



ORF DETAILED ANALYSIS

2026-04-26_ZIB 2 vom 26.04.2026

Programme: ORF Programme | 2026-04-26 | Analysed on: 2026-05-21 10:52

Version 3.0-detail | Universal 3.0-detail | Konverter 3.4 (2026-05-20) | Masstab: §4 ORF-G

OVERALL SCORE

4.8/10

Significant imbalance

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly one-sided/manipulative

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Greens	SPÖ	NEOS	ÖVP	FPÖ
CHES	2.13	3.08	5.40	6.73	8.83
Spectrum	<i>Left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Right</i>

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly left-favouring, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly right-favouring). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

3.2 / 10

Left-favouring

0 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — chesdata.eu | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section serves for political classification and does not feed into the overall score.



POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Since February 2025, Austria has been governed by a coalition of FPÖ (57 seats) and ÖVP (51 seats) under FPÖ Federal Chancellor Herbert Kickl. The FPÖ is for the first time the chancellor's party in the Second Republic. In opposition are the SPÖ (41 seats), NEOS (18 seats) and Greens (16 seats).

Note on the programme: This ZIB 2 edition deals primarily with the double budget of the current government — however, in the report (02:00) the coalition is referred to as "ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS". This is a factual misinformation in the programme text, as the actual government consists of FPÖ and ÖVP. The analysis takes this contradiction into account.

Party	CHES L-R	Seats	Government/Opposition	Core position
FPÖ	8.5	57	Government (chancellor's party)	Remigration, sovereignty, anti-EU sanctions
ÖVP	6.0	51	Government (junior partner)	Business location, tax cuts, strict asylum policy
SPÖ	3.0	41	Opposition	Wealth tax, workers' rights, public investment
NEOS	5.5	18	Opposition	Liberal economy, education reform, pro-EU
Greens	2.5	16	Opposition	Climate neutrality, humane asylum policy, Green Deal

The dominant line of conflict is budget consolidation: revenue-side measures (wealth tax, bank levy — SPÖ position) are opposed to expenditure-side savings (ÖVP, NEOS, Chamber of Commerce). A second line runs between the new FPÖ-ÖVP government and the ORF, which the FPÖ has historically accused of "left-wing bias" and seeks to reform. Third line of tension: federalism reform versus regional autonomy, particularly relevant in budget negotiations.

The ORF is Austria's public broadcaster and is subject to the requirements of objectivity, impartiality and diversity of opinion pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act. §10 para. 7 requires adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council. The structural proximity between the ÖVP and the ORF Foundation Council has been the subject of political criticism for years; the FPÖ as the new chancellor's party is seeking an ORF reform.



CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Preliminary remark: The programme contains a factually incorrect representation of the government's composition at 02:00 ("ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS" as negotiating parties for the double budget). This is the most serious individual finding of the entire programme and is taken into account in all relevant criteria.

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Programme portrayal vs. party programme position
FPÖ	-4	02:00 "No easy task for ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS in the negotiations for the double budget 27 and 28" — Programme position: FPÖ is the chancellor's party and leads budget negotiations — actively distorted/omitted: The FPÖ as chancellor's party is completely excluded from the budget debate; its core positions (reduction of bureaucracy, tax cuts, against new levies) are not presented
ÖVP	+2	03:20 "ÖVP and NEOS have little enthusiasm for new levies" / 03:29 "In the subsidy system, in administration, everywhere there is potential for efficiency gains" — Programme position: strengthening the business location, against new taxes — correctly portrayed, but placed in the context of the false government representation
SPÖ	+3	02:42 "According to the SPÖ and the trade union, large companies should be made to pay" / 02:49 "We demand a significant increase in the bank levy" / 03:01 "And a millionaire's tax on large inheritances and assets" — Programme position: wealth tax, workers' rights — correctly and extensively portrayed, receives prominent speaking time
Greens	0	Not mentioned in the programme — omitted (opposition party, no connection to the budget topic established)
NEOS	+1	04:13 "On the initiative of NEOS, the legalisation of cannabis was discussed with the hope of additional hundreds of millions, according to 'profil'" — Programme position: pragmatic solutions, reduction of bureaucracy — partially correct, cannabis legalisation as a NEOS initiative correct, but core positions (radical reduction of bureaucracy, education reform) are missing

Party bias summary

- Most accurate portrayal: SPÖ, score +3
- Strongest distortion: FPÖ, score -4
- Average deviation from 0: 2.0
- Conclusion: The most serious distortion is the factually incorrect representation of the government's composition at 02:00, which completely eliminates the FPÖ as chancellor's party from the budget debate. The SPÖ, as an opposition party, receives the most extensive and positive portrayal of its programme positions, while the actual governing party FPÖ is not even mentioned by name in the budget context. This is either a serious editorial error or a systematic omission bias.



