



ORF DETAILED ANALYSIS

2026-04-27_Hinter den Schlagzeilen- Gerda Rogers_ Sternstunden-Geh

Programme: ORF Programme | 2026-04-27 | Analysed on: 2026-05-21 11:41

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

OVERALL SCORE

5.9/10

Considerable 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 favouring the left, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly favouring the right). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

5.0 / 10

Balanced

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 the purpose of political classification and does not factor 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 opposition consists of SPÖ (41 seats), NEOS (18 seats) and the Greens (16 seats). The FPÖ is for the first time the chancellor's party in the Second Republic and has historically classified the ORF as politically left-leaning and sought reforms of public broadcasting.

Party	CHES L-R	Seats	Government/Opposition	Core position
FPÖ	8.5	57	Government (chancellor's party)	Remigration, EU scepticism, neutrality, social benefits for Austrians
ÖVP	6.0	51	Government (junior partner)	Business location, strict asylum policy, openness to technology
SPÖ	3.0	41	Opposition	Wealth tax, workers' rights, social climate policy
NEOS	5.5	18	Opposition	Radical-liberal, education reform, pro-European
Greens	2.5	16	Opposition	Climate neutrality, humane asylum policy, Green Deal

The dominant line of conflict runs between the FPÖ-led government and the three opposition parties on questions of migration policy, the stance on the EU and media policy. The ORF is under particular pressure, as the chancellor's party FPÖ is seeking a structural reform of public broadcasting. In addition, there is a historically grown tension between ÖVP-aligned members of the foundation board and day-to-day editorial work, which further complicates the independence debate.

The ORF is Austria's public broadcaster and is subject, pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act, to the requirements of objectivity, impartiality and balance. §10 para. 7 ORF Act requires adequate consideration of all parties represented in the National Council. Funding is provided primarily through the ORF contribution (formerly GIS), which is intended to secure structural independence from advertising revenue, but does not exclude political influence via the foundation board.



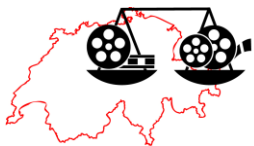
CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Assessment of party positions

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Programme portrayal vs. programme position
ÖVP	0	Party/topic not featured in programme — no portrayal, no distortion
SPÖ	0	Party/topic not featured in programme — no portrayal, no distortion
FPÖ	0	Party/topic not featured in programme — no portrayal, no distortion
Greens	0	Party/topic not featured in programme — no portrayal, no distortion
NEOS	0	Party/topic not featured in programme — no portrayal, no distortion

Party bias summary

- Most accurate portrayal: No party portrayed (Score 0)
- Strongest distortion: No party portrayed (Score 0)
- Average deviation from 0: 0.0
- Conclusion: The programme "Hinter den Schlagzeilen" from the analysed date is a pure personality interview with the astrologer Gerda Rogers. Party-political content, programme positions or political actors do not appear at any point. An assessment of the accuracy of portrayal of party positions is structurally not possible and would be methodologically inadmissible.



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CHAPTER 2 — PROGRAMME INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Programme data

- Title: Hinter den Schlagzeilen
- Date: 27.04.2026
- Presenter: Patrick (surname not mentioned in the transcript)
- Interviewed actors: Gerda Rogers, astrologer

Actors	Function	Party/affiliation	Political spectrum
Patrick [surname unknown]	Presenter, ORF	ORF (public broadcaster)	Neutral/not assignable
Gerda Rogers	Astrologer, Ö3 "Sternstunden"	No party	Not politically assignable

Main topic

Personality interview with the Austrian astrologer Gerda Rogers on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of her Ö3 programme "Sternstunden" and the forthcoming award of the Golden Medal of Honour of the Republic of Austria.



CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION

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Expert 1: Gerda Rogers, astrologer

Timestamp: 00:52 (introduction), continuously until 29:20

Statement: "I know it works." (09:56) — core statement on the validity of astrology

Classification: Rogers is the only substantive voice in the entire programme. She is a practitioner of astrology, thus directly economically and reputationally dependent on the positive portrayal of her field. She is introduced as the "most well-known astrologer in the country" (00:41) — a social attribution, not a professional qualification.

Missing countervoice: Scientist in cognitive psychology, philosophy of science or empirical social research.

Source in-depth check:

(a) FUNDING: Rogers finances herself through astrological consulting practice (individual consultations, practice in Linz) and through her Ö3 programme. She has a direct economic interest in the positive portrayal of astrology as an effective practice. Conflict of interest: maximum — she is the provider of the product being promoted.

