

Austrian Decorations of Honour

Imprint

Media owner, publisher and editor:

Federal Chancellery,

Department I/1/a – Awards and General Presidential Matters

auszeichnungen@bka.gv.at

www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/auszeichnungen.html

Layout: BKA Corporate Identity & Kommunikationsdesign

Photos: BKA & Austrian Presidential Chancellery/Gottschling

Printed by: Digitalprintcenter des BMI

Vienna, 2025

Excerpt reprinting free of copyright

Austrian Decorations of Honour

Decorations of Honour for Services
to the Republic of Austria

Austrian Decoration of Honour
for Science and Art

Austrian Cross of Honour
for Science and Art 1st class

Austrian Cross of Honour
for Science and Art

Legal regulations

Like many countries around the world, the Republic of Austria honours Austrian and foreign personalities for their outstanding achievements and exceptional service in the interest and for the good of the nation by awarding visible decorations.

In 1952, a Federal Law (Fed. Law Gazette no. 89/1952) and the regulation based thereon (Decoration of Honour Statute, Fed. Law Gazette no. 54/1953) created the **honorary award for services to the Republic of Austria**, which comprises ten levels. In addition, there are the Gold and Silver Medals of Merit, the Gold and Silver Medals and the Gold Medal with Red Ribbon.

The amended Decoration of Honour Act (Fed. Law Gazette I no. 132/2023; orig.: Ehrenzeichengesetz) came into force on 1 January 2024, introducing a uniform regulation for the revocation and withdrawal of decorations of honour.

The Federal President may confer the Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria upon a proposal by the Federal Government or the competent Federal Minister, the President of the National Council or the President of the Federal Council.

There is no right to conferment; the Federal President is free to determine whether a decoration is to be conferred in consultation with the bodies entitled to make proposals.

Anyone may propose a candidate for the Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria (but cannot do so for themselves or close relatives) by submitting their suggestion to the competent Federal Minister.

The Decoration of Honour of the Republic of Austria is awarded in the following classes:



Grand Star of the Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria

(Großstern des Ehrenzeichens für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)

Hip decoration worn from a sash with rosette, breast star; the sash is slightly narrower for ladies

This decoration of honour is conferred on heads of state. The Austrian Federal President is ex lege holder of the Grand Star.



Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Sash for Services to the Republic of Austria

(Großes Goldenes Ehrenzeichen am Bande für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)

Hip decoration worn from a sash with rosette, breast star; the sash is slightly narrower for ladies



Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver with Sash for Services to the Republic of Austria

(Großes Silbernes Ehrenzeichen am Bande für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)

Hip decoration worn from a sash with rosette, breast star; the sash is slightly narrower for ladies



**Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with
Star for Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Großes Goldenes Ehrenzeichen mit dem Stern
für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)*

Neck decoration, breast star; ladies wear the badge
suspended from a bow



**Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver with
Star for Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Großes Silbernes Ehrenzeichen mit dem Stern
für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)*

Neck decoration, breast star; ladies wear the badge
suspended from a bow



**Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold for
Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Großes Goldenes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste
um die Republik Österreich)*

Neck decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended
from a bow



**Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver for
Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Großes Silbernes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste
um die Republik Österreich)*

Neck decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended
from a bow



**Grand Decoration of Honour for
Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Großes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste um die
Republik Österreich)*

Cross pinned to the left chest



**Decoration of Honour in Gold for
Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Goldenes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste um die
Republik Österreich)*

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge
suspended from a bow



**Decoration of Honour in Silver for
Services to the Republic of Austria**

*(Silbernes Ehrenzeichen für Verdienste um die
Republik Österreich)*

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge
suspended from a bow



**Decoration of Merit in Gold
of the Republic of Austria**

*(Goldenes Verdienstzeichen der
Republik Österreich)*

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge
suspended from a bow



Decoration of Merit in Silver of the Republic of Austria

(Silbernes Verdienstzeichen der Republik Österreich)

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended from a bow



Medal in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria

(Goldene Medaille für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended from a bow



Medal in Silver for Services to the Republic of Austria

(Silberne Medaille für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich)

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended from a bow

The Medal in Gold is awarded in special form (**Lifesaving Medal**) to a person who rescues another person at the risk of their own life:



Medal in Gold on Red Ribbon for Services to the Republic of Austria (Lifesaving Medal)

(Goldene Medaille am Roten Bande für Verdienste um die Republik Österreich – Lebensrettungsmedaille)

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended from a bow

International classification

Decorations of Honour and their grades are largely comparable on an international scale. The international classification of the Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria is as follows:

Austria	International
Grand Star	Special grade of the Grand Cross
Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Sash	Grand Cross 1 st Class
Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver with Sash	Grand Cross 2 nd Class
Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Star	Grand Officer's Cross 1 st Class
Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver with Star	Grand Officer's Cross 2 nd Class
Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold	Commander's Cross 1 st Class
Grand Decoration of Honour in Silver	Commander's Cross 2 nd Class
Grand Decoration of Honour	Officer's Cross
Gold Decoration of Honour	Knight's Cross 1 st Class
Silver Decoration of Honour	Knight's Cross 2 nd Class

In addition to the Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria, three decorations were instituted in 1955 by Federal Law of 25 May 1955, Fed. Law Gazette no. 96, for services to science and/or art: **the Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art, the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art 1st Class and the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art.**



Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art

(Österreichisches Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst)

Neck decoration, no separate version for ladies; ladies' bow for miniatures only

The Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art is awarded to Austrian and foreign personalities who, due to particularly outstanding creative work in the field of science or the arts, have gained general recognition and built up an excellent reputation.

