



Building of Schools in Upper Austria

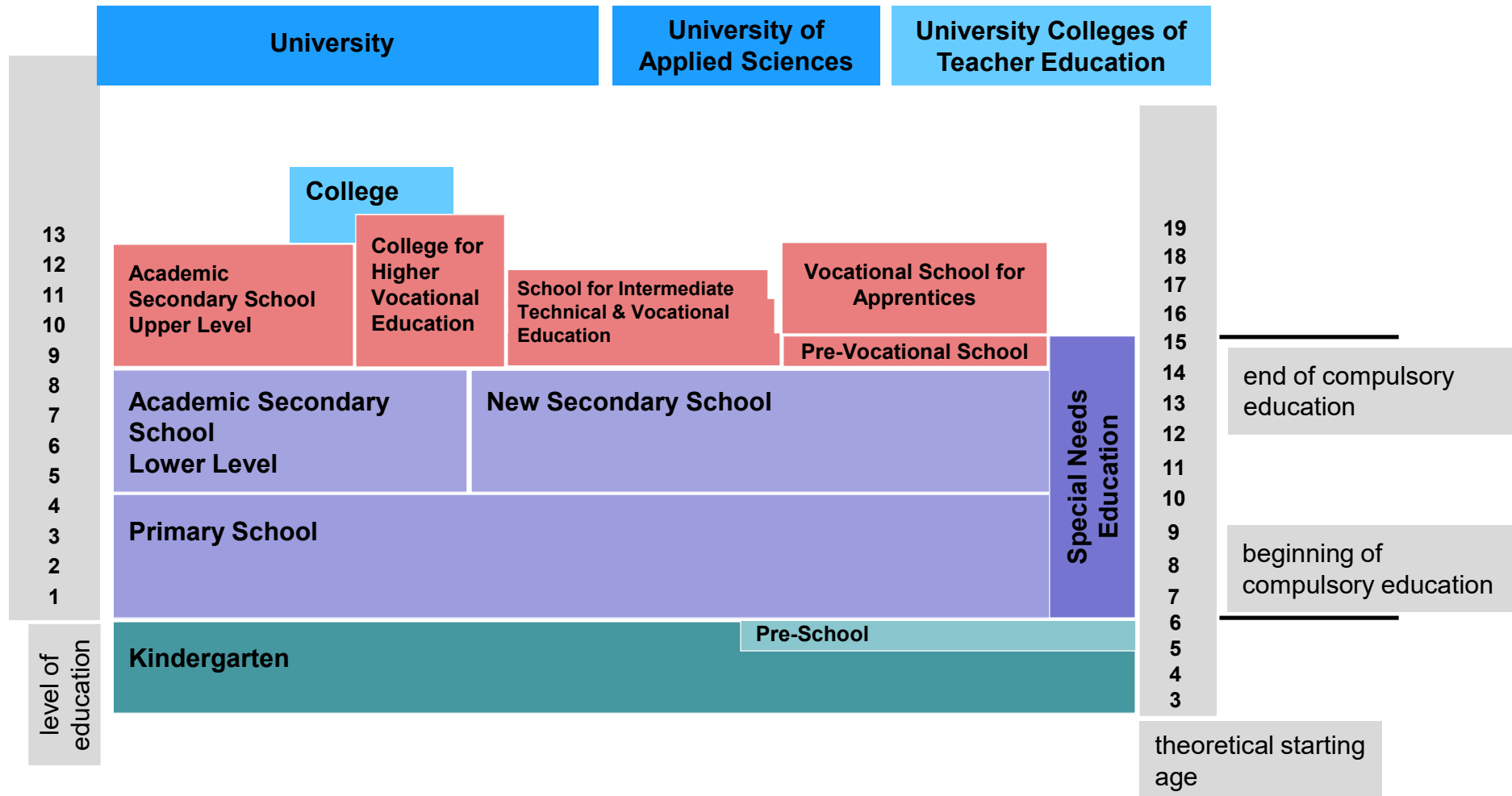
X. EURORAI-Congress October 16th – 18th, 2019



criticism of the system

- Austria's education system has been criticized for many years
 - central issue is the division of legislative responsibilities
 - division of responsibilities for performing the task, public spending and funding (especially applicable to compulsory education)
 - no consistent and effective resource as well as spending management
 - effective quality management and quality improvement are not possible due to fragmented responsibilities
- Education system and its development are recurring ideologically charged subjects
 - the consequence is a gradualistic (education-)policy