(b) MANDATE: Her mandate is the practice of astrology, not its neutral scientific assessment. She is structurally not in a position to provide a neutral evaluation of her own professional field.

Dimension	Score	Justification
D1 Conflict of interest	-2	Direct economic dependence on positive portrayal of astrology
D2 Personal risk	-2	No personal risk from her statements — she confirms her own business model
D3 Professional competence	-1	Decades of practical experience in astrology, but no scientific qualification; statements about effectiveness lie outside her area of competence
D4 Consistency of opinion	+1	Consistent position over 35 years — no contradictions discernible
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data	-2	Exclusively anecdotal and appellative; no data, no studies, no falsifiability
D6 Source level	-2	Tertiary — own experiential accounts without primary source
TOTAL	-8	SOURCE INDICATOR: RED

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Is the assessment framed as neutral, even though it is structurally partisan? YES. Rogers is introduced as the "most well-known astrologer in the country" — an attribution of authority that frames her statements as factually credible, even though she exclusively represents the interests of her own practice. The



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programme treats her statements on the effectiveness of astrology (e.g. 09:56: "I know it works.") as factual claims without any critical contextualisation. → Technique No. 2 (source selection) active.

Missing expert groups:

- Cognitive psychologist (Barnum effect, confirmation bias)
- Philosopher of science (falsifiability, pseudoscience)
- Clinical psychologist (dependency potential, contraindications)

Summary:

Expert	Source indicator	Main problem
Gerda Rogers	RED (-8)	Maximum conflict of interest, no data basis, tertiary source, framed as neutral authority



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Gerda Rogers (self-statements)

Timestamp 09:56 — Statement: "I know it works."

(a) Funding and sponsorship: Self-employed astrologer, income from consulting practice and Ö3 programme. No independent funding.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: Rogers benefits directly from the portrayal of astrology as effective. Every statement on effectiveness is structurally partisan.

(c) Is a source missing that would substantiate a contrary view? YES — not a single external source (study, expert, critical voice) is cited in the entire programme.

Source 2: Anecdotal references (lunar phases, farmers, Incas, ancient Egyptians)

Timestamp 11:11 — Statement: "Farmers, I would say, do very much orient themselves by lunar phases. The ancient Incas already did that."

(a) Funding: None — oral tradition without source citation.

(b) Structural conflict of interest: Serves to legitimise astrology through historical authority (appeal to tradition/antiquity).

(c) Missing counter-source: Agricultural science studies on the actual effect of lunar phases on plant growth (result: no consistent empirical evidence).

Rumour check (penalty points):

Rumour 1:

Timestamp: 11:11

Claim: "Farmers, I would say, do very much orient themselves by lunar phases [...] The ancient Incas already did that."

Word marker: "I would say" — implicit uncertainty marker

Primary source available: NO — no study, no source, no evidence → +1 penalty point

Rumour 2:

Timestamp: 11:35 — Claim: "The seven fat, the seven lean years. And that is really true."

Word marker: No explicit marker, but factual claim without evidence

Primary source available: NO → +1 penalty point

Rumour 3:

Timestamp: 09:02 — Claim: "It often really is the case that the birth hour is also incorrect [...] the statement can also shift by two, three years."

Word marker: "it often really is" — rhetorical reinforcement without data basis

Primary source available: NO → +1 penalty point

Total penalty points: +3 → Overall score: 9/10

Summary: The programme relies exclusively on a single source — the interviewee herself — and cites no external evidence, studies or countervoices. Factual claims about the effectiveness of astrology are presented as facts without a primary source, which falls considerably short of the source standards of public broadcasting.



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3. TIME DISTRIBUTION							7/10		
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Estimated speaking time:

- Gerda Rogers (pro-astrology position): (approx. 76%)
- Presenter Patrick (questions/presenter text): (approx. 24%)
- Critical/scientific position: 0 min. (0%)

Summary: The entire substantive speaking time falls to a single perspective — that of the advocate and practitioner of astrology. A critical or scientific countervoice receives zero seconds of speaking time. This is formally customary for a personality interview, but media-ethically problematic for a topic with a clear scientific consensus (astrology = pseudoscience), particularly in the public broadcasting context.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1:

Context

The scientific consensus on astrology (no empirical evidence for effectiveness, pseudoscience) is not presented.

Relevant at: 09:24 — Presenter briefly raises criticism, but immediately hands over to Rogers.

Effect

Viewers receive the impression that the question of effectiveness is open or subjective, even though it has been answered unambiguously by science.

Omission 2:

Context

Psychological explanatory models for belief in astrology (Barnum effect: general statements are experienced as personally applicable; confirmation bias: hits are remembered, misses forgotten) are not mentioned.

