

Recommendation regarding the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW)

In a letter dated 26 May 2004 Minister Gehrler requested the Austrian Council to comment on the reform process at the Academy of Sciences. The Austrian Council has issued recommendations on a number of occasions and has also declared its willingness to assist and support the reform process. On 30 March 2006 the Presiding Committee and the Chairman of the Reform Commission presented the 37th Meeting of the Austrian Council with a proposal for an organisational reform of the Academy. This proposal was accepted by the plenary session of the Academy on 24 March 2006 and forwarded to the Presiding Committee to be dealt with further.

The Austrian Council welcomes the proposal made by the Reform Commission and regards the proposed concept as an important first step within the scope of the Academy's reform process. The Austrian Council expects this reform process to be accelerated.

The Austrian Council recommends

- the establishment of a working group which will support the reform process by drawing up concepts and steps toward reform. The Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK) must be involved in this process.
- incorporating the recommendations contained in the Annual Report of the National Audit Office – Federal Government: Administrative Year 2003 in the future reform process.
- implementing a financial controlling system to ensure the transparent use of funds. This controlling should be carried out by external auditors and should support the Presidium of the Academy, the Research Board, the ministry and other relevant bodies with the implementation of reform and a medium-term planning process.
- The BMBWK should make funding available as needed and based on the progress of the reform process.

In a recommendation to the National Foundation for Research, Technology and Development dated 14 December 2006, the Austrian Council reaffirmed this recommendation, adding that in the medium term

the Academy institutes should be funded by the ministries and medium-term planning certainty must be guaranteed on the basis of agreed performance targets. Furthermore, the responsible ministry must continue to ensure that the steps agreed as part of the reform process are successfully implemented.