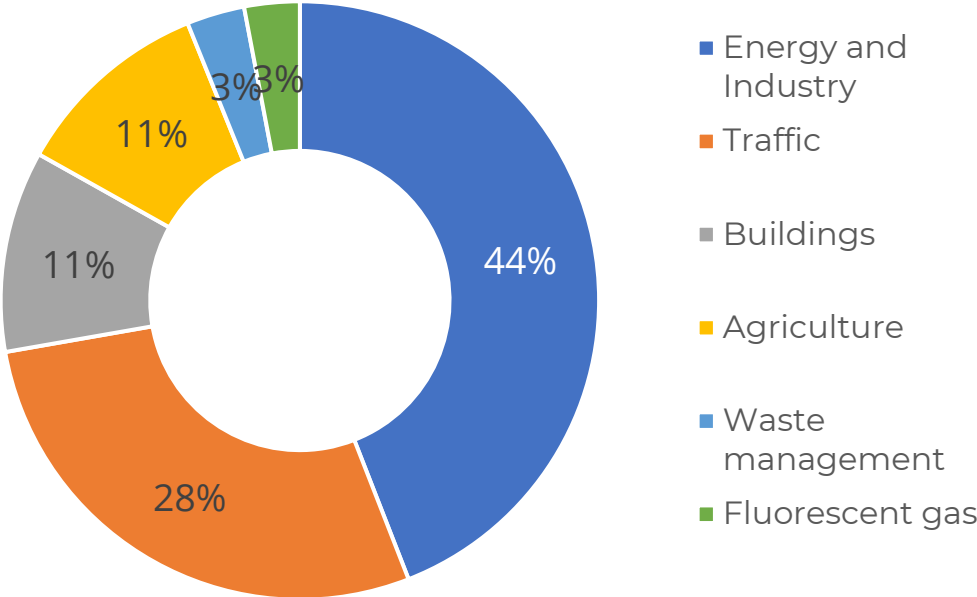
Financing of retrofitting

- Maintenance and improvement fund: part of rent is set aside for future maintenance, renovations and improvements (0.5€ – 2€/m² per month)
- Most major renovations and retrofitting works have been financed with this fund
- No rent increases due to major renovations
- Additional grant funding for energy efficiency measures from regional governments

Towards net zero: what's the role of the building sector in Austria?