Relevant at: 06:01 — Rogers reads the presenter's horoscope, which he finds accurate.

Effect

The scene is staged as evidence for the effectiveness of astrology, without the Barnum effect being offered as an alternative explanation.

Omission 3:

Context

The fact that Rogers herself concedes that predictions sometimes do not come true (09:02: "That of course also happens"), and her explanation for this (incorrect birth time) is a classic non-falsifiable evasion strategy — is not identified as such.

Relevant at: 09:02–09:18

Effect

A methodologically problematic immunisation strategy (every explanation of error is shifted onto external factors) is presented as a plausible explanation.

Summary: The programme systematically omits all information that would call the credibility of astrology into question — scientific evidence, psychological explanatory models and the logical analysis of error immunisation. The omission is not coincidental, but structurally consistent with the aim of drawing a positive portrait.

Missing voices

- Scientist in cognitive psychology or philosophy of science: Would have introduced the Barnum effect, confirmation bias and the empirical null evidence for astrology.
- Consumer protection expert: Would have pointed to the risks of psychological dependency and financial exploitation through consulting services.
- Media ethicist: Would have addressed the question of the ORF's responsibility in 35 years of disseminating pseudoscientific content.
- Critical former client: Would have provided a counter-perspective to the exclusively positive experiential accounts.
- Sociologist of youth religiosity: Would have embedded the trend towards astrology among young people in a social context.
- Legal scholar or regulatory authority representative: Would have shed light on the legal classification of astrological consulting and possible regulatory gaps.



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- Theologian or religious studies scholar: Would have introduced the tension between astrology and established worldviews.
- Psychiatrist or clinical psychologist: Would have answered the question of when astrological counselling is therapeutically contraindicated.



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES									2/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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

Finding 1:	
Timestamp	01:45
Figure: "young people are now very much following suit" — no concrete figure, but a quantitative claim about a trend Dimensions: No absolute value (a), no proportion (b), no evidenced trend (c)	
Missing context	Which age groups actually use astrological services, and to what extent? Is there survey data?
Effect	The claim of a youth trend is presented as fact without any data basis — it serves to legitimise astrology as a contemporary offering.

Summary: Classic manipulation of figures in the narrow sense (misuse of statistics) is not detectable, as the programme barely uses figures. The only relevant finding is the unsubstantiated trend claim regarding young people, which is presented as fact without a data basis. Score low, as the format (personality interview) does not require numerical intensity.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION

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Finding 1:

Timestamp

09:40 — Quote: "some believe in homeopathy, some don't. Physicists say there's nothing to it."

Technique: Inverse guilt by association — Rogers associates astrology with homeopathy in order to present both as equivalent matters of belief and to relativise scientific criticism.

Effect

The equation of astrology with homeopathy (likewise scientifically unproven) normalises both as legitimate alternatives to science, without the presenter questioning this equation.

Note: Classic guilt by association (discrediting through negative association) is not detectable in this programme. The only finding is the inverse variant — legitimisation through association with another popular alternative practice.

Summary: No classic guilt by association technique demonstrable. One case of inverse association for the legitimisation of pseudoscientific practice is identified, but not as a manipulative technique of the programme, but rather as a statement by the interviewee that goes unchallenged.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1:

Position: 00:41 (beginning)

Content: "How she became the most well-known astrologer in the country" — attribution of authority in the introduction

Timing effect

The framing as "most well-known astrologer" occurs before any substantive engagement and sets the interpretive frame for the entire programme. Viewers are primed by this priming statement to receive Rogers as an authority before critical questions are posed.

Finding 2:

Position: 09:24 (middle)

Content: Only critical question on pseudoscience — "that is absolute nonsense, it is a pseudoscience"

Timing effect

The only substantive critical question is placed in the middle of the programme, after Rogers has already presented her position unchallenged for 9 minutes. The question comes too late to correct the already established interpretive frame, and is moreover immediately handed over to Rogers.

Finding 3:

Position: 28:09 (end)

Content: "What do the stars say, how will the rest of 2026 be?" — closing question gives Rogers the final substantive statement

Timing effect

The programme ends with an astrological prognosis as the last substantive contribution — without critical contextualisation. The viewer's final impression is an uncommented future prognosis by the astrologer.

Summary: The placement of the only critical question in the middle (after 9 minutes of uncritical presentation) and the framing through attribution of authority at the beginning as well as an astrological prognosis at the end follow a pattern that structurally favours the positive reception of the interviewee.