Education System in Austria



division of responsibilities

general compulsory schools

federal level

- overall responsibility for legislation
- supervision
- remuneration of teachers
- grants subsidies for certain purposes (e.g. all-day schooling)
- responsibility for curricula

province level

- implementation of the federal framework of legislation
- (work-)authority over teachers
- definition of school districts
- legal and financial control over municipalities
- official duties
- **grants subsidies**

local level (municipalities)

- maintenance of school buildings
- employer of other staff
- **provides infrastructure (e.g. buildings including structural measures, teaching aids)**

different interests

- all three authorities
 - high qualifications
- federal state
 - pays teachers: efficient education system with cost-optimal entities (schools)
- provinces
 - major financial contributor to investments: building schools as cost-efficient as possible
- municipalities
 - ensuring the continuity of the location, school image

school organisation

general public compulsory schools in Upper Austria

school year	2007/08	2012/13	2017/18
pupil numbers	public		
Primary School	59,679	56,306	57,953
Secondary School / New Secondary School	46,890	38,338	36,521
Pre-Vocational School	4,672	3,489	2,879
Special Needs Education	4,848	5,114	5,568
total	116,089	103,247	102,921

number of classes	public		
Primary School	3,159	3,235	3,299
Secondary School / New Secondary School	2,197	2,070	1,977
Pre-Vocational School	218	179	151
Special Needs Education	271	272	210
total	5,845	5,756	5,637

locations	public		
Primary School	560	541	523
Secondary School / New Secondary School	229	224	212
Pre-Vocational School	57	52	49
Special Needs Education	37	35	36
total	883	852	820

factors influencing the building of schools

- demographic development
 - development pressure on city regions, decrease of the rural population
- increasing competition between
 - lower level of Academic Secondary School and New Secondary School
 - New Secondary Schools among themselves
- educational and organisational developments
 - flexible school districts
 - all-day schooling
 - changing teaching methods
 - class size
 - school clusters
- social changes lead to new tasks
 - changed image of the family
 - after-school child care

