



Vienna

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These differences in framework conditions are however constantly evolving: an economic catch-up is underway, with common market conditions in place (identical European standards for everyone, convergence of social standards). If there is competition, therefore, it is less about wage or tax dumping than a race for innovation within a territory whose economies are increasingly interdependent. However, the merging of economic and employment areas needs to address the linguistic barriers as knowledge of the neighbouring country's language is extremely important in developing cross-border relations. Finally, the growth of the Slovak, Czech and Hungarian economies also makes it possible to focus the region around Vienna, which is perceived as being a model in terms of its way of life, urban planning and level of environmental protection.

ECONOMIC FABRIC

The region is characterised by the important place occupied by industry and technical activities. An automotive industry cluster is developing, particularly in Slovakia⁸⁰ (with Volkswagen in Bratislava, PSA in Trnava and Kia in Žilina), as well as in Hungary (Audi in Győr, Suzuki in Esztergom). Many manufacturers of car parts have set up nearby.⁸¹ More generally, it is the technical trades that are the common feature of the regions surrounding Vienna, with importance attached to “dual training” (learning combined with work experience), which helps to strengthen the links between colleges and companies and also fosters innovation.

⁸⁰ In 2012, the automotive sector accounted for 41% of Slovak industry (which in turn accounted for 34.6% of the country's GDP), with 926,555 vehicles produced.

⁸¹ Major suppliers of the automotive industry have set up in Slovakia: Faurecia, Valeo, Delphi, Plastic Omnium, Johnson Controls, Magna, etc.

The strategy of public players is focused on supporting businesses to expand internationally:

- ✚ **Through the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)**, which helps European firms to find R&D partners, businesses have received free support in this initiative with Slovak partners.⁸²
- ✚ For Austrian firms, the **“Go International” programme** – an important international development tool of the Federal Chamber of Commerce and the Federal Ministry of the Economy – has also helped to develop cross-border exchanges between businesses, notably by sending staff on immersion programmes with firms on the other side of the border, with the aim of increasing knowledge of the system in the neighbouring country and developing interpersonal relations, thus fostering cooperation and innovation.

⁸² A bilateral partnership with Austria that also exists with Belgium and the Netherlands.