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

0/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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

Methodological principle K11+K8: Document the triggering event — asymmetry is only demonstrable with a comparable trigger without an analogous reaction to other guests/positions.

Finding:

The programme is a single interview without comparison persons or positions. Selective outrage presupposes by definition at least two comparable triggers with different reactions. Since only one interlocutor is present and the presenter acts in a consistently friendly and benevolent manner, an asymmetry is structurally not demonstrable.

Degree of outrage: 0/5

Selectivity: 0/5

Summary: No selective outrage detectable — the format (single interview, personality portrait) allows no basis for comparison. The presenter consistently displays a benevolent basic attitude, which however cannot be assessed as selective, since no comparable situation exists.



9. COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — Overall picture)

8/10

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Finding 1:

Timestamp 09:24

Missing perspective/fact: Scientific consensus on astrology — several meta-analyses (including Shawn Carlson, Nature 1985; Dean/Kelly 2003) show no evidence for astrological predictive power beyond chance level.

Relevance: For a balanced presentation of a topic classified as pseudoscience in public broadcasting, citing the scientific consensus is obligatory.

Impact: Viewers receive a distorted picture of the epistemic situation — the question of effectiveness appears open or subjective, even though it has been answered unambiguously by science.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 07:47 — Rogers: "Yes, quite clearly, those are health topics. Those must be consulted with the doctor."

Missing perspective/fact: Rogers excludes health topics, but simultaneously recommends astrological counselling for the "right time" for operations (08:25: "to calculate the right time"). This statement is potentially medically dangerous — no doctor or consumer protection expert comments on this.

Relevance: The recommendation to choose the timing of operations according to astrological constellations can lead to medically suboptimal decisions.

Impact: A potentially health-endangering recommendation remains entirely uncriticised.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 10:41 — Rogers: "Especially when someone wants to become self-employed [...] when she then hears that this self-employment is indeed foreseen in her destiny [...] then one can give a good push."

Missing perspective/fact: The description of the astrologer as a "pusher" for life decisions (self-employment, career choice) without liability or qualification is not linked to the question of responsibility in the event of wrong decisions.

Relevance: People who make economic decisions on the basis of astrological counselling and fail have no legal claim and no recourse.

Impact: The risk potential of astrological counselling in existential life decisions remains completely obscured.

Summary: The programme is considerably deficient in its completeness. Scientific contextualisation, medical risks and questions of economic liability are systematically omitted, while the positive self-presentation of the interviewee remains uncommented.

Astrology is a millennia-old practice of interpreting celestial constellations to predict human destinies, which is unanimously classified as pseudoscience by the scientific community — there is no empirically demonstrable causal connection between planetary constellations and human behaviour or life trajectories. At the same time, astrology is experiencing a renaissance in Western societies, particularly among younger generations, as a cultural phenomenon and source of orientation in uncertain times. The social debate moves between the right to individual search for meaning and the question of consumer protection, psychological dependency and the handling of unscientific content by public broadcasters. For the ORF as a public broadcaster, a particular responsibility arises in dealing with content that ignores or counteracts scientific consensus.



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Proportion of perspectives covered

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

- [A] SCIENTIFIC CONTEXTUALISATION:** What does empirical research say about the validity of astrological predictions?
- [B] PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:** What psychological mechanisms explain belief in astrology (Barnum effect, confirmation bias)?
- [C] CONSUMER PROTECTION PERSPECTIVE:** What risks arise when people base life decisions on astrological counselling?
- [D] MEDIA-ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE:** What responsibility does a public broadcaster bear in disseminating pseudoscientific content?
- [E] CULTURAL-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:** What social function does astrology fulfil as a system of orientation?
- [F] ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE:** How large is the market for astrological counselling, and who benefits from it?
- [G] CRITICAL USER PERSPECTIVE:** Accounts from people who have been harmed by astrological counselling.
- [H] RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE:** How does astrology relate to established religions and worldviews?
- [I] YOUTH SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:** Why are young people increasingly turning to astrology — and what does this say about social disorientation?
- [J] LEGAL PERSPECTIVE:** What regulation applies to astrological counselling, and are there cases of fraud or psychological manipulation?

[A] INDICATED

Timestamp: 09:24 — Quote: "that is absolute nonsense, it is a pseudoscience, some kind of blabla. What do you say to them?" — Assessment: The scientific criticism is briefly raised by the presenter, but immediately handed over to Rogers, who dismisses it with a comparison to homeopathy; no independent scientific voice is consulted.

[B] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Psychological explanatory models (Barnum effect, confirmation bias, placebo effect) are not mentioned or discussed at any point.