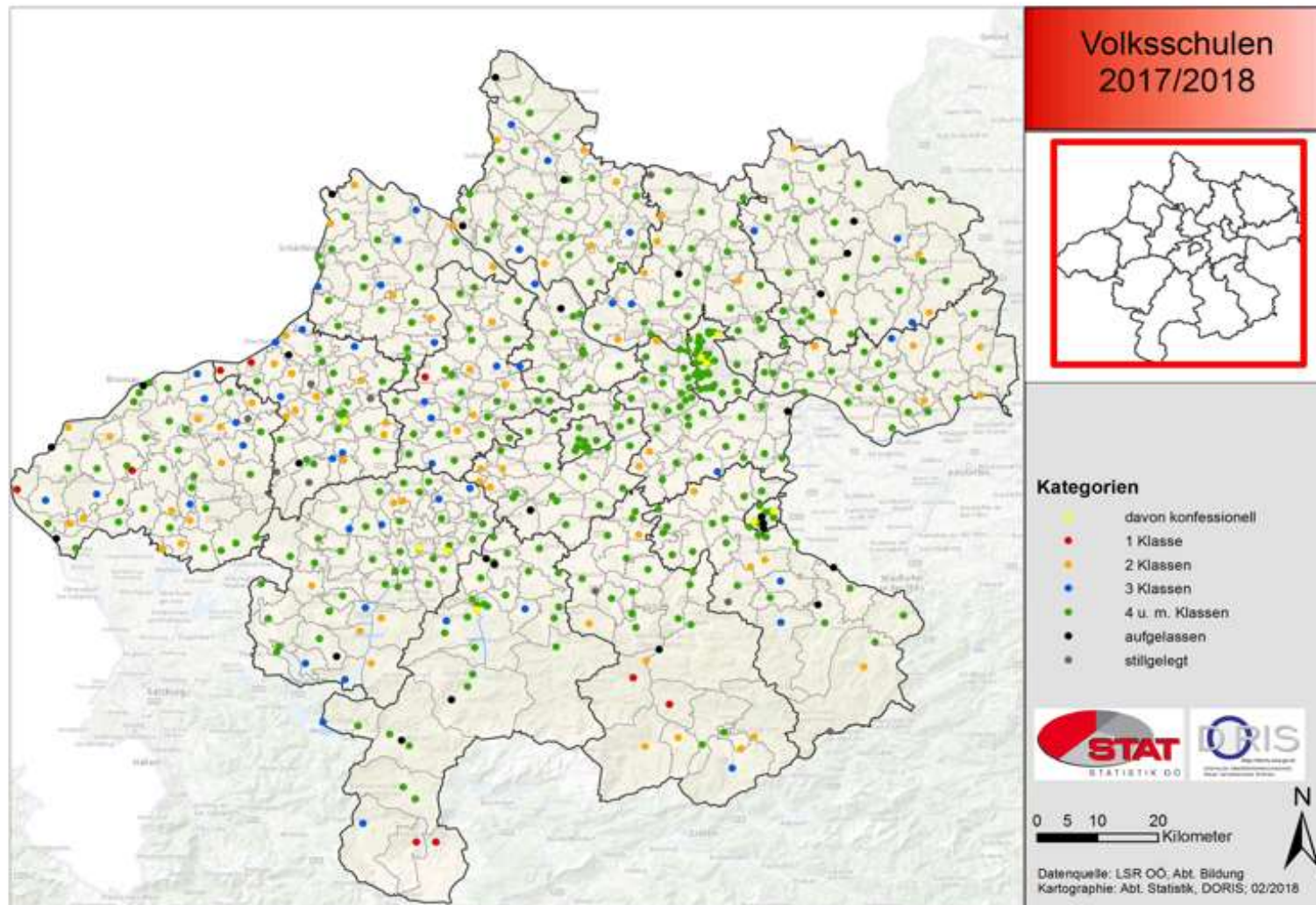
provinces and municipalities need to cope with these challenges

- every decision concerning structural measures is a long-lasting one for at least 25 years
- therefore it is even more important to coordinate and purposefully manage the location of schools
- provinces are responsible for this task
- province's management tools
 - financial incentives by means of investment subsidies (Upper Austrian School-building Funding-program)
 - province has the authority to set the legal framework for building of schools
 - according to these rules province grants authorizations