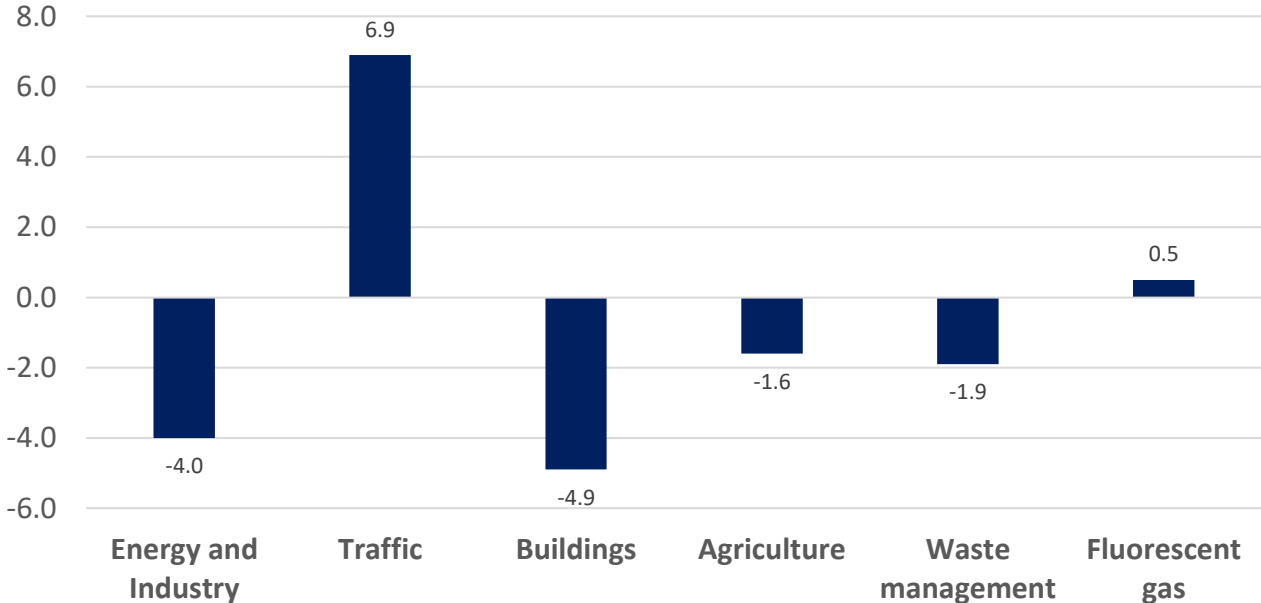
Share of CO2-emissions by sector

source: Umweltbundesamt, Klimaschutzbericht 2022



Change in CO-emissions between 1990 and 2020, in Mio t CO2

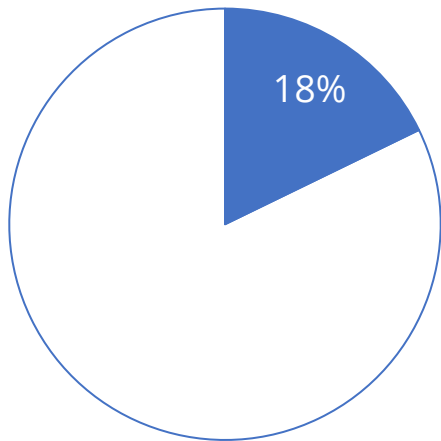
source: Umweltbundesamt, Klimaschutzbericht 2022



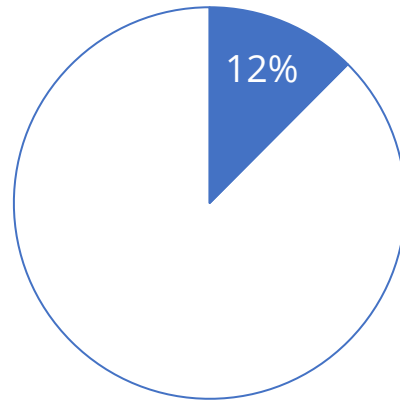
Main factors for lower CO2-emissions in LPHA homes

Size of homes – thermal standard - type of heating system (energy mix)

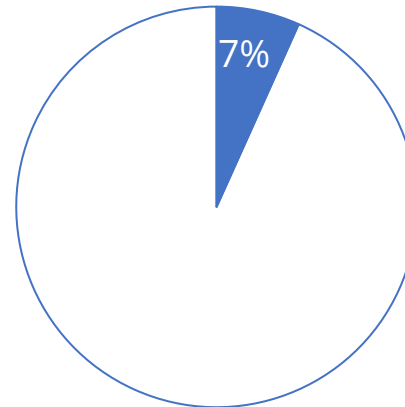
Main residences



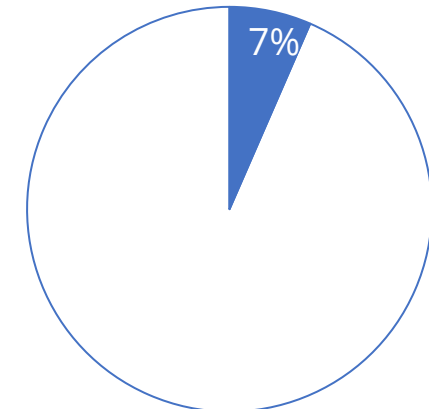
Floor space




Energy consumption for heating



CO2-Emissions for heating



How to decarbonise the remaining homes?

- Renewable Heating Law: phasing out of fossil-based heating by 2040 in Austria (oil: 2035, gas: 2040)
- The new collaborative innovation hub  [RENOWAVE.AT](https://renowave.at)
- Government funded project that brings together research and practice
- Peer-learning and knowledge-transfer across the sector
- Scaling up of existing solutions

The way forward...

- Fully decarbonise district heating (municipalities)
- Focus on integrated solutions that look beyond the building envelope: district approaches / energy communities
- Increasing installation of solar and PV (compulsory in Vienna)
- Cooling approaches (building design, thermal component activation, avoiding air conditioning)
- Mobility: car sharing, e-bikes, walkable neighbourhoods
- Maintain affordability through net-zero transition!

Additional Resources

Detailed description of limited-profit housing in Austria published via CIRIEC/University of Liege:

<https://www.ciriec.uliege.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/WP2022-04.pdf>

Thank you.

Gerald Koessler

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See you at the
next conference!



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