[C] INDICATED

Timestamp: 10:04 — Quote: "But isn't it perhaps sometimes also dangerous when one relinquishes one's own responsibility and places it in your hands?" — Assessment: The question is posed, but Rogers' answer is accepted without critical follow-up; no consumer protection expert is given a voice.

[D] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The media-ethical question of whether a public broadcaster should carry pseudoscience as a regular programme offering for 35 years is not addressed.

[E] INDICATED

Timestamp: 01:45 — Quote: "I can really observe that young people are now very much following suit." — Assessment: The cultural function is raised by Rogers herself, but not analytically contextualised.

[F] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The economic dimension of astrological counselling (prices, market volume, dependency potential) is not addressed.

[G] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Not a single critical user voice or experience with negative consequences of astrological counselling is introduced.



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[H] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Religious or worldview-based contextualisation is entirely absent.

[I] INDICATED

Timestamp: 01:45 — Quote: "young people are now very much following suit [...] they want to know: how am I doing?" — Assessment: The phenomenon is described, but not sociologically analysed or questioned.

[J] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Legal framework conditions, regulation or documented cases of abuse are not mentioned.

Completeness score: 2/10

Justification: Of ten relevant perspectives, only four are indicated — and exclusively by the interviewee herself or through very brief, unpursued presenter questions. Six perspectives are entirely absent. The programme is structurally conceived as an uncritical portrait that does not supplement the interviewee's self-presentation with external voices or independent contextualisation.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (Setting the frame)

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Finding 1:

Timestamp	00:41
Quote	<i>"How she became the most well-known astrologer in the country"</i>
Manipulation	The topic of astrology is framed from the outset within a success narrative — not as pseudoscience, not as a cultural phenomenon, but as the career story of a successful expert.
Why problematic	The success frame prejudices the reception of all subsequent content. Viewers are primed by this framing to accept Rogers as an authority, not as a practitioner of a scientifically unrecognised discipline.

Finding 2:

Timestamp	09:47
Quote	<i>"I think everyone should choose what suits them."</i>
Manipulation	Astrology is framed within the context of individual freedom and tolerance — as a personal preference like musical taste, not as a question of truth or consumer protection.
Why problematic	The tolerance frame immunises astrology against factual criticism. Anyone who criticises astrology appears, within the established frame, as intolerant of personal convictions — not as a representative of scientific methodology.

Finding 3:

Timestamp	11:04
Quote	<i>"There is much between heaven and earth that cannot be explained. But it is so."</i>
Manipulation	Astrology is framed within the context of mystery and openness to the inexplicable — a classic strategy for immunisation against falsification.
Why problematic	The mystery frame suggests that scientific explicability is not a criterion for credibility. This is epistemically false and is not questioned by the presenter.

Summary: The programme consistently frames astrology as a legitimate, successful and tolerance-worthy practice — never as a pseudoscience with demonstrable risks. This frame is consistent and structural, not coincidental.



11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS							7/10		
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Finding 1:	
Timestamp	00:41
Quote	<i>"most well-known astrologer in the country"</i>
Manipulation	"Most well-known" is a statement about reach, not quality — but is used as an attribution of authority.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "Gerda Rogers, who has been presenting the Ö3 programme 'Sternstunden' for 35 years."

Finding 2:	
Timestamp	00:47
Quote	<i>"what she says about the criticism of this pseudoscience"</i>
Manipulation	The term "pseudoscience" is used by the presenter himself — but only in the announcement, not in the questioning. In the actual question (09:24) it is replaced by "nonsense" and "blabla", which trivialises the criticism and makes it appear unscientific.
Why problematic	"Pseudoscience" is a precise term from the philosophy of science. "Nonsense" and "blabla" are colloquial derogations that frame the criticism as emotional and unserious. Neutral alternative: "What do you say to the scientific criticism that astrological predictions show no evidence in controlled studies?"

Finding 3:	
Timestamp	07:03
Quote	<i>"Dynamism in your destiny is your profession."</i>
Manipulation	The term "destiny" is used as a self-evident category — the existence of a predetermined destiny is set as a premise, not marked as a claim.
Why problematic	The use of "destiny" as an unquestioned term normalises a metaphysical worldview in the public broadcasting context. Neutral alternative: "You say your profession corresponds to what astrology foresees for you."

Summary: The programme's choice of words consistently favours the perspective of the interviewee — through attributions of authority, trivialisation of criticism and unreflective adoption of astrological terminology as a category of fact.



12. PRESENTER BEHAVIOUR

7/10

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Methodological principle K11+K8: Document the triggering event.