limitations

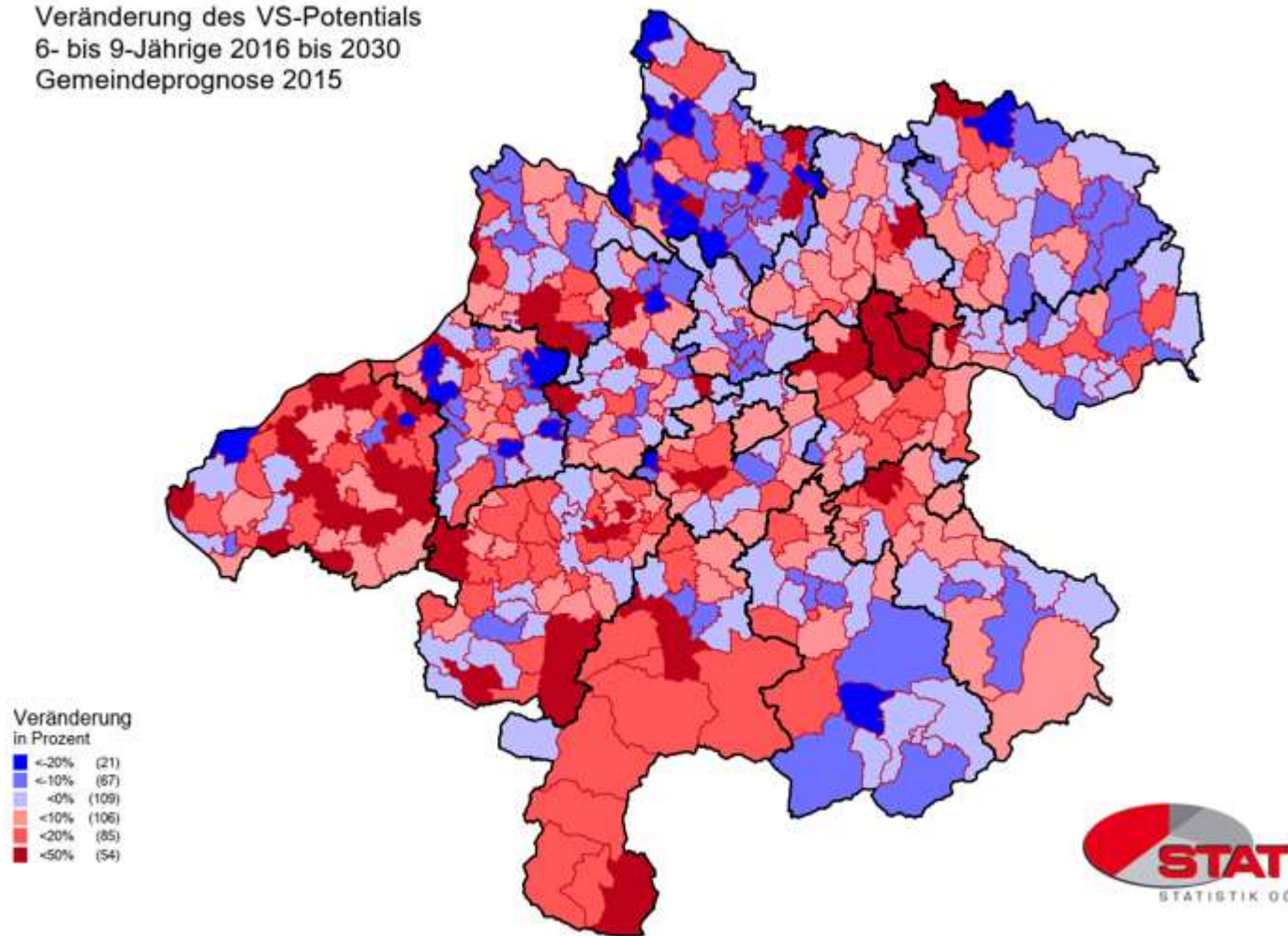
- any decision about closing down or relocating a school is made by the municipality
- therefore any measures to manage the school structure as a whole need to be made in consultation with the municipalities
- What has been done?
 - since 2010 main focus on small schools and on locations with same school types
 - 70 compulsory school locations were shut down
 - 15 locations were closed down

school locations – Primary Schools



school enrolment figures – Primary Schools

Veränderung des VS-Potentials
6- bis 9-Jährige 2016 bis 2030
Gemeindeprognose 2015



optimizing structure

challenges for optimizing future school locations:

- regions which already have several small schools have to expect further decrease of pupil numbers
- regions with several small schools have to expect increase of pupil numbers
- regions with increasing pupil numbers although schools have already reached maximum capacity
- **recommendation:**
- Province of Upper Austria should develop an overall school-location-concept based on regional conditions and clarify how to achieve this structure

implementation stage?