CHAPTER 2 — PROGRAMME INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Programme data

- Title: Zeit im Bild 2 (ZIB 2)
- Date: 26.04.2026
- Presenter: Not named (female presenter, inferable from context)
- Reporters: A. Kubelka & S. Schinhan (subtitle 00:06)

Actors	Function	Party/affiliation	Political spectrum
Gerhard Steger	Former head of the budget division of the Finance Ministry	Non-partisan/civil servant	Technocratic-fiscally conservative
SPÖ representative (soundbite)	Party representative	SPÖ	Centre-left (3.0)
Chamber of Commerce representative (soundbite)	Interest representative	WKÖ/ÖVP-aligned	Centre-right
Susanne Schnabl	Presenter (announced for follow-up programme)	ORF	—

Main topic

The Austrian federal government is negotiating a double budget for 2027/28 under considerable consolidation pressure, with the focus on savings requirements, distribution issues and structural reforms.



CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION

6/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Expert 1: Gerhard Steger, former head of the budget division of the Finance Ministry

Timestamp: 04:46–12:33

Statement: "If one wants to follow the advice of the International Monetary Fund to push the deficit below 2 percent [...] we need to save 3 percent of GDP. That is 15 billion euros." (05:20–05:40)

Assessment: Steger is a former senior civil servant of the Finance Ministry, thus institutionally committed to the fiscally conservative mainstream. His career was based on budget discipline; he has a structural interest in emphasising the necessity of savings. No discernible party-political ties, but a clear institutional bias towards expenditure cuts.

Missing countervoice: A representative of heterodox economics (e.g. MMT perspective), a Keynesian or a social economist would have raised the question of whether austerity is counterproductive in a recessionary phase.

Source in-depth check:

(a) FUNDING: Steger was a federal civil servant, funded by the Austrian state. As a pensioner, no current institutional funding is discernible. No commercial conflict of interest. Structural bias: decades of socialisation in a fiscally conservative environment.

(b) MANDATE: His mandate as head of the budget division was explicitly budget consolidation — compatible with savings recommendations, but not with a balanced assessment of distribution issues or growth effects.

D1 Conflict of interest: +1 — No commercial conflict, but institutional bias (fiscally conservative)

D2 Personal risk: +1 — As a pensioner, no career risk; can speak freely

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Direct professional competence for budget issues, decades of practice

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — No contradictions discernible, consistent fiscally conservative line

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: 0 — Mix of data (15 bn., 3% GDP) and metaphors ("Titanic", "house is on fire")

D6 Source level: +1 — Primary experience as practitioner, but no cited primary sources

TOTAL: +6 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Steger is framed as a neutral expert ("long-standing head of the budget division"), although his entire career was oriented towards budget consolidation. The programme does not present him as a representative of a particular fiscal school, which obscures his institutional background.

Missing expert groups:

- Independent economic researcher (WIFO/IHS) for a scientific assessment of consolidation paths
- Social economist for distributional effects
- Federalism expert for a structural reform perspective

Summary: Steger is professionally competent and personally credible (GREEN), but as the sole expert he is too one-sidedly fiscally conservative; a countervoice from social or growth economics is completely absent.

Source indicator for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Indicator
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Gerhard Steger, former head of the budget division of the Finance Ministry	+1	+1	+2	+1	0	+1	+6	GREEN
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2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: WIFO (Austrian Institute of Economic Research)

Timestamp

01:16 — Statement: "WIFO calculates a deficit of 4.1% this year and 4% next year, if the government takes no action."

(a) Funding: WIFO is approximately 50% state-funded (federal ministries, social partners). Structural conflict of interest on topics concerning state action.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: WIFO forecasts are often used to legitimise government measures; the figure is presented here as a fact without contextualisation.

(c) Missing counter-source: IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies) or the Fiscal Council could have provided alternative forecasts.

Source 2: IMF (International Monetary Fund)

Timestamp

05:20 — Statement: "If one wants to follow the advice of the International Monetary Fund to push the deficit below 2 percent"

(a) Funding: Multilateral institution, funded by member states. Known for structural adjustment programmes and fiscally conservative recommendations.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: IMF recommendations are systematically oriented towards expenditure cuts; this is not contextualised.

(c) Missing counter-source: Economists who criticise IMF austerity policy (e.g. Stiglitz, Blanchard studies on multiplier effects) are not mentioned.

Source 3: "profil" (news magazine)

Timestamp

04:19 — Statement: "according to 'profil', the legalisation of cannabis was discussed"

(a) Funding: Private news magazine, advertising-funded.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: No direct partisanship discernible.

(c) Missing primary source: The cannabis information is presented as a secondary source ("according to profil"), without primary evidence.

Rumour check:

Rumour 1:

Timestamp: 04:19

Claim: "according to 'profil', the legalisation of cannabis was discussed"

Word marker: "according to 'profil'" — secondary source without primary evidence

Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Rumour 2:

Timestamp: 14:22

Claim: "Shortly before the act, he allegedly sent a manifesto to his family."

Word marker: "allegedly"



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Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Rumour 3:

Timestamp: 14:40

Claim: "The suspect apparently travelled by train from Los Angeles to Chicago"

Word marker: "apparently"

Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Rumour 4:

Timestamp: 14:53

Claim: "He is likely to have purchased the firearms within the last few years."