Finding 1:

Timestamp 09:24

Triggering event: Presenter poses the only critical question of the programme on pseudoscience.

Quote (presenter) *"Now there are also people [...] who say, that is absolute nonsense, it is a pseudoscience, some kind of blabla. What do you say to them?"*

Comparison The question is immediately handed over to Rogers, without follow-up, without introducing a scientific countervoice, without insisting on a concrete answer. Rogers responds with a comparison to homeopathy and a message of freedom — the presenter accepts this without follow-up.

Asymmetry: Demonstrable — the only critical question is not pursued further, while all other topics (biography, love stories, Playboy offer) are explored in depth.

Finding 2:

Timestamp 06:53

Triggering event: Rogers reads the presenter's horoscope and makes positive statements about his character and career path.

Quote (presenter) *"I really have to smile." / "Well, there you go." / "Nothing can be added to that, thank you, dear Gerda."*

Comparison The presenter reacts to his own horoscope with visible joy and agreement — no critical distance, no contextualisation as Barnum effect.

Asymmetry: Not assessable as selective (no comparable case), but documented as a structural sympathy signal that undermines the presenter's critical distance.

Finding 3:

Timestamp 20:54

Triggering event: Rogers describes her health and appearance.

Quote (presenter) *"That's why you look the way you look, may I say that?"*

Comparison No comparable situation — but the statement is an explicit compliment that further reduces the presenter's professional distance.

Asymmetry: Not assessable as selective, but documented as a pattern of consistent expressions of sympathy.

Summary: The presenter acts throughout as a benevolent conversation partner, not as a critical journalist. The only critical question is not pursued further; compliments and signals of agreement dominate the presenter's behaviour.



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This is formally customary for a personality interview, but media-ethically problematic for a topic with a clear scientific consensus.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1:

To Rogers, 09	24: "that is absolute nonsense, it is a pseudoscience, some kind of blabla. What do you say to them?" — formally critical, but weakened by trivialisation of the criticism; no follow-up asking for concrete evidence.
To Rogers, 11	06: "But there is no real proof of that, is there? At the end of the day?" — softly formulated, with "is there?" as an invitation to deny; no insistence after Rogers' evasive answer.
Comparison	Both critical questions are not pursued further. All biographical and personal questions are explored in depth. The asymmetry lies not between different persons (since only one interlocutor is present), but between critical and uncritical topics within the interview.

Asymmetry 2:

To Rogers, 08	25: No follow-up to the statement that astrological counselling could determine the "right time" for operations — a potentially medically dangerous claim that remains entirely uncommented.
Comparison	On the Playboy enquiry (25:01) several follow-up questions are posed: "Did you briefly consider doing it?" / "Did they try again then?" — considerably more depth on a harmless topic than on a potentially dangerous statement.

Summary: The question asymmetry runs not between different persons, but between topics: harmless biographical topics are explored in depth, critical substantive questions (effectiveness, medical risks) are not pursued after one answer.



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

Finding 1:	
Timestamp	09:24 — Construct: The question on pseudoscience is posed as if it were an open debate — "What do you say to them?" — and Rogers' answer is treated as an equally valid opposing opinion.
Analysis	This is not a debate between two equally valid scientific positions. The scientific consensus is unambiguous: astrology has no empirically demonstrable predictive power. The presentation as an open question (some believe in it, some don't) is a false balance — it suggests an equivalence that does not exist.

Note: False balance in the classic sense (two sides are presented as equivalent) is only limitedly detectable in this programme, since the programme does not present a second side — it presents exclusively one side. The problem is rather the complete absence of the opposing side than its false equation.

Summary: Limited false balance: The programme presents the question of the effectiveness of astrology as an open, subjective question, even though the scientific consensus is unambiguous. This is less a classic false balance than an omission of the dominant scientific position.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

8/10

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

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10

Finding 1:

Agenda element set: Astrology is a legitimate, successful and socially valuable practice.

Timestamp

00:35 — Evidence: "Because for an incredible 35 years she has been looking at the stars every Sunday on Ö3."

Alternative agenda: The question of whether a public broadcaster is obliged to carry a pseudoscience as a regular programme offering for 35 years does not make it onto the agenda.

Finding 2:

Agenda element set: The Golden Medal of Honour of the Republic of Austria for an astrologer is self-evident and deserved.

Timestamp

23:56 — Evidence: "you are being awarded the Golden Medal of Honour of the Republic of Austria. What does that mean to you?"

Alternative agenda: The question of whether a state award for the dissemination of pseudoscientific content is appropriate is not posed.

