

SEA at a Crossroad

Trends in Austria's Transport Infrastructure Planning



Felix Sternath

*Head of Network Development Department, ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG
Austria*

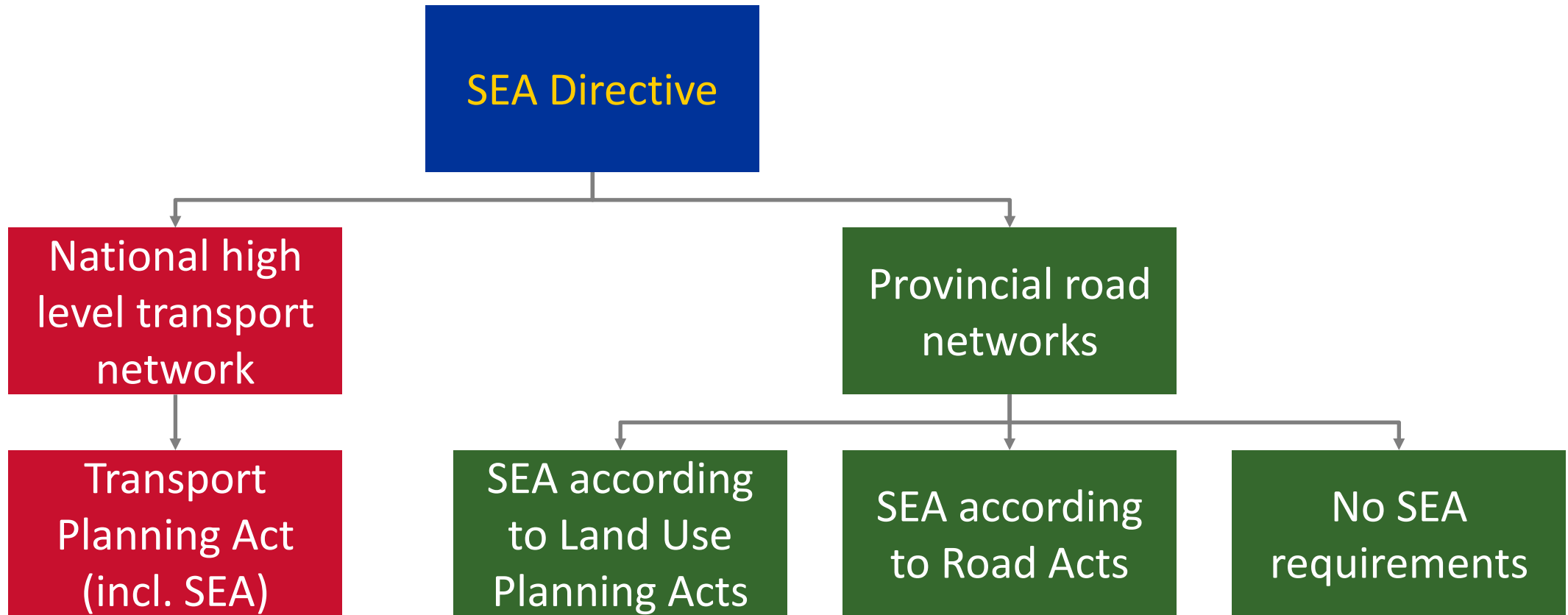
felix.sternath@oebb.at

www.linkedin.com/in/felix-sternath-2070a020a

<https://infrastruktur.oebb.at/>



SEA in Austria's transport infrastructure planning system



Learnings from 15 years of SEA practice in Austria

- Limited effect due to application mainly for specific routes rather than entire network or relevant parts of the network and many exceptions
- Good results and effects when fully integrated in planning process
- Moderate results and effects when practiced as “EIA light”
- Importance of extensive scoping (alternatives, focus on significant effects)
- High acceptance as an instrument of “good planning” rather than instrument for rigid environmental assessment
- No experience in cross border planning processes despite high degree of spatial and infrastructural interlinkage

Recommendations for the future development of the SEA Directive

- Objectives: emphasis on process requirements rather than content or outcome requirements
- Focus: shift from environment to sustainability
- Role: full and early integration in planning process instead of “end of pipe“ assessments (of e.g. plan drafts)
- Scope of application: add policies, clarify plans and programmes
- Scope of assessment: stay away from EIA (esp. Annexes)
- Implementation: encourage tailor made national implementation

Let's continue the conversation!

Post questions and comments in the IAIA24 app.



#iaia24

Felix Sternath

*Head of Network Development Department, ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG
Austria*

felix.sternath@oebb.at

www.linkedin.com/in/felix-sternath-2070a020a

<https://infrastruktur.oebb.at/>