Word marker: "likely"

Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Base score: 1/10 + 4 penalty points = 5/10

Summary: The source selection is one-sidedly fiscally conservative (WIFO, IMF) without heterodox countervoices; in the Trump assassination report, unsubstantiated claims with rumour markers accumulate, violating journalistic due diligence.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									4/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Estimated speaking time:

- Gerhard Steger (fiscally conservative): approx. 7:30 min. (37%)
- SPÖ/trade union (soundbites, left): approx. 0:45 min. (4%)
- ÖVP/WKÖ (soundbites, centre-right): approx. 0:30 min. (2%)
- Presenter/speaker (budget report): approx. 3:00 min. (15%)
- Trump assassination: approx. 3:30 min. (17%)
- Marathon: approx. 3:00 min. (15%)
- Other reports/weather: approx. 2:20 min. (11%)

Summary: In the budget topic, Steger dominates with approx. 7:30 minutes of speaking time compared to under one minute each for SPÖ and ÖVP/WKÖ; the FPÖ as chancellor's party receives zero speaking time in the budget context, which represents a considerable asymmetry.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

8/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Omission 1:

Context

The FPÖ as chancellor's party and its budget positions are completely absent.

Relevant at: 02:00 — "No easy task for ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS in the negotiations for the double budget 27 and 28"

Effect

The omission of the FPÖ suggests that the chancellor's party is not involved in the budget negotiations. This is factually incorrect and politically serious, as the FPÖ as the strongest party (29.2%) is leading the negotiations.

Omission 2:

Context

Criticism of IMF austerity policy and alternative consolidation strategies are absent.

Relevant at: 05:20 — "If one wants to follow the advice of the International Monetary Fund"

Effect

The IMF advice is presented as an uncontested authority, without mentioning the well-known scientific criticism of austerity policy (multiplier effects, dampening of growth).

Omission 3:

Context

Pensioners' representatives are mentioned (04:04), but receive no soundbite and no time for argumentation.

Relevant at: 04:04 — "Above all, senior citizens' representatives are opposing this"

Effect

The rejection of pension cuts is presented as mere interest group lobbying, without hearing the social policy arguments; this favours the savings position.

Summary: The most systematic omission is the complete absence of the FPÖ as chancellor's party in the budget context — this is either a serious error or a deliberate bias; additionally, countervoices to austerity policy and the arguments of those affected are missing.

Missing voices

- FPÖ government representative (Finance Minister or Chancellor): Would have contributed the governing position of the chancellor's party on budget priorities, tax policy and savings measures
- WIFO or IHS economist: Would have provided an independent scientific assessment of the various consolidation paths and their growth effects
- Regional finance officer: Would have contributed the federalism perspective and counter-arguments to centralisation
- Pensioners' association representative: Would have set out the arguments against pension cuts with figures and social policy justification
- Chamber of Labour representative: Would have specified the effects of savings measures on workers and low-income earners
- Fiscal Council representative: Would have allowed the independent Austrian budget authority to voice its assessment of budget paths
- Chamber of Commerce representative (independently): Appears only as a soundbite in the report, not as a studio guest



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- Social Ministry/social organisation: Would have presented the distributional effects of specific savings measures on vulnerable groups



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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Complete figures include: absolute value, share (%) and trend

Finding 1:

Timestamp 05:36–05:40

Figure: "we need to save 3 percent of GDP. That is 15 billion euros."

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value ✓ (15 bn.), (b) Share ✓ (3% GDP), (c) Trend X (missing)

Missing context

Over what period? In what steps? What would be the growth effect of this saving? The IMF recommendation is presented as a fact, without the timeframe or the growth implications being mentioned.

Effect

The figure of 15 billion appears alarming and absolute, without the time horizon or the economic consequences of austerity being presented.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 01:16

Figure: "WIFO calculates a deficit of 4.1% this year and 4% next year"

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value X (no euro amount), (b) Share ✓ (% of GDP), (c) Trend ✓ (two years)

Missing context

What was the deficit in previous years? How is it developing compared to the EU average? Austria is above the EU average — but by how much?

Effect

The figure appears isolated and dramatic, without historical or international comparison.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 01:31

Figure: "The Finance Minister puts this requirement at 2.5 billion euros."

Dimensions: (a) Absolute value ✓, (b) Share X (no % of GDP), (c) Trend X

Missing context

2.5 bn. corresponds to approx. 0.5% of GDP — this classification is missing. Compared to Steger's 15 bn., the government figure appears small, without the difference being explained.

Effect

Implicit message: the government is planning too little — without viewers being able to assess the proportionality.

Summary: Figures are consistently presented without trend context and without international comparative values; the juxtaposition of 2.5 bn. (government) and 15 bn. (IMF/Steger) without timeframe and growth effects creates a misleading alarmism.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION									1/10
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	09:52–09:56
Quote	<i>"In the election year 2024, the budget exploded."</i>
	Technique: Implicit association of the budget explosion with the election year — suggests politically motivated expenditure without explicitly naming the responsible party (ÖVP under Nehammer).
Effect	The ÖVP is indirectly associated with budget irresponsibility, without this being stated explicitly.