Finding 3:

Agenda element set: Astrological counselling is a helpful guide for life decisions.

Timestamp

10:41 — Evidence: "then one can give a good push so that it comes to fruition."

Alternative agenda: The question of liability, qualification requirements and consumer protection in astrological counselling does not make it onto the agenda.

Summary: The programme sets an agenda in which astrology is taken as self-evidently legitimate, state-recognised and socially valuable. All questions that would call this premise into question remain outside the agenda.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (average criteria 1–9): 5.4 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (average criteria 10–15): 6.3 / 10

Dominant techniques

- 1. Source selection / expert selection (Score 9/8):** The programme relies exclusively on a single source — the interviewee herself — who exhibits a maximum conflict of interest and whose statements on the effectiveness of astrology are presented as facts without any external contextualisation. Not a single independent voice — neither scientific nor critical — is given a hearing.
- 2. Omission / completeness (Score 8/8):** The scientific consensus on astrology (no empirical evidence), psychological explanatory models (Barnum effect, confirmation bias) and medical risks (timing of operations according to the stars) are systematically omitted. The omission is consistent and structural, not coincidental.
- 3. Framing / agenda-setting (Score 8/8):** Astrology is consistently presented within a success, tolerance and mystery frame; the question of the ORF's responsibility for 35 years of pseudoscience in the programme, for a state award for an astrologer and for consumer protection does not make it onto the agenda.

Core messages of the programme

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "Astrology is a legitimate, effective and socially valuable practice that requires no further justification."

Technique: Framing (success frame), source selection (only advocate), omission (no scientific consensus) — evidence: 00:41, 09:56, 11:04

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "Gerda Rogers is an admirable, successful and authentic personality whose life's work deserves state recognition."

Technique: Attribution of authority, presenter sympathy, timing (award as highlight) — evidence: 00:41, 23:56, 20:54

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIAL): "Criticism of astrology is a matter of personal tolerance, not a matter of scientific methodology — everyone should believe what they wish."

Technique: Tolerance frame, false balance, choice of words (trivialisation of criticism as "nonsense/blabla") — evidence: 09:24, 09:40, 09:47

Justification: The programme achieves an overall score of 5.8/10, which corresponds to a clear one-sidedness. The one-sidedness is not party-political in nature — it concerns the uncritical portrayal of a pseudoscience in public broadcasting. Pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act, the ORF is obliged to objectivity and impartiality in reporting; the complete omission of the scientific consensus and every critical perspective on a topic that is explicitly introduced as pseudoscience (00:47) violates this principle. The one-sidedness is structural (choice of format, guest selection, question design) and not limited to individual statements, which makes it more serious than isolated errors.

CONCLUSION

The programme "Hinter den Schlagzeilen" presents an uncritical personality portrait of the astrologer Gerda Rogers, which portrays the practice of astrology as legitimate, effective and socially valuable without consulting a single independent scientific or critical voice. The presenter himself describes astrology in the introduction as "pseudoscience" (00:47), but does not consistently pursue this classification in a single question — a contradiction that reveals the editorial conception of the programme. Pursuant to §4 of the ORF Act, which requires objectivity, impartiality and consideration of diversity of opinion, the complete omission of the scientific consensus (no empirical evidence for astrology), psychological explanatory models and consumer-protection-relevant information (medical risks, liability questions) is to be assessed as a violation of the requirement of balance. The programme is not an isolated case, but part of a 35-year programme offering of the ORF that carries pseudoscience as regular content — a structural question that the programme itself does not address and that requires an independent media law review.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	8	••••
2	SOURCE SELECTION	9	•••••
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	7	••••
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	8	••••
5	MANIPULATION OF FIGURES	2	•
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	1	•
7	TIMING	6	•••
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	0	•
9	COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — Overall picture)	8	••••
10	FRAMING (Setting the frame)	8	••••
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	7	••••
12	PRESENTER BEHAVIOUR	7	••••
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	5	•••
14	FALSE BALANCE	3	••
15	AGENDA-SETTING	8	••••

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

5.4/10

Considerable imbalance

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the requirement of balance. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

5.9/10

Considerable 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	Minor irregularity without material impairment of balance.
3–4	Slight to moderate finding	Discernible tendency; relevance of effect low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of effect	Relevant imbalance that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
6	Considerable finding (threshold)	Scores from 6 onwards are reported as "considerable findings".
7	Considerable finding	Clear, well-evidenced imbalance with marked relevance of effect.
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	Considerable imbalance	Several considerable 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 effect.
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 less favourably in portrayal, speaking time or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Discernible, but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No detectable favouring or disadvantaging.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Discernible, but weak favouring.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly favoured in portrayal, speaking time or framing.



