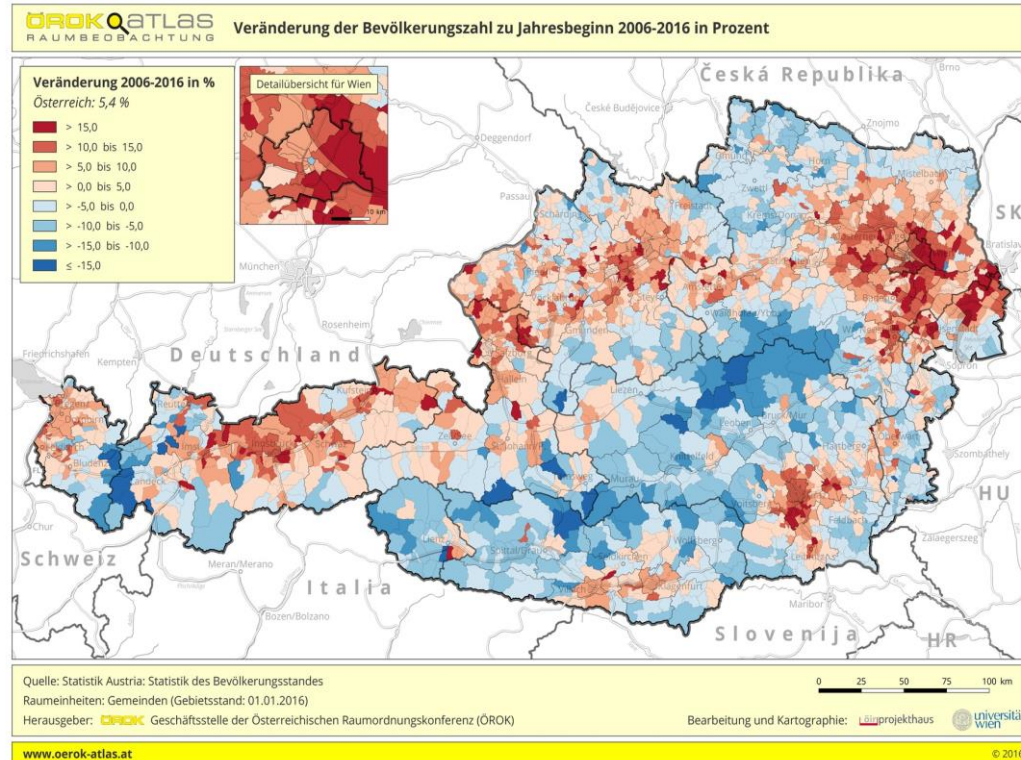


Strategies for regions facing population decline

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Netzwerk Zukunftsraum Land wird finanziert von Bund, Ländern und Europäischer Union

Diagnosis 1: There are several regions growing and several others facing a reduction of inhabitants