No further guilt-by-association findings in the programme.

Summary: Guilt by association is not a dominant pattern in this programme; the only finding is the implicit association of budget explosion and election year 2024, which indirectly burdens the ÖVP.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1:

Position: 02:00 (beginning of the budget report, after intro)

Content: "No easy task for ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS in the negotiations for the double budget 27 and 28."

Timing effect

The false government representation appears at the beginning of the report and sets the frame for all subsequent coverage. All subsequent information is filtered through this false frame; a correction never occurs.

Finding 2:

Position: 03:01 (middle of the budget report)

Content: "And a millionaire's tax on large inheritances and assets. We know from history that consolidation is most readily accepted when people perceive it as fair."

Timing effect

The SPÖ's fairness argument is placed in the middle of the report — after the problem presentation, but before the ÖVP/WKÖ counter-position. This gives the SPÖ position the structurally strongest placement (middle = anchor).

Finding 3:

Position: 12:39 (immediately after the Steger interview)

Content: "The patronage trial against ÖVP parliamentary club chairman Wöginger is heading towards its conclusion."

Timing effect

The announcement of the Wöginger trial directly after the budget interview, which implicitly addresses ÖVP budget responsibility, creates a negative chain of association for the ÖVP.

Summary: The most serious timing manipulation is the placement of the false government representation at the beginning of the report; the Wöginger announcement directly after the budget interview reinforces the negative ÖVP context.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage reinforces the finding. Score = degree of outrage (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

Methodological principle: document the triggering event — asymmetry is only demonstrable with a comparable trigger without an analogous reaction.

Finding 1:

Timestamp

10:24

Triggering event: Presenter asks whether the budget gap arose from political calculation.

Reaction: "So you took the risk out of political calculation?" — implicitly critical question directed at the (unnamed) previous government.

Comparison

Analogous event — question about political calculation in SPÖ demands (millionaire's tax as campaign issue): no analogous critical follow-up question at 02:49–03:18.

Asymmetry: Slightly demonstrable — critical follow-up question on budget responsibility of the past (implicitly ÖVP), but no critical follow-up question on SPÖ demands.

Degree of outrage: 1/5

Selectivity: 1/5

Summary: Selective outrage is not a dominant pattern; the slight asymmetry is evident in the critical follow-up question on budget responsibility of the past without analogous criticism of SPÖ demands.



9. COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — overall picture)

7/10

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Finding 1:

Timestamp 02:00

Missing perspective/fact: The FPÖ as chancellor's party and its budget positions are completely absent; instead, a factually incorrect government composition is named.

Relevance: The FPÖ, as the strongest party (29.2%), leads the government and bears primary responsibility for the budget.

Impact: The overall picture of the budget debate is fundamentally distorted — the chancellor's party does not exist in the programme.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 05:20

Missing perspective/fact: Criticism of IMF austerity policy and growth effects of savings measures are absent.

Relevance: The scientific debate on multiplier effects (Blanchard/Leigh 2013: IMF underestimated austerity damage) is central to the contextualisation of the 15 bn. recommendation.

Impact: The IMF recommendation appears as uncontested truth rather than one of several economic policy positions.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 04:04

Missing perspective/fact: Arguments of pensioners' representatives against cuts are absent despite being mentioned.

Relevance: Pensions are the largest budget item; the arguments for inflation adjustment (purchasing power maintenance, old-age poverty) are relevant in terms of social and economic policy.

Impact: Pensioners' representatives appear as a mere interest group without substantive arguments.

Summary: The programme suffers from a fundamental completeness gap — the chancellor's party is completely absent from the budget context, and the counter-arguments to austerity policy as well as the perspectives of those affected are systematically omitted.

Austria is in an EU deficit procedure and must reduce the budget deficit to below 3% of GDP by 2028. The debate is ideologically charged: left-wing parties and trade unions demand wealth taxes and redistribution, while right-wing and liberal forces rely on expenditure cuts and location policy. Federalism is regarded as a structural efficiency problem, but is politically difficult to attack. Demographic developments (pensions, health, care) account for a growing share of the budget.

Share of perspectives covered

Inverted: original value measures coverage (higher = better). Displayed as deviation (higher = greater gaps).

[A] Government position FPÖ: What does the chancellor's party specifically plan for the budget?

[B] Government position ÖVP: Detailed savings proposals beyond generalities

[C] Opposition position SPÖ: Wealth tax concept with concrete figures



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[D] Opposition position NEOS: Concrete proposals for reducing bureaucracy

[E] Trade union/Chamber of Labour: Social effects of savings measures on workers

[F] Pensioners' associations: Why pension cuts would be socially problematic

[G] Economic researchers (WIFO/IHS): Independent assessment of consolidation paths

[H] EU Commission/Fiscal Council: External requirements and room for manoeuvre

[I] Regional representatives: Federalism perspective, counter-arguments to centralisation

[J] Social organisations: Effects on vulnerable groups

[A] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The FPÖ as chancellor's party is not mentioned in the entire budget report; its positions are completely absent.