CHAPTER 5 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (§4 ORF Act)

Assessment pursuant to §4 ORF Act

§4 ORF Act requires: objectivity and impartiality of reporting, consideration of diversity of opinion, balance of programmes.

Violation 1:

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

Facts: Factual claims about the effectiveness of astrology are presented as facts without scientific contextualisation.

Evidence: Timestamp 09:56 — Quote: "I know it works." — This statement is not confronted by the presenter with the scientific consensus (no empirical evidence), but accepted without comment.

Assessment: The ORF's duty of objectivity requires that factual claims that contradict the scientific consensus be identified as such or contextualised by independent expertise. This is entirely omitted.

Violation 2:

Norm: §4 para. 5 ORF Act (balance of programmes)

Facts: The programme presents exclusively one perspective (pro-astrology) without any countervoice.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:52–29:20 — The entire programme contains not a single independent scientific, critical or consumer-protection-relevant voice.

Assessment: Balance within the meaning of the ORF Act does not necessarily require a 50/50 presentation in every individual programme, but for a topic that the presenter himself introduces as "pseudoscience", the complete omission of the scientific perspective constitutes a structural violation of the requirement of balance.

Violation 3:

Norm: §4 para. 1 ORF Act (impartiality) in conjunction with general duty of care

Facts: A potentially health-endangering statement (astrological counselling for the choice of the timing of operations) remains entirely uncriticised.

Evidence: Timestamp 08:25 — Quote: "when some people are now in a bit of a recovery phase [...] perhaps a knee operation, to calculate the right time."

Assessment: The recommendation to make medical decisions (timing of operations) according to astrological constellations is not evidence-based and potentially health-endangering. A public broadcaster has a particular duty of care in disseminating content that can influence health decisions.

Overall assessment §4 ORF Act

The programme violates the objectivity requirement of §4 ORF Act through the uncritical presentation of pseudoscientific factual claims without scientific contextualisation. The requirement of balance is violated by the complete omission of every critical or scientific perspective — this is particularly serious, since the presenter himself introduces the topic as "pseudoscience" and thereby implicitly acknowledges that a counter-perspective exists and is relevant. The ORF's duty of care is violated by the uncritical dissemination of a potentially health-endangering recommendation (timing of operations according to the stars). The violations are not limited to individual statements, but are structural — they result from the format decision (uncritical personality interview without countervoice) and the editorial conception of the programme.



CHAPTER 6 — SOURCE IN-DEPTH CHECK

Gerda Rogers — Astrologer, Ö3 "Sternstunden"

1. FUNDING: Self-employed astrologer; income from individual consultations (practice in Linz and Baden), Ö3 programme (fee from ORF), book publications and public appearances. No public, ecclesiastical or state funding in the institutional sense — but direct economic dependence on the positive perception of astrology as a practice.

2. MANDATE: Her mandate is the practice of astrology — not its scientific assessment. She is structurally not in a position to provide a neutral assessment of the effectiveness of her own professional field.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Maximum institutional conflict of interest: every statement on the effectiveness of astrology directly serves to secure her economic existence and reputation. A negative assessment of astrology would destroy her business model.

Dimension	Score	Justification
D1 Conflict of interest	-2	Direct economic dependence on positive portrayal
D2 Personal risk	-2	No risk from her statements — she confirms her business model
D3 Professional competence	-1	Practical experience in astrology, but no scientific qualification; statements about effectiveness outside her area of competence
D4 Consistency of opinion	+1	35 years of consistent position
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data	-2	Exclusively anecdotal; no data, no studies
D6 Source level	-2	Tertiary — own experiential accounts without primary source
TOTAL	-8	SOURCE INDICATOR: RED

5. COUNTERVOICE: Yes — there is extensive scientific literature on the non-effectiveness of astrology (including Shawn Carlson, "A double-blind test of astrology", Nature 1985; Geoffrey Dean/Ivan Kelly, "Is Astrology Relevant to Consciousness and Psi?", Journal of Consciousness Studies 2003). This countervoice is not cited in the programme.

IMPORTANT: The introduction of Rogers as the "most well-known astrologer in the country" is a social attribution (reach), not a factual qualification (competence). She is herself the subject of the review — and does not pass it: fame is not evidence of the effectiveness of the practice.

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 ORF Act. The determination 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 can 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 considerable 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 the purpose of comparative pattern recognition across thousands of programmes, not the precise metric measurement of individual contributions. Threshold values serve heuristic orientation, not 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 one another.
- 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 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

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