Diagnosis 2: The image and public discourse is quite negative

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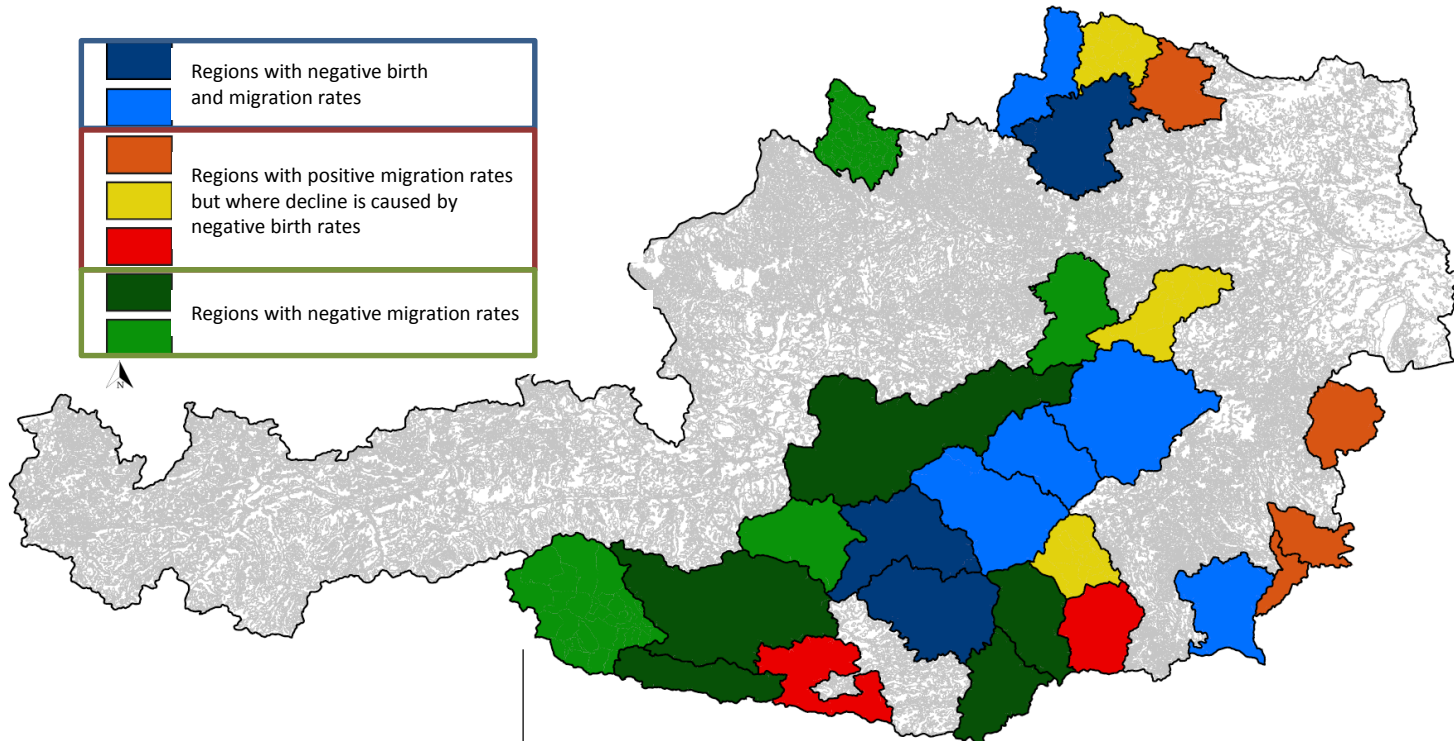
Rural exodus into the Grazer-Feld

Should we give up our villages?

Are the rural areas dying?

Valleys are losing people!

But: there are several reasons for population decline



The initiative – a thematic partnership: Strategies for regions facing population decline

- Coordinated by the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK)
- Lead partner:
 - Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism
 - Federal province Tyrol
- Participants:
 - further Federal provinces
 - Association of municipalities, Association of cities
 - Chamber of agriculture, Chamber of labour
 - Representatives of pilot regions
- Duration: 2 years
- Analysis phase (concluded with an expert's assessment)
- Communication phase
- 3 major events in pilot-regions where milestones were presented and discussed
- Partly funded by EAFRD (Technical Assistance)

Analysis phase: describing / explaining / recommending

- Learn to live with population decline
- Consider outmigration as “moving forward”
- Turn the point of view 180 degrees - instead of preventing emigration, support immigration and return migration
- Regional centers are stabilizers - do not play off against the other communities
- "Soft factors" of quality of life are particularly important
- Foster knowledge-related services
- Industry and trade: much happens by chance - but good sectoral mix enhances demographic sustainability.
- Tourism is no longer a panacea against population decline
- Ensuring agricultural quality production and regional value chains

Communication phase: new narratives!

- Aims:
 - raising awareness about the topic among target groups
 - enhancing the „evidence base“ by rolling out results of the analysis phase
 - first steps to embed new narratives
- Preparation:
 - Condensing the findings of the analysis phase
 - Drafting new narratives
 - Offering blue-prints for workshops, discussions, etc.
- Several decentralized reflections where results were presented and narratives discussed
 - organized by members of partnership
 - different reflection-formats

Example narratives

“We are the fertile garden of the city. We produce sustainable products and food, here people find rest and ground, here there is a high quality of life. City and country need each other. We can only bloom together!”

“Here are still free spaces in which one can develop. Not every square centimeter is planned here. But we also have a clear idea of how we want to organize our lives. We are creative and shape our environment.”

“Let's get started! We have enough of bad mood. We do a lot and we can be proud of what is going on in our region. We are much more than recipients of subsidies. We do not want to read in the newspaper every week how bad we are. It has been moaned enough now, let's get started, let's look ahead, even if some things will change!”

What remains



- Results of analytical research and communication activities
- Documentation - brochure and website with results
- Experiences of the members of the partnership
- Input for further initiatives/analysis:
 - master plan “rural areas” of the ministry
 - new ÖROK-project “strengthening regional levels”
 - new Austrian concept for spatial planning 2022-2031
 - programming CAP strategy plan (SWOT)
- Identification of needs for further analysis