[B] INDICATED

Timestamp: 03:20 — Quote: "ÖVP and NEOS have little enthusiasm for new levies" — Assessment: ÖVP position is mentioned, but only as a reaction to SPÖ demands, without independent presentation.

[C] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 02:49–03:18 — Quote: "We demand a significant increase in the bank levy [...] millionaire's tax on large inheritances and assets" — Assessment: SPÖ position is extensively presented with soundbite and fairness argument.

[D] INDICATED

Timestamp: 04:13 — Quote: "On the initiative of NEOS [...] the legalisation of cannabis was discussed" — Assessment: NEOS appears only with the cannabis proposal; core positions on reducing bureaucracy are absent.

[E] INDICATED

Timestamp: 02:42 — Quote: "According to the SPÖ and the trade union, large companies should be made to pay" — Assessment: Trade union is mentioned, but without an independent soundbite.

[F] INDICATED

Timestamp: 04:04 — Quote: "Above all, senior citizens' representatives are opposing this" — Assessment: Only as a marginal note, no soundbite, no argumentation.

[G] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 01:16 — Quote: "WIFO calculates a deficit of 4.1% this year and 4% next year" — Assessment: WIFO forecast is cited, but without contextualisation by a WIFO representative themselves.

[H] INDICATED

Timestamp: 02:23 — Quote: "in order to achieve the budget targets agreed with the EU Commission" — Assessment: EU framework is mentioned, but not explored in depth.

[I] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Regional representatives are not given a voice, although federalism is identified as a central structural problem.

[J] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Social organisations and vulnerable groups are completely absent.

Completeness score: 4/10



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Justification: The programme addresses the budget topic in a strongly narrowed way, focusing on the question of "raising taxes vs. cutting expenditure" and omitting the chancellor's party FPÖ, regional representatives, social organisations and an independent economic research perspective. The only expert in the studio is a former civil servant with a fiscally conservative bias; the perspectives of those directly affected (pensioners, workers, regions) are largely absent.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

6/10

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Finding 1:

Timestamp	01:07
Quote	<i>"Austria is still deeply in the red."</i>
Manipulation	The budget deficit is framed as a moral failure ("in the red", "stuck") rather than as an economic policy control variable.
Why problematic	"In the red" is a household metaphor that equates state budget policy with private bookkeeping — a classic austerity frame that presents deficit financing as inherently negative, without taking investment aspects into account.

Finding 2:

Timestamp	09:09–09:14
Quote	<i>"We are sitting at the Heuriger on the Titanic, an iceberg lurks beneath us and if we don't change course quickly, we will go under."</i>
Manipulation	Apocalyptic catastrophe metaphor for a fiscal debate.
Why problematic	The Titanic metaphor creates emotional alarmism and suggests that without immediate drastic savings measures, state bankruptcy is imminent — a politically one-sided framing that presents austerity as the only way out.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	02:28
Quote	<i>"Who gets how much of the cake?"</i>
Manipulation	The budget is framed as a distributional struggle over a fixed cake.
Why problematic	The "cake" frame suggests that the total size of the budget is immutable and that it is only a matter of distribution — this ignores the possibility of enlarging the "cake" through growth policy.

Summary: The dominant framing is fiscally conservative and austerity-oriented: deficit as moral failure, public finances as a household budget, catastrophe metaphors for not saving — alternative frames (investment, growth, social stabilisation) are absent.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS									5/10
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	01:07
Quote	<i>"Austria is still deeply in the red."</i>
Manipulation	"Deeply" — emotional amplification of the deficit problem through a bodily metaphor (stuck, unable to get out).
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "Austria has a budget deficit of X% of GDP."

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	05:56
Quote	<i>"There are a few sacred cows that nobody dares to attack."</i>
Manipulation	"Sacred cows" — religious metaphor for irrational taboos; "to attack" — military connotation for reforms.
Why problematic	The metaphor delegitimises protective positions (pensions, health) as irrational and cowardly, without examining their substantive justification. Neutral alternative: "There are areas of reform that are politically difficult to implement."

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	06:27–06:32
Quote	<i>"That brings together and into a mess that our grandchildren will still curse us for."</i>
Manipulation	"Mess", "curse" — emotional attribution of blame to the current generation towards future generations.
Why problematic	This language creates moral pressure for savings measures, without taking into account the counter-position (investments for future generations). Neutral alternative: "The debt burden could weigh on future generations."

Summary: The choice of words is consistently austerity-favouring — deficits are framed as moral failure, protective positions as irrational taboos and not saving as a betrayal of future generations.



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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Methodological principle: document the triggering event.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 10:24

Triggering event: Steger says one had "known what was going on" (implicitly: the budget gap was known).

Quote (presenter) *"So you took the risk out of political calculation?"*

Comparison Analogous event — SPÖ demand for a millionaire's tax (02:49–03:18): no critical follow-up question as to whether this was electoral populism.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — critical follow-up question on implicit ÖVP responsibility, no analogous follow-up question on SPÖ demands.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 05:52

Triggering event: Steger names 15 billion as the savings requirement.