The above Decoration of Honour may be conferred only upon submission of a curia decision of its holders (Section 4 (1) of the Federal Law of 25 May 1955, Fed. Law Gazette no. 96).

The total number of holders (curia) of the Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art may not exceed the number of 36 Austrian citizens and 36 foreign citizens—18 each in the field of science and art. The curia elects the new recipients of the Decoration of Honour.



Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art 1st Class

*(Österreichisches Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft
und Kunst I. Klasse)*

Cross pinned to the left chest

The prerequisite for being awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art 1st Class for **scientific achievements** is the performance of activities in the field of science going above and beyond the usual scientific work of a scholar.

The prerequisite for being awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art 1st Class for **artistic achievements** is the performance of an artistic activity for many years, which has gained above-average recognition.



Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art

(Österreichisches Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst)

Breast decoration; ladies wear the badge suspended from a bow

The prerequisite for being awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art is the provision of services to science and/or the arts in the interest of Austria, which are of extraordinary significance and impact and have gained special public recognition.

International classification

The international classification of the decorations below is as follows:

Austria	International
Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art	Commander's Cross 1 st Class
Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art 1 st Class	Officer's Cross
Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art	Knight's Cross 1 st Class

Rights and obligations of the recipients of the decoration of honour

Only the recipient is entitled to wear the decoration of honour and to call him/herself its owner. In accordance with Section 17 (2) of the Decoration of Honour Act (EhrenzeichenG), the recipient receives a certification decree bearing the insignia.

According to Section 18 EhrenzeichenG, decorations awarded are the property of the Federal Government. The person awarded the decoration merely becomes the owner and can only dispose of the decoration of honour in his or her will.

As decorations pursuant to Section 18 EhrenzeichenG are not an object of legal commercial transactions, they cannot be sold, auctioned or given away. The sale/auction of decorations constitutes unjustified interference with the property of the Federal Government.

This does not apply to the Austrian Decoration of Honour for Science and Art and Art, which, in accordance with Section 11 EhrenzeichenG, is to be returned to the Austrian Decoration of Honour Department of the office of the President upon the death of the recipient.

Pursuant to Section 25 EhrenzeichenG, the unauthorised wearing of decorations or their use in a manner that degrades their significance constitutes an administrative offence. Likewise, any person who, without authorisation and in a manner perceptible to third parties, designates himself or herself as the owner of a badge of honour is to be punished.

How to wear the full decoration

Decorations of Honour are expressions of special appreciation by the awarding state. The decorations must therefore be worn with adequate respect for and consideration of their significance, avoiding any sign of low regard.

The general rule is that full decorations are worn only with a tailcoat (never with a dinner jacket), with formal evening dress or a uniform exclusively at official or highly respectable public events and corresponding venues.

Hip decorations are worn from a sash passing from the right shoulder to the left hip. The breast star is pinned to the left chest (at the height of the last rib). If the Head of State is present, the sash is to be worn over the waistcoat; in all other cases, it should be worn under the waistcoat. Ladies do not wear the sash on bare shoulders.

Clergy dignitaries place the ribbons of the hip decorations in a gathered form around the neck, so that the badge lies in the middle of the chest.



Neck decorations are worn on a ribbon around the neck. When wearing a tailcoat, the ribbon is to be placed over the ribbon of the bow tie, ensuring that the decoration fits snugly underneath the bow tie and that neither the ribbon of the bow tie nor the ribbon of the decoration extends above the collar of the tailcoat.



Pinback decorations (Grand Decorations of Honour) are worn on the left chest (height of the last rib).



Breast decorations—Decorations of Honour and Merit or medals conferred on triangular ribbons—are worn on the upper left chest.





Insignia for female recipient of Decoration of Merit in Gold of the Republic of Austria



Rosette (Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold)



Rosette (Decoration of Merit)



Miniature for men (Decoration of Honour in Gold)



Miniature for women (Decoration of Honour in Gold)

Ladies wear the **decorations**—except for hip decorations—on a ribbon sewn in the form of a bow, above the left chest (approx. one hand's width below the left shoulder). The breast star is worn on the lower left chest.

In addition to the full decoration, a **rosette** is also presented. The rosette can be worn with a suit or tuxedo, or with a ladies' suit jacket (left button-hole).



The **miniature** can be worn on the upper half of the left lapel and can be purchased from the Austrian Presidential Chancellery.



Multiple decorations

Holders of several grades of the Decoration of Honour usually only wear the highest grade.

A certain level of decorum should be exercised if several decorations are worn.

Decorations of the Republic of Austria generally take precedence over those awarded by the Austrian Federal States and foreign orders. A combination with decorations that are similar to orders but not awarded by the state is not permitted.

Only one hip decoration is worn.

In case of multiple neck decorations, only a single ribbon with the badge is worn. If there are other decorations, only the breast stars belonging to them are worn.

The maximum is three breast stars, with the breast star of the federal decoration being worn at the top.

Instead of a larger number of full decorations, holders are recommended to wear miniatures on a thin chain on the left chest.

Only one rosette is worn, usually on official occasions.