Upper Austria is in the beginning stage:

- **pilot region** was defined
- **first stage:** location analysis – locations are assessed according to their regional economic importance
 - general development of location
 - assessment of catchment area
 - accessibility of location
- **second stage:** concrete assessment of a certain school or school location
 - development of pupil numbers
 - definition of possible schools
 - quality of school building
 - upcoming school-organizational changes

Upper Austrian School-building Funding-program

- 2017: 316 projects included in Upper Austrian School-building Funding-program; additional 159 – with an investment sum of Euro 300 Mio – registered for subsidies
- estimated investment total: Euro 620 Mio
 - 140 projects already built
 - subsidies are paid by instalments within the next years
- the Province of Upper Austria contributed subsidies amounting to Euro 44.4 Mio per year to municipal investment projects within the Upper Austrian School-building Funding-program



Upper Austrian School-building Funding-program

- 1.5 years ago the regulations for granting subsidies were changed; until then the Province of Upper Austria partly granted very high subsidies, up to 90 percent of the investment sum
 - for the Upper Austrian Court of Audit the different subsidy rates granted by the province were not comprehensible

weaknesses in the system of subsidies

- high number of projects and former relatively high subsidies granted by the Province of Upper Austria caused many problems, e.g.:
 - long period (+ 10 years) between application from the municipality until constructional completion and final instalment of subsidies
 - municipalities often financed in advance in order to bridge the waiting time until project realization; province partly subsidized the cost of financing
 - due to these long waiting periods project plans were changed several times or project scopes were expanded
 - multiple assessments as well as additional authorizations and project applications became necessary
 - final cost partly higher than the originally agreed budget

changes in the system of subsidies

- 2018 the system of subsidies from the province for municipalities was changed; consequences for building of schools:
 - subsidy rate is granted according to the financial situation of the municipality, therefore objective and comprehensible determination
 - in general subsidy rate is lower than before
 - the municipality has to prioritize its investment projects and needs to carry it out accordingly; a project can only be started if the municipality has the necessary funds
 - financial incentives for cooperations between municipalities



changes in the system of subsidies

- Province of Upper Austria expects the following advantages:
 - higher transparency
 - shifting of demand for subsidies for school buildings to other investment projects
 - impulse to adjust locations

- according to the Upper Austrian Court of Audit it is up in the air if the managing effects will occur



specific projects



- 2 new buildings,
1 complete
refurbishment
- in municipalities
with 4,500 to
5,000 inhabitants





specific projects



- schools develop their own educational orientation and requirements; structural decisions are adjusted accordingly
- audited projects handled it differently:
 - impulse was generated by the planning team that won the architecture competition
 - major interest groups developed a new concept – including spatial and educational requirements – as basis for the following architecture competition
 - requirements originated from regular school life
- legal framework has not been changed during several decades and hardly considers such developments

- implementing new educational concepts also require spatial changes – which differ from current legal regulations
 - emphasis on group work with corresponding seating and working arrangements as opposed to lecture-style teaching
- change of spatial requirements and floor plan
 - legal regulations concerning spatial requirements and floor plan are based on lecture-style teaching and therefore need to be handled flexibly

topics concerning subsidies

- necessary **needs assessment**
- assessment should be based on **location concept for schools**
 - regional perspective instead of local perspective
 - coordination of provincial and municipal interests
- spatial and functional program as well as a binding budget are required
 - educational requirements should already be set



conclusion

- education is a very political topic; noticeable in the restrained dynamic
- the criticism of the system, especially the division of legislative responsibilities, as mentioned at the beginning also affects the building of schools; many decision can only be made consensually which makes overall management more difficult
- the province has specific processes on how to carry out school-building projects (subsidies and authorizations); however, a strategic overall concept for school locations does not exist
- regional aspects should be considered more in depth when planning the location of schools as well as optimal educational and economic school sizes (especially pupil numbers)





**Thank you for
your attention!**

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