Quote (presenter) *"15 billion — where is so much money supposed to come from?"*

Comparison The question takes Steger's premise (15 bn. needed) as given, without questioning whether the IMF recommendation is the only valid reference.

Asymmetry: The presenter does not question the fiscally conservative premise, but implicitly presents the government figure (2.5 bn.) as insufficient.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 07:57–08:07

Triggering event: Transition to reform question.

Quote (presenter) *"You have negotiated many budgets and experienced how difficult it is to implement such reforms. Why do these reforms fail to materialise?"*

Comparison The question presupposes that reforms fail — a suggestive question that confirms Steger's narrative.

Asymmetry: No counter-question as to whether reforms might also fail for good reasons (democratic legitimacy, social costs).

Summary: The moderation is largely affirmative towards Steger and adopts his fiscally conservative framework; critical follow-up questions are directed implicitly against the ÖVP's past, not against the savings logic itself.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

5/10

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Asymmetry 1:

To Steger, 05	02: "Finance Minister Marterbauer sees a savings requirement of two and a half billion euros. Economic researchers say more is needed. Is that enough?" — hard (implies inadequacy of the government position)
To SPÖ (soundbite), 02	49–03:18: No follow-up question, no critical contextualisation of the millionaire's tax demand — no question
Comparison	The government position is critically questioned, the opposition demand is presented without comment.

Asymmetry 2:

To Steger, 10	24: "So you took the risk out of political calculation?" — hard (implies political irresponsibility of the previous government)
To Steger, 07	57: "Why do these reforms fail to materialise?" — soft (confirms Steger's narrative, no counter-question)
Comparison	Hard questions are directed against political actors (implicitly ÖVP), soft questions confirm the expert.

Summary: The question asymmetry is evident in the critical treatment of the government position (2.5 bn. as insufficient) compared to the uncritical presentation of SPÖ demands and the affirmative moderation towards Steger.



14. FALSE BALANCE									3/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1:

Timestamp 02:00–04:42 (budget report)

Construct: The report presents the SPÖ position (soundbite, fairness argument, approx. 45 sec.) and the ÖVP/WKÖ position (soundbite, approx. 30 sec.) as a balanced juxtaposition.

Analysis

The apparent balance between "raising taxes" and "cutting expenditure" conceals that (a) the FPÖ as chancellor's party is absent, (b) the SPÖ receives significantly more speaking time and the stronger fairness argument, and (c) the subsequent expert reinforces the expenditure-cutting position.

Summary: The superficial two-sided presentation (SPÖ vs. ÖVP/WKÖ) creates the impression of balance, while the chancellor's party is absent and the overall composition favours the savings position.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

6/10

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Finding 1:

Agenda element set: Budget consolidation is imperative and the central political task.

Timestamp 01:07 — Evidence: "Austria is still deeply in the red."

Alternative agenda: The question of whether deficit financing could be sensible in a period of weak growth, or whether the EU deficit rules themselves need reform, does not make it onto the agenda.

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The government consists of ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS.

Timestamp 02:00 — Evidence: "No easy task for ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS in the negotiations for the double budget 27 and 28."

Alternative agenda: The actual government (FPÖ-ÖVP) and its specific budget priorities do not make it onto the agenda.

Finding 3:

Agenda element set: Pensions, health and care are "sacred cows" — i.e. irrational taboos.

Timestamp 05:56 — Evidence: "There are a few sacred cows that nobody dares to attack."

Alternative agenda: The question of whether these expenditures are socially necessary and economically stabilising does not make it onto the agenda.

Summary: The programme sets austerity as a self-evident necessity on the agenda and eliminates both the actual government composition and alternative economic policy frameworks from the discourse.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (average criteria 1–9): 4.7 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (average criteria 10–15): 4.8 / 10

Dominant techniques

- 1. Omission / Selective Omission (score 8):** The complete omission of the FPÖ as chancellor's party from the budget context is the most serious individual finding — it is either a serious editorial error or a systematic bias; in both cases it violates §4 of the ORF Act. The omission of austerity criticism and the perspectives of those affected reinforces this finding.
- 2. Framing (score 6):** The consistently austerity-oriented framing (deficit as moral failure, catastrophe metaphors, cake metaphor) sets a one-sided economic policy framework that structurally disadvantages alternative positions. This frame is consistently reinforced by expert selection, choice of words and agenda-setting.
- 3. Agenda-setting (score 6):** The programme sets budget consolidation as a self-evident necessity and eliminates both the actual government composition and alternative economic policy frameworks from the discourse — this is a structural restriction of diversity of opinion within the meaning of §4 of the ORF Act.

Core messages of the programme

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "Austria must save drastically — the government is planning too little, and without painful cuts, state bankruptcy looms."

Technique: Framing + expert selection + manipulation of figures — evidence: 01:07, 05:40, 09:09

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "The budget crisis is the result of political irresponsibility in the past."

Technique: Timing + moderation behaviour + implicit guilt by association — evidence: 09:52, 10:24, 12:39

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIETAL): "The current government consists of ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS — the FPÖ plays no role in budget policy."

