Projekt “Improving Administrative Quality: Merging of the Districts Judenburg and Knittelfeld” (District Authority Office "Murtal"; Federal State of Styria)

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In the framework of this project the existing administrative framework was substantially changed for the first time in Austria since the 19th century. A process model was developed on how to merge two districts, namely Judenburg with some 44,000 inhabitants, and Knittelfeld with some 30,000 inhabitants, and its two district commissions to form one bigger administrative unit. All administrative tasks that can be executed quickly and non-bureaucratically are offered in two locations, enabling the authorities to remain accessible to citizens. All administrative tasks that, however, require expert knowledge by the authorities, were centralised. The new district ‘Murtal’ came into existence by 1 January 2012, having some 74,000 inhabitants and a new district commission. The project has been implemented without the help of external experts. The new district commission provides the same range of services for its citizens and functions more efficiently at lower costs. The administrative costs of the new district ‘Murtal’ and thus the costs for its citizens were lowered. The first year of the new structure led to savings amounting to €550,000, which should reach €850,000 by the end of 2013. Further savings are expected. These financial means can be used to foster innovative projects and to strengthen the local economy in the future. The cost savings mainly result from centralisation and reduction of human resources. The reduction of staff is, however, not based on dismissals; the choice was, to not fill the posts of some staff members that left for retirement. Moreover, high-qualified staff members are now used in different positions requiring expert knowledge. This results in faster and better services for citizens. Six other districts in this federal state have been merged, from 16 to 13 administrative units. The potential financial savings is estimated at €10 million per year in the long term.

addressed: behaviour, attitude and space.