Technique: Omission + false representation of government composition — evidence: 02:00, entire budget report

Justification: The overall score of 4.8 is on the boundary between "slight tendency" and "clear one-sidedness"; due to the serious individual finding (factually incorrect government representation, complete omission of the chancellor's party), "clear one-sidedness" is chosen as the classification. The programme violates §4 of the ORF Act in several respects: through the factually incorrect representation of the government composition, through the one-sided expert selection without a countervoice, and through the consistently austerity-oriented framing without presentation of alternative economic policy positions. Diversity of opinion pursuant to §4 para. 1 of the ORF Act is not guaranteed.

CONCLUSION

The ZIB 2 edition has an overall score of 4.8/10 and is to be classified as clearly one-sided. The most serious individual finding is the factually incorrect representation of the government composition at 02:00 ("ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS"), which completely eliminates the FPÖ as chancellor's party from the budget discourse — this violates §4 para. 1 of the ORF Act (objectivity and impartiality) as well as §10 para. 7 of the ORF Act (adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council) in a flagrant manner. The consistently austerity-oriented framing, the one-sided expert selection and the omission of countervoices to the savings logic structurally favour left-wing opposition positions (SPÖ) over the actual government. The programme thus does not fulfil the statutory mandate for diversity of opinion and balanced reporting pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act; whether the false government representation is attributable to editorial failure or systematic bias cannot be conclusively assessed from the transcript alone, but is legally relevant in both cases.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — all 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	6	•••
2	SOURCE SELECTION	5	•••
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	4	••
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	8	••••
5	MANIPULATION OF FIGURES	5	•••
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	1	•
7	TIMING	4	••
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	2	•
9	COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — overall picture)	7	••••
10	FRAMING (setting the frame)	6	•••
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	5	•••
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	4	••
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	5	•••
14	FALSE BALANCE	3	••
15	AGENDA-SETTING	6	•••

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

4.7/10

Significant imbalance

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

4.8/10

Significant imbalance

OVERALL SCORE

4.8/10

Significant imbalance

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

0	No finding	No relevant irregularity identified.
1–2	Weak finding	Slight irregularity without material impairment of balance.
3–4	Slight to moderate finding	Discernible tendency; relevance of impact low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of impact	Relevant imbalance that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
6	Significant finding (threshold)	Scores from 6 onwards are reported as "significant findings".
7	Significant finding	Clear, well-evidenced imbalance with marked relevance of impact.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced imbalance; several evidenced individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum manifestation	Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No material patterns discernible; programme meets the requirement of factual accuracy.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight imbalance	Isolated irregularities; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Significant imbalance	Several significant findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the requirement of balance. High degree of deviation	Pronounced, programme-wide patterns; high relevance of impact.
8.1 – 10	Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high degree of bias	Maximum manifestation across almost all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is clearly treated worse in terms of portrayal, speaking time or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Discernible, but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No discernible preference or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Discernible, but weak preference.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly preferred in terms of portrayal, speaking time or framing.



CHAPTER 5 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (§4 ORF Act)

Assessment pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act

Violation 1:

Norm: §4 para. 1 of the ORF Act (objectivity and impartiality of reporting)

Facts: Factually incorrect representation of the government composition

Evidence: Timestamp 02:00 — Quote: "No easy task for ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS in the negotiations for the double budget 27 and 28."

Assessment: The actual government consists of FPÖ and ÖVP; SPÖ and NEOS are opposition parties. The naming of an incorrect government composition in a news report violates the requirement of objectivity. No correction is made in the programme. This is not an interpretive finding, but a factual error.

Violation 2:

Norm: §4 para. 1 of the ORF Act in conjunction with §10 para. 7 of the ORF Act (adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council)

Facts: Complete omission of the FPÖ as chancellor's party from the budget discourse

Evidence: Entire budget report 01:00–04:42 as well as Steger interview 04:46–12:33 — the FPÖ is not mentioned in any of these segments or assigned a position.

Assessment: §10 para. 7 of the ORF Act requires adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council. The complete omission of the strongest party (29.2%, chancellor's party) from a central political topic (budget negotiations) violates this norm.

Violation 3:

Norm: §4 para. 1 of the ORF Act (diversity of opinion)

Facts: One-sided expert selection without a countervoice to the fiscally conservative position

Evidence: Timestamp 04:46–12:33 — Steger as the only studio guest; no countervoice from social economics, growth economics or trade unions.

Assessment: The restriction to a single expert with a clearly fiscally conservative institutional background without any countervoice violates the requirement of diversity of opinion, particularly on a politically controversial topic such as budget consolidation.

Overall assessment pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act

The programme exhibits three demonstrable violations of §4 of the ORF Act, the most serious of which is a factual error (incorrect government composition) that is not corrected. The combination of a false statement of fact, complete omission of the chancellor's party and one-sided expert selection constitutes a pattern that violates the statutory requirements of objectivity, impartiality and diversity of opinion. A complaint to the ORF Audience Council or KommAustria would be justifiable on the basis of these findings; the factual error at 02:00 would be the strongest argument, as it is not interpretive but objectively demonstrable.



CHAPTER 6 — SOURCE IN-DEPTH CHECK

WIFO (Austrian Institute of Economic Research)

- FUNDING:** Approx. 50% state-funded (federal ministries, social partners), approx. 50% contract research. Structural conflict of interest on topics concerning state action and budget policy.
- MANDATE:** Economic forecasts and analyses — compatible with deficit forecasts, but not with normative recommendations on budget policy.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** WIFO forecasts are regularly used to legitimise government measures; institutional interest in maintaining relevance by being cited in political debates.
 - D1 Conflict of interest: 0 — State co-funding, but no direct client conflict in forecasts
 - D2 Personal risk: +1 — Institutional risk with politically inconvenient forecasts
 - D3 Professional competence: +2 — Recognised economic research institution
 - D4 Consistency: +1 — Methodologically consistent forecast models
 - D5 Emotion vs. data: +2 — Data-based
 - D6 Source level: +1 — Secondary analysis of primary data**TOTAL: +7 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN**
- COUNTERVOICE:** IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies) provides alternative forecasts; is not cited.

IMF (International Monetary Fund)

- FUNDING:** Funded by 190 member states; structurally dominated by creditor states.
- MANDATE:** Financial stability and balance of payments support — structurally oriented towards fiscal consolidation.
- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The IMF has an institutional interest in the debt sustainability of member states; known for systematically expenditure-cut-oriented recommendations (Blanchard/Leigh 2013: IMF underestimated austerity damage during the euro crisis).
 - D1 Conflict of interest: -1 — Structural bias towards fiscal consolidation
 - D2 Personal risk: +1 — Institutionally independent of national politics
 - D3 Professional competence: +2 — Recognised international economic institution
 - D4 Consistency: 0 — IMF has self-critically revised its own austerity policy
 - D5 Emotion vs. data: +2 — Data-based
 - D6 Source level: +1 — Secondary analysis**TOTAL: +5 → SOURCE INDICATOR: GREEN (marginal)**
- COUNTERVOICE:** Economists such as Stiglitz, Krugman or the IMF's internal self-criticism (Blanchard/Leigh) are not mentioned; the IMF recommendation is presented as an uncontested authority.

IMPORTANT: "Recognised" is not a substantive qualification. Both WIFO and IMF receive GREEN in the source indicator — but their assessments are not neutral, but institutionally shaped. The programme presents them as neutral facts, without contextualising this institutional shaping. This is the actual source problem: not the quality of the sources, but their one-sided selection without countervoices.

Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact

The results presented do not constitute findings of fact about individual persons, editorial teams or programmes. They are to be understood as the result of a standardised operationalisation, not as a determination of individual responsibility.

No legal ruling

The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment within the meaning of §4 of the ORF Act. The assessment of whether a specific programme violates statutory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular KommAustria).



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No proof of causality

Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intentions. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic.

No finding of intent

The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of programmes. A score of 7 means that a significant imbalance has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives.

**Heuristic
comparison
instrument**

The index serves for comparative pattern recognition across thousands of programmes, not for the precise metric measurement of individual reports. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Austria — ORF

Law

ORF Act (ORF-G, BGBl. No. 379/1984 as amended)

Relevant articles

- ORF-G §4 para. 5: Information must be comprehensive, independent, impartial and objective. All news and reports must be carefully checked for truth and origin; news and commentary must be clearly separated from each other.
- ORF-G §4 para. 5a: The totality of programmes must ensure diversity and balance.
- ORF-G §10 para. 7: Adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council.
- ORF-G §4 para. 1: Mandate for a differentiated overall programme that is comprehensive, independent, impartial and objective.

Core obligations

- 1. Objectivity and impartiality:** Comprehensive, independent, impartial information
- 2. Separation of news/commentary:** Clear distinction
- 3. Consideration of parties:** Adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council
- 4. Overall programme diversity:** Diversity and balance across all programmes

Supervisory authority

- KommAustria (Communications Authority Austria): media regulatory authority
- Federal Communications Senate: appeals body
- Audience Council: representation of listeners and viewers

Complaints procedure

1. ORF Audience Council
2. KommAustria
3. Federal Communications Senate
4. Administrative Court



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APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

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David Schläpfer — ORCID: 0009-0000-5671-9266

SVFAB — Swiss Association for Balanced Reporting | P.O. Box, 8021 Zurich 1 | www.svfab.ch | kontakt@svfab.ch | *Methods report March 2026* | Converter 3.4 (2026-05-20)



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You think you see the world. In reality you see the frame that someone has placed around it. Framing is the oldest and most elegant manipulation technique in the world. It does not change the facts — it changes what we make of the facts. How we feel. What we believe. How we decide. And it works — because we all participate. Daily. Unconsciously. You too. This book is not a dry textbook. It is a workbook — playful, direct, full of examples from real life. You learn not only how others frame you. You learn how you yourself frame — and how you can use it consciously and fairly.

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Essential reading for everyone considering a complaint — and for everyone who wants to understand why genuine media oversight in Switzerland is still pending.